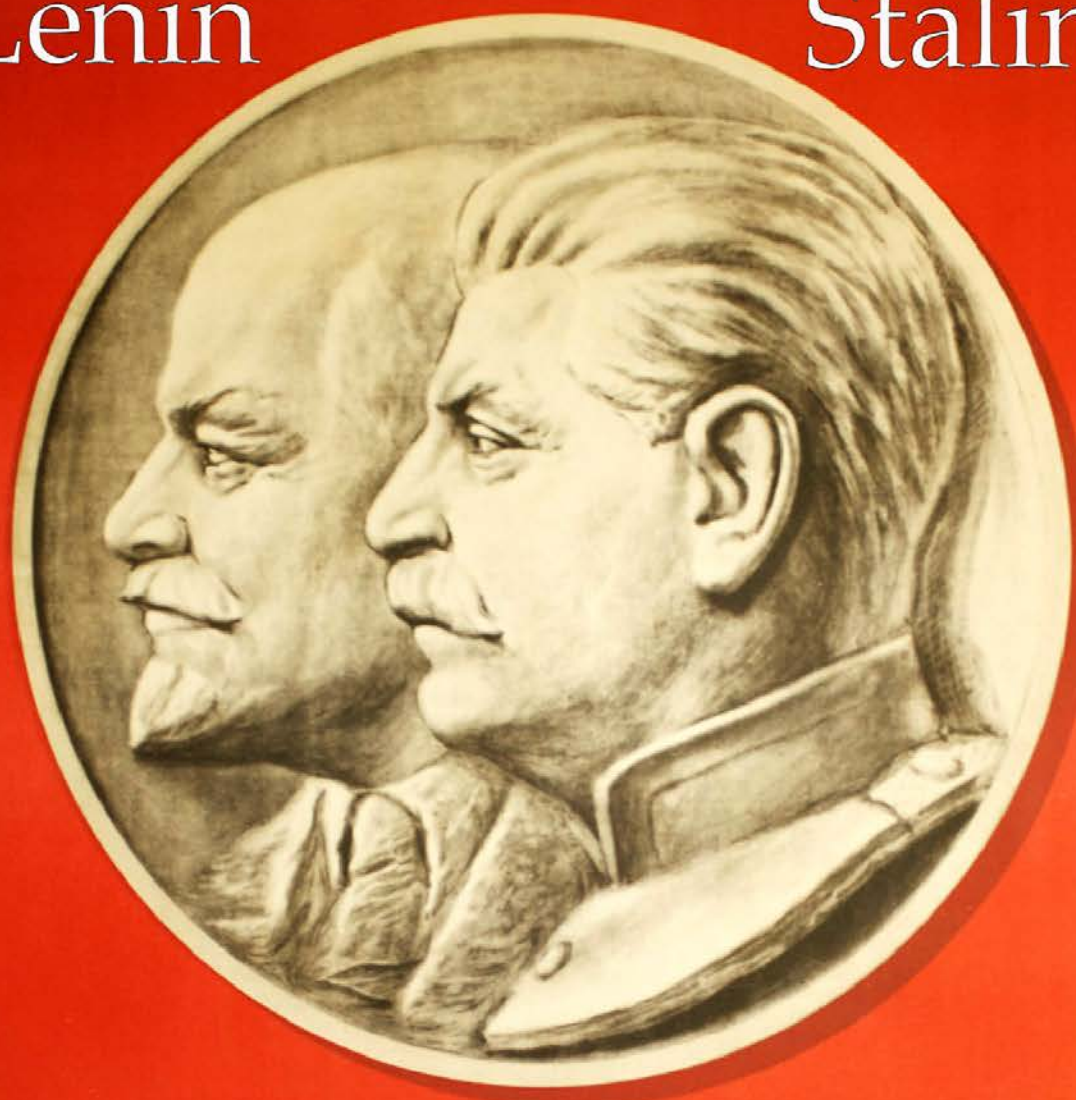


Lenin

Stalin



On The Character
of
Our Epoch

V. I. LENIN,
J. V. STALIN
ON THE CHARACTER
OF OUR EPOCH

The "8 NENTORI" Publishing House - Tirana, 1982

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PREFACE

The present collection comprises parts of V. I. Lenin's and J. V. Stalin's works which dwell on the character of our epoch and the strategy and tactics of the revolution.

In these works, the fundamental problems of our times, the major questions concerning the world revolutionary Liberation movement, are subjected to a penetrating dialectical analysis.

The works included in this collection follow in chronological order.

In V. I. Lenin's works of the first revolutionary period "What the 'Friends of the Peoples' Are and How They Fight the Socuill-Demoerats", "What Is to Be Done?" etc., a series of programmatic theses and tasks in the revolutionary struggle of the Russian proletariat, are formulated. In his work "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" Lenin ideologically smashed the petty-bourgeois tactical platform of Mensheviks and international opportunism, provided arguments of genius for the Bolshevik tactics, worked out the tactical fundamentals of the Marxist party of the new type, armed the working class for the further development of the revolution and laid the foundations of the revolutionary tactics.

Of particular significance are the works "Two Worlds" and "Differences in the European Working Class Movement" which constitute an exposure of opportunism in the European working-class movement and the traitorous policy of the leaders of the Second International. A series of writings as e.g. "The Position and the Tasks of the Socialist International", "The War and the Russian Social-Democracy" etc., are dedicated to the struggle of Bolshevism against opportunism in the Russian and international working-class movement against Trotskyite Liquidators, Socialist-Revolutionaries and the opportunists of

the Second International. In the work "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" the author provided argument for and developed the Bolshevik programme of the national question, expounding on the concrete historical way of how this question should be treated.

In a number of works written in the period 1914- 1915, as e.g. "Socialism and War" etc., V. I. Lenin raised the banner of struggle against imperialist war and international social-chauvinism, laid the foundations of the theory and tactics of the Bolshevik Party on the question of war, peace and the revolution.

In the article "Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International", V. I. Lenin tears the mask of apostasy and of the betrayal by the opportunist leaders of the Second International and the West- European socialist parties, and defines the tasks and tactics of the revolutionary Social-Democracy in the struggle against international opportunism.

In his work "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism" V. I. Lenin propounds his ideas of genius on imperialism as the highest and last stage of the development of capitalism; as monopoly parasitic and senile capitalism, as moribund capitalism, as an unprecedented increase of exploitation, oppression and reaction in all the fields and as the eve of the proletarian revolution. On the basis of this analysis Lenin formulates a new theoretical thesis on the possibility of the triumph of socialism first in one capitalist country, and on the impossibility of its triumph in all countries simultaneously.

In the article "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism" V. I. Lenin criticizes the anti- Marxist attitude of the anti-party Bukharin-Pyatakov group and explains the Bolshevik programme on the national question in the new historical conditions.

In the work "The State and Revolution", V. I. Lenin developed and defended the Marxist theory of the state against distortion and vulgarization by the opportunists,

while in the work "The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky" denounces the opportunism and obsequiousness of Kautsky and other leaders of the Second International towards the imperialists.

In the work "Left- Wing Communism - an Infantile Disorder" V. I. Lenin showed that international opportunism is the chief enemy within the working class movement and stigmatized the leaders of the Second International as collaborators of imperialist banditism.

Treating the character of our epoch in his work "Two Camps" J. V. Stalin says:

«The world has definitely and irrevocably split into two camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism. The struggle between these two camps

constitutes the hub of present-day affairs, determines of whole substance of the present home and foreign policies of the leaders of the old and the new worlds. »

J. V. Stalin's major work "The Foundations of Leninism" is dedicated to the theoretical argumentation of Leninism as the further development of Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.

It played a very important role in the struggle of the Party against Trotskyists and all other enemies of Bolshevism.

In "Political Report of the Central Committee, (The Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU(b), in The International Situation and the

Tasks of the Communist Parties" and in other works, the author proves with all-round argument the soundness of the general line of the Bolshevik Party and denounces the defeatist attitude of Trotskyists and Zinovievists who advocated the restoration of capitalism.

In the works "Concerning Questions of Leninism" and in other works J. V. Stalin upholds the decisions of the Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU (b), exposes the malicious distortions by Zinoviev - Kamenev group, discloses the attempts of New Opposition to arouse in the Party the feeling of mistrust in the triumph of socialism in the USSR and their attempts to substitute Trotskyism for Leninism. J. V. Stalin lays special emphasis on the absolute necessity of preserving and strengthening the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the conditions of the existing capitalist encirclement and the danger of intervention.

In his writing "Notes on Contemporary Themes" and in other works J. V. Stalin, besides other problems lays stress on the unity and indivisibility of the national and international tasks of the socialist revolution; he defines the line of the party in the field of foreign policy in the conditions of the threat of a new aggression against USSR and sets the new tasks for strengthening the defence potential of the Soviet Union.

In the political reports to the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Congresses of the CPSU (b) J. V. Stalin- makes a detailed analysis of the economic crisis of world capitalism and points out the exacerbation of contradictions in the capitalist system and indicates the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist system. J. V. Stalin treats the aggravation of the political situation in the capitalist countries, the relations among these countries, as well as the preparations for a new world war by the imperialists.

The teachings of V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin on the character of our epoch and on the revolutionary strategy and tactics are valid even in our days. The present-day capitalist society is developed according to the same objective laws which Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin have discovered.

«Properly applied, » as Comrade Enver Hoxha has put it, «Marxism-Leninism and its immortal principles will inevitably bring about the destruction of world capitalism and the triumph of the dictatorship of the proletariat, by means of which the working class will build socialism and march towards communism. »

THE «8 NENTORI" PUBLISHING HOUSE - 1982

WHAT THE "FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE" ARE AND HOW
THEY FIGHT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS

(excerpts)

pages 290 - 291 and pages 299 - 300 (Volume 1, English edition)

In Russia, the relics of medieval, semi-feudal institutions are still so enormously strong (as compared with Western Europe), they are such an oppressive yoke upon the proletariat and the people generally, retarding the growth of political thought in all estates and classes, that one cannot but insist on the tremendous importance which the struggle against all feudal institutions, absolutism, the social estate system, and the bureaucracy has for the workers. The workers must be shown in the greatest detail what a terribly reactionary force these institutions are, how they intensify the oppression of labour by capital, what a degrading pressure they exert on the working people, how they keep capital in its medieval forms, which, while not falling short of the modern, industrial forms in respect of the exploitation of labour, add to this exploitation by placing terrible difficulties in the way of the fight for emancipation. The workers must know that unless these pillars of reaction [*] are overthrown, it will be utterly impossible for them to wage a successful struggle against the bourgeoisie, because so long as they exist, the Russian rural proletariat, whose support is an essential condition for the victory of the working class, will never cease to be downtrodden and cowed, capable only of sullen desperation and not of intelligent and persistent protest and struggle. And that is why it is the direct duty of the working class to fight side by side with the radical democracy against absolutism and the reactionary social estates and institutions—a duty which the Social-Democrats must impress upon the workers, while not for a

moment ceasing also to impress upon them that the struggle against all these institutions is necessary only as a means of facilitating the struggle against the bourgeoisie, that the worker needs the achievement of the general democratic demands only to clear the road to victory over the working people's chief enemy, over an institution that is purely democratic by nature, capital, which here in Russia is particularly inclined to sacrifice its democracy and to enter into alliance with the reactionaries in order to suppress the workers, to still further impede the emergence of a working-class movement.

[*]

A particularly imposing reactionary institution one to which our revolutionaries have paid relatively little attention, is our bureaucracy, which de facto rules the Russian state. The bureaucracy being made up mainly of middle-class intellectuals are profoundly bourgeois both in origin and in the purpose and character of their activities; but absolutism and the enormous political privileges of the landed nobility have lent them particularly pernicious qualities. They are regular weathercocks, who regard it as their supreme task to combine the interests of the landlord and the bourgeois. They are Judushkas who use their feudal sympathies and connections to fool the workers and peasants, and employ the pretext of "protecting the economically weak" and acting as their "guardian" against the kulak and usurer to carry through measures which reduce the working people to the status of a "base rabble," handing them over to the feudal landlords and making them all the more defenceless against the bourgeoisie. The bureaucracy are most dangerous hypocrites, who have imbibed the experience of the West-European champion reactionaries, and skillfully conceal their Arakcheyev designs behind the fig-leaves of phrases about loving the people. —Lenin

... Hence, despite the existence of differences among Marxists on various theoretical questions, the methods of their political activity have remained unchanged ever since the group arose.

The political activity of the Social-Democrats lies in promoting the development and organisation of the working-class movement in Russia, in transforming this movement from its present state of sporadic attempts at protest, "riots" and strikes devoid of a guiding idea, into an organised struggle of the WHOLE Russian working CLASS directed against the bourgeois regime and working for the expropriation of the expropriators and the abolition of the social system based on the oppression of the working people. Underlying these activities is the common conviction of Marxists that the Russian worker is the sole and natural representative of Russia's entire working and exploited population. [*]

Natural because the exploitation of the working people in Russia is everywhere capitalist in nature, if we leave out of account the moribund remnants of serf economy; but the exploitation of the mass of producers is on a small scale, scattered and undeveloped, while the exploitation of the factory proletariat is on a large scale, socialised and concentrated. In the former case, exploitation is still enmeshed in medieval forms, various political, legal and conventional trappings, tricks and devices, which hinder the working people and their ideologists from seeing the essence of the system which oppresses the working people, from seeing where and how a way can be found out of this system. In the latter case, on the contrary, exploitation is fully developed and emerges in its pure form, without any confusing details. The worker cannot fail to see that he is oppressed by capital, that his struggle has to be waged against the bourgeois class. And this struggle, aimed at satisfying his immediate economic needs, at improving his material conditions, inevitably demands that the

workers organise, and inevitably becomes a war not against individuals, but against a class, the class which oppresses and crushes the working people not only in the factories, but everywhere. That is why the factory worker is none other than the foremost representative of the entire exploited population. And in order that he may fulfil his function of representative in an organised, sustained struggle it is by no means necessary to enthuse him with “perspectives”; all that is needed is simply to make him understand his position, to make him understand the political and economic structure of the system that oppresses him, and the necessity and inevitability of class antagonisms under this system. This position of the factory worker in the general system of capitalist relations makes him the sole fighter for the emancipation of the working class, for only the higher stage of development of capitalism, large scale machine industry, creates the material condition and the social forces necessary for this struggle.

[*]

Russia’s man of the future is the muzhik—thought the representatives of peasant socialism, the Narodniks in the broadest sense of the term. Russia’s man of the future is the worker—think the Social-Democrats. That is how the Marxist view was formulated in a certain manuscript. —Lenin

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

(excerpts)

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (an eventuation regarding which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an “unimportant” error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other “shade”.

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently. He who realises how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will

understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task.

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory. To have a concrete understanding of what this means, let the reader recall such predecessors of Russian Social Democracy as Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and the brilliant galaxy of revolutionaries of the seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him. . . but be that enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognizes, not two forms of the great struggle of Social Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, but three, placing the theoretical struggle on a par with the first two.

TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION [1]

(excerpts)

pages 48 - 51; page 52; pages 112 - 114 Volume 9, English edition

But it does not at all follow from this that a democratic revolution (bourgeois in its social and economic substance) is not of enormous interest for the proletariat. It does not at all follow from this that the democratic revolution cannot take place in a form advantageous mainly to the big capitalist, the financial magnate and the “enlightened” landlord, as well as in a form advantageous to the peasant and to the worker.

The new-Iskraists thoroughly misunderstand the meaning and significance of the category: bourgeois revolution. Through their arguments there constantly runs the idea that a bourgeois revolution is a revolution which can be advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. And yet nothing is more erroneous than such an idea. A bourgeois revolution is a revolution which does not go beyond the limits of the bourgeois, i.e., capitalist, social and economic system. A bourgeois revolution expresses the need for the development of capitalism, and far from destroying the foundations of capitalism, it does the opposite, it broadens and deepens them. This revolution therefore expresses the interests not only of the working class, but of the entire bourgeoisie as well. Since the rule of the bourgeoisie over the working class is inevitable under capitalism, it is quite correct to say that a bourgeois revolution expresses the interests not so much of the proletariat as of the bourgeoisie. But it is entirely absurd to think that a bourgeois revolution does not express the interests of the proletariat at all. This absurd idea boils down either to the hoary Narodnik theory that a bourgeois revolution runs counter to the interests of the proletariat, and that therefore we do not need

bourgeois political liberty; or to anarchism, which rejects all participation of the proletariat in bourgeois politics, in a bourgeois revolution and in bourgeois parliamentarism. From the standpoint of theory, this idea disregards the elementary propositions of Marxism concerning the inevitability of capitalist development where commodity production exists. Marxism teaches that a society which is based on commodity production, and which has commercial intercourse with civilised capitalist nations, at a certain stage of its development, itself, inevitably takes the road of capitalism. Marxism has irrevocably broken with the ravings of the Narodniks and the anarchists to the effect that Russia, for instance, can avoid capitalist development, jump out of capitalism, or skip over it and proceed along some path other than the path of the class struggle on the basis and within the framework of this same capitalism.

All these principles of Marxism have been proved and explained over and over again in minute detail in general and with regard to Russia in particular. And from these principles it follows that the idea of seeking salvation for the working class in anything save the further development of capitalism is reactionary. In countries like Russia, the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is therefore decidedly interested in the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism. The removal of all the remnants of the old order which are hampering the broad, free and rapid development of capitalism is of decided advantage to the working class. The bourgeois revolution is precisely a revolution that most resolutely sweeps away the survivals of the past, the remnants of serfdom (which include not only autocracy but monarchy as well) and most fully guarantees the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism.

That is why a bourgeois revolution is in the highest degree advantageous to the proletariat. A bourgeois revolution is absolutely necessary in the interests of the proletariat. The more complete and determined, the more consistent the bourgeois revolution, the more assured will be the proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie for Socialism. Only those who are ignorant of the rudiments of scientific Socialism can regard this conclusion as new or strange, paradoxical. And from this conclusion, among other things, follows the thesis that, in a certain sense, a bourgeois revolution is more advantageous to the proletariat than to the bourgeoisie. This thesis is unquestionably correct in the following sense: it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to rely on certain remnants of the past as against the proletariat, for instance, on the monarchy, the standing army, etc. It is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie if the bourgeois revolution does not too resolutely sweep away all the remnants of the past, but leaves some of them, i.e., if this revolution is not fully consistent, if it is not complete and if it is not determined and relentless. Social-Democrats often express this idea somewhat differently by stating that the bourgeoisie betrays its own self, that the bourgeoisie betrays the cause of liberty, that the bourgeoisie is incapable of being consistently democratic. It is of greater advantage to the bourgeoisie if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place more slowly, more gradually, more cautiously, less resolutely, by means of reforms and not by means of revolution; if these changes spare the "venerable" institutions of serfdom (such as the monarchy) as much as possible; if these changes develop as little as possible the independent revolutionary activity, initiative and energy of the common people, i.e., the peasantry and especially the workers, for otherwise it will be easier for the workers, as the French say, "to hitch the rifle from one shoulder to the other," i.e., to turn against the bourgeoisie the guns which

the bourgeois revolution will place in their hands, the liberty which the revolution will bring, the democratic institutions which will spring up on the ground that is cleared of serfdom.

On the other hand, it is more advantageous for the working class if the necessary changes in the direction of bourgeois democracy take place by way of revolution and not by way of reform; for the way of reform is the way of delay, of procrastination, of the painfully slow decomposition of the putrid parts of the national organism. It is the proletariat and the peasantry that suffer first of all and most of all from their putrefaction. The revolutionary way is the way of quick amputation, which is the least painful to the proletariat, the way of the direct removal of the decomposing parts, the way of fewest concessions to and least consideration for the monarchy and the disgusting, vile, rotten and contaminating institutions which go with it.

Marxism teaches the proletarian not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie but, on the contrary, to take a most energetic part in it, to fight most resolutely for consistent proletarian democracy, for carrying the revolution to its conclusion. We cannot jump out of the bourgeois-democratic boundaries of the Russian revolution, but we can vastly extend these boundaries, and within these boundaries we can and must fight for the interests of the proletariat, for its immediate needs and for the conditions that will make it possible to prepare its forces for the future complete victory.

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.

[*] Of interest in this connection is Mr. Struve's open letter to Jaurès recently published by the latter in *L' Humanité* [2] and by Mr. Struve in *Osvobozhdeniye*, No 72.

But we Marxists should know that there is not, nor can there be, any other path to real freedom for the proletariat and the peasantry, than the path of bourgeois freedom and bourgeois progress. We must not forget that there is not, nor can there be, at the present time, any other means of bringing Socialism nearer, than complete political liberty, than a democratic republic, than the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. As the representatives of the advanced and only revolutionary class, revolutionary without reservations, doubts or looking back, we must present to the whole of the people, as widely, as boldly and with the utmost initiative possible, the tasks of the democratic revolution. To degrade these tasks in theory means making a travesty of Marxism, distorting it in

philistine fashion, while in practical politics it means delivering the cause of the revolution into the hands of the bourgeoisie, which will inevitably recoil from the task of consistently carrying out the revolution. The difficulties that lie on the road to the complete victory of the revolution are very great. No one will be able to blame the representatives of the proletariat if, having done everything in their power, their efforts are defeated by the resistance of the reaction, the treachery of the bourgeoisie and the ignorance of the masses. But everybody and the class-conscious proletariat above all, will condemn Social-Democracy if it curtails the revolutionary energy of the democratic revolution and dampens revolutionary ardour because it is afraid to win, because it is actuated by the consideration: lest the bourgeoisie recoil.

Revolutions are the locomotives of history, said Marx [3] [In the Class Struggles in France] Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. At no other time are the masses of the people in a position to come forward so actively as creators of a new social order as at a time of revolution. At such times the people are capable of performing miracles, if judged by the narrow, philistine scale of gradual progress. But the leaders of the revolutionary parties must also make their aims more comprehensive and bold at such a time, so that their slogans shall always be in advance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, serve as a beacon, reveal to them our democratic and socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendor and show them the shortest and most direct route to complete, absolute and decisive victory. Let us leave to the opportunists of the Osvobozhdeniye bourgeoisie the task of inventing roundabout, circuitous paths of compromise out of fear of the revolution and of the direct path. If we are compelled by force to drag ourselves along such paths, we shall be able to fulfil our duty in petty, everyday work also. But let ruthless struggle first decide the

choice of the path. We shall be traitors to and betrayers of the revolution if we do not use this festive energy of the masses and their revolutionary ardour to wage a ruthless and self-sacrificing struggle for the direct and decisive path. Let the bourgeois opportunists contemplate the future reaction with craven fear. The workers will not be frightened either by the thought that the reaction promises to be terrible or by the thought that the bourgeoisie proposes to recoil. The workers are not looking forward to striking bargains, are not asking for sops; they are striving to crush the reactionary forces without mercy, i.e., to set up the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Of course, greater dangers threaten the ship of our Party in stormy times than in periods of the smooth "sailing" of liberal progress, which means the painfully slow sweating of the working class by its exploiters. of course, the tasks of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship are a thousand times more difficult and more complicated than the tasks of an "extreme opposition" or of the exclusively parliamentary struggle. But whoever can deliberately prefer smooth sailing and the path of safe "opposition" in the present revolutionary situation had better abandon Social-Democratic work for a while, had better wait until the revolution is over, until the festive days have passed, when humdrum everyday life starts again and his narrow routine standards no longer strike such an abominably discordant note, or constitute such an ugly distortion of the tasks of the advanced class.

At the head of the whole of the people, and particularly of the peasantry—for complete freedom, for a consistent democratic revolution, for a republic! At the head of all the toilers and the exploited—for Socialism! Such must in practice be the policy of the revolutionary proletariat, such is the class slogan which must

permeate and determine the solution of every tactical problem, every practical step of the workers' party during the revolution.

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY

(Excerpt)

Volume 10; pages 41 - 43

Of course, not all peasants fighting for land and freedom are fully aware of what their struggle implies and go so far as to demand a republic. But for all that, the democratic trend of the peasants' demands is beyond all doubt. Hence the peasantry can be certain that the proletariat will support these demands. The peasants must know that the red banner which has been raised in the towns is the banner of struggle for the immediate and vital demands, not only of the industrial and agricultural workers, but also of the millions and tens of millions of small tillers of the soil.

Survivals of serfdom in every possible shape and form are to this day a cruel burden on the whole mass of the peasantry, and the proletarians under their red banner have declared war on this burden.

But the red banner means more than proletarian support of the peasants' demands. It also means the independent demands of the proletariat. It means struggle, not only for land and freedom, but also against all exploitation of man by man, struggle against the poverty of the masses of the people, against the rule of capital. And it is here that we are faced with the second question: what can the revolution give the peasantry? Many sincere friends of the peasants (the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, among them) ignore this question, do not realise its importance. They think it is sufficient to raise and settle the question of what the peasants want, to get the answer: land and freedom. This is a great mistake. Full freedom, election of all officials all the way to the head of the state, will not do away with the rule of capital, will not abolish the wealth of the few and the poverty of the masses. Complete abolition of private landownership, too, will

not do away either with the rule of capital or with the poverty of the masses. Even on land belonging to the whole nation, only those with capital of their own, only those who have the implements, livestock, machines, stocks of seed, money in general, etc., will be able to farm independently. As for those who have nothing but their hands to work with, they will inevitably remain slaves of capital even in a democratic republic, even when the land belongs to the whole nation. The idea that "socialisation" of land can be effected without socialisation of capital, the idea that equalized land tenure is possible while capital and commodity economy exist, is a delusion. In nearly all countries of Europe, socialism has experienced periods when this or some similar delusions have been prevalent. The experience of working-class struggle in all countries has shown in practice how dangerous such an error is, and today the socialist proletarians of Europe and America have completely rid themselves of it.

Thus, the red banner of the class-conscious workers means, first, that we support with all our might the peasants' struggle for full freedom and all the land; secondly, it means that we do not stop at this, but go on further. We are waging, besides the struggle for freedom and land, a fight for socialism. The fight for socialism is a fight against the rule of capital. It is being carried on first and foremost by the wage-workers, who are directly and wholly dependent on capital. As for the small farmers, some of them own capital themselves, and often themselves exploit workers. Hence not all small peasants join the ranks of fighters for socialism; only those do so who resolutely and consciously side with the workers against capital, with public property against private property.

That is why the Social-Democrats say they are fighting together with the entire peasantry against the landlords and officials,

besides which they—the town and village proletarians together—are fighting against capital. The struggle for land and freedom is a democratic struggle. The struggle to abolish the rule of capital is a socialist struggle.

LESSONS OF THE COMMUNE

Published: *Zagranichnaya Gazeta*, No. 2 March 23, 1908

Lenin, Volume 13, pages 475 – 478

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.

EVENTS IN THE BALKANS AND IN PERSIA

Proletary No. 37, October 16 (29), 1908.

Lenin Collected Works; Volume 15, pages 220-230.

Essentially, what we see now going on in the Balkans, Turkey and Persia is a counter-revolutionary coalition of the European powers against the mounting tide of democracy in Asia. All the efforts of our governments, all the preaching of the “big” European papers, are aimed at glossing over this fact, misleading public opinion, covering up with hypocritical speeches and diplomatic hocus-pocus the counter revolutionary coalition of the so-called civilised nations of Europe against the nations of Asia, least civilised but most energetic in their striving for democracy. And the very essence of proletarian policy at this stage should be to tear the mask from these bourgeois hypocrites and to reveal to the broadest masses of the people the reactionary character of the European governments who, out of fear of the proletarian struggle at home, are playing, and helping others play, the part of gendarme in relation to the revolution in Asia.

Europe has woven a dense web of intrigue around all the Turkish and Balkan events, and the man in the street is being hoodwinked by the diplomats, who try to divert public attention to trifles, secondary issues, individual aspects of present developments, in an effort to obscure the meaning of the process as a whole. In contrast to this, our task, the task of international Social-Democracy, should be to show the people how these developments are interconnected, to bring out their fundamental trend and underlying motives.

Rivalry among the capitalist powers, anxious to “bite off” as big a piece as they can and extend their possessions and colonies, coupled with fear of an independent democratic movement among the nations dependent on or “protected” by Europe—

these are two mainsprings of all European policy. The Young Turks are praised for their moderation and restraint, i.e., the Turkish revolution is being praised because it is weak, because it is not rousing the popular masses to really independent action, because it is hostile to the proletarian struggle beginning in the Ottoman Empire—and at the same time the plunder of Turkey continues. The Young Turks are praised for making it possible to go on plundering Turkish possessions. They praise the Young Turks and continue a policy, the obvious purpose of which is to partition Turkey.

And this liberal struggle against one variety of bourgeois foreign policy in favour of another variety of that same policy, these liberal reproaches levelled at the government for lagging behind other countries (in rapine and intervention!) have the most corrupting effect on the masses. Down with all colonial policy, down with the whole policy of intervention and capitalist struggle for the conquest of foreign lands and foreign populations, for new privileges, new markets, control of the Straits, etc.! Social-Democrats do not subscribe to the stupid philistine utopia of “peaceful and just” capitalist progress. Their struggle is against the whole of capitalist society as such, in the knowledge that there is no other champion of peace and liberty in the world than the international revolutionary proletariat.

TWO WORLDS

1910, Volume 16, English edition

Much has been written in all the newspapers about the Magdeburg Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party. All the main events of this Congress, all the vicissitudes of the struggle are sufficiently known. The outward aspect of the struggle of the revisionists with the orthodox, the dramatic episodes of the Congress overmuch engaged the attention of the readers, to the detriment of a clarification of the principles involved in this struggle, the ideological and political roots of the divergence. Yet the debates in Magdeburg—above all on the question of the Badenites voting for the budget—provide exceedingly interesting material for characterising the two worlds of ideas and the two class tendencies within the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Germany. The voting for the budget is but one of the manifestations of this division into two worlds, a division which is so deep that it is undoubtedly bound to be expressed on much more serious occasions, much more profound and important. And now, when, as everybody can see, a great revolutionary storm is impending in Germany, the Magdeburg debates should be regarded as a small review of forces covering a small fraction of the army (for the question of voting for the budget is only a small fraction of the fundamental questions of Social-Democratic tactics) before the beginning of the campaign.

Two worlds of ideas: on the one hand, the point of view of the proletarian class struggle, which in certain historical periods can proceed on the basis of bourgeois legality, but which leads inevitably to a denouement, an open collision, to the dilemma: either “smash” the bourgeois state “to smithereens” or be defeated and strangled. On the other hand, the point of view of the reformist, the petty bourgeois who cannot see the wood for

the trees, who cannot, through the tinsel of constitutional legality, see the fierce class struggle, who forgets in the backwoods of some diminutive state the great historical problems of the present day.

The reformists imagine themselves to be realist politicians, doers of positive work, statesmen. It is in the interests of the masters of bourgeois society to encourage these childish illusions in the ranks of the proletariat, but the Social-Democrats must destroy them ruthlessly. The talk of parity of rights is "nothing but meaningless phrases", said Bebel. "Anyone who can take in a whole socialist faction with these phrases is certainly a statesman," said Babel, amid general laughter from the Party Congress, "but those who let themselves be taken in are anything but statesmen." This is a home thrust at all the opportunists in the socialist movement who let themselves be taken in by the National Liberals in Germany and the Cadets in Russia. "Negators," said Bebel, "often achieve far more than those who stand for so-called positive work. Sharp criticism, sharp opposition always falls on fertile ground if this criticism is just, as ours unquestionably is."

The opportunist phrases about positive work mean in many cases working for the liberals, in general working for others, who hold the reins of power, who set the course of the given state, society, community. And Bebel drew this conclusion, frankly, declaring that "in our Party there are no few National Liberals of this kind, pursuing a National-Liberal policy". As an example, he mentioned Bloch, the well-known editor of the so-called (so-called is Bebel's word) Socialist Monthly (Sozialistische Monatshefte). "National Liberals have no place in our Party," declared Babel outright, to the general approval of the Congress.

Look at the list of contributors to the Socialist Monthly. You will find there all the representatives of international opportunism.

They cannot find praise high enough for the behaviour of our liquidators. Are there not two worlds of ideas here when the leader of the German Social-Democrats calls the editor of this journal a National Liberal?

Opportunists throughout the world favour the policy of a bloc with the liberals, now openly and outrightly pro claiming and implementing it, now advocating or justifying election agreements with the liberals, support of their slogans, etc. Babel has time and again exposed the sheer falsity, the sheer mendacity of this policy, and we can say without exaggeration that every Social-Democrat should know and remember his words.

“If I, as a Social-Democrat, enter into an alliance with bourgeois parties, it is a thousand to one that the bourgeois parties will gain by it, not the Social-Democrats. We shall be the losers. It is a political law, that wherever the Rights and Lefts enter an alliance, the Lefts lose, the Rights win....

“If I enter into a political alliance with a party whose principles are hostile to mine, I must of necessity modify my tactics, i.e., my methods of struggle, in order not to break this alliance. I can no longer criticise ruthlessly, I cannot fight for principles, because this would give offence to my allies; I have to keep quiet, cover up a lot of things, make excuses for the inexcusable, gloss over matters that cannot be glossed over.”

Opportunism is opportunism for the very reason that it sacrifices the fundamental interests of the movement to momentary advantages or considerations based on the most short-sighted, superficial calculations. Frank pathetically declared in Magdeburg that the ministers in Baden “want us, Social-Democrats, to work together with them”!

We must look not above but below, we said during the revolution to our opportunists who were repeatedly led astray

by various prospects held out by the Cadets. Babel, with the Franks arrayed before him, said in his closing remarks at Magdeburg: "The masses cannot understand that there are Social-Democrats who support with a vote of confidence a government which the masses would much prefer to do away with altogether. I often get the impression that a section of our leaders has ceased to understand the sufferings and afflictions of the masses (thunderous applause), that the position of the masses has become alien to them." Yet "all over Germany an enormous resentment has accumulated among the masses".

"We are living through a time," said Babel in another part of his speech, "when rotten compromises are particularly impermissible. Class contradictions are not subsiding but growing more acute. We are on the threshold of very, very grave times. What will happen after the forthcoming elections? We shall wait and see. If matters come to the outbreak of a European war in 1912 you will see what we are in for, where we shall have to take our stand. It will probably not be where the Badenites are standing today."

While some people are becoming smugly content with the state of affairs which has become customary in Germany, Bebel himself turns all his attention to the inevitable change which is impending and advises that the Party's attention should be turned to it. "All our experiences so far have been skirmishes at the outposts, mere trifles," said Bebel in his closing remarks. The main struggle lies ahead. And from the standpoint of this main struggle, the whole tactics of the opportunists are the height of spinelessness and short-sightedness.

Bebel only speaks in hints about the coming struggle. Never once does he say outright that revolution is impending in Germany, although such, undoubtedly, is the idea in his mind—all his references to the aggravation of contradictions, the difficulty of

reforms in Prussia, the inextricable position of the government and the classes in command, the growth of resentment among the masses, the danger of a European war, the intensification of the economic yoke as a result of the high cost of living, the amalgamation of the capitalists in trusts and cartels, etc., etc.—all are clearly intended to open the eyes of the Party and the masses to the inevitability of a revolutionary struggle.

Why is Bebel so cautious? Why does he confine himself to pointed references? Because the maturing revolution in Germany encounters a special, peculiar political situation that does not resemble other pre-revolutionary periods in other countries and for that reason requires from the leaders of the proletariat the solution of a somewhat new problem. The chief feature of this peculiar pre-revolutionary situation consists in the fact that the coming revolution must inevitably be incomparably more profound, more radical, drawing far broader masses into a, more difficult, stubborn and prolonged struggle than all previous revolutions. Yet at the same time this pre-revolutionary situation is marked by the greater (in comparison with anything hitherto) domination of legality, which has become an obstacle to those who introduced it. There lies the peculiarity of the situation, there lies the difficulty and novelty of the problem.

The irony of history has brought it about that the ruling classes of Germany, who have created the strongest state known in the whole second half of the nineteenth century, who have consolidated conditions for the most rapid capitalist progress and conditions for the most stable constitutional legality, are now most unmistakably coming to a point when this legality, their legality, will have to be shattered—so that the domination of the bourgeoisie may be preserved.

For about half a century the German Social-Democratic Labour Party has made exemplary use of bourgeois legality, haying

created the best proletarian organisations, a magnificent press, having raised to the highest pitch (that is possible under capitalism) the class-consciousness and solidarity of the proletarian socialist vanguard.

Now the time is drawing near when this half-century phase of German history must, by force of objective causes, be replaced by a different phase. The era of utilising the legality created by the bourgeoisie is giving way to an era of tremendous revolutionary battles, and these battles, in effect, will be the destruction of all bourgeois legality, the whole bourgeois system, while in form they must begin (and are beginning) with panicky efforts on the part of the bourgeoisie to get rid of the legality which, though it is their own handiwork, has become unbearable to them! "You shoot first, Messieurs the Bourgeoisie!"—with these words, spoken in 1892, Engels summed up the peculiarity of the position and the peculiarity of the tactical problems of the revolutionary proletariat [4].

The socialist proletariat will not forget for a moment that it is confronted, inevitably confronted, with a revolutionary mass struggle that must sweep away all the legalities of the doomed bourgeois society. But, at the same time, a party which has magnificently utilised a half-century of bourgeois legality against the bourgeoisie has not the slightest reason to renounce those conveniences in the struggle, that advantage in battle afforded by the fact that the enemy is caught in the toils of his own legality, that the enemy is compelled to "shoot first", is compelled to shatter his own legality.

There lies the peculiarity of the pre-revolutionary situation in modern Germany. That is why old Bebel is so cautious, fixing all his attention on the great struggle which is to come, exerting all the power of his vast talent, his experience and authority against the short-sighted, spine less opportunists, who do not

understand this struggle, who are not fit to lead it, who during the revolution will probably find themselves degraded from the leaders to the led or even cast aside.

In Magdeburg these leaders were remonstrated with, they were censured, they were given an official ultimatum as the representatives of all that was unreliable that had accumulated in the great revolutionary army, of all that was weak, infected with bourgeois legality and stupefied by pious prostrations before this legality, before all the limitations of what is one of the eras of slavery, i.e., one of the eras of bourgeois supremacy. In condemning the opportunists, threatening them with expulsion, the German proletariat thereby expressed its condemnation of all the elements in its mighty organisation personifying stagnation, diffidence, flabbiness and inability to break with the psychology of moribund bourgeois society. In condemning the bad revolutionaries in its own ranks, the vanguard class held one of the last reviews of its forces before entering upon the path of social revolution.

* *

While the attention of all revolutionary Social-Democrats throughout the world was concentrated on seeing how the German workers were preparing for action, selecting the moment for action, keeping a watchful eye on the enemy and purging themselves of the weaknesses of opportunism—the opportunists throughout the world were gloating over the differences which had arisen between Luxemburg and Kautsky in their estimate of the present situation, on the question whether one of those turning-points like the Ninth of January in the Russian revolution was due now or not just yet, this very minute or the next. The opportunists gloated. They did their utmost to make a burning issue of these differences, which were not of prime importance, in the columns of Socialist Monthly, Golos

Sotsial-Demokrata (Martynov), Zhizn, Vozrozhdeniye and suchlike liquidationist papers and Neue Zeit (Martov) [*]. The shabbiness of these methods of the opportunists in all countries was indelibly registered in Magdeburg, where differences of opinion among the revolutionary Social-Democrats of Germany did not play any appreciable role. The opportunists however gloated too soon. The Magdeburg Congress adopted the first part of the resolution proposed by Rosa Luxemburg, in which there is direct reference to the mass strike as a means of struggle.

[*]

In Neue Zeit Martov was met with an emphatic rebuke from Comrade Karsky. — Lenin

DIFFERENCES IN THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MOVEMENT [5]

Zvezda No. 1, December 16, 1910.

Lenin Collected Works; Volume 16, pages 345-352, English edition

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

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

Furthermore, the rate at which capitalism develops varies in different countries and in different spheres of the national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and lastingly assimilated by the working class and its ideologists

where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

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

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour movement, are constantly jumping from one futile extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-

minded persons “incite” class against class—at another they console themselves with the idea that the workers’ party is “a peaceful party of reform”. Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and its influence. They seize upon one aspect of the labour movement, elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and declare mutually exclusive those tendencies or features of this movement that are a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity. But real life, real history, includes these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity.

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

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

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

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

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not because of the malicious intent of individuals, and not accidentally, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population, which is bound to be distinguished by its relatively high "cultural" demands. These demands for a certain minimum of culture are created by the

conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapid development of world competition, and so forth. In consequence, vacillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, transitions from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions have been characteristic of the history of all European countries during the last half-century, the various countries developing primarily the application of the one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century Britain was the classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties adhered to the method of force, and so on.

When this method prevailed in Germany, a one-sided echo of this particular system of bourgeois government was the growth of anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism, as it was then called, in the labour movement (the "Young" at the beginning of the nineties [6], Johann Most at the beginning of the eighties). When in 1890 the change to "concessions" took place, this change, as is always the case, proved to be even more dangerous to the labour movement, and gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement. "The positive, real aim of the liberal policy of the bourgeoisie," Pannekoek says, "is to mislead the workers, to cause a split in their ranks, to convert their policy into an impotent adjunct of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, sham reformism."

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

of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently bring the differences within the labour movement to the point of an outright split.

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

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

THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

2. The historically concrete presentation of the question

(Excerpt)

February-May 1914

Collected Works, Volume 20, pp. 393-454, English edition

The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within definite historical limits, and, if it refers to a particular country (e. g., the national programme for a given country), that account be taken of the specific features distinguishing that country from others in the same historical epoch.

What does this categorical requirement of Marxism imply in its application to the question under discussion?

First of all, it implies that a clear distinction must be drawn between the two periods of capitalism, which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned. On the one hand, there is the period of the collapse of feudalism and absolutism, the period of the formation of the bourgeois-democratic society and state, when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all classes of the population into politics through the press, participation in representative institutions, etc. On the other hand, there is the period of fully formed capitalist states with a long-established constitutional regime and a highly developed antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—a period that may be called the eve of capitalism's downfall.

The typical features of the first period are: the awakening of national movements and the drawing of the peasants, the most numerous and the most sluggish section of the population, into

these movements, in connection with the struggle for political liberty in general, and for the rights of the nation in particular. Typical features of the second period are: the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements and the fact that developed capitalism, in bringing closer together nations that have already been fully drawn into commercial intercourse, and causing them to intermingle to an increasing degree, brings the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international working-class movement into the forefront.

Of course, the two periods are not walled off from each other; they are connected by numerous transitional links, the various countries differing from each other in the rapidity of their national development, in the national make up and distribution of their population, and so on. There can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national programme without taking into account all these general historical and concrete state conditions.

REPORT OF THE C.C. OF THE R.S.D.L.P. TO THE BRUSSELS
CONFERENCE

AND INSTRUCTIONS TO THE C.C. DELEGATION

(excerpt)

Written June 23–30 (July 6–13), 1914

Collected Works, Volume 20, pages 495-535.

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

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

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

Our tactics are different. We make use of every reform (insurance, for example) and of every legal society. But we use them to develop the revolutionary consciousness and the revolutionary struggle of the masses. In Russia, where political freedom to this day does not exist, these words have far more direct implications for us than they have in Europe. Our Party conducts revolutionary strikes, which in Russia are growing as in no other country in the world. Take, for example, the month of May alone. In May 1912, 64,000 and in May 1914, 99,000 workers were involved in economic strikes.

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

THE WAR AND RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

(excerpts)

Written prior to September 28 (October 11), 1914

Collected Works, Volume 21, pages 25-34.

It is primarily on Social-Democracy that the duty rests of revealing the true meaning of the war, and of ruthlessly exposing the falsehood, sophistry and “patriotic” phrase mongering spread by the ruling classes, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, in defence of the war.

One group of belligerent nations is headed by the German bourgeoisie. It is hoodwinking the working class and the toiling masses by asserting that this is a war in defence of the fatherland, freedom and civilisation, for the liberation of the peoples oppressed by tsarism, and for the destruction of reactionary tsarism. In actual fact, however, this bourgeoisie, which servilely grovels to the Prussian Junkers, headed by Wilhelm II, has always been a most faithful ally of tsarism, and an enemy of the revolutionary movement of Russia’s workers and peasants. In fact, whatever the outcome of the war, this bourgeoisie will together with the Junkers, exert every effort to support the tsarist monarchy against a revolution in Russia.

In fact, the German bourgeoisie has launched a robber campaign against Serbia, with the object of subjugating her and throttling the national revolution of the Southern Slavs, at the same time sending the bulk of its military forces against the freer countries, Belgium and France, so as to plunder richer competitors. In fact, the German bourgeoisie, which has been spreading the fable that it is waging a war of defence, chose the moment it thought most favourable for war, making use of its latest improvements in

military matériel and forestalling the rearmament already planned and decided upon by Russia and France.

The other group of belligerent nations is headed by the British and the French bourgeoisie, who are hoodwinking the working class and the toiling masses by asserting that they are waging a war for the defence of their countries, for freedom and civilisation and against German militarism and despotism. In actual fact, this bourgeoisie has long been spending thousands of millions to hire the troops of Russian tsarism, the most reactionary and barbarous monarchy in Europe, and prepare them for an attack on Germany.

In fact, the struggle of the British and the French bourgeoisie is aimed at the seizure of the German colonies, and the ruining of a rival nation, whose economic development has been more rapid. In pursuit of this noble aim, the “advanced” “democratic” nations are helping the savage tsarist regime to still more throttle Poland, the Ukraine, etc., and more thoroughly crush the revolution in Russia.

Neither group of belligerents is inferior to the other in spoilation, atrocities and the boundless brutality of war; however, to hoodwink the proletariat and distract its attention from the only genuine war of liberation, namely, a civil war against the bourgeoisie both of its “own” and of “foreign” countries—to achieve so lofty an aim—the bourgeoisie of each country is trying, with the help of false phrases about patriotism, to extol the significance of its “own” national war, asserting that it is out to defeat the enemy, not for plunder and the seizure of territory, but for the “liberation” of all other peoples except its own.

But the harder the governments and the bourgeoisie of all countries try to disunite the workers and pit them against one

another, and the more savagely they enforce, for this lofty aim, martial law and the military censorship (measures which even now, in wartime, are applied against the “internal” foe more harshly than against the external), the more pressing is it the duty of the class-conscious proletariat to defend its class solidarity, its internationalism, and its socialist convictions against the unbridled chauvinism of the “patriotic” bourgeois cliques in all countries. If class-conscious workers were to give up this aim, this would mean renunciation of their aspirations for freedom and democracy, to say nothing of their socialist aspirations.

It is with a feeling of the most bitter disappointment that we have to record that the socialist parties of the leading European countries have failed to discharge this duty, the behaviour of these parties’ leaders, particularly in Germany, bordering on downright betrayal of the cause of socialism. At this time of supreme and historic importance, most of the leaders of the present Socialist International, the Second (1889-1914), are trying to substitute nationalism for socialism. As a result of their behaviour, the workers’ parties of these countries did not oppose the governments’ criminal conduct but called upon the working class to identify its position with that of the imperialist governments. The leaders of the International committed an act of treachery against socialism by voting for war credits, by reiterating the chauvinist (“patriotic”) slogans of the bourgeoisie of their “own” countries, by justifying and defending the war, by joining the bourgeois governments of the belligerent countries, and so on and so forth. The most influential socialist leaders and the most influential organs of the socialist press of present-day Europe hold views that are chauvinist, bourgeois and liberal, and in no way socialist. The responsibility for thus disgracing socialism falls primarily on the German Social-Democrats, who were the strongest and most influential party in the Second

International. But neither can one justify the French socialists, who have accepted ministerial posts in the government of that very bourgeoisie which betrayed its country and allied itself with Bismarck so as to crush the Commune.

The German and the Austrian Social-Democrats are attempting to justify their support for the war by arguing that they are thereby fighting against Russian tsarism. We Russian Social-Democrats declare that we consider such justification sheer sophistry. In our country the revolutionary movement against tsarism has again assumed tremendous proportions during the past few years. This movement has always been headed by the working class of Russia. The political strikes of the last few years, which have involved millions of workers, have had as their slogan the overthrow of tsarism and the establishment of a democratic republic. During his visit to Nicholas II on the very eve of the war, Poincaré, President of the French Republic, could see for himself, in the streets of St. Petersburg, barricades put up by Russian workers. The Russian proletariat has not flinched from any sacrifice to rid humanity of the disgrace of the tsarist monarchy. We must, however, say that if there is anything that, under certain conditions, can delay the downfall of tsarism, anything that can help tsarism in its struggle against the whole of Russia's democracy, then that is the present war, which has placed the purses of the British, the French and the Russian bourgeois at the disposal of tsarism, to further the latter's reactionary aims. If there is anything that can hinder the revolutionary struggle of the Russia's working class against tsarism, then that is the behaviour of the German and the Austrian Social-Democratic leaders, which the chauvinist press of Russia is continually holding up to us as an example.

Even assuming that German Social-Democracy was so weak that it was compelled to refrain from all revolutionary action, it

should not have joined the chauvinist camp, or taken steps which gave the Italian socialists reason to say that the German Social-Democratic leaders were dishonoring the banner of the proletarian International.

The opportunists have wrecked the decisions of the Stuttgart [7], Copenhagen [8] and Basle [9] congresses, which made it binding on socialists of all countries to combat chauvinism in all and any conditions, made it binding on socialists to reply to any war begun by the bourgeoisie and governments, with intensified propaganda of civil war and social revolution. The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism, which developed from the features of a now bygone (and so-called “peaceful”) period of history, and in recent years has some practically to dominate the International. The opportunist have long been preparing the ground for this collapse by denying the socialist revolution and substituting bourgeois reformism in its stead; by rejecting the class struggle with its inevitable conversion at certain moments into civil war, and by preaching class collaboration; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the guise of patriotism and the defence of the fatherland, and ignoring or rejecting the fundamental truth of socialism, long ago set forth in the Communist Manifesto, that the workingmen have no country; by confining themselves, in the struggle against militarism, to a sentimental, philistine point of view, instead of recognising the need for a revolutionary war by the proletarians of all countries, against the bourgeoisie of all countries; by making a fetish of the necessary utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarianism and bourgeois legality, and forgetting that illegal forms of organisation and propaganda are imperative at times of crises. The natural “appendage” to opportunism—one that is just as bourgeois and hostile to the proletarian, i.e., the Marxist, point of view—namely, the anarcho-syndicalist trend,

has been marked by a no less shamefully smug reiteration of the slogans of chauvinism, during the present crisis.

The aims of socialism at the present time cannot be fulfilled, and real international unity of the workers cannot be achieved, without a decisive break with opportunism, and without explaining its inevitable fiasco to the masses.

It must be the primary task of Social-Democrats in every country to combat that country's chauvinism.

The bourgeoisie's use of wartime laws to gag the proletariat makes it imperative for the latter to create illegal forms of agitation and organisation. Let the opportunists "preserve" the legal organisations at the price of treachery to their convictions—revolutionary Social-Democrats will utilise the organisational experience and links of the working class so as to create illegal forms of struggle for socialism, forms appropriate to a period of crisis, and to unite the workers, not with the chauvinist bourgeoisie of their respective countries, but with the workers of all countries. The proletarian International has not gone under and will not go under. Notwithstanding all obstacles, the masses of the workers will create a new International. Opportunism's present triumph will be short-lived. The greater the sacrifices imposed by the war the clearer will it become to the mass of the workers that the opportunists have betrayed the workers' cause and that the weapons must be turned against the government and the bourgeoisie of each country.

The conversion of the present imperialist war into a civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan, one that follows from the experience of the Commune, and outlined in the Basle resolution (1912); it has been dictated by all the conditions of an imperialist war between highly developed bourgeois countries. However difficult that transformation may seem at any given moment,

socialists will never relinquish systematic, persistent and undeviating preparatory work in this direction now that war has become a fact.

It is only along this path that the proletariat will be able to shake off its dependence on the chauvinist bourgeoisie, and, in one form or another and more or less rapidly, take decisive steps towards genuine freedom for the nations and towards socialism.

Long live the international fraternity of the workers against the chauvinism and patriotism of the bourgeoisie of all countries!

Long live a proletarian International, freed from opportunism!

THE POSITION AND TASKS OF SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

(excerpts)

1914

Sozial-Demokrat No. 33 November 1, 1914

Lenin, collected works, Volume 21, pages 35 - 41

The gravest feature of the present crisis is that the majority of official representatives of European socialism have succumbed to bourgeois nationalism, to chauvinism. It is with good reason that the bourgeois press of all countries writes of them now with derision, now with condescending praise. To anyone who wants to remain a socialist there can be no more important duty than to reveal the causes of this crisis in socialism and analyse the tasks of the International.

There are such that are afraid to admit that the crisis or, to put it more accurately, the collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism.

Reference is made to the unanimity, for instance, among French socialists, and to the fact that the old groups in socialism have supposedly changed their stands in the question of the war. Such references, however, are groundless.

Advocacy of class collaboration; abandonment of the idea of socialist revolution and revolutionary methods of struggle; adaptation to bourgeois nationalism; losing sight of the fact that the borderlines of nationality and country are historically transient; making a fetish of bourgeois legality; renunciation of the class viewpoint and the class struggle, for fear of repelling the "broad masses of the population" (meaning the petty bourgeoisie)—such, doubtlessly, are the ideological foundations

of opportunism. And it is from such soil that the present chauvinist and patriotic frame of mind of most Second International leaders has developed. Observers representing the most various points of view have long noted that the opportunists are in fact prevalent in the Second International's leadership. The war has merely brought out, rapidly and saliently, the true measure of this prevalence. There is nothing surprising in the extraordinary acuteness of the crisis having led to a series of reshufflings within the old groups. On the whole, however, such changes have affected only individuals. The trends within socialism have remained the same.

The bourgeoisie's stand is clear. It is no less clear that the opportunists are simply echoing bourgeois arguments. In addition to what has been said in the leading article, we need only mention the insulting statements in *Die Neue Zeit*, suggesting that internationalism consists in the workers of one country shooting down the workers of another country, allegedly in defence of the fatherland!

The question of the fatherland—we shall reply to the opportunists—cannot be posed without due consideration of the concrete historical nature of the present war. This is an imperialist war, i.e., it is being waged at a time of the highest development of capitalism, a time of its approaching end. The working class must first “constitute itself within the nation”, the Communist Manifesto declares, emphasising the limits and conditions of our recognition of nationality and fatherland as essential forms of the bourgeois system, and, consequently, of the bourgeois fatherland. The opportunists distort that truth by extending to the period of the end of capitalism that which was true of the period of its rise. With reference to the former period and to the tasks of the proletariat in its struggle to destroy, not feudalism but capitalism, the Communist Manifesto gives a clear

and precise formula: "The workingmen have no country." One can well understand why the opportunists are so afraid to accept this socialist proposition, afraid even, in most cases, openly to reckon with it. The socialist movement cannot triumph within the old framework of the fatherland. It creates new and superior forms of human society, in which the legitimate needs and progressive aspirations of the working masses of each nationality will, for the first time, be met through international unity, provided existing national partitions are removed. To the present-day bourgeoisie's attempts to divide and disunite them by means of hypocritical appeals for the "defence of the fatherland" the class-conscious workers will reply with ever new and persevering efforts to unite the workers of various nations in the struggle to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie of all nations.

The bourgeoisie is duping the masses by disguising imperialist rapine with the old ideology of a "national war". This deceit is being shown up by the proletariat, which has brought forward its slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. This was the slogan of the Stuttgart and Basle resolutions, which had in mind, not war in general, but precisely the present war and spoke, not of "defence of the fatherland", but of "hastening the downfall of capitalism", of utilising the war-created crisis for this purpose, and of the example provided by the Paris Commune. The latter was an instance of a war of nations being turned into a civil war.

Of course, such a conversion is no easy matter and cannot be accomplished at the whim of one party or another. That conversion, however, is inherent in the objective conditions of capitalism in general, and of the period of the end of capitalism in particular. It is in that direction, and that direction alone, that socialists must conduct their activities. It is not their business to

vote for war credits or to encourage chauvinism in their "own" country (and allied countries), but primarily to strive against the chauvinism of their "own" bourgeoisie, without confining themselves to legal forms of struggle when the crisis has matured and the bourgeoisie has itself taken away the legality it has created. Such is the line of action that leads to civil war and will bring about civil war at one moment or another of the European conflagration.

War is no chance happening, no "sin" as is thought by Christian priests (who are no whit behind the opportunists in preaching patriotism, humanity and peace), but an inevitable stage of capitalism, just as legitimate a form of the capitalist way of life as peace is. Present-day war is a people's war. What follows from this truth is not that we must swim with the "popular" current of chauvinism, but that the class contradictions dividing the nations continue to exist in wartime and manifest themselves in conditions of war. Refusal to serve with the forces, anti-war strikes, etc., are sheer nonsense, the miserable and cowardly dream of an unarmed struggle against the armed bourgeoisie, vain yearning for the destruction of capitalism without a desperate civil war or a series of wars. It is the duty of every socialist to conduct propaganda of the class struggle, in the army as well; work directed towards turning a war of the nations into civil war is the only socialist activity in the era of an imperialist armed conflict of the bourgeoisie of all nations. Down with mawkishly sanctimonious and fatuous appeals for "peace at any price"! Let us raise high the banner of civil war! Imperialism sets at hazard the fate of European culture: this war will soon be followed by others, unless there are a series of successful revolutions. The story about this being the "last war" is a hollow and dangerous fabrication, a piece of philistine "mythology" (as Golos aptly puts it). The proletarian banner of civil war will rally together, not only hundreds of thousands of class-conscious

workers but millions of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeois, now deceived by chauvinism, but whom the horrors of war will not only intimidate and depress, but also enlighten, teach, arouse, organise, steel and prepare for the war against the bourgeoisie of their "own" country and "foreign" countries. And this will take place, if not today, then tomorrow, if not during the war, then after it, if not in this war then in the next one.

The Second International is dead, overcome by opportunism. Down with opportunism, and long live the Third International, purged not only of "turncoats" (as Golos wishes), but of opportunism as well.

The Second International did its share of useful preparatory work in preliminarily organising the proletarian masses during the long, "peaceful" period of the most brutal capitalist slavery and most rapid capitalist progress in the last third of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. To the Third International falls the task of organising the proletarian forces for a revolutionary onslaught against the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries for the capture of political power, for the triumph of socialism!

KARL MARX [10]

A Brief Biographical Sketch with an Exposition of Marxism

1914

(excerpts)

The class struggle

It is common knowledge that, in any given society, the striving of some of its members conflict with the strivings of others, that social life is full of contradictions, and that history reveals a struggle between nations and societies, as well as within nations and societies, and, besides, an alternation of periods of revolution and reaction, peace and war, stagnation and rapid progress or decline. Marxism has provided the guidance —i.e., the theory of the class struggle—for the discovery of the laws governing this seeming maze and chaos. It is only a study of the sum of the strivings of all the members of a given society or group of societies that can lead to a scientific definition of the result of those strivings. Now the conflicting strivings stem from the difference in the position and mode of life of the classes into which each society is divided.

“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles,” Marx wrote in the Communist Manifesto (with the exception of the history of the primitive community, Engels added subsequently). “Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with

class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.”

Ever since the Great French Revolution, European history has, in a number of countries, tellingly revealed what actually lies at the bottom of events—the struggle of classes. The Restoration period in France already produced a number of historians (Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, and Thiers) who, in summing up what was taking place, were obliged to admit that the class struggle was taking place, were obliged to admit that the class struggle was the key to all French history. The modern period—that of complete victory of the bourgeoisie, representative institutions, extensive (if not universal) suffrage, a cheap daily press that is widely circulated among the masses, etc., a period of powerful and every-expanding unions of workers and unions of employers, etc.—has shown even more strikingly (though sometimes in a very one-sided, “peaceful”, and “constitutional” form) the class struggle as the mainspring of events. The following passage from Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* will show us what Marx demanded of social science as regards an objective analysis of the position of each class in modern society, with reference to an analysis of each class’s conditions of development:

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product. The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the

artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Anymore, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat; they thus defend not their present, but their future interests; they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat."

In a number of historical works (see Bibliography), Marx gave brilliant and profound examples of materialist historiography, of an analysis of the position of each individual class, and sometimes of various groups or strata within a class, showing plainly why and how "every class struggle is a political struggle. The above-quoted passage is an illustration of what a complex network of social relations and transitional stages from one class to another, from the past to the future, was analyzed by Marx so as to determine the resultant of historical development.

Tactics of the struggle of the proletariat

The fundamental task of proletarian tactics was defined by Marx in strict conformity with all the postulates of his materialist-dialectical Weltanschauung ["world-view"]. Only an objective consideration of the sum total of the relations between absolutely all the classes in a given society, and consequently a consideration of the objective stage of development reached by that society and of the relations between it and other societies, can serve as a basis for the correct tactics of an advanced class. At the same time, all classes and all countries are regarded, not statistically, but dynamically —i.e., not in a state of immobility— but in motion (whose laws are determined by the economic conditions of existence of each class). Motion, in its turn, is regarded from the standpoint, not only of the past, but also of the

future, and that not in the vulgar sense it is understood in by the “evolutionists”, who see only slow changes, but dialectically: “...in developments of such magnitude 20 years are no more than a day,” Marx wrote to Engels, “thought later on there may come days in which 20 years are embodied” (Briefwechsel, Vol. 3, p. 127) [11].

At each stage of development, at each moment, proletarian tactics must take account of this objectively inevitable dialectics of human history, on the one hand, utilizing the periods of political stagnation or of sluggish, so-called “peaceful” development in order to develop the class-consciousness, strength and militancy of the advanced class, and, on the other hand, directing all the work of this utilization towards the “ultimate aim” of that class’s advance, towards creating in it the ability to find practical solutions for great tasks in the great days, in which “20 years are embodied”.

SOCIALISM AND WAR

The Attitude of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party Towards the War

July - August 1915

Lenin, collected works, Volume 21, pages 295 - 338

(excerpts)

The war of today is an imperialist war.

Nearly everybody admits that the present war is an imperialist war, but in most cases this term is distorted or applied to one side, or a loophole is left for the assertion that this war may, after all, have a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberating significance. Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, reached only in the twentieth century. Capitalism now finds the old national states, without the formation of which it could not have overthrown feudalism, too tight for it. Capitalism has developed concentration to such a degree that whole branches of industry have been seized by syndicates, trusts and associations of capitalist billionaires, and almost the entire globe has been divided up among the "lords of capital, either in the form of colonies, or by enmeshing other countries in thousands of threads of financial exploitation. Free trade and competition have been superseded by the striving for monopoly, for the seizure of territory for the investment of capital, for the export of raw materials from them, and so forth. From the liberator of nations that capitalism was in the struggle against feudalism, imperialist capitalism has become the greatest oppressor of nations. Formerly progressive, capitalism has become reactionary; it has developed the forces of production to such a degree that mankind is faced with the alternative of going over to Socialism or of suffering years and even decades of

armed struggle between the "great powers for the artificial preservation of capitalism by means of colonies, monopolies, privileges and national oppression of every kind.

It is not the business of Socialists to help the younger and stronger robber (Germany) to rob the older and overgorged robbers. Socialists must take advantage of the struggle between the robbers to overthrow them all. To be able to do this, the Socialists must first of all tell the people the truth, namely, that this war is in a treble sense a war between slave-owners to fortify slavery. This is a war firstly, to fortify the enslavement of the colonies by means of a "fairer" distribution and subsequent more "concerted exploitation of them; secondly, to fortify the oppression of other nations within the "great" powers, for both Austria and Russia (Russia more and much worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to fortify and prolong wage slavery, for the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists gain, making fortunes out of the war, aggravating national prejudices and intensifying reaction, which has raised its head in all countries. even in the freest and most republican.

"War is the continuation of politics by other" (i.e. violent) "means"

This famous aphorism was uttered by one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war, Clausewitz. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views concerning the significance of every given war. It was precisely from this viewpoint that Marx and Engels always regarded different wars.

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of England, and France, and Germany, and Italy, and Austria, and Russia, pursued a policy of, plundering colonies, of

oppressing other nations, of suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this policy that is being continued in the present war. In particular, the policy of both Austria and Russia peace-time as well as in war, is a policy of enslaving and not of liberating nations. In China, Persia. India and other dependent countries, on the contrary, we have seen during the past decades a policy of rousing tens and hundreds of millions of people to national life, of liberating them from the oppression of the reactionary "great" powers. A war on such a historical ground can even today be a bourgeois-progressive, national-liberation war.

It is sufficient to glance at the present war from the viewpoint that it is a continuation of the politics of the great powers, and of the principal classes within them, to see at once the howling anti-historicalness, falsity and hypocrisy of the view that the "defence of the fatherland" idea can be justified in the present war.

The case of Belgium

Herein, precisely, lies the specific feature of imperialist war, war between reactionary-bourgeois, historically obsolete governments, waged for the purpose of oppressing other nations. Whoever justifies participation in the present war perpetuates imperialist oppression of nations. Whoever advocates taking advantage of the present embarrassments of the governments to fight for the social revolution champions the real freedom of really all nations, which is possible only under Socialism.

What social-chauvinism is

Social-chauvinism is advocacy of the idea of "defence of the fatherland" in the present war. Further, this idea logically leads to the abandonment of the class struggle during the war, to voting war credits, etc. Actually, the social-chauvinists are

pursuing an anti-proletarian, bourgeois policy; for actually, they are championing not "defence of the fatherland" in the sense of fighting foreign oppression, but the "right" of one or other of the "great" powers to plunder colonies and to oppress other nations. The social-chauvinists repeat the bourgeois deception of the people that the war is being waged to protect the freedom and existence of nations, and thereby they go over to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In the category of social-chauvinists are those who justify and embellish the governments and bourgeoisie of one of the belligerent groups of powers, as well as those who, like Kautsky, argue that the Socialists of all the belligerent powers have an equal right to "defend the fatherland". Social-chauvinism, being actually defence of the privileges, advantages, robbery and violence of one's "own" (or every) imperialist bourgeoisie, is the utter betrayal of all socialist convictions and of the decision of the Basle International Socialist Congress.

The Basle Manifesto

The manifesto on war that was unanimously adopted in Basle in 1911 had in view the very war between England and Germany and their present allies that broke out in 1914. The manifesto openly declares that no plea of the interests of the people can justify such a war, waged "for the sake of the profits of the capitalists" and "the ambitions of dynasties" on the basis of the imperialist, predatory policy of the great powers. The manifesto openly declares that war is dangerous "for the governments" (all without exception), notes their fear of "a proletarian revolution", and very definitely points to the example of the Commune of 1871, and of October-December 1905, i.e., to the examples of revolution and civil war. Thus, the Basle Manifesto lays down, precisely for the present war, the tactics of revolutionary struggle by the workers on an international scale against their

governments, the tactics of proletarian revolution. The Basle Manifesto repeats the statement in the Stuttgart resolution that, in the event of war breaking out, Socialists must take advantage of the "economic and political crisis" it will cause, to "hasten the downfall of capitalism", i.e., to take advantage of the governments' embarrassments and the anger of the masses, caused by the war, for the socialist revolution.

The policy of the social-chauvinists, their justification of the war from the bourgeois-liberation standpoint, their sanctioning of "defence of the fatherland", voting credits, entering cabinets, and so on and so forth, is downright treachery to Socialism, which can be explained only, as we will see lower down, by the victory of opportunism and of the national-liberal labour policy in the majority of European parties.

False references to Marx and Engels

The Russian social-chauvinists (headed by Plekhanov), refer to Marx's tactics in the war of 1870; the German (of the type of Lensch, David and Co.) to Engels' statement in 1891 that in the event of war against Russia and France together, it would be the duty of the German Socialists to defend their fatherland; and lastly, the social-chauvinists of the Kautsky type, who want to reconcile and legitimize international chauvinism, refer to the fact that Marx and Engels, while condemning war, nevertheless, constantly, from 1870-1871 and 1876-1877, took the side of one or another belligerent state once war had broken out

All these references are outrageous distortions of the views of Marx and Engels in the interest of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, in just the same way as the writings of the Anarchists Guillaume and Co. distort the views of Marx and Engels in justification of anarchism. The war of 1870-1871 was a historically progressive war on the part of Germany until

Napoleon III was defeated; for the latter, together with the tsar, had oppressed Germany for many years, keeping her in a state of feudal disintegration. But as soon as the war developed into the plunder of France (the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine), Marx and Engels emphatically condemned the Germans. And even at the beginning of that war Marx and Engels approved of the refusal of Bebel and Liebknecht to vote for credits and advised the Social-Democrats not to merge with the bourgeoisie, but to uphold the independent class interests of the proletariat. To apply the appraisal of this bourgeois-progressive and national-liberating war to the present imperialist war means mocking at truth. The same applies with still greater force to the war of 1854-1855, and to all the wars of the nineteenth century, when there was no modern imperialism, no ripe objective conditions for Socialism, and no mass Socialist parties in any of the belligerent countries, i.e., none of the conditions from which the Basle Manifesto deduced the tactics of "proletarian revolution" in connection with a war between the great powers.

Whoever refers today to Marx's attitude towards the wars of the epoch of the progressive bourgeoisie and forgets Marx's statement that "the workers have no fatherland", a statement that applies precisely to the epoch of the reactionary, obsolete bourgeoisie, to the epoch of the socialist revolution. shamelessly distorts Marx and substitute, the bourgeois for the socialist point of view.

The collapse of the Second International

The Socialists of all the world solemnly declared in Basle, in 1912, that they regarded the impending war in Europe as the "criminal" and most reactionary affair of all the governments, which must hasten the downfall of capitalism by inevitably calling forth a revolution against it. The war came, the crisis came. Instead of revolutionary tactics, the majority of the Social-

Democratic parties conducted reactionary tactics, went over to the side of their respective governments and bourgeoisie. This betrayal of Socialism signifies the collapse of the Second (1889-1914) International, and we must understand what caused this collapse, what brought social-chauvinism into being what gave it strength.

Social-chauvinism is the acme of opportunism

During the whole epoch of the Second International, a struggle raged everywhere in the Social-Democratic parties between the revolutionary and the opportunist wings. In a number of countries, a split has taken place along this line (England, Italy, Holland, Bulgaria). Not a single Marxist has any doubt that opportunism expresses bourgeois policy within the working-class movement, expresses the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the alliance of a tiny section of bourgeoisified workers with "their" bourgeoisie against the interests of the proletarian masses, the oppressed masses.

The objective conditions of the end of the nineteenth century exceptionally intensified opportunism, converted the utilization of bourgeois legality into subservience to it, created a tiny stratum of bureaucrats and aristocrats within the working class, and drew into the ranks of the Social-Democratic parties numerous petty-bourgeois "fellow travelers".

The war accelerated this development and transformed opportunism into social-chauvinism, transformed the secret alliance between the opportunists and the bourgeoisie into an open one. Simultaneously, the military authorities everywhere have introduced martial law and have muzzled the mass of the workers, whose old leaders have nearly all gone over to the bourgeoisie.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same economic basis: the interests of a tiny stratum of privileged workers and of the petty bourgeoisie who are defending their privileged position, their "right" to crumbs of the profits "their" national bourgeoisie obtain from robbing other nations, from the advantages of their position as the ruling nation, etc.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same ideological-political content: collaboration of classes instead of class struggle, renunciation of revolutionary methods of struggle, helping one's "own" government in its embarrassed situation instead of taking advantage of these embarrassments for revolution. If we take all the European countries as a whole, if we pay attention not to individuals (even the most authoritative), we will find that it is the opportunist trend that has become the chief bulwark of social-chauvinism, whereas from the camp of the revolutionaries, more or less consistent protests against it are heard nearly everywhere. And if we take, for example, the grouping of trends at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress in 1907, we will find that international Marxism was opposed to imperialism, while international opportunism was in favour of it already at that time.

Unity with the opportunists means an alliance between the workers and their "own" national bourgeoisie, and splitting the international revolutionary working class

In the past epoch, before the war, although opportunism was often regarded as a "deviationist", "extremist" part of the Social-Democratic Party, it was nevertheless regarded as a legitimate part. The war has shown that this cannot be so in future. Opportunism has "matured", is now playing to the full its role as emissary of the bourgeois in the working-class movement. Unity with the opportunists has become sheer hypocrisy, an example of which we see in the German Social-Democratic Party.

On all important occasions (for example, the voting on August 4), the opportunists come forward with an ultimatum, which they carry out with the aid of their numerous connections with the bourgeoisie, of their majority on the executives of the trade unions, etc. Unity with the opportunists actually means today, subordinating the working class to "its" national bourgeoisie, alliance with it for the purpose of oppressing other nations and of fighting for great-power privileges, it means splitting the revolutionary proletariat in all countries.

Hard as the struggle may be, in individual cases, against the opportunists who predominate in many organisations, peculiar as the process of purging the workers' parties of opportunists may be in individual countries, this process is inevitable and fruitful. Reformist Socialism is dying; regenerated Socialism "will be revolutionary, uncompromising and insurrectionary", to use the apt expression of the French Socialist Paul Golay.

The Marxists' slogan of revolutionary social-democracy

It is our duty to help the masses to become conscious of these moods, to deepen and formulate them. This task is correctly expressed only by the slogan: convert the imperialist war into civil war; and all consistently waged class struggles during the war, all seriously conducted "mass action" tactics inevitably lead to this. It is impossible to foretell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will flare up during the first or the second war of the great powers, whether during or after it; in any case, our bounden duty is systematically and undeviatingly to work precisely in this direction.

The Basle Manifesto refers directly to the example set by the Paris Commune, i.e., to the conversion of a war between governments into civil war. Half a century ago, the proletariat was too weak; the objective conditions for Socialism had not yet ripened; there

could be no coordination and cooperation between the revolutionary movements in all the belligerent countries; the "national ideology" (the traditions of 1792), with which a section of the Parisian workers were imbued, was their petty-bourgeois weakness, which Marx noted at the time, and was one of the causes of the fall of the Commune. Half a century after it, the conditions that weakened the revolution at that time have passed away, and it is unpardonable for a Socialist at the present time to resign himself to the abandonment of activities precisely in the spirit of the Paris Communards.

The example set by fraternization in the trenches

The bourgeois newspapers of all the belligerent countries have reported cases of fraternisation between the soldiers of the belligerent nations even in the trenches. And the issue by the military authorities (of Germany, England) of draconic orders against such fraternisation proved that the governments and the bourgeoisie attached grave importance to it. The fact that such cases of fraternisation have been possible even when opportunism reigns supreme in the top ranks of the Social-Democratic parties of Western Europe, and when social-chauvinism is supported by the entire Social-Democratic press and by all the authorities of the Second International, shows us how possible it would be to shorten the present criminal, reactionary and slave-owners' war and to organise a revolutionary international movement if systematic work were conducted in this direction, if only by the Left-wing Socialists in all the belligerent countries.

The importance of an underground organization

The most prominent Anarchists all over the world, no less than the opportunists, have disgraced themselves with social-chauvinism (in the spirit of Plekhanov and Kautsky) in this war.

One of the useful results of this war will undoubtedly be that it will kill both anarchism and opportunism.

While under no circumstances or conditions refraining from utilizing all legal possibilities, however small, for the purpose of organizing the masses and of preaching Socialism, the Social-Democratic parties must break with subservience to legality. "You shoot first, Messieurs the Bourgeoisie," wrote Engels, hinting precisely at civil war and at the necessity of our violating legality after the bourgeoisie had violated it. The crisis has shown that the bourgeoisie violate it in all countries, even the freest, and that it is impossible to lead the masses to revolution unless an underground organisation is set up for the purpose of advocating, discussing, appraising and preparing revolutionary methods of struggle. In Germany, for example, all the honest things that Socialists are doing, are being done in spite of despicable opportunism and hypocritical "Kautskyism" and are being done secretly. In England, people are sent to penal servitude for printing appeals against joining the army.

To regard the repudiation of underground methods of propaganda, and ridiculing the latter in the legally published press, as being compatible with membership of the Social-Democratic Party is treachery to Socialism.

On the defeat of one's «own» government in the imperialist war

Both the advocates of victory for their governments in the present war and the advocates of the slogan "neither victory nor defeat", equally take the standpoint of social-chauvinism. A revolutionary class cannot but wish for the defeat of its government in a reactionary war, cannot fail to see that its military reverses facilitate its overthrow. Only a bourgeois who believes that a war started by the governments must necessarily end as a war between governments and wants it to end as such,

can regard as “ridiculous” and “absurd” the idea that the Socialists of all the belligerent countries should wish for the defeat of all “their” governments and express this wish. On the contrary, it is precisely a statement of this kind that would conform to the cherished thoughts of every class-conscious worker and would be in line with our activities towards converting the imperialist war into civil war.

Undoubtedly, the serious anti-war agitation that is being conducted by a section of the British, German and Russian Socialists has “weakened the military power” of the respective governments, but such agitation stands to the credit of the Socialists. Socialists must explain to the masses that they have no other road of salvation except the revolutionary overthrow of “their” governments, and that advantage must be taken of these governments’ embarrassments in the present war precisely for this purpose.

Pacifism and the peace slogan

The sentiments of the masses in favour of peace often express incipient protest, anger and consciousness of the reactionary character of the war. It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to utilise these sentiments. They will take a most ardent part in every movement and in every demonstration on this ground; but they will not deceive the people by conceding the idea that peace without annexations, without the oppression of nations, without plunder, without the germs of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement. Such a deception of the people would merely play into the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent governments and facilitate their counter-revolutionary plans. Whoever wants a lasting and democratic peace must be in favour of civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie.

The right of nations to self-determination

The most widespread deception of the people perpetrated by the bourgeoisie is, the present war is the concealment of its predatory aims with "national-liberation" ideology. The English promise the liberation of Belgium, the Germans of Poland, etc. Actually, as we have seen, this is a war waged by the oppressors of the majority of the nations of the world for the purpose of fortifying and expanding such oppression.

Socialists cannot achieve their great aim without fighting against all oppression of nations. Therefore, they must without fail demand that the Social-Democratic parties of oppressing countries (especially of the so-called "great" powers) should recognise and champion the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, precisely in the political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The Socialist of a ruling or colony-owning nation who fails to champion this right is a chauvinist.

The championing of this right, far from encouraging the formation of small states, leads, on the contrary, to the freer, fearless and therefore wider and more widespread formation of very big states and federations of states, which are more beneficial for the masses and more fully in keeping with economic development.

The Socialists of oppressed nations must, in their turn, unfailingly fight for the complete (including organisational) unity of the workers of the oppressed and oppressing nationalities. The idea of the juridical separation of one nation from another (so-called "cultural-national autonomy" advocated by Bauer and Renner) is reactionary.

Imperialism is the epoch of the constantly increasing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of "great" powers and, therefore, it is impossible to fight for the socialist international

revolution against imperialism unless the right of nations to self-determination is recognized. "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (Marx and Engels). A proletariat that tolerates the slightest violence by "its" nation against other nations cannot be a socialist proletariat.

ON THE SLOGAN FOR A UNITED STATES OF EUROPE

Sotsial-Demokrat No. 44, August 23, 1915.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 21, pages 339-343, English edition

(excerpt)

Political changes of a truly democratic nature, and especially political revolutions, can under no circumstances whatsoever either obscure or weaken the slogan of a socialist revolution. On the contrary, they always bring it closer, extend its basis, and draw new sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the semi-proletarian masses into the socialist struggle. On the other hand, political revolutions are inevitable in the course of the socialist revolution, which should not be regarded as a single act, but as a period of turbulent political and economic upheavals, the most intense class struggle, civil war, revolutions, and counter-revolutions.

But while the slogan of a republican United States of Europe—if accompanied by the revolutionary overthrow of the three most reactionary monarchies in Europe, headed by the Russian—is quite invulnerable as a political slogan, there still remains the highly important question of its economic content and significance. From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the “advanced” and “civilised” colonial powers—a United States of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary.

Capital has become international and monopolist. The world has been carved up by a handful of Great Powers, i.e., powers successful in the great plunder and oppression of nations. The four Great Powers of Europe—Britain, France, Russia and

Germany, with an aggregate population of between 250,000,000 and 300,000,000, and an area of about 7,000,000 square kilometers—possess colonies with a population of almost 500 million (494,500,000) and an area of 64,600,000 square kilometers, i.e., almost half the surface of the globe (133,000,000 square kilometers, exclusive of Arctic and Antarctic regions). Add to this the three Asian states—China, Turkey and Persia, now being rent piecemeal by thugs that are waging a war of “liberation”, namely, Japan, Russia, Britain and France. Those three Asian states, which may be called semi-colonies (in reality they are now 90 per cent colonies), have a total population of 360,000,000 and an area of 14,500,000 square kilometers (almost one and a half times the area of all Europe).

Furthermore, Britain, France and Germany have invested capital abroad to the value of no less than 70,000 million rubles. The business of securing “legitimate” profits from this tidy sum—these exceed 3,000 million rubles annually—committees of the millionaires, known as governments, which are equipped with armies and navies and which provide the sons and brothers of the millionaires with jobs in the colonies and semi-colonies as viceroys, consuls, ambassadors, officials of all kinds, clergymen, and other leeches.

That is how the plunder of about a thousand million of the earth’s population by a handful of Great Powers is organised in the epoch of the highest development of capitalism. No other organisation is possible under capitalism. Renounce colonies, “spheres of influence”, and the export of capital? To think that it is possible means coming down to the level of some sniveling parson who every Sunday preaches to the rich on the lofty principles of Christianity and advises them to give the poor, well, if not millions, at least several hundred rubles yearly.

A United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement on the partition of colonies. Under capitalism, however, no other basis and no other principle of division are possible except force. A multi-millionaire cannot share the “national income” of a capitalist country with anyone otherwise than “in proportion to the capital invested” (with a bonus thrown in, so that the biggest capital may receive more than its share). Capitalism is private ownership of the means of production, and anarchy in production. To advocate a “just” division of income on such a basis is sheer Proudhonism, stupid philistinism. No division can be effected otherwise than in “proportion to strength”, and strength changes with the course of economic development. Following 1871, the rate of Germany’s accession of strength was three or four times as rapid as that of Britain and France, and of Japan about ten times as rapid as Russia’s. There is and there can be no other way of testing the real might of a capitalist state than by war. War does not contradict the fundamentals of private property—on the contrary, it is a direct and inevitable outcome of those fundamentals. Under capitalism the smooth economic growth of individual enterprises or individual states is impossible. Under capitalism, there are no other means of restoring the periodically disturbed equilibrium than crises in industry and wars in politics.

Of course, temporary agreements are possible between capitalists and between states. In this sense a United States of Europe is possible as an agreement between the European capitalists ... but to what end? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism in Europe, of jointly protecting colonial booty against Japan and America, who have been badly done out of their share by the present partition of colonies, and the increase of whose might during the last fifty years has been immeasurably more rapid than that of backward and monarchist Europe, now turning senile. Compared with the United States of

America, Europe as a whole denotes economic stagnation. On the present economic basis, i.e., under capitalism, a United States of Europe would signify an organisation of reaction to retard America's more rapid development. The times when the cause of democracy and socialism was associated only with Europe alone have gone forever.

A United States of the World (not of Europe alone) is the state form of the unification and freedom of nations which we associate with socialism—about the total disappearance of the state, including the democratic. As a separate slogan, however, the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organising their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise against the rest of the world—the capitalist world—attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states. The political form of a society wherein the proletariat is victorious in overthrowing the bourgeoisie will be a democratic republic, which will more and more concentrate the forces of the proletariat of a given nation or nations, in the struggle against states that have not yet gone over to socialism. The abolition of classes is impossible without a dictatorship of the oppressed class, of the proletariat. A free union of nations in

socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states.

It is for these reasons and after repeated discussions at the conference of R.S.D.L.P. groups abroad, and following that conference, that the Central Organ's editors have come to the conclusion that the slogan for a United States of Europe is an erroneous one.

OPPORTUNISM AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

January 1916

“Vorbote” No. 1.

Lenin, collected works, volume 22, pages 108 - 120

(excerpts)

The epoch of capitalist imperialism is one of ripe and rotten-ripe capitalism, which is about to collapse, and which is mature enough to make way for socialism. The period between 1789 and 1871 was one of progressive capitalism when the overthrow of feudalism and absolutism, and liberation from the foreign yoke were on history's agenda. “Defence of the fatherland”, i.e., defence against oppression, was permissible on these grounds, and on these alone. The term would be applicable even now in a war against the imperialist Great Powers, but it would be absurd to apply it to a war between the imperialist Great Powers, a war to decide who gets the biggest piece of the Balkan countries, Asia Minor, etc. It is not surprising, therefore, that the “socialists” who advocate “defence of the fatherland” in the present war shun the Basle Manifesto as a thief shuns the scene of his crime. For the Manifesto proves them to be social-chauvinists, i.e., socialists in words, but chauvinists in deeds, who are helping “their own” bourgeoisie to rob other countries and enslave other nations. That is the very substance of chauvinism—to defend one's “own” fatherland even when its acts are aimed at enslaving other peoples' fatherlands.

Recognition that a war is being fought for national liberation implies one set of tactics; its recognition as an imperialist war, another. The Manifesto clearly points to the latter. The war, it says, “will bring on an economic and political crisis”, which must

be “utilised”, not to lessen the crisis, not to defend the fatherland, but, on the contrary, to “rouse” the masses and “hasten the downfall of capitalist rule”. It is impossible to hasten something for which historical conditions are not yet mature. The Manifesto declares that social revolution is possible, that the conditions for it have matured, and that it will break out precisely in connection with war. Referring to the examples of the Paris Commune and the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, i.e., examples of mass strikes and of civil war, the Manifesto declares that “the ruling classes” fear “a proletarian revolution”. It is sheer falsehood to claim, as Kautsky does, that the socialist attitude to the present war has not been defined. This question was not merely discussed, but decided in Basle, where the tactics of revolutionary proletarian mass struggle were recognised.

The bourgeoisie of all the big powers are waging the war to divide and exploit the world and oppress other nations. A few crumbs of the bourgeoisie’s huge profits may come the way of the small group of labour bureaucrats, labour aristocrats, and petty-bourgeois fellow-travelers. Social-chauvinism and opportunism have the same class basis, namely, the alliance of a small section of privileged workers with “their” national bourgeoisie against the working-class masses; the alliance between the lackeys of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the class the latter is exploiting.

Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same political content, namely, class collaboration, repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, repudiation of revolutionary action, unconditional acceptance of bourgeois legality, confidence in the bourgeoisie and lack of confidence in the proletariat. Social-chauvinism is the direct continuation and consummation of British liberal-labour politics, of Millerandism and Bernsteinism.

Social-chauvinism is opportunism in its finished form. It is quite ripe for an open, frequently vulgar, alliance with the bourgeoisie and the general staffs. It is this alliance that gives it great power and a monopoly of the legal press and of deceiving the masses. It is absurd to go on regarding opportunism as an inner-party phenomenon. It is ridiculous to think of carrying out the Basle resolution together with David, Legien, Hyndman, Plekhanov and Webb. Unity with the social-chauvinists means unity with one's "own" national bourgeoisie, which exploits other nations; it means splitting the international proletariat.

Kautsky has put forward his new theory of "ultra-imperialism" in opposition to the revolutionary Marxists. By this he means that the "rivalries of national finance capitals" are to be superseded by the "joint exploitation of the world by international finance capital" ("Die Neue Zeit, April 30, 1915"). But he adds: "We do not as yet have sufficient data to decide whether this new phase of capitalism is possible." On the grounds of the mere assumption of a "new phase", which he does not even dare declare definitely "possible", the inventor of this "phase" rejects his own revolutionary declarations as well as the revolutionary tasks and revolutionary tactics of the proletariat—rejects them now, in the "phase" of a crisis, which has already broken out, the phase of war and the unprecedented aggravation of class antagonisms! Is this not Fabianism at its most abominable?

The sum and substance of Social-Democracy's practical programme in this war is to support, develop, extend and sharpen mass revolutionary action, and to set up illegal organisations, for without them there is no way of telling the truth to the masses of people even in the "free" countries. The rest is either lies or mere verbiage, whatever its trappings of opportunist or pacifist theory. [*]

[*]

At the International Women's Congress held in Berne in March 1915, the representatives of the Central Committee of our Party urged that it was absolutely necessary to set up illegal organisations. This was rejected. The British women laughed at this proposal and praised British "liberty". But a few months later British newspapers, like the Labour = Leader, reached us with blank spaces, and then came the news of police raids, confiscation of pamphlets, arrests, and Draconian sentences imposed on comrades who had spoken in Britain about peace, nothing but peace! — Lenin

We've had enough of empty talk, and of prostituted "Marxism" à la Kautsky! After twenty-five years of the Second International, after the Basle Manifesto, the workers will no longer believe fine words. Opportunism is rotten-ripe; it has been transformed into social-chauvinism and has definitely deserted to the bourgeois camp. It has severed its spiritual and political ties with Social-Democracy. It will also break off its organisational ties. The workers are already demanding "illegal" pamphlets and "banned" meetings, i.e., underground organisations to support the revolutionary mass movement. Only when "war against war" is conducted on these lines does it cease to be empty talk and becomes Social-Democratic work. In spite of all difficulties, setbacks, mistakes, delusions and interruptions, this work will lead humanity to the victorious proletarian revolution.

THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE RIGHT OF NATIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION

(THESES)

THESES

January-February 1916

magazine *Vorbote* No. 2.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 22, pages 143-156.

(excerpt)

1. Imperialism, socialism and liberation of the oppressed nations

Imperialism is the highest stage of development of capitalism. Capital in the advanced countries has outgrown the boundaries of national states. It has established monopoly in place of competition, thus creating all the objective prerequisites for the achievement of socialism. Hence, in Western Europe and in the United States of America, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of the capitalist governments, for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, is on the order of the day. Imperialism is forcing the masses into this struggle by sharpening class antagonisms to an immense degree, by worsening the conditions of the masses both economically—trusts and high cost of living, and politically—growth of militarism, frequent wars, increase of reaction, strengthening and extension of national oppression and colonial plunder. Victorious socialism must achieve complete democracy and, consequently, not only bring about the complete equality of nations, but also give effect to the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political secession. Socialist Parties which fail to prove by all their activities now, as

well as during the revolution and after its victory, that they will free the enslaved nations and establish relations with them on the basis of a free union and a free union is a lying phrase without right to secession—such parties would be committing treachery to socialism.

IMPERIALISM -THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM

January-June 1916

collected works, volume 22,

pages 252 - 253; 259; 260; 262 - 263; 265 - 266; 276; 282 - 283; 287;
297 - 298; 298 - 300; 302 - 304;

English edition

(excerpts)

V. Division of the world among capitalist associations

Certain bourgeois writers (now joined by Karl Kautsky, who has completely abandoned the Marxist position he had held, for example, in 1909) have expressed the opinion that international cartels, being one of the most striking expressions of the internationalisation of capital, give the hope of peace among nations under capitalism. Theoretically, this opinion is absolutely absurd, while in practice it is sophistry and a dishonest defence of the worst opportunism. International cartels show to what point capitalist monopolies have developed, and the object of the struggle between the various capitalist associations. This last circumstance is the most important; it alone shows us the historical-economic meaning of what is taking place; for the forms of the struggle may and do constantly change in accordance with varying, relatively specific and temporary causes, but the substance of the struggle, its class content, positively cannot change while classes exist. Naturally, it is in the interests of, for example, the German bourgeoisie, to whose side Kautsky has in effect gone over in his theoretical arguments (I shall deal with this later), to obscure the substance of the present economic struggle (the division of the world) and to emphasise now this and now another form of the struggle. Kautsky makes the same mistake. Of course, we have in mind

not only the German bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie all over the world. The capitalists divide the world, not out of any particular malice, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached forces them to adopt this method in order to obtain profits. And they divide it "in proportion to capital", "in proportion to strength", because there cannot be any other method of division under commodity production and capitalism. But strength varies with the degree of economic and political development. In order to understand what is taking place, it is necessary to know what questions are settled by the changes in strength. The question as to whether these changes are "purely" economic or non-economic (e.g., military) is a secondary one, which cannot in the least affect fundamental views on the latest epoch of capitalism. To substitute the question of the form of the struggle and agreements (today peaceful, tomorrow warlike, the next day warlike again) for the question of the substance of the struggle and agreements between capitalist associations is to sink to the role of a sophist.

The epoch of the latest stage of capitalism shows us that certain relations between capitalist associations grow up, based on the economic division of the world; while parallel to and in connection with it, certain relations grow up between political alliances, between states, on the basis of the territorial division of the world, of the struggle for colonies, of the "struggle for spheres of influence".

VI. Division of the world among the great powers

However strong the process of levelling the world, of levelling the economic and living conditions in different countries, may have been in the past decades as a result of the pressure of large-scale industry, exchange and finance capital, considerable differences still remain; and among the six countries mentioned we see, firstly, young capitalist countries (America, Germany,

Japan) whose progress has been extraordinarily rapid; secondly, countries with an old capitalist development (France and Great Britain), whose progress lately has been much slower than that of the previously mentioned countries, and thirdly, a country most backward economically (Russia), where modern capitalist imperialism is enmeshed, so to speak, in a particularly close network of pre-capitalist relations.

Alongside the colonial possessions of the Great Powers, we have placed the small colonies of the small states, which are, so to speak, the next objects of a possible and probable "redivision" of colonies. These small states mostly retain their colonies only because the big powers are torn by conflicting interests, friction, etc., which prevent them from coming to an agreement on the division of the spoils.

The principal feature of the latest stage of capitalism is the domination of monopolist associations of big employers. These monopolies are most firmly established when all the sources of raw materials are captured by one group, and we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist associations exert every effort to deprive their rivals of all opportunity of competing, to buy up, for example, iron fields, oilfields, etc. Colonial possession alone gives the monopolies complete guarantee against all contingencies in the struggle against competitors, including the case of the adversary wanting to be protected by a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism is developed, the more strongly the shortage of raw materials is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw materials throughout the whole world, the more desperate the struggle for the acquisition of colonies.

The non-economic superstructure which grows up on the basis of finance capital, its politics and its ideology, stimulates the striving for colonial conquest. "Finance capital does not want

liberty, it wants domination," as Hilferding very truly says. And a French bourgeois writer, developing and supplementing, as it were, the ideas of Cecil Rhodes quoted above, writes that social causes should be added to the economic causes of modern colonial policy: "Owing to the growing complexities of life and the difficulties which weigh not only on the masses of the workers, but also on the middle classes, 'impatience, irritation and hatred are accumulating in all the countries of the old civilisation and are becoming a menace to public order; the energy which is being hurled out of the definite class channel must be given employment abroad in order to avert an explosion at home'."

[*] Wahl, *La France aux colonies* quoted by Henri Russier, *Le Partage de l'Océanie*, Paris, 1905, p. 165. — Lenin

VII. Imperialism, as a special stage of capitalism

We must now try to sum up, to draw together the threads of what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying

concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

VIII. Parasitism and decay of capitalism

We now have to examine yet another significant aspect of imperialism to which most of the discussions on the subject usually attach insufficient importance. One of the shortcomings of the Marxist Hilferding is that on this point he has taken a step backward compared with the non-Marxist Hobson. I refer to parasitism, which is characteristic of imperialism.

As we have seen, the deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly. This is capitalist monopoly, i.e., monopoly which has grown out of capitalism and which exists in the general environment of capitalism, commodity production

and competition, in permanent and insoluble contradiction to this general environment. Nevertheless, like all monopoly, it inevitably engenders a tendency of stagnation and decay. Since monopoly prices are established, even temporarily, the motive cause of technical and, consequently, of all other progress disappears to a certain extent and, further, the economic possibility arises of deliberately retarding technical progress. For instance, in America, a certain Owens invented a machine which revolutionised the manufacture of bottles. The German bottle-manufacturing cartel purchased Owens's patent, but pigeon-holed it, refrained from utilising it. Certainly, monopoly under capitalism can never completely, and for a very long period of time, eliminate competition in the world market (and this, by the by, is one of the reasons why the theory of ultra-imperialism is so absurd). Certainly, the possibility of reducing the cost of production and increasing profits by introducing technical improvements operates in the direction of change. But the tendency to stagnation and decay, which is characteristic of monopoly, continues to operate, and in some branches of industry, in some countries, for certain periods of time, it gains the upper hand.

One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts I am describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid. As Hobson observes, emigration from Great Britain has been declining since 1884. In that year the number of emigrants was 242,000, while in 1900, the number was 169,000. Emigration from Germany reached the highest point between 1881 and 1890, with a total of 1,453,000 emigrants. In the course of the following two decades, it fell to 544,000 and to 341,000. On the other hand, there was an increase in the number of workers entering Germany from Austria, Italy, Russia and other countries.

According to the 1907 census, there were 1,342,294 foreigners in Germany, of whom 440,800 were industrial workers and 257,329 agricultural workers. [1] In France, the workers employed in the mining industry are, "in great part", foreigners: Poles, Italians and Spaniards. [2] In the United States, immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe are engaged in the most poorly paid jobs, while American workers provide the highest percentage of overseers or of the better-paid workers. [3] Imperialism has the tendency to create privileged sections also among the workers, and to detach them from the broad masses of the proletariat.

[1] Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Bd. 211. — Lenin

[2] Henger, Die Kapitalsanlage der Franzosen, Stuttgart, 1913. — Lenin

[3] Hourwich, Immigration and Labour, New York, 1913. — Lenin

IX. Critique of imperialism

The questions as to whether it is possible to reform the basis of imperialism, whether to go forward to the further intensification and deepening of the antagonisms which it engenders. or backward, towards allaying these antagonisms, are fundamental questions in the critique of imperialism. Since the specific political features of imperialism are reaction everywhere and increased national oppression due to the oppression of the financial oligarchy and the elimination of free competition, a petty-bourgeois-democratic opposition to imperialism arose at the beginning of the twentieth century in nearly all imperialist countries. Kautsky not only did not trouble to oppose, was not only unable to oppose this petty-bourgeois reformist opposition, which is really reactionary in its economic basis, but became merged with it in practice, and this is precisely where Kautsky and the broad international Kautskian trend deserted Marxism.

Kautsky's obscuring of the deepest contradictions of imperialism, which inevitably boils down to painting imperialism in bright colours, leaves its traces in this writer's criticism of the political features of imperialism. Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and of monopolies, which introduce everywhere the striving for domination, not for freedom. Whatever the political system, the result of these tendencies is everywhere reaction and an extreme intensification of antagonisms in this field. Particularly intensified become the yoke of national oppression and the striving for annexations, i.e., the violation of national independence (for annexation is nothing but the violation of the right of nations to self-determination). Hilferding rightly notes the connection between imperialism and the intensification of national oppression. "In the newly opened-up countries," he writes, "the capital imported into them intensifies antagonisms and excites against the intruders the constantly growing resistance of the peoples who are awakening to national consciousness; this resistance can easily develop into dangerous measures against foreign capital. The old social relations become completely revolutionised, the age-long agrarian isolation of 'nations without history' is destroyed and they are drawn into the capitalist whirlpool. Capitalism itself gradually provides the subjugated with the means and resources for their emancipation and they set out to achieve the goal which once seemed highest to the European nations: the creation of a united national state as a means to economic and cultural freedom. This movement for national independence threatens European capital in its most valuable and most promising fields of exploitation, and European capital can maintain its domination only by continually increasing its military forces."

[1]

To this must be added that it is not only in newly opened-up countries, but also in the old, that imperialism is leading to

annexation, to increased national oppression, and, consequently, also to increasing resistance. While objecting to the intensification of political reaction by imperialism, Kautsky leaves in the shade a question that has become particularly urgent, viz., the impossibility of unity with the opportunists in the epoch of imperialism.

[1] Finance Capital, p. 487. — Lenin

X. The place of imperialism in history

We have seen that in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order. We must take special note of the four principal types of monopoly, or principal manifestations of monopoly capitalism, which are characteristic of the epoch we are examining.

Firstly, monopoly arose out of the concentration of production at a very high stage. This refers to the monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates, and trusts. We have seen the important part these play in present-day economic life. At the beginning of the twentieth century, monopolies had acquired complete supremacy in the advanced countries, and although the first steps towards the formation of the cartels were taken by countries enjoying the protection of high tariffs (Germany, America), Great Britain, with her system of free trade, revealed the same basic phenomenon, only a little later, namely, the birth of monopoly out of the concentration of production.

Secondly, monopolies have stimulated the seizure of the most important sources of raw materials, especially for the basic and most highly cartelised industries in capitalist society: the coal and iron industries. The monopoly of the most important sources

of raw materials has enormously increased the power of big capital and has sharpened the antagonism between cartelised and non-cartelised industry.

Thirdly, monopoly has sprung from the banks. The banks have developed from modest middleman enterprises into the monopolists of finance capital. Some three to five of the biggest banks in each of the foremost capitalist countries have achieved the “personal link-up” between industrial and bank capital, and have concentrated in their hands the control of thousands upon thousands of millions which form the greater part of the capital and income of entire countries. A financial oligarchy, which throws a close network of dependence relationships over all the economic and political institutions of present-day bourgeois society without exception—such is the most striking manifestation of this monopoly.

Fourthly, monopoly has grown out of colonial policy. To the numerous “old” motives of colonial policy, finance capital has added the struggle for the sources of raw materials, for the export of capital, for spheres of influence, i.e., for spheres for profitable deals, concessions, monopoly profits and so on, economic territory in general. When the colonies of the European powers, for instance, comprised only one-tenth of the territory of Africa (as was the case in 1876), colonial policy was able to develop—by methods other than those of monopoly—by the “free grabbing” of territories, so to speak. But when nine-tenths of Africa had been seized (by 1900), when the whole world had been divided up, there was inevitably ushered in the era of monopoly possession of colonies and, consequently, of particularly intense struggle for the division and the redivision of the world.

The extent to which monopolist capital has intensified all the contradictions of capitalism is generally known. It is sufficient to

mention the high cost of living and the tyranny of the cartels. This intensification of contradictions constitutes the most powerful driving force of the transitional period of history, which began from the time of the final victory of world finance capital.

Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not for freedom, the exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations—all these have given birth to those distinctive characteristics of imperialism which compel us to define it as parasitic or decaying capitalism. More and more prominently there emerges, as one of the tendencies of imperialism, the creation of the “rentier state”, the usurer state, in which the bourgeoisie to an ever-increasing degree lives on the proceeds of capital exports and by “clipping coupons”. It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a greater or lesser degree, now one and now another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before; but this growth is not only becoming more and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (Britain).

From all that has been said in this book on the economic essence of imperialism, it follows that we must define it as capitalism in transition, or, more precisely, as moribund capitalism. It is very instructive in this respect to note that bourgeois economists, in describing modern capitalism, frequently employ catchwords and phrases like “interlocking”, “absence of isolation”, etc.; “in conformity with their functions and course of development”, banks are “not purely private business enterprises: they are more and more outgrowing the sphere of purely private business

regulation". And this very Riesser, whose words I have just quoted, declares with all seriousness that the "prophecy" of the Marxists concerning "socialisation" has "not come true"!

What then does this catchword "interlocking" express? It merely expresses the most striking feature of the process going on before our eyes. It shows that the observer counts the separate trees but cannot see the wood. It slavishly copies the superficial, the fortuitous, the chaotic. It reveals the observer as one who is overwhelmed by the mass of raw material and is utterly incapable of appreciating its meaning and importance. Ownership of shares, the relations between owners of private property "interlock in a haphazard way". But underlying this interlocking, its very base, are the changing social relations of production. When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and, on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan among tens and hundreds of millions of consumers (the marketing of oil in America and Germany by the American oil trust)—then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere "interlocking", that private economic and private property relations constitute a shell which no longer fits its contents, a shell which must inevitably decay if its removal is artificially delayed, a shell which may remain in a state of decay for a fairly long period (if, at the worst, the cure of the

opportunistic abscess is protracted), but which will inevitably be removed.

THE DISCUSSION ON SELF-DETERMINATION SUMMED UP

July 1916

Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata No. 1.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 22, pages 333; 354 - 358

(excerpts)

4. For or against annexations?

If we do not want to betray socialism, we must support every revolt against our chief enemy, the bourgeoisie of the big states, provided it is not the revolt of a reactionary class. By refusing to support the revolt of annexed regions we become, objectively, annexationists. It is precisely in the “era of imperialism”, which is the era of nascent social revolution, that the proletariat will today give especially vigorous support to any revolt of the annexed regions so that tomorrow, or simultaneously, it may attack the bourgeoisie of the “great” power that is weakened by the revolt.

10. The Irish rebellion of 1916

The war proved to be an epoch of crisis for the West-European nations, and for imperialism as a whole. Every crisis discards the conventionalities, tears away the outer wrappings, sweeps away the obsolete and reveals the underlying springs and forces. What has it revealed from the standpoint of the movement of oppressed nations! In the colonies there have been a number of attempts at rebellion, which the oppressor nations, naturally did all they could to hide by means of a military censorship.

Whoever expects a “pure” social revolution will never live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these there were masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. But objectively, the mass movement was breaking the back of tsarism and paving the way for democracy; for this reason, the class-conscious workers led it.

The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for difficult reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately “purge” itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

On the other hand, the very fact that revolts do break out at different times, in different places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement; but it is only in premature, individual, sporadic and therefore

unsuccessful, revolutionary movements that the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, and get to know their real leaders, the socialist proletarians, and in this way prepare for the general onslaught, just as certain strikes, demonstrations, local and national, mutinies in the army, outbreaks among the peasantry, etc., prepared the way for the general onslaught in 1905.

A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM

August-October 1916

Zvezda Nos. 1 and 2, 1924

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 28 - 76.

(excerpts)

2. Our understanding of the new era

The heading is Kievsky's. He constantly speaks of a "new era", but here, too, unfortunately his arguments are erroneous.

Our Party resolutions speak of the present war as stemming from the general conditions of the imperialist era. We give a correct Marxist definition of the relation between the "era" and the "present war": Marxism requires a concrete assessment of each separate war. To understand why an imperialist war, i.e., a war thoroughly reactionary and anti-democratic in its political implications, could, and inevitably did, break out between the Great Powers, many of whom stood at the head of the struggle for democracy in 1789–1871—to understand this we must understand the general conditions of the imperialist era, i.e., the transformation of capitalism in the advanced countries into imperialism. Kievsky has flagrantly distorted the relation between the "era" and the "present war". In his reasoning, to consider the matter concretely means to examine the "era". That is precisely where he is wrong.

The era 1789–1871 was of special significance for Europe. That is irrefutable. We cannot understand a single national liberation war, and such wars were especially typical of that period, unless we understand the general conditions of the period. Does that mean that all wars of that period were national liberation wars?

Certainly not. To hold that view is to reduce the whole thing to an absurdity and apply a ridiculous stereotype in place of a concrete analysis of each separate war. There were also colonial wars in 1789–1871, and wars between reactionary empires that oppressed many nations.

Advanced European (and American) capitalism has entered a new era of imperialism. Does it follow from that that only imperialist wars are now possible? Any such contention would be absurd. It would reveal inability to distinguish a given concrete phenomenon from the sum total of variegated phenomena possible in a given era. An era is called an era precisely because it encompasses the sum total of variegated phenomena and wars, typical and untypical, big and small, some peculiar to advanced countries, others to backward countries. To brush aside these concrete questions by resorting to general phrases about the “era”, as Kievsky does, is to abuse the very concept “era”. And to prove that, we shall cite one example out of many. But first it should be noted that one group of Lefts, namely, the German Internationale group [12] , has advanced this manifestly erroneous proposition in §5 of its theses, published in No. 3 of the Bulletin of the Berne Executive Committee (February 29, 1916): “National wars are no longer possible in the era of this unbridled imperialism.” We analysed that statement in *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata* [13]. Here we need merely note that though everyone who has followed the internationalist movement is long acquainted with this theoretical proposition (we opposed it way back in the spring of 1916 at the extended meeting of the Berne Executive Committee), not a single group has repeated or accepted it. And there is not a single word in the spirit of this or any similar proposition in Kievsky’s article, written in August 1916. That should be noted, and for the following reason: if this or a similar theoretical proposition were advanced, then we could speak of theoretical

divergencies. But since no such proposition has been advanced, we are constrained to say: what we have is not a different interpretation of the concept “era”, not a theoretical divergency, but merely a carelessly uttered phrase, merely abuse of the word “era”. Here is an example. Kievsky starts his article by asking: “Is not this (self-determination) the same as the right to receive free of charge 10,000 acres of land on Mars? The question can be answered only in the most concrete manner, only in context with the nature of the present era. The right of nations to self-determination is one thing in the era of the formation of national states, as the best form of developing the productive forces at their then existing level, but it is quite another thing now that this form, the national state, fetters the development of the productive forces. A vast distance separates the era of the establishment of capitalism and the national state from the era of the collapse of the national state and the eve of the collapse of capitalism itself. To discuss things in ‘general’, out of context with time and space, does not befit a Marxist.”

3. What is economic analysis?

Economically, imperialism (or the “era” of finance capital—it is not a matter of words) is the highest stage in the development of capitalism, one in which production has assumed such big, immense proportions that free competition gives way to monopoly. That is the economic essence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in trusts, syndicates, etc., in the omnipotence of the giant banks, in the buying up of raw material sources, etc., in the concentration of banking capital, etc. Everything hinges on economic monopoly. The political superstructure of this new economy, of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change from democracy to political reaction. Democracy corresponds to free competition. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly.

"Finance capital strives for domination, not freedom," Rudolf Hilferding rightly remarks in his *Finance Capital*. It is fundamentally wrong, un-Marxist and unscientific, to single out "foreign policy" from policy in general, let alone counterpose foreign policy to home policy. Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction. In this sense imperialism is indisputably the "negation" of democracy in general, of all democracy, and not just of one of its demands, national self-determination. Being a "negation" of democracy in general, imperialism is also a "negation" of democracy in the national question (i.e., national self-determination): it seeks to violate democracy. The achievement of democracy is, in the same sense, and to the same degree, harder under imperialism (compared with pre-monopoly capitalism), as the achievement of a republic, a militia, popular election of officials, etc. There can be no talk of democracy being "economically" unachievable.

5. Monism and dualism

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. Why? Because capitalism develops unevenly, and objective reality gives us highly developed capitalist nations side by side with a number of economically slightly developed, or totally undeveloped, nations. P. Kievsky has absolutely failed to analyse the objective conditions of social revolution from the standpoint of the economic maturity of various countries. His reproach that we "invent" instances in which to apply self-determination is therefore an attempt to lay the blame at the wrong door.

THE MILITARY PROGRAMME OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

September 1916

Jugend-Internationale Nos. 9 and 10, September and October
1917

collected works, volume 23, pp. 77-87.

(excerpts)

I

Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be socialists, be opposed to all war. Firstly, socialists have never been, nor can they ever be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the imperialist "Great" Powers has become thoroughly reactionary, and the war this bourgeoisie is now waging we regard as a reactionary, slave-owners' and criminal war. But what about a war against this bourgeoisie? A war, for instance, waged by peoples oppressed by and dependent upon this bourgeoisie, or by colonial peoples, for liberation? In Section 5 of the Internationale group these we read: "National wars are no longer possible in the era of this unbridled imperialism." That is obviously wrong. The history of the 20th century, this century of "unbridled imperialism," is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the world's peoples, with our habitual, despicable European chauvinism, call "colonial wars" are often national wars, or national rebellions of these oppressed peoples. One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates capitalist development in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact, and from it inevitably follows that imperialism must often give rise to national wars. Junius, who defends the

above-quoted "theses" in her pamphlet, says that in the imperialist era every national war against an imperialist Great Power leads to intervention of a rival imperialist Great Power. Every national war is thus turned into an imperialist war. But that argument is wrong, too. This can happen but does not always happen. Many colonial wars between 1900 and 1914 did not follow that course. And it would be simply ridiculous to declare, for instance, that after the present war, if it ends in the utter exhaustion of all the belligerents, "there can be no" national, progress, revolutionary wars "of any kind", wages, say, by China in alliance with India, Persia, Siam, etc., against the Great Powers. To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is "impossible" for them to wage war against "our" nations! Secondly, civil war is just as much a war as any other. He who accepts the class struggle cannot fail to accept civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions inevitable, continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. That has been confirmed by every great revolution. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, is to fall into extreme opportunism and renounce the socialist revolution.

Thirdly, the victory of socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all wars in general. On the contrary, it presupposes wars. The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-

bourgeois. This is bound to create not only friction, but a direct attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the socialist state's victorious proletariat. In such cases, a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky of September 12, 1882 [14], he clearly stated that it was possible for already victorious socialism to wage "defensive wars". What he had in mind was defense of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not merely in one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong—and utterly unrevolutionary—for us to evade or gloss over the most important things: crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie—the most difficult task, and one demanding the greatest amount of fighting, in the transition to socialism. The "social" parsons and opportunists are always ready to build dreams of future peaceful socialism. But the very thing that distinguishes them from revolutionary Social-Democrats is that they refuse to think about and reflect on the fierce class struggle and class wars needed to achieve that beautiful future. We must not allow ourselves to be led astray by words. The term "defense of the fatherland", for instance, is hateful to many because both avowed opportunists and Kautskyites use it to cover up and gloss over the bourgeois lie about the present predatory war. This is a fact. But it does not follow that we must no longer see through to the meaning of political slogans. To accept "defense of the fatherland" in the present war is no more nor less than to accept it as a "just" war, a war in the interests of the proletariat—no more nor less, we repeat, because invasions may occur in any war. It would be sheer folly to repudiate "defense of the fatherland" on the part of

oppressed nations in their wars against the imperialist Great Powers, or on the part of a victorious proletariat in its war against some Galliffet of a bourgeois state. Theoretically, it would be absolutely wrong to forget that every war is but the continuation of policy by other means. The present imperialist war is the continuation of the imperialist policies of two groups of Great Powers, and these policies were engendered and fostered by the sum total of the relationships of the imperialist era. But this very era must also necessarily engender and foster policies of struggle against national oppression and of proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie and, consequently, also the possibility and inevitability; first, of revolutionary national rebellions and wars; second, of proletarian wars and rebellions against the bourgeoisie; and, third, of a combination of both kinds of revolutionary war, etc.

II

To this must be added the following general consideration. An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot, unless we have become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, forget that we are living in a class society from which there is no way out, nor can there be, save through the class struggle. In every class society, whether based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, wage-labor, the oppressor class is always armed. Not only the modern standing army, but even the modern militia—and even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, Switzerland, for instance—represent the bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat. That is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. Suffice it to point to the use of troops against strikers in all capitalist countries. A bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society. And in face of this

fact, revolutionary Social-Democrats are urged to “demand” “disarmament”! That is tantamount of complete abandonment of the class-struggle point of view, to renunciation of all thought of revolution. Our slogan must be arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics possible for a revolutionary class, tactics that follow logically from, and are dictated by, the whole objective development of capitalist militarism. Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before.

The whole of social life is now being militarized. Imperialism is a fierce struggle of the Great Powers for the division and redivision of the world. It is therefore bound to lead to further militarization in all countries, even in neutral and small ones. How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only by demanding disarmament? The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept that shameful role. They will say to their sons: “You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie.” If we are to shun such propaganda, precisely such propaganda, in connection with the present war, then we had better stop using fine words about international revolutionary Social-Democracy, the socialist revolution and war against war.

III

The disarmament advocates object to the “armed nation” clause in the programme also because it more easily leads, they allege, to concessions to opportunism. The cardinal point, namely, the relation of disarmament to the class struggle and to the social revolution, we have examined above. We shall now examine the relation between the disarmament demand and opportunism. One of the chief reasons why it is unacceptable is precisely that, together with the illusions it creates, it inevitably weakens and devitalizes our struggle against opportunism. Undoubtedly, this struggle is the main, immediate question now confusing the International. Struggle against imperialism that is not closely linked with the struggle against opportunism is either an empty phrase or a fraud. One of the main defects of Zimmerwald and Kienthal [15] —on the main reasons why these embryos of the Third International may possibly end in a fiasco—is that the question of fighting opportunism was not even raised openly, let alone solved in the sense of proclaiming the need to break with the opportunists.

Avowed opportunism is openly and directly opposed to revolution and to incipient revolutionary movements and outbursts. It is in direct alliance with the governments, varied as the forms of this alliance may be—from accepting ministerial posts to participation in the war industries committees (in Russia) [15]. The masked opportunists, the Kautskyites, are much more harmful and dangerous to the labor movement, because they hide their advocacy of alliance with the former under a cloak of plausible, pseudo- “Marxist” catchwords and pacifist slogans. The fight against both these forms of prevailing opportunism must be conducted in all fields of proletarian politics: parliament, the trade unions, strikes, the armed forces, etc. The main distinguishing feature of both these forms of

prevailing opportunism is the concrete question of the connection between the present war and revolution, and the other concrete questions of revolution, and the other concrete questions of revolution, are hushed up, concealed, or treated with an eye to police prohibitions. And this despite the fact that before the war the connection between this impending war and the proletarian revolution was emphasized innumerable times, both unofficially and officially in the Basle Manifesto [16]. The main defect of the disarmament demand is its evasion of all the concrete questions of revolution. Or do the advocates of disarmament stand for an altogether new kind of revolution, unarmed revolution? To proceed. We are by no means opposed to the fight for reforms. And we do not wish to ignore the sad possibility—if the worst comes to the worst—of mankind going through a second imperialist war, if revolution does not come out of the present war, in spite of our efforts. We favor a programme of reforms directed also against the opportunists. They would be only too glad if we left the struggle for reforms entirely to them and sought escape from sad reality in a nebulous “disarmament” fantasy. “Disarmament” means simply running away from unpleasant reality, not fighting it. In such a programme, we would say something like this: “To accept the defense of the fatherland slogan in the 1914–16 imperialist war is to corrupt the labor movement with the aid of a bourgeois lie.” Such a concrete reply to a concrete question would be more correct theoretically, much more useful to the proletariat and more unbearable to the opportunists, than the disarmament demand and repudiation of “all and any” defense of the fatherland. And we would add: “The bourgeoisie of all the imperialist Great Powers—England, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Japan, the United States—has become so reactionary and so intent on world domination, that any war waged by the bourgeoisie of those countries is bound to be reactionary. The proletariat must not only oppose all such

wars but must also wish for the defeat of its 'own' government in such wars and utilise its defeat for revolutionary insurrection, if an insurrection to prevent the war proves unsuccessful."

THE "DISARMAMENT" SLOGAN

October 1916

Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata No. 2, December 1916.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 94-104.

(excerpt)

If the present war arouses among the reactionary Christian socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, only horror and fright, only aversion to all use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc., then we must say: Capitalist society is and has always been horror without end. And if this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society an end in horror, we have no reason to fall into despair. But the disarmament "demand", or more correctly, the dream of disarmament, is, objectively, nothing but an expression of despair at a time when, as everyone can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war—civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie. A lifeless theory, some might say, but we would remind them of two world-historical facts: the role of the trusts and the employment of women in industry, on the one hand, and the Paris Commune of 1871 and the December 1905 uprising in Russia, on the other. The bourgeoisie makes it its business to promote trusts, drive women and children into the factories, subject them to corruption and suffering, condemn them to extreme poverty. We do not "demand" such development, we do not "support" it. We fight it. But how do we fight? We explain that trusts and the employment of women in industry are progressive. We do not want a return to the handicraft system, pre-monopoly capitalism, domestic drudgery for women. Forward through the trusts, etc., and beyond them to socialism! That argument takes account of objective development and, with the necessary changes, applies also to the

present militarisation of the population. Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarises the youth as well as the adults; tomorrow it may begin militarising the women. Our attitude should be: All the better! Full speed ahead! For the faster we move, the nearer shall we be to the armed uprising against capitalism. How can Social-Democrats give way to fear of the militarisation of the youth, etc., if they have not forgotten the example of the Paris Commune? This is not a "lifeless theory" or a dream. It is a fact. And it would be a sorry state of affairs indeed if, all the economic and political facts notwithstanding, Social-Democrats began to doubt that the imperialist era and imperialist wars must inevitably bring about a repetition of such facts.

IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM

October 1916

Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata No. 2, December 1916.

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 105-120.

(excerpts)

Is there any connection between imperialism and the monstrous and disgusting victory opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labour movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our era and of the present war [*], and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyse this fundamental question.

We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the quintessence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of raw material by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic)

partition of the world by the international cartels has begun. There are already over one hundred such international cartels, which command the entire world market and divide it “amicably” among themselves—until war redivides it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is completed. Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898–1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of every monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of rentiers, capitalists who live by “clipping coupons”. In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to 100,000 or 150,000 million francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, “finance capital strives for domination, not freedom”. Political reaction all along the line is

a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of “Great” Powers, increasingly transforms the “civilised” world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi [18]. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is moribund capitalism, capitalism in transition to socialism: monopoly, which grows out of capitalism, is already dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous socialisation of labour by imperialism (what its apologists—the bourgeois economists—call “interlocking”) produces the same result.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a “phase of capitalism” and defines it as a policy “preferred” by finance capital, a tendency of “industrial” countries to annex “agrarian” countries. [* *] Kautsky’s definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule not of industrial capital, but of finance capital, the striving to annex not agrarian countries, particularly, but every kind of country. Kautsky divorces imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament”, “ultra-imperialism” and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and

significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the most profound contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social-chauvinists and opportunists.

Notes

[*] The reference is to the First World War of 1914–18. p.5 — Lenin

[* *] “Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger agrarian territories irrespective of the nations that inhabit them” (Kautsky in *Die Neue Zeit*; September 11, 1914). —Lenin

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, or of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—measured on a world scale, this is a minor point—the “proletariat” of course “will be” united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will “inevitably” be victorious within it. But that is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, you are fawning on the opportunists, who are alien to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and unless the labour movement rids itself of them, it will remain a bourgeois labour movement. By advocating “unity” with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., you are, objectively, defending the enslavement of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labour movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is absolutely inevitable, only it is

moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, against you, it will be a victory over you.

Neither we nor anyone else can calculate precisely what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the “defenders of the fatherland” in the imperialist war represent only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain socialists to go down lower and deeper, to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices. The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilise the experience of the war to expose, not conceal, the utter vileness of national-liberal labour politics.

THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

August - September 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381-492

(excerpt: Chapter IV: Supplementary Explanations by Engels)

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word "planlessness" (Planlosigkeit), used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism,

Engels wrote:

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolize, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." (Neue Zeit, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p.8)

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly capitalism. The latter must be emphasized because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is no longer capitalism but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under capitalism - at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt.

The “proximity” of such capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility, and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE RENEGADE KAUTSKY

October—November 1918.

Collected Works, Volume 28, 1974, pages 227-325

(excerpts)

Secondly, it is obligatory for a Marxist to count on a European revolution if A Revolutionary Situation Exists. It Is the ABC Of Marxism That the tactics of the socialist proletariat cannot be the same both when there is a revolutionary situation and when there is no revolutionary situation. If Kautsky had put this question, which is obligatory for a Marxist, he would have seen that the answer was absolutely against him. Long before the war, all Marxists, all socialists were agreed that a European war would create a revolutionary situation. Kautsky himself, before he became a renegade, clearly and definitely recognised this-in 1902 (in his Social Revolution) and in 1909 (in his Road to Power). It was also admitted in the name of the entire Second International in the Basle Manifesto. No wonder the social-'chauvinists and Kautsky supporters (the "Centrists", i.e., those who waver between the revolutionaries and the opportunists) of all countries shun like the plague the declarations of the Basle Manifesto on this score! So, the expectation of a revolutionary situation in Europe was not an infatuation of the Bolsheviks, but the general opinion of all Marxists. When Kautsky tries to escape from this indisputable truth using such phrases as the Bolsheviks "always believed in the omnipotence of violence and will", he simply utters a sonorous and empty phrase to cover up his evasion, a shameful evasion, to put the question of a revolutionary situation. To proceed. Has a revolutionary situation actually come or not? Kautsky proved unable to put this question either. The economic facts provide an answer: the

famine and ruin created everywhere by the war imply a revolutionary situation. The political facts also provide an answer: ever since 1915 a splitting process has been evident in all countries within the old and decayed socialist parties, a process of departure of the mass of the proletariat from the social-chauvinist leaders to the left, to revolutionary ideas and sentiments, to revolutionary leaders. Only a person who dreads revolution and betrays it could have failed to see these facts on August 5, 1918, when Kautsky was writing his pamphlet. And now, at the end of October 1918, the revolution is growing in a number of European countries and growing under everybody's eyes and very rapidly at that. Kautsky the "revolutionary", who still wants to be regarded as a Marxist, has proved to be a short-sighted philistine, who, like those philistines of 1847 whom Marx ridiculed, failed to see the approaching revolution! Now to the third point. Thirdly, what should be the specific features of revolutionary tactics when there is a revolutionary situation in Europe? Having become a renegade, Kautsky feared to put this question, which is obligatory for a Marxist. Kautsky argues like a typical petty bourgeois, a philistine, or like an ignorant peasant: has a "general European revolution" begun or not? If it has, then he too is prepared to become a revolutionary! But then, mark you, every scoundrel (like the scoundrels who now sometimes attach themselves to the victorious Bolsheviks) would proclaim himself a revolutionary! If it has not, then Kautsky will turn his back on revolution! Kautsky does not display a shade of understanding of the truth that a revolutionary Marxist differs from the philistine and petty bourgeois by his ability to preach to the uneducated masses that the maturing revolution is necessary, to prove that it is inevitable, to explain its benefits to the people, and to prepare the proletariat and all the working and exploited people for it.

The Bolsheviks' tactics were correct; they were the only internationalist tactics, because they were based, not on the cowardly fear of a world revolution, not on a philistine "lack of faith" in it, not on the narrow nationalist desire to protect one's "own" fatherland (the fatherland of one's own bourgeoisie), while not "giving a damn" about all the rest, but on a correct (and, before the war and before the apostasy of the social-chauvinists and social-pacifists, a universally accepted) estimation of the revolutionary situation in Europe. These tactics were the only internationalist tactics, because they did the utmost possible in one country for the development, support and awakening of the revolution in all countries. These tactics have been justified by their enormous success, for Bolshevism (not by any means because of the merits of the Russian Bolsheviks, but because of the most profound sympathy of the people everywhere for tactics that are revolutionary in practice) has become world Bolshevism, has produced an idea, a theory, a programme and tactics which differ concretely and in practice from those of social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. Bolshevism has given a coup de grace to the old, decayed International of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, Renaudels and Longuets, Hendersons and MacDonalds, who from now on will be treading on each other's feet, dreaming about "unity" and trying to revive a corpse. Bolshevism has created the ideological and tactical foundations of a Third International, of a really proletarian and Communist International, which will take into consideration both the gains of the tranquil epoch and the experience of the epoch of revolutions, which has begun.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

16 December 1919

Collected Works, Volume 30, pages 253-275

Unless the revolutionary section of the proletariat is thoroughly prepared in every way for the expulsion and suppression of opportunism it is useless even thinking about the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the lesson of the Russian revolution which should be taken to heart by the leaders of the “independent” German Social-Democrats,[1] French socialists, and so forth, who now want to evade the issue by means of verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To continue. The Bolsheviks had behind them not only the majority of the proletariat, not only the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat which had been steeled in the long and persevering struggle against opportunism; they had, if it is permissible to use a military term, a powerful “striking force” in the metropolitan cities. An overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment—this “law” of military success is also the law of political success, especially in that fierce, seething class war which is called revolution. Capitals, or, in general, big commercial and industrial centres (here in Russia the two coincided, but they do not everywhere coincide), to a considerable degree decide the political fate of a nation, provided, of course, the centres are supported by sufficient local, rural forces, even if that support does not come immediately. In the two chief cities, in the two principal commercial and industrial centres of Russia, the Bolsheviks had an overwhelming, decisive superiority of forces. Here our forces were nearly four times as great as those of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We had here more than the Socialist Revolutionaries and Cadets put together. Moreover, our

adversaries were split up, for the “coalition” of the Cadets with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (in Petrograd and Moscow the Mensheviks polled only 3 per cent of the votes) was utterly discredited among the working people. Real unity between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the Cadets against us was quite out of the question at that time.[It is interesting to note that the above figures also reveal the unity and solidarity of the party of the proletariat and the extremely fragmented state of the parties of the petty bourgeoisie and of the bourgeoisie.] It will be remembered that in November 1917, even the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were a hundred times nearer to the idea of a bloc with the Cadets than the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik workers and peasants, even those leaders thought (and bargained with us) about a bloc with the Bolsheviks without the Cadets! We were certain of winning Petrograd and Moscow in October-November 1917, for we had an overwhelming superiority of forces and the most thorough political preparation, insofar as concerns both the assembly, concentration, training, testing and battle-hardening of the Bolshevik “armies”, and the disintegration, exhaustion, disunity and demoralisation of the “enemy’s” “armies”. And being certain of winning the two metropolitan cities, the two centres of the capitalist state machine (economic and political), by a swift, decisive blow, we, in spite of the furious resistance of the bureaucracy and intelligentsia, despite sabotage, and so forth, were able with the aid of the central apparatus of state power to prove by deeds to the non-proletarian working people that the proletariat was their only reliable ally, friend and leader.

On the basis of the returns of the Constituent Assembly elections we have studied the three conditions which determined the victory of Bolshevism: (1) an overwhelming majority among the proletariat; (2) almost half of the armed forces; (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the

decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre. But these conditions could have ensured only a very short-lived and unstable victory had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the non-proletarian working masses, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties. That is the main thing. And the chief reason why the "socialists" (read: petty-bourgeois democrats) of the Second International fail to understand the dictatorship of the proletariat is that they fail to understand that state power in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can and must become an instrument for winning to the side of the proletariat the non-proletarian working masses, an instrument for winning those masses from the bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois parties. Filled with petty-bourgeois prejudices, forgetting the most important thing in the teachings of Marx about the state, the "socialists" of the Second International regard state power as something holy, as an idol, or as the result of formal voting, the absolute of "consistent democracy" (or whatever else they call this nonsense). They fail to see that state power is simply an instrument which different classes can and must use (and know how to use) for their class aims. The bourgeoisie has used state power as an instrument of the capitalist class against the proletariat, against all the working people. That has been the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics. Only the betrayers of Marxism have "forgotten" this. The proletariat must (after mustering sufficiently strong political and military "striking forces") overthrow the bourgeoisie, take state power from it in order to use that instrument for its class aims. What are the class aims of the-proletariat? Suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie; Neutralise the peasantry and, if possible, win them over at any rate the majority of the labouring, non-exploiting section to the side of the proletariat; Organise large-scale machine production, using factories, and means of

production in general, expropriated from the bourgeoisie; Organise socialism on the ruins of capitalism.

7. In all capitalist countries, besides the proletariat, or that part of the proletariat which is conscious of its revolutionary aims and is capable of fighting to achieve them, there are numerous politically immature proletarian, semi-proletarian, semi-petty-bourgeois strata which follow the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy (including the "socialists" of the Second International) because they have been deceived, have no confidence in their own strength, or in the strength of the proletariat, are unaware of the possibility of having their urgent needs satisfied by means of the expropriation of the exploiters. These strata of the working and exploited people provide the vanguard of the proletariat with allies and give it a stable majority of the population; but the proletariat can win these allies only with the aid of an instrument like state power, that is to say, only after it has overthrown the bourgeoisie and has destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus.

8. The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism. Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (or when the class-conscious and really revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and, after that, of winning to its side numerous allies from a mass of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeoisie who never declare in advance in favour of the rule of the proletariat, who do not understand the conditions and

aims of that rule, and only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the proletarian dictatorship is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9.Finally, in every capitalist country there are always very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie which inevitably vacillate between capital and labour. To achieve victory, the proletariat must, first, choose the right moment for its decisive assault on the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the disunity between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their alliance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat must, after its victory, utilise this vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie in such a way as to neutralise them, prevent their siding with the exploiters; it must be able to hold on for some time in spite of this vacillation, and so on, and so forth.

10.One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working-class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 if before that, in 1903-17, it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

"LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM - AN INFANTILE DISORDER

April—May 1920

Collected Works, Volume 31, p. 17—118

(excerpts)

II. An essential condition of the Bolsheviks' success

It is, I think, almost universally realised at present that the Bolsheviks could not have retained power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, without the most rigorous and truly iron discipline in our Party, or without the fullest and unreserved support from the entire mass of the working class, that is, from all thinking, honest, devoted and influential elements in it, capable of leading the backward strata or carrying the latter along with them.

The dictatorship of the proletariat means a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by their overthrow (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also in the force of habit, in the strength of small-scale production. Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. All these reasons make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, and a single and inflexible will.

I repeat: the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are

incapable of thinking or have had no occasion to give thought to the matter that absolute centralisation and rigorous discipline of the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often dwelt on. However, not nearly enough thought is given to what it means, and under what conditions it is possible. Would it not be better if the salutations addressed to the Soviets and the Bolsheviks were more frequently accompanied by a profound analysis of the reasons why the Bolsheviks have been able to build up the discipline needed by the revolutionary proletariat?

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

The first questions to arise are: how is the discipline of the proletariat's revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people. Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, from their own experience, that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform

the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end up in phrase mongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

XIII. No compromises?

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" [19], from the German Social-Democratic newspaper Volksstaat, 1874, No. 73, given in the Russian translation of Articles, 1871-1875, Petrograd, 1919, pp. 52-53).

In the same article, Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the "unquestionable merit" of the latter (who, like Guesde, was one of the most prominent leaders of international socialism until their betrayal of socialism in August 1914). But Engels does not fail to give a detailed analysis of an obvious error. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even very respectable age and great experience, it seems extremely "dangerous", incomprehensible and wrong to "permit compromises". Many sophists (being unusually or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If the Bolsheviks are permitted a certain compromise, why should we not be permitted any kind of compromise?" However, proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually assimilate in admirable fashion the very profound truth (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers have had to return to work either without having

achieved anything or else agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—as a result of the conditions of the mass struggle and the acute intensification of class antagonisms he lives among—sees the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, starvation and exhaustion)—a compromise which in no way minimizes the revolutionary devotion and readiness to carry on the struggle on the part of the workers who have agreed to such a compromise—and, on the other hand, a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to objective causes their self-interest (strike-breakers also enter into "compromises"!); their cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery from the capitalists. (The history of the British labour movement provides a very large number of instances of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, almost all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Naturally, there are individual cases of exceptional difficulty and complexity, when the greatest efforts are necessary for a proper assessment of the actual character of this or that "compromise", just as there are cases of homicide when it is by no means easy to establish whether the homicide was fully justified and even necessary (as, for example, legitimate self-defense), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed perfidious plan. Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complex relations—national and international—between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the question of a legitimate "compromise" in a strike or a treacherous "compromise" by a strike-breaker, treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule ("No

compromises!") to suit all cases. One must use one's own brains and be able to find one's bearings in each particular instance. It is, in fact, one of the functions of a party organisation and of party leaders worthy of the name, to acquire, through the prolonged, persistent, variegated and comprehensive efforts of all thinking representatives of a given class, [*] the knowledge, experience and—in addition to knowledge and experience—the political flair necessary for the speedy and correct solution of complex political problems.

Naive and quite inexperienced people imagine that the permissibility of compromise in general is sufficient to obliterate any distinction between opportunism, against which we are waging, and must wage, an unrelenting struggle, and revolutionary Marxism., or communism. But if such people do not yet know that in nature and in society all distinctions are fluid and up to a certain point conventional, nothing can help them but lengthy training, education, enlightenment, and political and everyday experience. In the practical questions that arise in the politics of any particular or specific historical moment, it is important to single out those which display the principal type of intolerable and treacherous compromises, such as embody an opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the 1914-18 imperialist war between two groups of equally predatory countries, social-chauvinism was the principal and fundamental type of opportunism, i.e., support of "defence of country", which in such a war was really equivalent to defence of the predatory interests of one's "own" bourgeoisie. After the war, defence of the robber League of Nations, defence of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and defence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarianism against "Soviet power" became the principal

manifestations of those intolerable and treacherous compromises, whose sum total constituted an opportunism fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

note:

[*] Within every class, even in the conditions prevailing in the most enlightened countries, even within the most advanced class, and even when the circumstances of the moment have aroused all its spiritual forces to an exceptional degree, there always are—and inevitably will be as long as classes exist, as long as a classless society has not fully consolidated itself, and has not developed on its own foundations -- representatives of the class who do not think, and are incapable of thinking, for themselves. Capitalism would not be the Oppressor of the masses that it actually is, if things were otherwise.

X. Several conclusions

The Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905 revealed a highly original turn in world history: in one of the most backward capitalist countries, the strike movement attained a scope and power unprecedented anywhere in the world. In the first month of 1905 alone, the number of strikers was ten times the annual average for the previous decade (1895-1904); from January to October 1905, strikes grew all the time and reached enormous proportions. Under the influence of a number of unique historical conditions, backward Russia was the first to show the world, not only the growth, by leaps and bounds, of the independent activity of the oppressed masses in time of revolution (this had occurred in all great revolutions), but also that the significance of the proletariat is infinitely greater than its proportion in the total population; it showed a combination of the economic strike and the political strike, with the latter developing into an armed uprising, and the birth of the Soviets,

a new form of mass struggle and mass organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism.

The revolutions of February and October 1917 led to the all-round development of the Soviets on a nation-wide scale and to their victory in the proletarian socialist revolution. In less than two years, the international character of the Soviets, the spread of this form of struggle and organisation to the world working-class movement and the historical mission of the Soviets as the grave-digger, heir and successor of bourgeois parliamentarianism and of bourgeois democracy in general, all became clear.

But that is not all. The history of the working-class movement now shows that, in all countries, it is about to go through (and is already going through) a struggle waged by communism — emergent, gaining strength and advancing towards victory — against, primarily, Menshevism, i.e., opportunism and social-chauvinism (the home brand in each particular country), and then as a complement, so to say, Left-wing communism. The former struggle has developed in all countries, apparently without any exception, as a duel between the Second International (already virtually dead) and the Third International. The latter struggle is to be seen in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, America (at any rate, a certain section of the Industrial Workers of the World and of the anarcho-syndicalist trends uphold the errors of Left-wing communism alongside of an almost universal and almost unreserved acceptance of the Soviet system), and in France (the attitude of a section of the former syndicalists towards the political party and parliamentarianism, also alongside of the acceptance of the Soviet system); in other words, the struggle is undoubtedly being waged, not only on an international, but even on a worldwide scale.

But while the working-class movement is everywhere going through what is actually the same kind of preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, it is achieving that development in its own way in each country. The big and advanced capitalist countries are travelling this road far more rapidly than did Bolshevism, to which history granted fifteen years to prepare itself for victory, as an organised political trend. In the brief space of a year, the Third International has already scored a decisive victory; it has defeated the yellow, social-chauvinist Second International, which only a few months ago was incomparably stronger than the Third International, seemed stable and powerful, and enjoyed every possible support—direct and indirect, material (Cabinet posts, passports, the press) and ideological — from the world bourgeoisie.

It is now essential that Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the fundamental objectives of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism, and the concrete features which this struggle assumes and must inevitably assume in each country, in conformity with the specific character of its economics, politics, culture, and national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth. Dissatisfaction with the Second International is felt everywhere and is spreading and growing, both because of its opportunism and because of its inability or incapacity to create a really centralized and really leading centre capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a world Soviet republic. It should be clearly realised that such a leading centre can never be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equated, and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world-

wide scale—the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but an application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which will correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the concrete manner in which each country should tackle a single international task: victory over opportunism and Left doctrinarism within the working-class movement; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through. The chief thing—though, of course, far from everything—the chief thing, has already been achieved: the vanguard of the working class has been won over, has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government and against parliamentarianism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat and against bourgeois democracy. All efforts and all attention should now be concentrated on the next step, which may seem—and from a certain viewpoint actually is—less fundamental, but, on the other hand, is actually closer to a practical accomplishment of the task. That step is: the search after forms of the transition or the approach to the proletarian revolution.

The proletarian vanguard has been won over ideologically. That is the main thing. Without this, not even the first step towards victory can be made. But that is still quite a long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with a vanguard alone. To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle, before the entire class, the broad masses, have taken up a position either of direct

support for the vanguard, or at least of sympathetic neutrality towards it and of precluded support for the enemy, would be, not merely foolish but criminal. Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well. To turn resolutely towards communism, it was necessary, not only for the ignorant and often illiterate masses of Russia, but also for the literate and well-educated masses of Germany, to realise from their own bitter experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, and the utter vileness of the government of the paladins of the Second International; they had to realise that a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia; Kapp and Co. in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The immediate objective of the class-conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to lead the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant and convention-ridden) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead, not only their own party but also these masses in their advance and transition to the new position. While the first historical objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the masses to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution,

cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors.

As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work; even propaganda circles, with all their parochial limitations, are useful under these conditions, and produce good results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses, of the disposition, if one may so put it, of vast armies, of the alignment of all the class forces in a given society for the final and decisive battle, then propagandist methods alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances, one must not count in thousands, like the propagandist belonging to a small group that has not yet given leadership to the masses; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances, we must ask ourselves, not only whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of all classes—positively of all the classes in a given society, without exception—are arrayed in such a way that the decisive battle is at hand—in such a way that: (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; (2) all the vacillating and unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie —have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy, and (3) among the proletariat, a mass sentiment favouring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly

gauged all the conditions indicated and summarized above, and if we have chosen the right moment, our victory is assured.

The differences between the Churchills and the Lloyd Georges — with insignificant national distinctions, these political types exist in all countries—on the one hand, and between the Hendersons and the Lloyd Georges on the other, are quite minor and unimportant from the standpoint of pure (i.e., abstract) communism, i.e., communism that has not yet matured to the stage of practical political action by the masses. However, from the standpoint of this practical action by the masses, these differences are most important. To take due account of these differences, and to determine the moment when the inevitable conflicts between these "friends", which weaken and enfeeble all the "friends" taken together, will have come to a head—that is the concern, the task, of a Communist who wants to be, not merely a class-conscious and convinced propagandist of ideas, but a practical leader of the masses in the revolution. It is necessary to link the strictest devotion to the ideas of communism with the ability to effect all the necessary practical compromises, tacks, conciliatory manoeuvres, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to speed up the achievement and then loss of political power by the Hendersons (the heroes of the Second International, if we are not to name individual representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy who call themselves socialists); to accelerate their inevitable bankruptcy in practice, which will enlighten the masses in the spirit of our ideas, in the direction of communism; to accelerate the inevitable friction, quarrels, conflicts and complete disintegration among the Hendersons, the Lloyd Georges and the Churchills (the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Constitutional-Democrats, the monarchists; the Scheidemanns, the bourgeoisie and the Kappists, etc.); to select the proper moment when the discord among these "pillars of sacrosanct private property" is at its height, so that, through a

decisive offensive, the proletariat will defeat them all and capture political power.

History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, livelier and more ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can readily be understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master all forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power — sometimes at great risk and with very great danger — what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another.

One will readily agree that any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner. This applies to politics even more than it does to the art of war. In politics it is even harder to know in advance which methods of struggle will be applicable and to our advantage in certain future conditions. Unless we learn to apply all the methods of struggle, we may suffer grave and sometimes even decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront a form of activity in which we are especially weak. If, however, we learn to use all the methods of struggle, victory will be certain, because

we represent the interests of the really foremost and really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to make use of weapons that are most dangerous to the enemy, weapons that deal the swiftest mortal blows. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because, in this field, the bourgeoisie has most frequently deceived and duped the workers (particularly in "peaceful" and non-revolutionary times), while illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. That, however, is wrong. The truth is that those parties and leaders are opportunists and traitors to the working class that are unable or unwilling (do not say, "I can't"; say, "I shan't") to use illegal methods of struggle in conditions such as those which prevailed, for example, during the imperialist war of 1914-18, when the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries most brazenly and brutally deceived the workers, and smothered the truth about the predatory character of the war. But revolutionaries who are incapable of combining illegal forms of struggle with every form of legal struggle are poor revolutionaries indeed. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when revolution has already broken out and is in spike, when all people are joining the revolution just because they are carried away, because it is the vogue, and sometimes even from careerist motives. After its victory, the proletariat has to make most strenuous efforts, even the most painful, so as to "liberate" itself from such pseudo-revolutionaries. It is far more difficult—and far more precious—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle do not yet exist, to be able to champion the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organisation) in non-revolutionary bodies, and quite often in downright reactionary bodies, in a non-revolutionary situation, among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action. To be able to seek, find and

correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will lead the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle—such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America today.

Britain is an example. We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and what immediate cause will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be "well shod on all four feet" (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the breach will be forced, the ice broken, by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising from colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. We are not discussing the kind of struggle that will determine the fate of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain (no Communist has any doubt on that score; for all of us this is a foregone conclusion): what we are discussing is the immediate cause that will bring into motion the now dormant proletarian masses, and lead them right up to revolution. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which, from both the international and the national viewpoints, was a hundred times less revolutionary than it is today, such an "unexpected" and "petty" cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent machinations of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus case) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war!

In Great Britain the Communists should constantly, unremittingly and unswervingly utilise parliamentary elections and all the vicissitudes of the Irish, colonial and world-imperialist policy of the British Government, and all other fields,

spheres and aspects of public life, and work in all of them in a new way, in a communist way, in the spirit of the Third, not the Second, International. I have neither the time nor the space here to describe the "Russian" "Bolshevik" methods of participation in parliamentary elections and in the parliamentary struggle; I can, however, assure foreign Communists that they were quite unlike the usual West-European parliamentary campaigns. From this the conclusion is often drawn: "Well, that was in Russia, in our country parliamentarianism is different." This is a false conclusion. Communists, adherents of the Third International in all countries, exist for the purpose of changing — all along the line, in all spheres of life—the old socialist, trade unionist, syndicalist, and parliamentary type of work into a new type of work, the communist. In Russia, too, there was always an abundance of opportunism, purely bourgeois sharp practices and capitalist rigging in the elections. In Western Europe and in America, the Communist must learn to create a new, uncustomary, non-opportunist, and non-careerist parliamentarianism; the Communist parties must issue their slogans; true proletarians, with the help of the unorganised and downtrodden poor, should distribute leaflets, canvass workers' houses and cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are many times fewer remote villages in Europe than in Russia, and in Britain the number is very small); they should go into the public houses, penetrate into unions, societies and chance gatherings of the common people, and speak to the people, not in learned (or very parliamentary) language, they should not at all strive to "get seats" in parliament, but should everywhere try to get people to think, and draw the masses into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at its word and utilise the machinery it has set up, the elections it has appointed, and the appeals it has made to the people; they should try to explain to the people what Bolshevism is, in a way that was never

possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (exclusive, of course, of times of big strikes, when in Russia a similar apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively). It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and extremely difficult in America, but it can and must be done, for the objectives of communism cannot be achieved without effort. We must work to accomplish practical tasks, ever more varied and ever more closely connected with all branches of social life, winning branch after branch, and sphere after sphere from the bourgeoisie.

In Great Britain, further, the work of propaganda, agitation and organisation among the armed forces and among the oppressed and underprivileged nationalities in their "own" state (Ireland, the colonies) must also be tackled in a new fashion (one that is not socialist, but communist not reformist, but revolutionary). That is because, in the era of imperialism in general and especially today after a war that was a sore trial to the peoples and has quickly opened their eyes to the truth (i.e., the fact that tens of millions were killed and maimed for the sole purpose of deciding whether the British or the German robbers should plunder the largest number of countries), all these spheres of social life and heavily charged with inflammable material and are creating numerous causes of conflicts, crises and an intensification of the class struggle. We do not and cannot know which spark—of the innumerable sparks that are flying about in all countries as a result of the world economic and political crisis—will kindle the conflagration, in the sense of raising up the masses; we must, therefore, with our new and communist principles, set to work to stir up all and sundry, even the oldest, mustiest and seemingly hopeless spheres, for otherwise we shall not be able to cope with our tasks, shall not be comprehensively prepared, shall not be in possession of all the weapons and shall not prepare ourselves either to gain victory over the bourgeoisie

(which arranged all aspects of social life—and has now disarranged them—in its bourgeois fashion), or to bring about the impending communist reorganisation of every sphere of life, following that victory.

Since the proletarian revolution in Russia and its victories on an international scale, expected neither by the bourgeoisie nor the philistines, the entire world has become different, and the bourgeoisie everywhere has become different too. It is terrified of "Bolshevism", exasperated by it almost to the point of frenzy, and for that very reason it is, on the one hand, precipitating the progress of events and, on the other, concentrating on the forcible suppression of Bolshevism, thereby weakening its own position in a number of other fields. In their tactics the Communists in all the advanced countries must take both these circumstances into account.

When the Russian Cadets and Kerensky began furiously to hound the Bolsheviks—especially since April 1917, and more particularly in June and July 1917—they overdid things. Millions of copies of bourgeois papers, clamouring in every key against the Bolsheviks, helped the masses to make an appraisal of Bolshevism, apart from the newspapers, all public life was full of discussions about Bolshevism, as a result of the bourgeoisie's "zeal". Today the millionaires of all countries are behaving on an international scale in a way that deserves our heartiest thanks. They are hounding Bolshevism with the same zeal as Kerensky and Co. did; they, too, are overdoing things and helping us just as Kerensky did. When the French bourgeoisie makes Bolshevism the central issue in the elections, and accuses the comparatively moderate or vacillating socialists of being Bolsheviks; when the American bourgeoisie, which has completely lost its head, seizes thousands and thousands of people on suspicion of Bolshevism, creates an atmosphere of

panic, and broadcasts stories of Bolshevik plots; when, despite all its wisdom and experience, the British bourgeoisie—the most "solid" in the world—makes incredible blunders, founds richly endowed "anti-Bolshevik societies", creates a special literature on Bolshevism, and recruits an extra number of scientists, agitators and clergymen to combat it, we must salute and thank the capitalists. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the essence and significance of Bolshevism, and they cannot do otherwise, for they have already failed to ignore Bolshevism and stifle it.

But at the same time, the bourgeoisie sees practically only one aspect of Bolshevism—insurrection, violence, and terror, it therefore strives to prepare itself for resistance and opposition primarily in this field. It is possible that, in certain instances, in certain countries, and for certain brief periods, it will succeed in this. We must reckon with such an eventuality, and we have absolutely nothing to fear if it does succeed. Communism is emerging in positively every sphere of public life; its beginnings are to be seen literally on all sides. The "contagion" (to use the favourite metaphor of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois police, the one mostly to their liking) has very thoroughly penetrated the organism and has completely permeated it. If special efforts are made to block one of the channels, the "contagion" will find another one, sometimes very unexpectedly. Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavour to kill off (as in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all historically doomed classes have done. Communists should know that, in any case, the future belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle, with the coolest and most

sober appraisal of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie. The Russian revolution was cruelly defeated in 1905; the Russian Bolsheviks were defeated in July 1917; over 15,000 German Communists were killed as a result of the wily provocation and cunning manoeuvres of Scheidemann and Noske, who were working hand in glove with the bourgeoisie and the monarchist generals, White terror is raging in Finland and Hungary. But in all cases in all countries, communism is becoming steeled and is growing; its roots are so deep that persecution does not weaken or debilitate it but only strengthens it. Only one thing is lacking to enable us to march forward more confidently and firmly to victory, namely, the universal and thorough awareness of all Communists in all countries of the necessity to display the utmost flexibility in their tactics. The communist movement, which is developing magnificently, now lacks, especially in the advanced countries, this awareness and the ability to apply it in practice.

That which happened to such leaders of the Second International, such highly erudite Marxists devoted to socialism as Kautsky, Otto Bauer and others, could (and should) provide a useful lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they themselves learned Marxist dialectic and taught it to others (and much of what they have done in this field will always remain a valuable contribution to socialist literature); however, in the application of this dialectic they committed such an error, or proved to be so undialectical in practice, so incapable of taking into account the rapid change of forms and the rapid acquisition of new content by the old forms, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde and Plekhanov. The principal reason for their bankruptcy was that they were hypnotised by a definite form of growth of the working-class movement and socialism, forgot all about the one-sidedness of that form, were afraid to see the break-up which objective

conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple and, at first glance, incontestable axioms that had been learned by rote, like: "three is more than two". But politics is more like algebra than like higher than elementary arithmetic, and still more like higher than elementary mathematics. In reality, all the old form of the socialist movement have acquired a new content, and, consequently, a new symbol, the "minus" sign, has appeared in front of all the figures; our wiseacres, however, have stubbornly continued (and still continue) to persuade themselves and others that "minus three" is more than "minus two".

We must see to it that Communists do not make a similar mistake, only in the opposite sense, or rather, we must see to it that a similar mistake, only made in the opposite sense by the "Left" Communists is corrected as soon as possible and eliminated as rapidly and painlessly as possible. It is not only Right doctrinairism that is erroneous; Left doctrinairism is erroneous too. Of course, the mistake of Left doctrinairism in communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and less significant than that of Right doctrinairism (i.e., social-chauvinism and Kautskyism); but, after all, that is only due to the fact that Left communism is a very young trend, is only just coming into being. It is only for this reason that, under certain conditions, the disease can be easily eradicated, and we must set to work with the utmost energy to eradicate it.

The old forms burst asunder, for it turned out that their new content—anti-proletarian and reactionary—had attained an inordinate development. From the standpoint of the development of international communism, our work today has such a durable and powerful content (for Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) that it can and must manifest itself in any form, both new and old; it can and must regenerate, conquer and subjugate all forms, not only the new, but also the

old—not for the purpose of reconciling itself with the old, but for the purpose of making all and every form—new and old—a weapon for the complete and irrevocable victory of communism.

The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working-class movement and social development in general along the straightest and shortest road to the victory of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world-wide scale. That is an incontestable truth.

TO INESSA ARMAND

December 25, 1916

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 35, page 269.

(Excerpt)

One should know how to combine the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution, subordinating the first to the second. In this lies the whole difficulty; in this is the whole essence.

The Tolstoyans and the anarchists throw out the first. Bukharin and Radek have become confused, failing to combine the first with the second.

But I say: don't lose sight of the main thing (the socialist revolution); put it first (Junius has not done this); put all the democratic demands, but subordinating them to it, coordinating them with it (Radek + Bukharin unwisely eliminate one of them), and bear in mind that the struggle for the main thing may blaze up even though it has begun with the struggle for something partial. In my opinion, only this conception of the matter is the right one.

TO INESSA ARMAND

February 3, 1917

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 35, page 284.

(Excerpt)

Try to make friends with the French internees, start corresponding with them, make contacts, found (a secret and informal) group of Lefts among them. Most important!

The slogan of "a mass movement" is not bad, but it is not completely correct. Because it forgets the revolution, the conquest of power, the dictatorship of the proletariat. N.B. this!! Or more correctly: the support and development (at once) of every kind of revolutionary mass actions, with the object of bringing nearer the revolution, etc.

Platten = a muddle head. With Scheidemann or with Liebknecht? he asks, not understanding that the very thing Grimm is doing is "reconciling", uniting, confusing the Swiss social-patriots (Greulich and Co.) and the Swiss "Left", who are quite politically unconscious!!!

You are right: revolutionary struggle against the high cost of living, strikes, demonstrations, etc., at once. At once "go to the people", i.e., to the masses, to the majority of the oppressed, preaching the socialist revolution (i.e., taking over the banks and all large-scale enterprises).

PART 2

(Works of STALIN)

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Pravda, Nos. 241 and 250, November 6 and 19, 1918

Works, Vol. 4

(Excerpts)

III. The world-wide significance of the October Revolution

Having triumphed in the centre of Russia and embraced a number of the border regions, the October Revolution could not stop short at the territorial borders of Russia. In the atmosphere of the imperialist world war and the general discontent among the masses, it could not but spread to neighbouring countries. Russia's break with imperialism and its escape from the predatory war; the publication of the secret treaties and the solemn renunciation of the policy of annexations; the proclamation of the national freedom and recognition of the independence of Finland; the declaring of Russia a "federation of Soviet national republics" and the battle cry of a determined struggle against imperialism issued to the world by the Soviet Government —all this could not but deeply affect the enslaved East and the bleeding West.

And, indeed, the October Revolution is the first revolution in world history to break the age-long sleep of the labouring masses of the oppressed peoples of the East and to draw them into the fight against world imperialism. The formation of workers' and peasants' Soviets in Persia, China and India, modelled on the Soviets in Russia, is sufficiently convincing evidence of this.

The October Revolution is the first revolution in world history to provide the workers and soldiers of the West with a living, salvation-bringing example and to impel them on to the path of real emancipation from the yoke of war and imperialism. The uprising of the workers and soldiers in Austria-Hungary and Germany, the formation of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the revolutionary struggle of the subject peoples of Austria-Hungary against national oppression is sufficiently eloquent evidence of this.

The chief point is not at all that the struggle in the East and even in the West has not yet succeeded in shedding its bourgeois-nationalist features; the point is that the struggle against imperialism has begun, that it is continuing and is inevitably bound to arrive at its logical goal.

Foreign intervention and the occupation policy of the "external" imperialists merely sharpen the revolutionary crisis, by drawing now peoples into the struggle and extending the area of the revolutionary battles with, imperialism.

Thus, the October Revolution, by establishing a tie between the peoples of the backward East and of the advanced West, is ranging them in a common camp of struggle against imperialism.

Thus, from the particular question of combating national oppression, the national question is evolving into the general question of emancipating the nations, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism.

The mortal sin of the Second International and its leader, Kautsky, consists, incidentally, in the fact that they have always gone over to the bourgeois conception of national self-determination, that they have never understood the revolutionary meaning of the latter, that they were unable or unwilling to put the national question on the revolutionary

footing of an open fight against imperialism, that they were unable or unwilling to link the national question with the question of the emancipation of the colonies.

The obtuseness of the Austrian Social-Democrats of the type of Bauer and Renner consists in the fact that they have not understood the inseparable connection between the national question and the question of power, that they tried to separate the national question from politics and to confine it to cultural and educational questions, forgetting the existence of such "trifles" as imperialism and the colonies enslaved by imperialism.

The great world-wide significance of the October Revolution chiefly consists in the fact that:

- 1) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression in Europe into the general question of emancipating the oppressed peoples, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism;
- 2) It has opened up wide possibilities for their emancipation and the right paths towards it, has thereby greatly facilitated the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the West and the East, and has drawn them into the common current of the victorious struggle against imperialism;
- 3) It has thereby erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East, having created a new front of revolutions against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East.

This in fact explains the indescribable enthusiasm which is now being displayed for the Russian proletariat by the toiling and exploited masses of the East and the West.

And this mainly explains the frenzy with which the imperialist robbers of the whole world have now flung themselves upon Soviet Russia.

TWO CAMPS

Izvestia, No, 41, February 22, 1919

works, volume 4

(Excerpts)

The world has definitely and irrevocably split into two camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism.

Over there, in their camp, are America and Britain, France and Japan, with their capital, armaments, tried agents and experienced administrators.

Here, in our camp, are Soviet Russia and the young Soviet republics and the growing proletarian revolution in the countries of Europe, without capital, without tried agents or experienced administrators, but, on the other hand, with experienced agitators capable of firing the hearts of the working people with the spirit of emancipation.

The struggle between these two camps constitutes the hub of present-day affairs, determines the whole substance of the present home and foreign policies of the leaders of the old and the new worlds.

Estland and Lithuania, the Ukraine and the Crimea, Turkestan and Siberia, Poland and the Caucasus, and, finally, Russia itself are not aims in themselves. They are only an arena of struggle, of a mortal struggle between two forces: imperialism, which is striving to strengthen the yoke of slavery, and socialism, which is fighting for emancipation from slavery.

The strength of imperialism lies in the ignorance of the masses, who create wealth for their masters and forge chains of oppression for themselves. But the ignorance of the masses is a transient thing and inevitably tends to be dispelled in the course

of time, as the dissatisfaction of the masses grows and the revolutionary movement spreads. The imperialists have capital—but who does not know that capital is powerless in the face of the inevitable? For this reason, the rule of imperialism is impermanent and insecure.

The weakness of imperialism lies in its powerlessness to end the war without catastrophe, without increasing mass unemployment, without further robbery of its own workers and peasants, without further seizures of foreign territory. It is a question not of ending the war, nor even of victory over Germany, but of who is to be made to pay the billions spent on the war. Russia emerged from the imperialist war rejuvenated, because she ended the war at the cost of the imperialists, home and foreign, and laid the expense of the war on those who were directly responsible for it by expropriating them. The imperialists cannot do this; they cannot expropriate themselves, otherwise they would not be imperialists. To end the war in imperialist fashion, they are "compelled" to doom the workers to starvation (wholesale unemployment due to the closing down of "unprofitable" plants, additional indirect taxation, a terrific rise in prices of food); they are "compelled" to plunder Germany, Austria-Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Turkestan, Siberia.

Need it be said that all this broadens the base of revolution, shakes the foundations of imperialism and hastens the inevitable catastrophe?

The world has split into two irreconcilable camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism. Imperialism in its death throes is clutching at the last straw, the "League of Nations," trying to save itself by uniting the robbers of all countries into a single alliance. But its efforts are in vain, because time and circumstances are working against it and in favour of socialism.

The tide of socialist revolution is irresistibly rising and investing the strongholds of imperialism. Its thunder is re-echoing through the countries of the oppressed East. The soil is beginning to burn under the feet of imperialism. Imperialism is doomed to inevitable destruction.

CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS [20]

Pravda, No. 56, March 14, 1923

Works, Volume 5

(Excerpts)

I. Preliminary concepts

1. Two aspects of the working-class movement

Political strategy, as well as tactics, is concerned with the working-class movement. But the working-class movement itself consists of two elements: the objective or spontaneous element, and the subjective or conscious element. The objective, spontaneous element is the group of processes that take place independently of the conscious and regulating will of the proletariat. The economic development of the country, the development of capitalism, the disintegration of the old regime, the spontaneous movements of the proletariat and of the classes around it, the conflict of classes, etc.—all these are phenomena whose development does not depend on the will of the proletariat. That is the objective side of the movement. Strategy has nothing to do with those processes, for it can neither stop nor alter them; it can only take them into account and proceed from them. That is a field which has to be studied by the theory of Marxism and the programme of Marxism.

But the movement has also a subjective, conscious side. The subjective side of the movement is the reflection in the minds of the workers of the spontaneous processes of the movement; it is the conscious and systematic movement of the proletariat towards a definite goal. It is this side of the movement that interests us because, unlike the objective side, it is entirely subject to the directing influence of strategy and tactics. Whereas

strategy is unable to cause any change in the course of the objective processes of the movement, here, on the contrary, on the subjective, conscious side of the movement, the field of application of strategy is broad and varied, because strategy can accelerate or retard the movement, direct it along the shortest path or divert it to a more difficult and painful path, depending on the perfections or shortcomings of strategy itself.

To accelerate or retard the movement, facilitate or hinder it—such is the field and the limits within which political strategy and tactics can be applied.

2. The theory and programme of Marxism

Strategy itself does not study the objective processes of the movement. Nevertheless, it must know them and take them into account correctly if gross and fatal errors in the leadership of the movement are to be avoided. The objective processes of the movement are studied, in the first place, by the theory of Marxism and also by the programme of Marxism. Hence, strategy must base itself entirely on the data provided by the theory and programme of Marxism.

From a study of the objective processes of capitalism in their development and decline, the theory of Marxism arrives at the conclusion that the fall of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the proletariat are inevitable, that capitalism must inevitably give way to socialism. Proletarian strategy can be called truly Marxist only when its operations are based on this fundamental conclusion of the theory of Marxism.

Proceeding from the data of theory, the programme of Marxism determines the aims of the proletarian movement, which are scientifically formulated in the points of the programme. The programme may be designed to cover the whole period of capitalist development and have in view the overthrow of

capitalism and the organisation of socialist production, or only one definite phase of the development of capitalism, for instance, the overthrow of the survivals of the feudal-absolutist system and the creation of conditions for the free development of capitalism. Accordingly, the programme may consist of two parts: a maximum and a minimum. It goes without saying that strategy designed for the minimum part of the programme is bound to differ from strategy designed for the maximum part; and strategy can be called truly Marxist only when it is guided in its operations by the aims of the movement as formulated in the programme of Marxism.

3. Strategy

The most important function of strategy is to determine the main direction which ought to be taken by the working-class movement, and along which the proletariat can most advantageously deliver the main blow at its enemy in order to achieve the aims formulated in the programme. A strategic plan is a plan of the organisation of the decisive blow in the direction in which the blow is most likely to achieve the maximum results.

The principal features of political strategy could easily be described by drawing an analogy with military strategy: for instance, in the fight against Denikin during the Civil War. Everybody remembers the end of 1919, when Denikin's forces were standing near Tula. At that time an interesting dispute arose among our military men about the point from which the decisive blow at Denikin's armies should be delivered. Some military men proposed that the line Tsaritsyn-Novorossiisk be chosen for the main direction of the blow. Others, on the contrary, proposed that the decisive blow be delivered along the line Voronezh-Rostov, to proceed along this line and thus cut Denikin's armies in two and then crush each part separately. The first plan undoubtedly had its merits in that it provided for the

capture of Novorossiisk, which would have cut off the retreat of Denikin's armies. But, on the one hand, it was faulty because it assumed our advance through districts (the Don Region) which were hostile to Soviet power, and thus would have involved heavy casualties; on the other hand, it was dangerous because it opened for Denikin's armies the road to Moscow via Tula and Serpukhov. The only correct plan for the main blow was the second one, because, on the one hand, it assumed the advance of our main group through districts (Voronezh Gubernia-Donets Basin) which were friendly towards Soviet power and, therefore, would not involve any considerable casualties; on the other hand, it would disrupt the operations of Denikin's main group of forces which were moving towards Moscow. The majority of the military men declared in favour of the second plan, and this determined the fate of the war against Denikin.

In other words, determining the direction of the main blow means deciding in advance the nature of operations during the whole period of the war, i.e., deciding in advance, to the extent of nine-tenths, the fate of the whole war. That is the function of strategy.

The same must be said about political strategy. The first serious collision between the political leaders of the Russian proletariat on the question of the main direction of the proletarian movement took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, during the Russo-Japanese war. At that time, as we know, one section of our Party (the Mensheviks) held the view that the main direction of the proletarian movement in its struggle against tsarism should be along the line of a bloc between the proletariat and the liberal bourgeoisie; the peasantry was omitted, or almost entirely omitted from the plan as a major revolutionary factor, while the leading role in the general revolutionary movement was assigned to the liberal bourgeoisie. The other section of the

Party (the Bolsheviks) maintained, on the contrary, that the main blow should proceed along the line of a bloc between the proletariat and the peasantry, and that the leading role in the general revolutionary movement should be assigned to the proletariat, while the liberal bourgeoisie should be neutralised.

If, by analogy with the war against Denikin, we depict our whole revolutionary movement, from the beginning of this century to the February Revolution in 1917, as a war waged by the workers and peasants against tsarism and the landlords, it will be clear that the fate of tsarism and of the landlords largely depended upon which of the two strategic plans (the Menshevik or the Bolshevik) would be adopted, and upon which direction would be chosen as the main direction of the revolutionary movement.

Just as during the war against Denikin military strategy, by deciding the main direction of the blow, determined to the extent of nine-tenths the character of all subsequent operations, including the liquidation of Denikin's armies, so here, in the sphere of the revolutionary struggle against tsarism, our political strategy, by deciding that the main direction of the revolutionary movement should follow the Bolshevik plan, determined the character of our Party's work during the whole period of the open struggle against tsarism, from the time of the Russo-Japanese war down to the February Revolution in 1917.

The function of political strategy is, primarily, on the basis of the data provided by the theory and programme of Marxism, and taking into account the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the workers of all countries, correctly to determine the main direction of the proletarian movement of the given country in the given historical period.

4. Tactics

Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinated to and serving it. Tactics are not concerned with the war as a whole, but with its individual episodes, with battles and engagements. Strategy strives to win the war, or to carry through the struggle, against tsarism let us say, to the end; tactics, on the contrary, strive to win particular engagements and battles, to conduct particular campaigns successfully, or particular operations, that are more or less appropriate to the concrete situation of the struggle at each given moment.

A most important function of tactics is to determine the ways and means, the forms and methods of fighting that are most appropriate to the concrete situation at the given moment and are most certain to prepare the way for strategic success. Consequently, the operation and results of tactics must be regarded not in isolation, not from the point of view of their immediate effect, but from the point of view of the aims and possibilities of strategy.

There are times when tactical successes facilitate the achievement of strategic aims. Such was the case, for instance, on the Denikin front at the end of 1919, when our troops liberated Orel and Voronezh, when the successes of our cavalry at Voronezh and of our infantry at Orel created a situation favourable for delivering the blow at Rostov. Such was the case in August 1917 in Russia, when the Petrograd and Moscow Soviets came over to the side of the Bolsheviks and thereby created a new political situation, which subsequently facilitated the blow delivered by our Party in October.

There are also times when tactical successes, brilliant from the point of view of their immediate effect but not corresponding to the strategic possibilities, create an "unexpected" situation, fatal to the whole campaign. Such was the case with Denikin at the end of 1919 when, carried away by the easy success of a rapid

and striking advance on Moscow, he stretched his front from the Volga to the Dnieper, and thereby prepared the way for the defeat of his armies. Such was the case in 1920, during the war against the Poles, when, under-estimating the strength of the national factor in Poland, and carried away by the easy success of a striking advance, we undertook a task that was beyond our strength, the task of breaking into Europe via Warsaw, which rallied the vast majority of the Polish population against the Soviet forces and so created a situation which nullified the successes of the Soviet forces at Minsk and Zhitomir and damaged the Soviet Government's prestige in the West.

Lastly, there are also times when a tactical success must be ignored and when tactical losses and reverses must be deliberately incurred in order to ensure future strategic gains. This often happens in time of war, when one side, wishing to save its army cadres and to withdraw them from the onslaught of superior enemy forces, begins a systematic retreat and surrenders whole cities and regions without a fight in order to gain time and to muster its forces for new decisive battles in the future. Such was the case in Russia in 1918, during the German offensive, when our Party was forced to accept the Brest Peace, which was a tremendous setback from the point of view of the immediate political effect at that moment, in order to preserve the alliance with the peasants, who were thirsting for peace, to obtain a respite, to create a new army and thereby ensure strategic gains in the future.

In other words, tactics must not be subordinated to the transient interests of the moment, they must not be guided by considerations of immediate political effect, still less must they desert firm ground and build castles in the air. Tactics must be devised in accordance with the aims and possibilities of strategy.

The function of tactics is primarily to determine— in accordance with the requirements of strategy and taking into account the experience of the workers' revolutionary struggle in all countries—the forms and methods of fighting most appropriate to the concrete situation of the struggle at each given moment.

II. The strategic plans

1. Historic turns. Strategic plans

The Party's strategy is not something constant, fixed once and for all. It alters in accordance with the turns in history, with historic changes. These alterations in strategy find expression in the fact that with each separate turn in history a separate strategic plan is drawn up corresponding to that turn, and effective during the whole period from that turn to the next. The strategic plan defines the direction of the main blow to be delivered by the revolutionary forces and the corresponding disposition of the vast masses on the social front. Naturally, a strategic plan suitable for one period of history, which has its own specific features, cannot be suitable for another period of history, which has entirely different specific features. Corresponding to each turn in history is the strategic plan essential for it and adapted to its tasks.

The same may be said about the conduct of war. The strategic plan that was drawn up for the war against Kolchak could not have been suitable for the war against Denikin, which called for a new strategic plan, which, in its turn, would not have been suitable for, say, the war against the Poles in 1920, because the direction of the main blows, as well as the disposition of the main fighting forces, could not but be different in each of these three cases.

The recent history of Russia knows of three main historic turns, which gave rise to three different strategic plans in the history of

our Party. We consider it necessary to describe them briefly in order to show how the Party's strategic plans in general change in conformity with new historic changes.

2. The first historic turn and the course towards the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia

This turn began at the beginning of the present century, in the period of the Russo-Japanese war, when the defeat of the tsar's armies and the tremendous political strikes of the Russian workers stirred up all classes of the population and pushed them into the arena of the political struggle. This turn came to an end in the days of the February Revolution in 1917.

During this period two strategic plans were at issue in our Party: the plan of the Mensheviks (Plekhanov-Martov, 1905), and the plan of the Bolsheviks (Comrade Lenin, 1905).

The Menshevik strategy planned the main blow at tsarism along the line of a coalition between the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Proceeding from the fact that at that time the revolution was regarded as a bourgeois revolution, this plan assigned the hegemony (leadership) of the movement to the liberal bourgeoisie and doomed the proletariat to the role of "extreme left opposition," to the role of "prompter" to the bourgeoisie, while the peasantry, one of the major revolutionary forces, was entirely, or almost entirely, left out of account. It is easy to understand that since this plan left out of account the millions of peasants in a country like Russia it was hopelessly utopian, and since it placed the fate of the revolution in the hands of the liberal bourgeoisie (the hegemony of the bourgeoisie) it was reactionary, for the liberal bourgeoisie was not interested in achieving the complete victory of the re

The Bolshevik strategy (see Comrade Lenin's book *Two Tactics*) planned the revolution's main blow at tsarism along the line of a

coalition between the proletariat and the peasantry, while the liberal bourgeoisie was to be neutralised. Proceeding from the fact that the liberal bourgeoisie was not interested in the complete victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that it preferred a deal with tsarism at the expense of the workers and peasants to the victory of the revolution, this plan assigned the hegemony of the revolutionary movement to the proletariat as the only completely revolutionary class in Russia. This plan was remarkable not only because it took into account correctly the driving forces of the revolution, but also because it contained in embryo the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat (the hegemony of the proletariat), because it brilliantly foresaw the next, higher phase of the revolution in Russia and facilitated the transition to it.

The subsequent development of the revolution right up to February 1917 fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan.

3. The second historic turn and the course towards the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia

The second turn began with the February Revolution in 1917, after tsarism was overthrown, when the imperialist war had exposed the fatal ulcers of capitalism all over the world; when the liberal bourgeoisie, incapable of taking in its hands the actual government of the country, was compelled to confine itself to holding formal power (the Provisional Government); when the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, after getting actual power into their hands, had neither the experience nor the will to make the necessary use of it; when the soldiers at the front and the workers and peasants in the rear were groaning under the burdens of the war and economic disruption; when the "dual power" and "contact committee" [21] regime, torn by internal contradictions and capable neither of waging war nor of bringing

about peace, not only failed to find "a way out of the impasse" but confused the situation still more. This period ended with the October Revolution in 1917.

Two strategic plans were at issue in the Soviets at that time: the Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary plan, and the Bolshevik plan.

The Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary strategy, vacillating at first between the Soviets and the Provisional Government, between revolution and counter-revolution, took final shape at the time of the opening of the Democratic Conference (September 1917). It took the line of the gradual but steady removal of the Soviets from power and the concentration of all power in the country in the hands of the "Pre-parliament," the prototype of a future bourgeois parliament. The questions of peace and war, the agrarian and labour questions, as well as the national question, were shelved, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, which, in its turn, was postponed for an indefinite period. "All power to the Constituent Assembly"—this was how the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks formulated their strategic plan. It was a plan for the preparation of a bourgeois dictatorship, a combed and brushed-up, "perfectly democratic" dictatorship it is true, but a bourgeois dictatorship for all that.

The Bolshevik strategy (see Comrade Lenin's "Theses," published in April 1917 [22]) planned the main blow along the line of liquidating the power of the bourgeoisie by the combined forces of the proletariat and the poor peasants, along the line of organising the dictatorship of the proletariat in the shape of a Soviet Republic. Rupture with imperialism and withdrawal from the war; liberation of the oppressed nationalities of the former Russian Empire; expropriation of the landlords and capitalists; preparation of the conditions for organising socialist economy—such were the elements of the Bolsheviks' strategic plan in that

period. "All power to the Soviets"—this was how the Bolsheviks then formulated their strategic plan. This plan was important not only because it took into account correctly the actual driving forces of the new, proletarian revolution in Russia, but also because it facilitated and accelerated the unleashing of the revolutionary movement in the West.

Subsequent developments right up to the October Revolution fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan.

4. The third historic turn and the course towards the proletarian revolution in Europe

The third turn began with the October Revolution, when the mortal combat between the two imperialist groups in the West had reached its climax; when the revolutionary crisis in the West was obviously growing; when the bourgeois government in Russia, bankrupt and entangled in contradictions, fell under the blows of the proletarian revolution; when the victorious proletarian revolution broke with imperialism and withdrew from the war, and thereby made bitter enemies in the shape of imperialist coalitions in the West; when the new Soviet Government's decrees on peace, the confiscation of the landlords' land, the expropriation of the capitalists and the liberation of the oppressed nationalities earned for it the confidence of millions of toilers throughout the world. This was a turn on an international scale, because, for the first time, the international front of capital was breached, the question of overthrowing capitalism was for the first time put on a practical footing. This transformed the October Revolution from a national, Russian force into an international force, and the Russian workers from a backward detachment of the international proletariat into its vanguard, which by its devoted struggle rouses the workers of the West and the oppressed countries of the East. This turn has not yet come to the end of its development, for it has not yet developed on an

international scale, but its content and general direction are already sufficiently clear.

Two strategic plans were at issue in political circles in Russia at that time: the plan of the counter-revolutionaries, who had drawn into their organisations the active sections of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the plan of the Bolsheviks.

The counter-revolutionaries and active Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks planned along the line of uniting in one camp all the discontented elements: the old army officers in the rear and at the front, the bourgeois-nationalist governments in the border regions, the capitalists and landlords who had been expropriated by the revolution, the agents of the Entente who were preparing for intervention, and so forth. They steered a course towards the overthrow of the Soviet Government by means of revolts or foreign intervention, and the restoration of the capitalist order in Russia.

The Bolsheviks, on the contrary, planned along the line of internally strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia and extending the sphere of operation of the proletarian revolution to all countries of the world by combining the efforts of the proletarians of Russia with the efforts of the proletarians of Europe and with the efforts of the oppressed nations of the East against world imperialism. Highly noteworthy is the exact and concise formulation of this strategic plan given by Comrade Lenin in his pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, namely: "To do the utmost possible in one country (one's own— J. St.) for the development, support and awakening of the revolution in all countries." The value of this strategic plan lies not only in that it took into account correctly the driving forces of the world revolution, but also in that it foresaw and facilitated the subsequent process of transformation

of Soviet Russia into the focus of attention of the revolutionary movement throughout the world, into the banner of liberation of the workers in the West and of the colonies in the East.

The subsequent development of the revolution all over the world, and also the five years' existence of Soviet power in Russia, have fully confirmed the correctness of this strategic plan. The fact that the counterrevolutionaries, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who made several attempts to overthrow the Soviet Government, are now emigres, while the Soviet Government and the international proletarian organisation are becoming the major instruments of the policy of the world proletariat, and other facts of this kind, are obvious testimony in favour of the Bolsheviks' strategic plan.

NATIONAL FACTOR IN PARTY AND STATE AFFAIRS

Pravda, No. 65, March 24, 1923

Works, Volume 5

(Excerpts)

1. Already in the last century the development of capitalism revealed the tendency to internationalise the modes of production and exchange, to eliminate national isolation, to bring peoples into closer economic relations, and gradually to unite vast territories into a single connected whole. The further development of capitalism, the development of the world market, the establishment of the great sea and rail routes, the export of capital, and so on, still further strengthened this tendency and bound peoples of the most diverse types by the ties of international division of labour and all-round mutual dependence. In so far as this process was a reflection of the colossal development of productive forces, in so far as it helped to destroy national aloofness and the opposition of interests of the various peoples, it was and is a progressive process, for it is creating the material prerequisites for the future world socialist economic system.

2. But this tendency developed in peculiar forms that were completely at variance with its intrinsic historical significance. The mutual dependence of peoples and the economic union of territories took place in the course of the development of capitalism not as a result of the co-operation of nations as entities with equal rights, but by means of the subjugation of some nations by others, by means of the oppression and exploitation of less developed nations by more developed nations. Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist tyranny and violence, colonial slavery and national subjection, and, finally, the struggle among the "civilised"

nations for domination over the "uncivilised" peoples—such were the forms within which the development of closer economic relations of peoples took place. For that reason, we find that, side by side with the tendency towards union, there arose a tendency to destroy the forcible forms of such union, a struggle for the liberation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. Since the latter tendency signified a revolt of the oppressed masses against imperialist forms of union, since it demanded the union of nations on the basis of co-operation and voluntary union, it was and is a progressive tendency, for it is creating the spiritual prerequisites for the future world socialist economy.

3. The struggle between these two principal tendencies, expressed in forms that are natural to capitalism, filled the history of the multi-national bourgeois states during the last half-century. The irreconcilable contradiction between these tendencies within the framework of capitalist development was the underlying cause of the internal unsoundness and organic instability of the bourgeois colonial states. Inevitable conflicts: within such states and inevitable wars between them; the disintegration of the old colonial states and the formation of new ones; a new drive for colonies and a new disintegration of the multi-national states leading to a new refashioning of the political map of the world—such are the results of this fundamental contradiction. The break-up of the old Russia, of Austria-Hungary and of Turkey, on the one hand, and the history of such colonial states as Great Britain and the old Germany, on the other; and, lastly, the "great" imperialist war and the growth of the revolutionary movement of the colonial and unequal nations— all these and similar facts clearly point to the instability and insecurity of the multi-national bourgeois states.

Thus, the irreconcilable contradiction between the process of economic union of peoples and the imperialist methods of accomplishing this union was the cause of the inability, helplessness and impotence of the bourgeoisie in finding a correct approach to the solution of the national question.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

Pravda, Nos. 96, 97, 103, 105, 107, 108, 111; April 26 and 30, May 9, 11, 14, 15 and 18, 1924

Works Volume 6, pages 71-196.

VII. Strategy and tactics

From this theme I take six questions:

- a) strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat;
- b) stages of the revolution, and strategy;
- c) the flow and ebb of the movement, and tactics;
- d) strategic leadership;
- e) tactical leadership;
- f) reformism and revolutionism.

1) Strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat. The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly a period of the formation and training of the proletarian political armies under conditions of more or less peaceful development. It was the period of parliamentarism as the predominant form of the class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary clashes, of the means of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, did not seem to be on the order of the day at that time. The task was confined to utilising all means of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilising parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat remained, and, as it seemed, had to remain, that of an opposition. It scarcely needs proof that in such a period and with such a

conception of the tasks of the proletariat there could be neither an integral strategy nor any elaborated tactics. There were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

The mortal sin of the Second International was not that it pursued at that time the tactics of utilising parliamentary forms of struggle, but that it overestimated the importance of these forms, that it considered them virtually the only forms; and that when the period of open revolutionary battles set in and the question of extra-parliamentary forms of struggle came to the fore, the parties of the Second International turned their backs on these new tasks, refused to shoulder them.

Only in the subsequent period, the period of direct action by the proletariat, the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate practical action; when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions; when all forms of struggle and of organisation, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics), had quite clearly manifested themselves-only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be worked out. It was precisely in this period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that been suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring particular tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and propositions, combining them all into a system of rules and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is to Be Done?* *Two Tactics*, *Imperialism*, *The State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade*

Kautsky, "Left Wing" Communism, undoubtedly constitute priceless contributions to the general treasury of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

2) Stages of the revolution, and strategy. Strategy is the determination of the direction of the main blow of the proletariat at a given stage of the revolution, the elaboration of a corresponding plan for the disposition of the revolutionary forces (main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution.

Our revolution had already passed through two stages, and after the October Revolution it entered a third one. Our strategy changed accordingly.

First stage. 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of medievalism. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Direction of the main blow: the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution by a compromise with tsarism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the working class with the peasantry. "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" (see Lenin, Vol. VIII, p.96)

Second stage. March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighbouring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war

and the crisis of imperialism as a favourable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to put an end to the revolution by a compromise with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry. "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" (ibid.).

Third stage. Began after the October Revolution. Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the defeat of imperialism in all countries. The revolution spreads beyond the confines of one country; the epoch of world revolution has begun. The main force of the revolution: the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, the revolutionary movement of the proletariat in all countries. Main reserves: the semi-proletarian and small-peasant masses in the developed countries, the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats, isolation of the parties of the Second International, which constitute the main support of the policy of compromise with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletarian revolution with the liberation movement in the colonies and the dependent countries.

Strategy deals with the main forces of the revolution and their reserves. It changes with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another but remains basically unchanged throughout a given stage.

3) The flow and ebb of the movement, and tactics. Tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow or ebb of the movement, of the rise or decline of the revolution, the fight to carry out this line by means of replacing old forms of struggle and organisation by new ones, old slogans by new ones, by combining these forms, etc. While the object of strategy is to win the war against tsarism, let us say, or against the bourgeoisie, to carry through the struggle against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics pursue less important objects, for their aim is not the winning of the war as a whole, but the winning of some particular engagements or some particular battles, the carrying through successfully of some particular campaigns or actions corresponding to the concrete circumstances in the given period of rise or decline of the revolution. Tactics are a part of strategy, subordinate to it and serving it.

Tactics change according to flow and ebb. While the strategic plan remained unchanged during the first stage of the revolution (1903 to February 1917), tactics changed several times during that period. In the period from 1903 to 1905 the Party pursued offensive tactics, for the tide of the revolution was rising, the movement was on the upgrade, and tactics had to proceed from this fact. Accordingly, the forms of struggle were revolutionary, corresponding to the requirements of the rising tide of the revolution. Local political strikes, political demonstrations, the general political strike, boycott of the Duma, uprising, revolutionary fighting slogans-such were the successive forms of the struggle during that period. These changes in the forms of struggle were accomplished by corresponding changes in the forms of organisation. Factory committees, revolutionary peasant committees, strike committees, Soviets of workers' deputies, a workers' party operating more or less openly-such were the forms of organisation during that period.

In the period from 1907 to 1912 the Party was compelled to resort to tactics of retreat; for we then experienced a decline in the revolutionary movement, the ebb of the revolution, and tactics necessarily had to take this fact into consideration. The forms of struggle, as well as the forms of organisation, changed accordingly: instead of the boycott of the Duma-participation in the Duma; instead of open revolutionary actions outside the Duma-actions and work in the Duma; instead of general political strikes-partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in activities. Of course, the Party had to go underground that period, while the revolutionary mass organisations were replaced by cultural, educational, co-operative, insurance and other legal organisations.

The same must be said of the second and third stages of the revolution, during which tactics changed dozens of times, whereas the strategic plans remained unchanged.

Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organisation of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow or ebb, the rise or decline of the revolution.

4) Strategic leadership. The reserves of the revolution can be:

Direct: a) the peasantry and in general the intermediate strata of the population within the country; b) the proletariat of neighbouring countries; c) the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries; d) the conquests and gains of the dictatorship of the proletariat-part of which the proletariat may give up temporarily, while retaining superiority of forces, in order to buy off a powerful enemy and gain a respite; and

Indirect: a) the contradictions and conflicts among the non-proletarian classes within the country, which can be utilised by

the proletariat to weaken the enemy and to strengthen its own reserves; b) contradictions, conflicts and wars (the imperialist war, for instance) among the bourgeois states hostile to the proletarian state, which can be utilised by the proletariat in its offensive or in manoeuvring in the event of a forced retreat.

There is no need to speak at length about the reserves of the first category, as their significance is clear to everyone. As for the reserves of the second category, whose significance is not clear, it must be said that sometimes they are of prime importance for the progress of the revolution. One can hardly deny the enormous importance, for example, of the conflicts between the petty-bourgeois democrats (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the liberal-monarchists bourgeoisie (the Cadets) during and after the first revolution, which undoubtedly played its part in freeing the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Still less reason is there for denying the colossal importance of the fact that the principal groups of imperialists were engaged in a deadly war during the period of the October Revolution, when the imperialist, engrossed in war among themselves, were unable to concentrate their forces against the young Soviet power, and the proletariat for this very reason, was able to get down to work of organising its forces and consolidating its power, and to prepare the rout of Kolchak and Denikin. It must be presumed that now, when the contradictions among the imperialist groups are becoming more and more profound, and when a new war among them is becoming inevitable, reserves of this description will assume ever greater importance for the proletariat.

The task of strategic leadership is to make proper use of all these reserves for the achievement of the main object of the revolution at the given stage of its development.

What does making proper use of reserves mean?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

Firstly. The concentration of the main forces of the revolution at the enemy's most vulnerable spot at the decisive moment, when the revolution has already become ripe, when the offensive is going full-steam ahead, when insurrection is knocking at the door, and when bringing the reserves up to the vanguard is the decisive condition of success. The party's strategy during the period from April to October 1917 can be taken as an example of this manner of utilising reserves. Undoubtedly, the enemy's most vulnerable spot at that time was the war. Undoubtedly, it was on this question, as the fundamental one, that the Party rallied the broadest masses of the population around the proletarian vanguard. The Party's strategy during that period was, while training the vanguard for street action by means of manifestations and demonstrations, to bring the reserves up to the vanguard through the medium of Soviets in the rear and the soldiers' committees at the front. The outcome of the revolution has shown that the reserves were properly utilised.

Here is what Lenin, paraphrasing the well-known theses of Marx and Engels on insurrection, says about this condition of the strategic utilisation of the forces of the revolution:

"1) Never play with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realise that you must go to the end.

"2) Concentrate a great superiority of forces at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

"3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest determination, and by all means, without fail, take the offensive. 'The defensive is the death of every armed uprising.'

"4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

"5) You must strive for daily success, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain the 'moral ascendancy'" (see Vol. XXI, pp. 319-20).

Secondly. The selection of the moment for the decisive blow, of the moment for starting the insurrection, so timed as to coincide with the moment when the crisis has reached its climax, when it is already the case that the vanguard is prepared to fight to the end, the reserves are prepared to support the vanguard, and maximum consternation reigns in the ranks of the enemy.

The decisive battle, says Lenin, may be deemed to have fully matured if "(1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength"; if "(2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements-the petty bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie-have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy"; if "(3) among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated above...and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured" (see Vol. XXV, p.229)

The manner in which the October uprising was carried out may be taken as a model of such strategy.

Failure to observe this condition leads to a dangerous error called "loss of tempo," when the Party lags behind the movement or

runs far ahead of it, courting the danger of failure. An example of such "loss of tempo," of how the moment for an uprising should not be chosen, may be seen in the attempt made by a section of our comrades to begin the uprising by arresting the Democratic Conference in September 1917, when wavering was still apparent in the Soviets, when the armies at the front were still at the crossroads, when the reserves had not yet been brought up to the vanguard.

Thirdly. Undeviating pursuit of the course adopted, no matter what difficulties and complications are encountered on the road towards the goal; this is necessary in order that the vanguard may not lose sight of the main goal of the struggle and that the masses may not stray from the road while marching towards that goal and striving to rally around the vanguard. Failure to observe this condition leads to a grave error, well known to sailors as "losing one's bearing." As an example of this "losing one's bearings." We may take the erroneous conduct of our Party when, immediately after the Democratic Conference, it adopted a resolution to participate in the Pre-parliament. For the moment the Party, as it were, forgot that the Pre-parliament was an attempt of the bourgeoisie to switch the country from the path of the Soviets to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism, that the Party's participation in such a body might result in mixing everything up and confusing the workers and peasants, who were waging a revolutionary struggle under the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets." This mistake was rectified by the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the Pre-parliament.

Fourthly. Manoeuvring the reserves with a view to effecting a proper retreat when the enemy is strong, when retreat is inevitable, when to accept battle forced upon us by the enemy is obviously disadvantageous, when, with the given relation of

forces, retreat becomes the only way to escape a blow against the vanguard and to retain the reserves for the latter.

"The revolutionary parties," says Lenin: must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realise that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realise-and the revolutionary class is taught to realise it by its own bitter experience-that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly" (see Vol. XXV, p. 177)

The object of this strategy is to gain time to disrupt the enemy, and to accumulate forces in order to later assume the offensive.

The signing of the Brest Peace may be taken as a model of this strategy, for it enabled the Party to gain time, to take advantage of the conflicts in the camp of the imperialists, to disrupt the forces of the enemy, to retain the support of the peasantry, and to accumulate forces in preparation for the offensive against Kolchak and Denikin.

"In concluding a separate peace," said Lenin at that time, "we free ourselves as much as it is possible at the present moment from both warring imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare, which hinder them from making a deal against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution" (see Vol. XXII, p. 198).

"Now even the biggest fool," said Lenin three years after the Brest Peace, can see "that the 'Brest Peace' was a concession that strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism" (see Vol. XXVII, p. 7)

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct strategic leadership.

5) Tactical leadership. Tactical leadership is a part of strategic leadership, subordinated to the tasks and the requirements of the latter. The task of tactical leadership is to master all forms of struggle and organisation of the proletariat and to ensure that they are used properly so as to achieve, with the given relations of forces, the maximum results necessary to prepare for strategic success.

What is meant by making proper use of the forms of struggle and organisation of the proletariat?

It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones:

Firstly. To put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organisation which are best suited to the conditions prevailing during the flow or ebb of the movement at a given moment, and which therefore can facilitate and ensure the bringing of the masses to the revolutionary positions, the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary front, and their disposition at the revolutionary front.

The point here is not that the vanguard should realise the impossibility of preserving the old regime and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the million should understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realise from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organisations as will make it easier from the masses to realise from experience the correctness of the revolutionary slogans.

The vanguard would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost contact with the masses, if the Party had not decided as the time to participate in the Duma, if it had not decided to concentrate its forces on work in the Duma and to develop a struggle on the basis of this work, in order to make it easier for the masses to realise from their own experience the futility of the Duma, the falsity of the promises of the Cadets, the impossibility of compromise with tsarism, and the inevitability of an alliance between the peasantry and the working class. Had the masses not gained their experience during the period of the Duma, the exposure of the Cadets and the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

The danger of the "Otzovist" tactics was that they threatened to detach the vanguard from the millions of its reserves.

The Party would have become detached from the working class, and the working class would have lost its influence among the broad masses of the peasants and soldiers, if the proletariat had followed the "Left" Communists, who called for an uprising in April 1917, when the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had not yet exposed themselves as advocates of war and imperialism, when the masses had not yet realized from their own experience the falsity of speeches of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries about peace, land and freedom. Had the masses not gained this experience during the Kerensky period, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries would not have been isolated, and the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible. Therefore, the tactics of "patiently explaining" the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties and of open struggle in the Soviets were the only correct tactics.

The danger of the tactics of the "Left" Communists was that they threatened to transform the Party from the leader of the

proletarian revolution into a handful of futile conspirators with no ground to stand on.

"Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone," says Lenin. "To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it...would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realise through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness, of the government of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp and Co. in Germany) as the only alternatives to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely towards communism" (see Vol. XXV, p. 228)

Secondly. To locate at any given moment the particular link in the chain of processes which, if grasped, will enable us to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare the conditions for achieving strategic success.

The point here is to single out from all the tasks confronting the Party the particular immediate task, the fulfillment of which constitutes the central point, and the accomplishment of which ensures the successful fulfillment of the other immediate tasks.

The importance of this thesis may be illustrated by two examples, one of which could be taken from the remote past (the period of the formation of the Party) and the other from the immediate present (the period of the NEP).

In the period of the formation of the Party, when the innumerable circles and organizations had not yet been linked together, when amateurishness and the parochial outlook of the circles were corroding the Party from top to bottom, when ideological confusion was the characteristic feature of the internal life of the Party, the main link and the main task in the chain of links and in the chain of tasks then confronting the Party proved to be the establishment of an all-Russian illegal newspaper (Iskra). Why? Because, under the conditions then prevailing, only by means of an all-Russian illegal newspaper was it possible to create a solid core of the Party capable of uniting the innumerable circles and organisations into one whole, to prepare the conditions for ideological and tactical unity, and thus to build the foundations for the formation of a real party.

During the period of transition from war to economic construction, when industry was vegetating in the grip of disruption and agriculture was suffering from a shortage of urban manufactured goods, when the establishment of a bond between state industry and peasant economy became the fundamental condition for successful socialist construction-in that period it turned out that the main link in the chain of processes, the main task among a number of tasks, was to develop trade. Why? Because under the conditions of the NEP the bond between industry and peasant economy cannot be established except through trade; because under the conditions of the NEP production without sale is fatal for industry; because industry can be expanded only by the expansion of sales as a

result of developing trade; because only after we have consolidated our position in the sphere of trade, only after we have secured control of trade, only after we have secured this link can there be any hope of linking industry with the peasant market and successfully fulfilling the other immediate tasks in order to create the conditions for building the foundations of socialist economy.

"It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general," says Lenin. "One must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which one must grasp with all one's might in order to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link."...

"At the present time...this link is the revival of internal trade under proper state regulation (direction). Trade-that is the 'link' in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, 'which we must grasp with all our might'..." (see Vol. XXVII, p. 82)

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct tactical leadership.

6) Reformism and revolutionism. What is the difference between revolutionary tactics and reformist tactics?

Some think that Leninism is opposed to reforms, opposed to compromises and to agreements in general. This is absolutely wrong. Bolsheviks know as well as anybody else that in a certain sense "every little helps," that under certain conditions reforms in general, and compromises and agreements in particular, are necessary and useful.

"To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie," says Lenin, "a war which is a hundred times more

difficult, protracted, and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to reject agreements and compromises with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies-is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected and to try others?" (see Vol. XXV, p. 210).

Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and agreements.

To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that rule, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

To a revolutionary, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are a by-product of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are naturally transformed into an instrument for strengthening the revolution, into a strongpoint for the further development of the revolutionary movement.

The revolutionary will accept a reform in order to use it as an aid in combining legal work with illegal work to intensify, under its cover, the illegal work for the revolutionary preparation of the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

That is the essence of making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The reformist, on the contrary, will accept reforms in order to renounce all illegal work, to thwart the preparation of the masses for the revolution and to rest in the shade of "bestowed" reforms.

That is the essence of reformist tactics.

Such is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism.

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself compelled temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the "reformist path," as Lenin says in his well-known article "The Importance of Gold"[23], the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes-in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate one's forces and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a "reformist" path. But it must be borne in mind that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite, its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

Under such conditions a reform is thus transformed into its opposite.

The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period

was great enough and therefore provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics of flanking movements.

Thus, while formerly, under bourgeois rule, reforms were a by-product of revolution, now under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the source of reforms is the revolutionary gains of the proletariat, the reserves accumulated in the hands of the proletariat consisting of these gains.

"Only Marxism," says Lenin, "has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect, namely, under the conditions preceding the first to any extant permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relations was reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat... After the victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principal, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism...After the victory (while still remaining a 'by-product' on an international scale) they (i.e., reforms-J.St.) are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates such a 'reserve of strength' that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, to hold out both materially and morally" (see Vol. XXVII, pp. 84-85).

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE TACTICS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS [24]

Preface to the book *On the Road to October*

Works, Volume 6

December 17, 1924

(Excerpts)

1. The external and internal setting for the October Revolution

Three circumstances of an external nature determined the comparative ease with which the proletarian revolution in Russia succeeded in breaking the chains of imperialism and thus overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie.

Firstly, the circumstance that the October Revolution began in a period of desperate struggle between the two principal imperialist groups, the Anglo-French and the Austro-German; at a time when, engaged in mortal struggle between themselves, these two groups had neither the time nor the means to devote serious attention to the struggle against the October Revolution. This circumstance was of tremendous importance for the October Revolution; for it enabled it to take advantage of the fierce conflicts within the imperialist world to strengthen and organize its own forces.

Secondly, the circumstance that the October Revolution began during the imperialist war, at a time when the laboring masses, exhausted by the war and thirsting for peace, were by the very logic of facts led up to the proletarian revolution as the only way out of the war. This circumstance was of extreme importance for the October Revolution; for it put into its hands the mighty weapon of peace, made it easier for it to link the Soviet revolution with the ending of the hated war, and thus created mass

sympathy for it both in the West, among the workers, and in the East, among the oppressed peoples.

Thirdly, the existence of a powerful working-class movement in Europe and the fact that a revolutionary crisis was maturing in the West and in the East, brought on by the protracted imperialist war. This circumstance was of inestimable importance for the revolution in Russia; for it ensured the revolution faithful allies outside Russia in its struggle against world imperialism.

But in addition to circumstances of an external nature, there were also a number of favorable internal conditions which facilitated the victory of the October Revolution.

Of these conditions, the following must be regarded as the chief ones:

Firstly, the October Revolution enjoyed the most active support of the overwhelming majority of the working class in Russia.

Secondly, it enjoyed the undoubted support of the poor peasants and of the majority of the soldiers, who were thirsting for peace and land.

Thirdly, it had at its head, as its guiding force, such a tried and tested party as the Bolshevik Party, strong not only by reason of its experience and discipline acquired through the years, but also by reason of its vast connections with the laboring masses.

Fourthly, the October Revolution was confronted by enemies who were comparatively easy to overcome, such as the rather weak Russian bourgeoisie, a landlord class which was utterly demoralized by peasant "revolts," and the compromising parties (the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), which had become completely bankrupt during the war.

Fifthly, it had at its disposal the vast expanses of the young state, in which it was able to maneuver freely, retreat when circumstances so required, enjoy a respite, gather strength, etc.

Sixthly, in its struggle against counter-revolution the October Revolution could count upon sufficient resources of food, fuel and raw materials within the country. The combination of these external and internal circumstances created that peculiar situation which determined the comparative ease with which the October Revolution won its victory.

This does not mean, of course, that there were no unfavorable features in the external and internal setting of the October Revolution. Think of such an unfavorable feature as, for example, the isolation, to some extent, of the October Revolution, the absence near it, or bordering on it, of a Soviet country on which it could rely for support. Undoubtedly, the future revolution, for example, in Germany, will be in a more favorable situation in this respect, for it has in close proximity a powerful Soviet country like our Soviet Union. I need not mention so unfavorable a feature of the October Revolution as the absence of a proletarian majority within the country.

But these unfavorable features only emphasize the tremendous importance of the peculiar internal and external conditions of the October Revolution of which I have spoken above.

These peculiar conditions must not be lost sight of for a single moment. They must be borne in mind particularly in analyzing the events of the autumn of 1923 in Germany. Above all, they should be borne in mind by Trotsky, who draws an unfounded analogy between the October Revolution and the revolution in Germany and lashes violently at the German Communist Party for its actual and alleged mistakes.

"It was easy for Russia," says Lenin, "in the specific, historically very special situation of 1917, to start the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to continue the revolution and carry it through to the end. I had occasion to point this out already at the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Such specific conditions, as 1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending, as a consequence of this revolution, of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; 2) the possibility of taking advantage for a certain time of the mortal conflict between two world powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; 3) the possibility of enduring a comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; 4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to take the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the majority of the members of which were definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and realize them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat — such specific conditions do not exist in Western Europe at present; and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not come so easily. That, by the way, apart from a number of other causes, is why it will be more difficult for Western Europe to start a socialist revolution than it was for us." (See "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder; Vol. XXV, p. 205.)

These words of Lenin's should not be forgotten.

II. Two specific features of the October Revolution

- or October and Trotsky's theory of "permanent" revolution

There are two specific features of the October Revolution which must be understood first of all if we are to comprehend the inner meaning and the historical significance of that revolution.

What are these features?

Firstly, the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat was born in our country as a power which came into existence on the basis of an alliance between the proletariat and the laboring masses of the peasantry, the latter being led by the proletariat. Secondly, the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat became established in our country as a result of the victory of socialism in one country — a country in which capitalism was little developed — while capitalism was preserved in other countries where capitalism was more highly developed. This does not mean, of course, that the October Revolution has no other specific features. But it is precisely these two specific features that are important for us at the present moment, not only because they distinctly express the essence of the October Revolution, but also because they brilliantly reveal the opportunist nature of the theory of "permanent revolution."

Let us briefly examine these features.

The question of the laboring masses of the petty bourgeoisie, both urban and rural, the question of winning these masses to the side of the proletariat, is highly important for the proletarian revolution.

Lenin constantly reiterated that without an alliance with these masses of other nationalities the proletariat of Russia could not achieve victory. In his articles on the national question and in his speeches at the congresses of the Comintern, Lenin repeatedly said that the victory of the world revolution was impossible without a revolutionary alliance, a revolutionary bloc, between the proletariat of the advanced countries and the oppressed

peoples of the enslaved colonies. But what are colonies if not the oppressed laboring masses, and, primarily, the laboring masses of the peasantry? Who does not know that the question of the liberation of the colonies is essentially a question of the liberation of the laboring masses of the non-proletarian classes from the oppression and exploitation of finance capital?

But from this it follows that Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a purely "Russian" theory, but a theory which necessarily applies to all countries. Bolshevism is not only a Russian phenomenon. "Bolshevism," says Lenin, is "a model of tactics for all." (See the Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky. Vol. XXIII, p. 336)

Such are the characteristics of the first specific feature of the October Revolution.

What are the characteristics of the second specific feature of the October Revolution?

In his study of imperialism, especially in the period of the war, Lenin arrived at the law of the uneven, spasmodic, economic and political development of the capitalist countries. According to this law, the development of enterprises, trusts, branches of industry and individual countries proceeds not evenly — not according to an established sequence, not in such a way that one trust, one branch of industry or one country is always in advance of the others, while other trusts or countries keep consistently one behind the other — but spasmodically, with interruptions in the development of some countries and leaps ahead in the development of others. Under these circumstances the "quite legitimate" striving of the countries that have slowed down to hold their old positions, and the equally "legitimate" striving of the countries that have leapt ahead to seize new positions, lead to a situation in which armed clashes among the imperialist

countries become an inescapable necessity. Such was the case, for example, with Germany, which half a century ago was a backward country in comparison with France and Britain. The same must be said of Japan as compared with Russia. It is well known, however, that by the beginning of the twentieth century Germany and Japan had leapt so far ahead that Germany had succeeded in overtaking France and had begun to press Britain hard on the world market, while Japan was pressing Russia. As is well known, it was from these contradictions that the recent imperialist war arose.

This law proceeds from the following:

- 1)"Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries" (see Preface to the French edition of Lenin's *Imperialism*.);
- 2) "This 'booty' is shared between two or three powerful world robbers armed to the teeth (America, Britain, Japan), who involve the whole world in their war over the sharing of their booty" (*ibid.*);
- 3) The growth of contradictions within the world system of financial oppression and the inevitability of armed clashes lead to the world front of imperialism becoming easily vulnerable to revolution, and to a breach in this front in individual countries becoming probable;
- 4) This breach is most likely to occur at those points, and in those countries, where the chain of the imperialist front is weakest, that is to say, where imperialism is least consolidated, and where it is easiest for a revolution to expand;

5) In view of this, the victory of socialism in one country, even if that country is less developed in the capitalist sense, while capitalism remains in other countries, even if those countries are more highly developed in the capitalist sense — is quite possible and probable.

Such, briefly, are the foundations of Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution.

It goes without saying that for the complete victory of socialism, for a complete guarantee against the restoration of the old order, the united efforts of the proletarians of several countries are necessary. It goes without saying that, without the support given to our revolution by the proletariat of Europe, the proletariat of Russia could not have held out against the general onslaught, just as without the support given by the revolution in Russia to the revolutionary movement in the West the latter could not have developed at the pace at which it has begun to develop since the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia. It goes without saying that we need support. But what does support of our revolution by the West-European proletariat imply? Is not the sympathy of the European workers for our revolution, their readiness to thwart the imperialists' plans of intervention — is not all this support, real assistance? Unquestionably it is. Without such support, without such assistance, not only from the European workers but also from the colonial and dependent countries, the proletarian dictatorship in Russia would have been hard pressed. Up to now, has this sympathy and this assistance, coupled with the might of our Red Army and the readiness of the workers and peasants of Russia to defend their socialist fatherland to the last — has all this been sufficient to beat off the attacks of the imperialists and to win us the necessary conditions for the serious work of construction? Yes, it has been sufficient. Is this sympathy growing stronger, or is it waning?

Unquestionably, it is growing stronger. Hence, have we favorable conditions, not only for pushing on with the organizing of socialist economy, but also, in our turn, for giving support to the West-European workers and to the oppressed peoples of the East? Yes, we have. This is eloquently proved by the seven years history of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia.

III. Certain specific features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks during the period of preparation for October

In order to understand the tactics pursued by the Bolsheviks during the period of preparation for October we must get a clear idea of at least some of the particularly important features of those tactics. This is all the more necessary since in numerous pamphlets on the tactics of the Bolsheviks precisely these features are frequently overlooked.

What are these features?

First specific feature. If one were to listen to Trotsky, one would think that there were only two periods in the history of the preparation for October: the period of reconnaissance and the period of uprising, and that all else comes from the evil one. What was the April demonstration of 1917? "The April demonstration, which went more to the 'Left' than it should have, was a reconnoitering sortie for the purpose of probing the disposition of the masses and the relations between them and the majority in the Soviets." And what was the July demonstration of 1917? In Trotsky's opinion, "this, too, was in fact another, more extensive, reconnaissance at a new and higher phase of the movement." Needless to say, the June demonstration of 1917, which was organized at the demand of our Party, should, according to Trotsky's idea, all the more be termed a "reconnaissance."

This would seem to imply that as early as March 1917 the Bolsheviks had ready a political army of workers and peasants, and that if they did not bring this army into action for an uprising in April, or in June, or in July, but engaged merely in "reconnaissance," it was because, and only because, "the information obtained from the reconnaissance" at the time was unfavorable.

Needless to say, this oversimplified notion of the political tactics of our Party is nothing but a confusion of ordinary military tactics with the revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks.

Actually, all these demonstrations were primarily the result of the spontaneous pressure of the masses, the result of the fact that the indignation of the masses against the war had boiled over and sought an outlet in the streets.

Actually, the task of the Party at that time was to shape and to guide the spontaneously arising demonstrations of the masses along the line of the revolutionary slogans of the Bolsheviks.

Obviously, it was not a question of "reconnaissance," but of the following:

- 1) all through the period of preparation for October the Party invariably relied in its struggle upon the spontaneous upsurge of the mass revolutionary movement;
- 2) while relying on the spontaneous upsurge, it maintained its own undivided leadership of the movement;
- 3) this leadership of the movement helped it to form the mass political army for the October uprising;
- 4) this policy was bound to result in the entire preparation for October proceeding under the leadership of one party, the Bolshevik Party;

5) this preparation for October, in its turn, brought it about that as a result of the October uprising power was concentrated in the hands of one party, the Bolshevik Party.

Thus, the undivided leadership of one party, the Communist Party, as the principal factor in the preparation for October — such is the characteristic feature of the October Revolution, such is the first specific feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.

It scarcely needs proof that without this feature of Bolshevik tactics the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the conditions of imperialism would have been impossible.

In this the October Revolution differs favorably from the revolution of 1871 in France, where the leadership was divided between two parties, neither of which could be called a Communist Party.

Second specific feature. The preparation for October thus proceeded under the leadership of one party, the Bolshevik Party. But how did the Party carry out this leadership, along what line did the latter proceed? This leadership proceeded along the line of isolating the compromising parties, as the most dangerous groupings in the period of the outbreak of the revolution, the line of isolating the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

What is the fundamental strategic rule of Leninism?

It is the recognition of the following:

1) the compromising parties are the most dangerous social support of the enemies of the revolution in the period of the approaching revolutionary outbreak;

2) it is impossible to overthrow the enemy (tsarism or the bourgeoisie) unless these parties are isolated;

3) the main weapons in the period of preparation for the revolution must therefore be directed towards isolating these parties, towards winning the broad masses of the working people away from them.

In the period of the struggle against tsarism, in the period of preparation for the bourgeois-democratic revolution (1905-16), the most dangerous social support of tsarism was the liberal-monarchist party, the Cadet Party. Why? Because it was the compromising party, the party of compromise between tsarism and the majority of the people, i.e., the peasantry as a whole. Naturally, the Party at that time directed its main blows at the Cadets, for unless the Cadets were isolated there could be no hope of a rupture between the peasantry and tsarism, and unless this rupture was ensured there could be no hope of the victory of the revolution. Many people at that time did not understand this specific feature of Bolshevik strategy and accused the Bolsheviks of excessive "Cadetophobia"; they asserted that with the Bolsheviks the struggle against the Cadets "overshadowed" the struggle against the principal enemy — tsarism. But these accusations, for which there was no justification, revealed an utter failure to understand the Bolshevik strategy, which called for the isolation of the compromising party in order to facilitate, to hasten the victory over the principal enemy.

It scarcely needs proof that without this strategy the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution would have been impossible.

In the period of preparation for October the center of gravity of the conflicting forces shifted to another plane. The tsar was gone. The Cadet Party had been transformed from a compromising

force into a governing force, into the ruling force of imperialism. Now the fight was no longer between tsarism and the people, but between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In this period the petty-bourgeois democratic parties, the parties of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, were the most dangerous social support of imperialism. Why? Because these parties were then the compromising parties, the parties of compromise between imperialism and the laboring masses. Naturally, the Bolsheviks at that time directed their main blows at these parties; for unless these parties were isolated there could be no hope of a rupture between the laboring masses and imperialism, and unless this rupture was ensured there could be no hope of the victory of the Soviet revolution. Many people at that time did not understand this specific feature of the Bolshevik tactics and accused the Bolsheviks of displaying "excessive hatred" towards the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and of "forgetting" the principal goal. But the entire period of preparation for October eloquently testifies to the fact that only by pursuing these tactics could the Bolsheviks ensure the victory of the October Revolution.

The characteristic feature of this period was the further revolutionization of the laboring masses of the peasantry, their disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, their defection from these parties, their turn towards rallying directly around the proletariat as the only consistently revolutionary force, capable of leading the country to peace. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and the Bolsheviks, on the other, for the laboring masses of the peasantry, for winning over these masses. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the coalition period, the Kerensky period, the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to confiscate the landlords' land, the fight of the

Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov revolt. And they decided the issue of this struggle entirely in favor of the Bolshevik strategy; for had not the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks been isolated it would have been impossible to overthrow the government of the imperialists, and had this government not been overthrown it would have been impossible to break away from the war. The policy of isolating the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks proved to be the only correct policy.

Thus, isolation of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties as the main line in directing the preparations for October — such was the second specific feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks.

It scarcely needs proof that without this feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks, the alliance of the working class and the laboring masses of the peasantry would have been left hanging in the air.

It is characteristic that in his *The Lessons of October* Trotsky says nothing, or next to nothing, about this specific feature of the Bolshevik tactics.

Third specific feature. Thus, the Party, in directing the preparations for October, pursued the line of isolating the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, of winning the broad masses of the workers and peasants away from them. But how, concretely, was this isolation effected by the Party — in what form, under what slogan? It was effected in the form of the revolutionary mass movement for the power of the Soviets, under the slogan "All power to the Soviets!", by means of the struggle to convert the Soviets from organs for mobilizing the

masses into organs of the uprising, into organs of power, into the apparatus of a new proletarian state power.

The inestimable significance of the tactics of transforming the Soviets into organs of state power lay in the fact that they caused millions of working people to break away from imperialism, exposed the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties as the tools of imperialism, and brought the masses by a direct route, as it were, to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Thus, the policy of transforming the Soviets into organs of state power, as the most important condition for isolating the compromising parties and for the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat — such is the third specific feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.

Fourth specific feature. The picture would not be complete if we did not deal with the question of how and why the Bolsheviks were able to transform their Party slogans into slogans for the vast masses, into slogans which pushed the revolution forward; how and why they succeeded in convincing not only the vanguard, and not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the people, of the correctness of their policy.

The point is that for the victory of the revolution, if it is really a people's revolution embracing the masses in their millions, correct Party slogans alone are not enough. For the victory of the revolution one more necessary condition is required, namely, that the masses themselves become convinced through their own experience of the correctness of these slogans. Only then do the slogans of the Party become the slogans of the masses themselves. Only then does the revolution really become a people's revolution. One of the specific features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October was that they correctly determined the paths and turns which would

naturally lead the masses to the Party's slogans — to the very threshold of the revolution, so to speak — thus helping them to feel, to test, to realize by their own experience the correctness of these slogans. In other words, one of the specific features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks is that they do not confuse leadership of the Party with leadership of the masses; that they clearly see the difference between the first sort of leadership and the second; that they, therefore, represent the science, not only of leadership of the Party, but of leadership of the vast masses of the working people.

Thus, ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party slogans on the basis of their own experience, by bringing them to the revolutionary positions, as the most important condition for the winning over of the millions of working people to the side of the Party — such is the fourth specific feature of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October.

I think that what I have said is quite sufficient to get a clear idea of the characteristic features of these tactics.

IV. The October Revolution is the beginning of and pre-condition for the world revolution

There can be no doubt that the universal theory of a simultaneous victory of the revolution in the principal countries of Europe, the theory that the victory of socialism in one country is impossible, has proved to be an artificial and untenable theory. The seven years' history of the proletarian revolution in Russia speaks not for but against this theory. This theory is unacceptable not only as a scheme of development of the world revolution, for it contradicts obvious facts. It is still less acceptable as a slogan; for it fetters, rather than releases, the initiative of individual countries which, by reason of certain historical conditions, obtain the opportunity to break through the front of capital

independently; for it does not stimulate an active onslaught on capital in individual countries, but encourages passive waiting for the moment of the "universal denouement"; for it cultivates among the proletarians of the different countries not the spirit of revolutionary determination, but the mood of Hamlet-like doubt over the question, "What if the others fail to back us up?" Lenin was absolutely right in saying that the victory of the proletariat in one country is the "typical case," that "a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries" can only be a "rare exception." (See the Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.)

But, as is well known, Lenin's theory of revolution is not limited only to this side of the question. It is also the theory of the development of the world revolution [See the Foundations of Leninism -J. V. Stalin]. The victory of socialism in one country is not a self-sufficient task. The revolution which has been victorious in one country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity, but as an aid, as a means for hastening the victory of the proletariat in all countries. For the victory of the revolution in one country, in the present case Russia, is not only the product of the uneven development and progressive decay of imperialism; it is at the same time the beginning of and the precondition for the world revolution.

Undoubtedly, the paths of development of the world revolution are not as plain as it may have seemed previously, before the victory of the revolution in one country, before the appearance of developed imperialism, which is "the eve of the socialist revolution." For a new factor has arisen — the law of the uneven development of the capitalist countries, which operates under the conditions of developed imperialism, and which implies the inevitability of armed collisions, the general weakening of the world front of capital, and the possibility of the victory of

socialism in individual countries. For a new factor has arisen — the vast Soviet country, lying between the West and the East, between the center of the financial exploitation of the world and the arena of colonial oppression, a country which by its very existence is revolutionizing the whole world.

All these are factors (not to mention other less important ones) which cannot be left out of account in studying the paths of development of the world revolution.

Formerly, it was commonly thought that the revolution would develop through the even "maturing" of the elements of socialism, primarily in the more developed, the "advanced," countries. Now this view must be considerably modified.

"The system of international relationships," says Lenin, "has now taken a form in which one of the states of Europe, viz., Germany, has been enslaved by the victor countries. Furthermore, a number of states, which are, moreover, the oldest states in the West, find themselves in a position, as the result of their victory, to utilize this victory to make a number of insignificant concessions to their oppressed classes — concessions which nevertheless retard the revolutionary movement in those countries and create some semblance of 'social peace.'"

"At the same time, precisely as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries — the East, India, China, etc. — have been completely dislodged from their groove. Their development has definitely shifted to the general European capitalist lines. The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that cannot but lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism."

In view of this fact, and in connection with it, "the West-European capitalist countries will consummate their

development towards socialism . . . not as we formerly expected. They are consummating it not by the even 'maturing' of socialism in them, but by the exploitation of some countries by others, by the exploitation of the first of the countries to be vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has definitely come into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement." (See *Better Fewer, But Better.*)

If we add to this the fact that not only the defeated countries and colonies are being exploited by the victorious countries, but that some of the victorious countries are falling into the orbit of financial exploitation at the hands of the most powerful of the victorious countries, America and Britain; that the contradictions among all these countries are an extremely important factor in the disintegration of world imperialism; that, in addition to these contradictions, very profound contradictions exist and are developing within each of these countries; that all these contradictions are becoming more profound and more acute because of the existence, alongside these countries, of the great Republic of Soviets — if all this is taken into consideration, then the picture of the special character of the international situation will become more or less complete.

Most probably, the world revolution will develop by the breaking away of a number of new countries from the system of the imperialist states as a result of revolution, while the proletarians of these countries will be supported by the proletariat of the imperialist states. We see that the first country to break away, the first victorious country, is already being supported by the workers and the laboring masses of other countries. Without this support it could not hold out.

Undoubtedly, this support will increase and grow. But there can also be no doubt that the very development of the world revolution, the very process of the breaking away from imperialism of a number of new countries will be the more rapid and thorough, the more thoroughly socialism becomes consolidated in the first victorious country, the faster this country is transformed into a base for the further unfolding of the world revolution, into a lever for the further disintegration of imperialism.

While it is true that the final victory of socialism in the first country to emancipate itself is impossible without the combined efforts of the proletarians of several countries, it is equally true that the unfolding of the world revolution will be the more rapid and thorough, the more effective the assistance rendered by the first socialist country to the workers and laboring masses of all other countries.

In what should this assistance be expressed?

It should be expressed, firstly, in the victorious country achieving "the utmost possible in one country f o r the development, support and awakening of the revolution in all countries. (See *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*.)

It should be expressed, secondly, in that the "victorious proletariat" of one country, "having expropriated the capitalists and organized its own socialist production, would stand up . . . against the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states." (See *On the Slogan for a United States of Europe*.)

The characteristic feature of the assistance given by the victorious country is not only that it hastens the victory of the proletarians of other countries, but also that, by facilitating this victory, it ensures the final victory of socialism in the first victorious country.

Most probably, in the course of development of the world revolution, side by side with the centers of imperialism in individual capitalist countries and with the system of these countries throughout the world, centers of socialism will be created in individual Soviet countries and a system of these centers throughout the world, and the struggle between these two systems will fill the history of the unfolding of the world revolution.

For, says Lenin, "the free union of nations in socialism is impossible without a more or less prolonged and stubborn struggle of the socialist republics against the backward states." (See *On the Slogan for a United States of Europe*.)

The world significance of the October Revolution lies not only in the fact that it constitutes a great beginning made by one country in causing a breach in the system of imperialism and that it is the first center of socialism in the ocean of imperialist countries, but also in that it constitutes the first stage of the world revolution and a mighty base for its further development.

Therefore, not only those are wrong who forget the international character of the October Revolution and declare the victory of socialism in one country to be a purely national, and only a national, phenomenon, but also those who, although they bear in mind the international character of the October Revolution, are inclined to regard this revolution as something passive, merely destined to accept help from without. Actually, not only does the October Revolution need support from the revolution in other

countries, but the revolution in those countries needs the support of the October Revolution, in order to accelerate and advance the cause of overthrowing world imperialism.

THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES

Pravda, No. 66, March 22, 1925

Works, Vol. 7, 1925

(Excerpt)

1. Undoubtedly, side by side with the strengthening of capitalism, there is a growth of the contradictions between the capitalist groups, a growth of the forces which weaken and disintegrate capitalism. The struggle between Britain and America for oil, for Canada, for markets, etc.; the struggle between the Anglo-American bloc and Japan for Eastern markets; the struggle between Britain and France for influence in Europe; and, lastly, the struggle between enslaved Germany and the dominant Entente — all these are commonly-known facts which indicate that the successes that capital has achieved are transient, that the process of capitalism's "recovery" contains within itself the germs of its inherent weakness and disintegration.

2. The growth and consolidation of the national-liberation movement in India, China, Egypt, Indonesia, North Africa, etc., which are undermining capitalism's rear. Since, for its "recovery," imperialism must enlarge its sphere of influence in the colonies and dependent countries, whereas the struggle of these countries against imperialism is undoubtedly becoming intensified, it is obvious that the successes of imperialism in this sphere cannot be durable.

POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

December 18-31, 1925

Pravda, Nos. 291, 292 and 296, December 20, 22, and 29, 1925

Works, Volume 7

(Excerpts)

At the bottom of all this lies an internal weakness, the weakness and infirmity of world capitalism, on the one hand, and the growth of the workers' revolutionary movement in general, and particularly the growth of strength in our country, the Land of Soviets, on the other.

What lies at the bottom of this weakness of the capitalist world?

At the bottom of this weakness lie the contradictions which capitalism cannot overcome, and within the framework of which the entire international situation is taking shape — contradictions which the capitalist countries cannot overcome, and which can be overcome only in the course of development of the proletarian revolution in the West.

What are these contradictions? They can be reduced to five groups.

The first group of contradictions are those between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries.

The second group of contradictions are those between imperialism and the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries.

The third group of contradictions are those that are developing, and cannot but develop, between the countries that were victorious in the imperialist war and those that were defeated.

The fourth group of contradictions are those that are developing, and cannot but develop, among the victor countries themselves.

And the fifth group of contradictions are those that are developing between the Land of Soviets and the countries of capitalism as a whole.

Such are the five principal groups of contradictions, within the framework of which the development of our international position is proceeding.

Comrades, unless we briefly examine the nature and the growth of these contradictions, we shall not be able to understand the present international position of our country. Therefore, a brief review of these contradictions must necessarily form part of my report.

1. The stabilization of capitalism

And so, let us begin with the first series of contradictions, those between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries. In this sphere, the basic facts may be reduced to the following.

Firstly. Capitalism is emerging, or has already emerged, from the chaos in production, trade and in the sphere of finance which set in, and in which it found itself, after the war. The Party called this the partial, or temporary, stabilisation of capitalism. What does that mean? It means that the production and trade of the capitalist countries, which had become terribly low at one time in the period of the post-war crisis (I have in mind the years 1919-20), have begun to make progress, and the political power of the bourgeoisie has begun to become more or less consolidated. It means that capitalism has temporarily extricated itself from the chaos in which it found itself after the war.

Secondly. Instead of the period of flow of the revolutionary tide that we observed in Europe in the years of the post-war crisis, we now see a period of ebb. This means that the question of taking power, of the proletariat capturing power any day, is not now on the order of the day in Europe. The period of rising revolutionary tide, when the movement pushes forward and upward and the Party's slogans cannot keep pace with the movement, as was the case in our country, for example, in 1905 or in 1917 — that period of rising tide still lies ahead.

Fourthly. The temporary stabilisation of European capitalism to which I referred above has been achieved mainly with the aid of American capital, and at the price of the financial subordination of Western Europe to America. To prove this, it is sufficient to quote the figure of Europe's state indebtedness to America. That figure amounts to no less than 26,000 million rubles. This is apart from private debts to America, i.e., American investments in European enterprises, amounting for Europe to the sum of several thousand millions. What does that show? It shows that Europe has begun to get on its feet, more or less, as a result of the influx of capital from America (and partly from Britain). At what price? At the price of Europe's financial subordination to America.

Fifthly. In view of this, in order to be able to pay interest and principal, Europe is forced to increase the burden of taxation on the population, to worsen the conditions of the workers. That is precisely what is happening now in the European countries. Already, before the payment of principal and interest has properly started, in Britain, for example, the burden of taxation as a percentage of the total national income has increased from 11 per cent (in 1913) to 23 per cent in 1924; in France it has increased from 13 per cent of the national income to 21 per cent, and in Italy — from 13 per cent to 19 per cent. Needless to say, in

the very near future the burden of taxation will grow still heavier. In view of this, the material conditions of the working people in Europe, and primarily those of the working class, will certainly deteriorate and the working class will inevitably become revolutionised. Symptoms of this revolutionisation are already to be observed in Britain and in other European countries. I have in mind the definite swing to the Left of the working class in Europe.

Such are the principal facts which show that the temporary stabilisation of capitalism which Europe has achieved is a putrid stabilisation that has grown up on putrid soil.

It is very likely — I do not exclude the possibility — that production and trade in Europe will reach the prewar level. But that does not mean that capitalism will thereby reach the degree of stability it possessed before the war. That degree of stability it will never reach again. Why? Because, firstly, Europe has purchased her temporary stability at the price of financial subordination to America, which is leading to a colossal increase in the burden of taxation, to the inevitable deterioration of the conditions of the workers, and to the revolutionization of the European countries; secondly, because of a number of other reasons — about which I will speak later — that make the present stabilisation undurable, unstable.

The general conclusion, if we sum up all that I have just said about the analysis of the first series of contradictions — the general conclusion is that the circle of major states exploiting the world has shrunk to an extreme degree compared with the period before the war. Formerly, the chief exploiters were Britain, France, Germany, and partly America; that circle has now shrunk to an extreme degree. Today, the major financial exploiters of the world, and hence its major creditors, are North America and to some extent her assistant — Britain.

That does not mean that Europe has sunk to the position of a colony. The European countries, while continuing to exploit their colonies, have themselves now fallen into a state of financial subordination to America and, as a consequence, are in their turn being exploited, and will continue to be exploited by America. In that sense, the circle of major states which exploit the world financially has shrunk to a minimum, whereas the circle of exploited countries has expanded.

That is one of the reasons for the instability and internal weakness of the present stabilisation of capitalism.

2. Imperialism, colonies and semi-colonies

Let us pass to the second series of contradictions, those between the imperialist countries and the colonial countries.

The basic facts in this sphere are: the development and growth of industry and of the proletariat in the colonies, especially during and after the war; the growth of culture in general, and of the national intelligentsia in particular, in these countries; the growth of the national-revolutionary movement in the colonies and the crisis in the world domination of imperialism in general; the struggle for liberation waged by India and Egypt against British imperialism; the war for liberation waged by Syria and Morocco against French imperialism; China's struggle for liberation against Anglo-Japanese-American imperialism, etc.; the growth of the working-class movement in India and China and the increasingly important role of the working class in these countries in the national-revolutionary movement.

From this it follows that the Great Powers are faced with the danger of losing their chief rear, i.e., the colonies. Here, the stabilisation of capitalism is in a bad way; for the revolutionary movement in the oppressed countries, growing step by step, is beginning in some places to assume the form of open war against

imperialism (Morocco, Syria, China), while imperialism is obviously unable to cope with the task of curbing "its" colonies.

3. Victors and vanquished

I pass to the third series of contradictions, those between the victor countries and the defeated countries.

The basic facts in this sphere are the following. Firstly, after the Versailles Peace, Europe found herself split up into two camps — the camp of the vanquished (Germany, Austria and other countries) and the camp of the victors (the Entente plus America). Secondly, the circumstance must be noted that the victors, who had previously tried to strangle the defeated countries by means of occupation (I remind you of the Ruhr), have abandoned this line and have adopted a different method, the method of financial exploitation — of Germany in the first place, and of Austria in the second place. This new method finds expression in the Dawes Plan, the unfavourable results of which are only now making themselves felt. Thirdly, the Locarno Conference [25], which was supposed to have eliminated all the contradictions between the victors and the vanquished, but which, actually, in spite of all the hullabaloo around this question, did not eliminate any of the contradictions but only aggravated them.

4. The contradictions between the victor countries

I pass to the fourth series of contradictions, to those between the victor countries. The basic facts here are that, in spite of the existence of a sort of bloc between America and Britain, a bloc founded on an agreement between America and Britain against the annulment of Allied debts, in spite of this bloc, I say, the conflict of interests between Britain and America is not being allayed, on the contrary, it is becoming more intense. One of the principal problems now facing the world powers is the problem

of oil. If, for example, we take America, we find that she produces about 70 per cent of the world output of oil and accounts for over 60 per cent of total world consumption. Well, it is just in this sphere, which is the principal nerve of the entire economic and military activities of the world powers, that America everywhere and always encounters opposition from Britain.

5. The capitalist world and the Soviet Union

I pass to the fifth series of contradictions, those between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world.

The basic fact in this sphere is that an all-embracing world capitalism no longer exists. After the Land of Soviets came into being, after the old Russia was transformed into the Soviet Union, an all-embracing world capitalism ceased to exist. The world split up into two camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of the struggle against imperialism. That is the first point that must be noted.

The second point that must be noted in this sphere is that two major countries — Britain and America, as an Anglo-American alliance — are coming to stand at the head of the capitalist countries. Our country — the Soviet Union — is coming to stand at the head of those discontented with imperialism and who are engaged in mortal struggle against it.

The third point is that two major, but opposite, centres of attraction are being created and, in conformity with this, two lines of attraction towards those centres all over the world: Britain and America — for the bourgeois governments, and the Soviet Union — for the workers of the West and for the revolutionaries of the East. The power of attraction of Britain and America lies in their wealth; credits can be obtained there. The power of attraction of the Soviet Union lies in its revolutionary experience, its experience in the struggle for the emancipation of

the workers from capitalism and of the oppressed peoples from imperialism. I am speaking of the attraction of the workers of Europe and of the revolutionaries of the East towards our country. You know what a visit to our country means to a European worker or to a revolutionary from an oppressed country, how they make pilgrimages to our country, and what an attraction our country has for all that is honest and revolutionary all over the world.

Two camps, two centres of attraction.

The fourth point is that in the other camp, the camp of capitalism, there is no unity of interests and no solidarity; that what reigns there is a conflict of interests, disintegration, a struggle between victors and vanquished, a struggle among the victors themselves, a struggle among all the imperialist countries for colonies, for profits; and that, because of all this, stabilisation in that camp cannot be lasting. On the other hand, in our country there is a healthy process of stabilisation, which is gaining strength, our economy is growing, our socialist construction is growing, and in the whole of our camp all the discontented elements and strata of both the West and the East are gradually and steadily rallying around the proletariat of our country, rallying around the Soviet Union.

Over there, in the camp of capitalism, there is discord and disintegration. Over here, in the camp of socialism, there is solidarity and an ever-increasing unity of interests against the common enemy — against imperialism.

Such are the basic facts which I wanted to point out in the sphere of the fifth series of contradictions — the contradictions between the capitalist world and the Soviet world.

Such are the characteristic features of the basic contradictions that are corroding capitalism.

What follows from all these contradictions? What-do they show? They show that the capitalist world is being corroded by a whole series of internal contradictions which are enfeebling capitalism; that, on the other hand, our world, the world of socialism, is becoming more and more closely welded, more united; that because of this, on precisely this basis, there arose that temporary equilibrium of forces that put an end to war against us, that ushered in the period of "peaceful co-existence" between the Soviet state and the capitalist states.

CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF LENINISM

January 25, 1926

Works, Vol. 8, January-November 1926, pp. 13-96

(excerpts)

I. The definition of Leninism

The pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism* contains a definition of Leninism which seems to have received general recognition. It runs as follows:

“Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.”

Is this definition correct?

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

All that, one would think, needs no special comment. Nevertheless, it appears that there are people in our party who

consider it necessary to define Leninism somewhat differently. Zinoviev, for example, thinks that:

“Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialist wars and of the world revolution which began directly in a country where the peasantry predominates.”

What can be the meaning of the words underlined by Zinoviev? What does introducing the backwardness of Russia, its peasant character, into the definition of Leninism mean?

It means transforming Leninism from an international proletarian doctrine into a product of specifically Russian conditions.

It means playing into the hands of Bauer and Kautsky, who deny that Leninism is suitable for other countries, for countries in which capitalism is more developed.

It goes without saying that the peasant question is of very great importance for Russia, that our country is a peasant country. But what significance can this fact have in characterising the foundations of Leninism? Was Leninism elaborated only on Russian soil, for Russia alone, and not on the soil of imperialism, and for the imperialist countries generally? Do such works of Lenin as *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, *The State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, “Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, etc., apply only to Russia, and not to all imperialist countries in general? Is not Leninism the generalisation of the experience of the revolutionary movement of all countries? Are not the fundamentals of the theory and tactics of Leninism suitable, are they not obligatory, for the proletarian parties of all countries? Was not Lenin right when he said that “Bolshevism can serve as a model of tactics for all”? (See Vol. XXIII, p. 386.) Was not Lenin right when he spoke about the “international significance of

Soviet power and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics"? (See Vol. XXV, pp. 171-72.) Are not, for example, the following words of Lenin correct?

"In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain specific features from that in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces—and the basic forms of social economy—are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that these specific features can relate only to what is not most important" (see Vol. XXIV, p. 508).

But if all that is true, does it not follow that Zinoviev's definition of Leninism cannot be regarded as correct?

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

II. The main thing in Leninism

In the pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism*, it stated:

"Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant question, that the point of departure of Leninism is the question of the peasantry, of its role, its relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question, but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant question, as the question of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative question."

Is this thesis correct?

I think it is correct. This thesis follows entirely from the definition of Leninism. Indeed, if Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution, and the basic content of the proletarian

revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, then it is clear that the main thing in Leninism is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the elaboration of this question, the substantiation and concretisation of this question.

Nevertheless, Zinoviev evidently does not agree with this thesis. In his article "In Memory of Lenin," he says:

"As I have already said, the question of the role of the peasantry is the fundamental question of Bolshevism, of Leninism."

As you see, Zinoviev's thesis follows entirely from his wrong definition of Leninism. It is therefore as wrong as his definition of Leninism is wrong.

Is Lenin's thesis that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the "root content of the proletarian revolution" correct? (See Vol. XXIII, p. 337.) It is unquestionably correct. Is the thesis that Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution correct? I think it is correct. But what follows from this? From this it follows that the fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, its foundation, is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

is it not true that the question of imperialism, the question of the spasmodic character of the development of imperialism, the question of the victory of socialism in one country, the question of the proletarian state, the question of the Soviet form of this state, the question of the role of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the question of the paths of building socialism—that all these questions were elaborated precisely by Lenin? Is it not true that it is precisely these questions that constitute the basis, the foundation of the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not true that without the elaboration of these fundamental questions, the elaboration of

the peasant question from the standpoint of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be inconceivable?

It goes without saying that Lenin was an expert on the peasant question. It goes without saying that the peasant question as the question of the ally of the proletariat is of the greatest significance for the proletariat and forms a constituent part of the fundamental question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But is it not clear that if Leninism had not been faced with the fundamental question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the derivative question of the ally of the proletariat, the question of the peasantry, would not have arisen either? Is it not clear that if Leninism had not been faced with the practical question of the conquest of power by the proletariat, the question of an alliance with the peasantry would not have arisen either?

Lenin would not have been the great ideological leader of the proletariat that he unquestionably is—he would have been a simple “peasant philosopher,” as foreign literary philistines often depict him—had he elaborated the peasant question, not on the basis of the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but independently of this basis, apart from this basis.

One or the other: Either the peasant question is the main thing in Leninism, and in that case, Leninism is not suitable, not obligatory, for capitalistically developed countries, for those which are not peasant countries.

Or the main thing in Leninism is the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in that case, Leninism is the international doctrine of the proletarians of all lands, suitable and obligatory for all countries without exception, including the capitalistically developed countries.

Here one must choose.

REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT ON THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC DEVIATION IN OUR PARTY

November 3, 1926

Works, Volume 8, January-November 1926, pp. 311-372

(Excerpt)

3. The Unevenness of Development of the Capitalist Countries

I said in my report that Lenin discovered and demonstrated the law of the unevenness of economic and political development of the capitalist countries, and that on the basis of this law, and of the fact that the unevenness was developing and becoming more pronounced, Lenin arrived at the idea that the victory of socialism in one country is possible. This thesis of Lenin's was contested by Trotsky and Zinoviev. Trotsky said that it is incorrect theoretically. And Zinoviev, together with Trotsky, asserted that formerly, in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, the unevenness of development was greater than it is now, in the period of monopoly capitalism, and that therefore the idea of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country cannot be linked with the law of the unevenness of capitalist development.

That Trotsky objects to Lenin's theoretical thesis concerning the law of uneven development is not at all surprising, for it is well known. that this law refutes Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

Furthermore, Trotsky is obviously tending to a philistine point of view here. He confuses the economic inequality of the various countries in the past—an inequality which did not always, and could not, lead to their spasmodic development—with the unevenness of economic and political development in the period of imperialism, when the economic inequality of countries is less than it was in the past, but the unevenness of economic and

political development is incomparably greater than before and manifests itself more sharply than before; moreover it necessarily and inevitably leads to spasmodic development, to a situation in which countries which were industrially backward in a more or less short period overtake countries which had gone ahead, and this cannot but create the pre-conditions for gigantic imperialist wars and the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country.

It scarcely needs proof that this muddling of two different concepts does not, and cannot, testify to a high level of "theoretical" knowledge on Trotsky's part.

But I cannot understand Zinoviev, who after all was a Bolshevik and had some inkling of Bolshevism. How can it be asserted that the unevenness of development was formerly greater than it is now, in the conditions of monopoly capitalism, without running the risk of landing in the quagmire of ultra-imperialism and Kautskyism? How can it be asserted that the idea of the victory of socialism in one country is not linked with the law of uneven development? Is it not known that it was precisely from the law of uneven development that Lenin deduced this idea? What, for example, do the following words of Lenin indicate?

"Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately" (see Vol. XVIII, p. 232).

What does the law of uneven development proceed from?

It proceeds from the fact that:

- 1) the old, pre-monopoly capitalism has grown into and developed into monopoly capitalism, into imperialism;

2) the division of the world into spheres of influence of imperialist groups and states is already completed;

3) world economic development is proceeding in the midst of a desperate, a mortal struggle of the imperialist groups for markets, raw materials, and the expansion of old spheres of influence;

4) this development is not even, but spasmodic; states that have run on ahead being ousted from the markets; and new states coming to the fore;

5) this manner of development results from some imperialist groups being able rapidly to develop technique, lower the cost of commodities and seize markets to the detriment of other imperialist groups;

6) periodical redivisions of the already divided world thus become an absolute necessity;

7) such redivisions may therefore be effected only by forcible means, by the testing of the strength of this or that imperialist group by force;

8) this cannot but lead to sharp conflicts and gigantic wars between the imperialist groups;

9) this state of affairs inevitably leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists and creates the possibility of the imperialist front being breached in individual countries;

10) the possibility of the imperialist front being breached in individual countries cannot but create favourable conditions for the victory of socialism in one country.

What is it that accentuates the unevenness and lends decisive significance to the uneven development in the conditions of imperialism?

Two main circumstances:

Firstly, that the division of the world among the imperialist groups is completed, that such a thing as “vacant” territory no longer exists anywhere, and that redivision of the already divided world through imperialist wars is an absolute necessity for the achievement of economic “equilibrium.”

Secondly, that the colossal and hitherto unparalleled development of technique, in the broad meaning of the word, makes it easier for certain imperialist groups to overtake and outstrip others in the struggle; for markets, for seizing sources of raw material, etc.

But these circumstances developed and reached their climax only in the period of developed imperialism. And it could not be otherwise, because only in the period of imperialism could the division of the world be completed, and only in the period of developed imperialism did the colossal technical possibilities show themselves.

It is to this that must be attributed the fact that, whereas formerly Britain was able to keep ahead of all other countries industrially and to leave them lagging behind for more than a hundred years, later, in the period of monopoly capitalism, Germany required only about a couple of decades to begin to outstrip Britain, while America required even less to overtake the European countries.

How, after this, can it be asserted that the unevenness of development was formerly greater than it is now, and that the idea of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country is not linked with the law of uneven development of capitalism in the period of imperialism?

Is it not clear that only philistines in matters of theory can confuse the economic inequality of the industrial countries in the past

with the law of uneven economic and political development, which assumed particular force and acuteness only in the period of developed monopoly capitalism?

Is it not clear that only complete ignorance in the field of Leninism could have prompted Zinoviev and his friends to put forward their more than strange objections to Lenin's propositions connected with the law of uneven economic and political development of the capitalist countries?

NOTES ON THE CONTEMPORARY THEMES

July 28, 1927

Pravda, No. 169, July 28, 1927

Works, Volume 9, December 1926 - July 1927

1. The threat of war

It can scarcely be doubted that the main issue of the present day is that of the threat of a new imperialist war. It is not a matter of some vague and immaterial "danger" of a new war but of the real and actual threat of a new war in general, and of a war against the U.S.S.R. in particular.

The redivision of the world and of spheres of influence that took place as a result of the last imperialist war has already managed to become "obsolete." Certain new countries (America, Japan) have come to the fore. Certain old countries (Britain) are receding into the background. Capitalist Germany, all but buried at Versailles, is reviving and growing and becoming steadily stronger. Bourgeois Italy, with an envious eye on France, is creeping upwards.

A frantic struggle is in progress for markets, for fields of capital export, for the sea and land routes to those markets, for a new redivision of the world. The contradictions between America and Britain, between Japan and America, between Britain and France, between Italy and France, are growing.

The contradictions within the capitalist countries are growing, every now and again breaking out in the form of open revolutionary actions of the proletariat (Britain, Austria).

The contradictions between the imperialist world and the dependent countries are growing, now and again breaking out

in the form of open conflicts and revolutionary explosions (China, Indonesia, North Africa, South America).

But the growth of all these contradictions signifies a growth of the crisis of world capitalism, despite the fact of stabilisation, a crisis incomparably deeper than the one before the last imperialist war. The existence and progress of the U.S.S.R., the land of proletarian dictatorship, only deepens and aggravates this crisis.

No wonder that imperialism is preparing for a new war, in which it sees the only way out of the crisis. The unparalleled growth of armaments, the general tendency of the bourgeois governments towards fascist methods of "administration," the crusade against the Communists, the frenzied campaign of slander against the U.S.S.R., the outright intervention in China—all these are different aspects of one and the same phenomenon: the preparation for a new war for a new redivision of the world.

The imperialists would long ago have come to blows among themselves, were it not for the Communist Parties, which are waging a determined struggle against imperialist war, were it not for the U.S.S.R., whose peaceful policy is a heavy fetter on the instigators of a new war, and were it not for their fear of weakening one another and thus facilitating a new breach of the imperialist front.

I think that this last circumstance—that is, the imperialists' fear of weakening one another and thus facilitating a new breach of the imperialist front—is one of the chief factors which have so far restrained the urge for a mutual slaughter.

Hence the "natural" endeavour of certain imperialist circles to relegate the contradictions in their own camp to the background, to gloss them over temporarily, to create a united front of the imperialists and to make war on the U.S.S.R., in order to solve

the deepening crisis of capitalism even if only partially, even if only temporarily, at the expense of the U.S.S.R.

What are our tasks?

It is our task to sound the alarm in all the countries of Europe over the threat of a new war, to rouse the vigilance of the workers and soldiers of the capitalist countries, and to work, to work indefatigably, to prepare the masses to counter with the full strength of revolutionary struggle every attempt of the bourgeois governments to organise a new war.

It is our task to pillory all those leaders of the labour movement who "consider" the threat of a new war to be a "figment of the imagination," who lull the workers with pacifist lies, who close their eyes to the fact that the bourgeoisie is preparing for a new war—for these people want the war to catch the workers by surprise.

Messieurs the instigators of a new war would do well to remember this.

The task is to increase the defensive capacity of our country, to expand our national economy, to improve our industry—both war and non-war—to enhance the vigilance of the workers, peasants and Red Army men of our country, steeling them in the determination to defend the socialist motherland and putting an end to the slackness which, unfortunately, is as yet far from having been eliminated.

The task is to strengthen our rear and cleanse it of dross, not hesitating to mete out punishment to "illustrious" terrorists and incendiaries who set fire to our mills and factories, because it is impossible to defend our country in the absence of a strong revolutionary rear.

RESULTS OF THE JULY PLENUM OF THE C.C., C.P.S.U.(B.)

Leningradshaya Pravda, No. 162, June 26, 1928;

Works, Volume 11

(Excerpt)

I. The Comintern

1. Major problems of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern

What are the major problems which confront the Sixth Congress of the Comintern at the present time?

If one looks at the stage passed through between the Fifth and Sixth Congresses, it is necessary first of all to consider the contradictions which have ripened in this interval within the imperialist camp.

What are these contradictions?

At the time of the Fifth Congress very little was said about the Anglo-American contradiction as the principal one. It was even the custom at that time to speak of an Anglo-American alliance. On the other hand, quite a lot was said about contradictions between Britain and France, between America and Japan, between the victors and the vanquished. The difference between that period and the present period is that, of the contradictions in the capitalist camp, that between American capitalism and British capitalism has become the principal one. Whether you take the question of oil, which is of decisive importance both for the development of the capitalist economy and for purposes of war; whether you take the question of markets, which are of the utmost importance for the life and development of world capitalism, because goods cannot be produced if there is no assured sale for them; whether you take the question of spheres of capital export, which is one of the most characteristic features

of the imperialist stage; or whether, lastly, you take the question of the lines of communication with markets or sources of raw material -- you will find that all these main questions drive towards one principal problem, the struggle between Britain and America for world hegemony. Wherever America, a country where capitalism is growing gigantically, tries to butt in -- whether it be China, the colonies, South America, or Africa -- everywhere she encounters formidable obstacles in the shape of Britain's firmly established positions.

This, of course, does not do away with the other contradictions in the capitalist camp: between America and Japan, Britain and France, France and Italy, Germany and France and so on. But it does mean that these contradictions are linked in one way or another with the principal contradiction, that between capitalist Britain, whose star is declining, and capitalist America, whose star is rising.

With what is this principal contradiction fraught? It is very likely fraught with war. When two giants come into collision, when they find the earth too small for both of them, they strive to cross swords in order to decide their dispute over world hegemony by war.

That is the first thing to bear in mind.

A second contradiction is that between imperialism and the colonies. This contradiction existed at the time of the Fifth Congress too. But only now has it assumed an acute character. We did not at that time have such a powerful development of the revolutionary movement in China, such a powerful shaking up of the vast masses of the Chinese workers and peasants as occurred a year ago and as is occurring now. And that is not all. We did not at that time, at the time of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, have that powerful stirring of the labour movement

and the national-liberation struggle in India which we have now. These two major facts bring squarely to the fore the question of the colonies and semi-colonies.

With what is the growth of this contradiction fraught? It is fraught with national wars of liberation in the colonies and with intervention on the part of imperialism.

This circumstance also must be borne in mind.

There is, lastly, a third contradiction -- that between the capitalist world and the U.S.S.R., one that is growing not less but more acute. Whereas at the time of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern it could be said that a certain equilibrium, unstable, it is true, but more or less prolonged, had been established between the two worlds, the two antipodes, the world of Soviets and the world of capitalism, now we have every ground for affirming that the days of this equilibrium are drawing to a close.

It goes without saying that the growth of this contradiction cannot fail to be fraught with the danger of armed intervention.

It is to be presumed that the Sixth Congress will take this circumstance also into consideration.

Thus, all these contradictions inevitably lead to one principal danger -- the danger of new imperialist wars and intervention.

Therefore, the danger of new imperialist wars and intervention is the main question of the day.

The most widespread method of lulling the working class and of diverting it from the struggle against the danger of war is present-day bourgeois pacifism, with its League of Nations, its preaching of "peace," its "prohibition" of war, its talk of "disarmament" and so forth.

Many think that imperialist pacifism is an instrument of peace. That is absolutely wrong. Imperialist pacifism is an instrument for the preparation of war and for disguising this preparation by hypocritical talk of peace. Without this pacifism and its instrument, the League of Nations, preparation for war in the conditions of today would be impossible.

There are naïve people who think that since there is imperialist pacifism, there will be no war. That is quite untrue. On the contrary, whoever wishes to get at the truth must reverse this proposition and say: since imperialist pacifism and its League of Nations are flourishing, new imperialist wars and intervention are certain.

And the most important thing in all this is that Social-Democracy is the main channel of imperialist pacifism within the working class -- consequently, it is capitalism's main support among the working class in preparing for new wars and intervention.

But for the preparation of new wars pacifism alone is not enough, even if it is supported by so serious a force as Social-Democracy. For this, certain means of suppressing the masses in the imperialist centres are also needed. It is impossible to wage war for imperialism unless the rear of imperialism is strengthened. It is impossible to strengthen the rear of imperialism without suppressing the workers. And that is what fascism is for.

Hence the growing acuteness of the inherent contradictions in the capitalist countries, the contradictions between labour and capital.

On the one hand, preaching of pacifism through the mouths of the Social-Democrats in order more effectively to prepare for new wars; on the other hand, suppression of the working class in the rear, of the Communist Parties in the rear, by the use of fascist

methods, in order then to conduct war and intervention more effectively -- such are the ways of preparing for new wars.

Hence the tasks of the Communist Parties:

Firstly, to wage an unceasing struggle against Social-Democratism in all spheres -- in the economic and in the political sphere, including in the latter the exposure of bourgeois pacifism with the task of winning the majority of the working class for communism.

Secondly, to form a united front of the workers of the advanced countries and the labouring masses of the colonies in order to stave off the danger of war, or, if war breaks out, to convert imperialist war into civil war, smash fascism, overthrow capitalism, establish Soviet power, emancipate the colonies from slavery, and organise all-round defence of the first Soviet Republic in the world.

POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
THE SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE C.P.S.U.(B.)

Pravda, No. 177, June 1930

Works, volume 12, pp. 242-385

(Excerpts)

I

And what is the picture today?

Today there is an economic crisis in nearly all the industrial countries of capitalism. Today there is an agricultural crisis in all the agrarian countries. Instead of "prosperity" there is mass poverty and a colossal growth of unemployment. Instead of an upswing in agriculture there is the ruin of the vast masses of the peasants. The illusions about the omnipotence of capitalism in general, and about the omnipotence of North American capitalism in particular, are collapsing. The triumphant hymns in honour of the dollar and of capitalist rationalisation are becoming fainter and fainter. Pessimistic wailing about the "mistakes" of capitalism is growing louder and louder. And the "universal" clamour about the "inevitable doom" of the USSR is giving way to "universal" venomous hissing about the necessity of punishing "that country" that dares to develop its economy when crisis is reigning all around.

Such is the picture today.

Things have turned out exactly as the Bolsheviks said they would two or three years ago.

The Bolsheviks said that in view of the restricted limits of the standard of living of the vast masses of the workers and peasants, the further development of technology in the capitalist countries, the growth of productive forces and of capitalist rationalisation,

must inevitably lead to a severe economic crisis. The bourgeois press jeered at the "queer prophecies" of the Bolsheviks. The Right deviators dissociated themselves from this Bolshevik forecast and for the Marxist analysis substituted liberal chatter about "organised capitalism." But how did things actually turn out? They turned out exactly as the Bolsheviks said they would.

Such are the facts.

Let us now examine the data on the economic crisis in the capitalist countries.

1. The world economic crisis

a) In studying the crisis, the following facts, above all, strike the eye: 1. The present economic crisis is a crisis of over-production. This means that more goods have been produced than the market can absorb. It means that more textiles, fuel, manufactured goods and food have been produced than can be purchased for cash by the bulk of the consumers, i.e., the masses of the people, whose incomes remain on a low level. Since, however, under capitalism, the purchasing power of the masses of the people remains at a minimum level, the capitalists keep their "superfluous" goods, textiles, grain, etc., in their warehouses or even destroy them in order to bolster up prices; they cut down production and discharge their workers, and the masses of the people are compelled to suffer hardship because too many goods have been produced.

2. The present crisis is the first post-war world economic crisis. It is a world crisis not only in the sense that it embraces all, or nearly all, the industrial countries in the world; even France, which is systematically injecting into her organism the billions of marks received as reparations payments from Germany, has been unable to avoid a certain depression, which, as all the data indicate, is bound to develop into a crisis. It is a world crisis also

in the sense that the industrial crisis has coincided with an agricultural crisis that affects the production of all forms of raw materials and food in the chief agrarian countries of the world.

3. The present world crisis is developing unevenly, notwithstanding its universal character; it affects different countries at different times and in different degrees. The industrial crisis began first of all in Poland, Rumania and the Balkans. It developed there throughout the whole of last year. Obvious symptoms of an incipient agricultural crisis were already visible at the end of 1928 in Canada, the United States, the Argentine, Brazil and Australia. During the whole of this period United States industry showed an upward trend. By the middle of 1929 industrial production in the United States had reached an almost record level. A break began only in the latter half of 1929, and then a crisis in industrial production swiftly developed, which threw the United States back to the level of 1927. This was followed by an industrial crisis in Canada and Japan. Then came bankruptcies and crisis in China and in the colonial countries, where the crisis was aggravated by the drop in the price of silver, and where the crisis of overproduction was combined with the ruination of the peasant farms, which were reduced to utter exhaustion by feudal exploitation and unbearable taxation. As regards Western Europe, there the crisis began to gain force only at the beginning of this year, but not everywhere to the same degree, and even in that period France still showed an increase in industrial production.

I do not think there is any need to dwell particularly on the statistics that demonstrate the existence of the crisis. Nobody now disputes the existence of the crisis

b) Now, when the destructive effects of the world economic crisis are spreading, sending to the bottom whole strata of medium and small capitalists, ruining entire groups of the labour

aristocracy and farmers, and dooming vast masses of workers to starvation, everybody is asking: what is the cause of the crisis, what is at the bottom of it, how can it be combated, how can it be abolished? The most diverse "theories" about crises are being invented. Whole schemes are being proposed for "mitigating," "preventing," and "eliminating" crises. The bourgeois oppositions are blaming the bourgeois governments because "they failed to take all measures" to prevent the crisis. The "Democrats" blame the "Republicans" and the "Republicans" blame the "Democrats," and all of them together blame the Hoover group with its "Federal Reserve System" [26], (Original Footnote: The Federal Reserve System was instituted in the U.S.A. In 1913. Twelve Federal Reserve Banks in the major centres of the country co-ordinate and control all the activities of the American banks and are an instrument of monopoly capital. The System is headed by a Federal Reserve Board (re-named in 1933 the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System), the members of which are appointed by the U.S. President, and which is completely under the thumb of the financial magnates. The American bourgeois economists - apologists of American capitalism - and financial and government circles in the U.S.A. considered that the Federal Reserve System would safeguard the country's economy against crises. The attempts of President Hoover to cope with the crisis that broke out in 1929 with the help of the Federal Reserve System proved a complete failure) which failed to "curb" the crisis. There are even wiseacres who ascribe the world economic crisis to the "machinations of the Bolsheviks". I have in mind the well-known "industrialist" Rechberg who, properly speaking, little resembles an industrialist, hut reminds one more than anything of an "industrialist" among literary men and a "literary man" among industrialists. (Laughter.)

It goes without saying that none of these "theories" and schemes has anything in common with science. It must be admitted that the bourgeois economists have proved to be utter bankrupts in face of the crisis. More than that, they have been found to be devoid even of that little sense of reality which their predecessors could not always be said to lack. These gentlemen forget that crises cannot be regarded as something fortuitous under the capitalist system of economy. These gentlemen forget that economic crises are the inevitable result of capitalism. These gentlemen forget that crises were born with the birth of the rule of capitalism. There have been periodical crises during more than a hundred years, recurring every 12, 10, 8 or less years. During this period bourgeois governments of all ranks and colours, bourgeois leaders of all levels and abilities, all without exception tried their strength at the task of "preventing" and "abolishing" crises. But they all suffered defeat. They suffered defeat because economic crises cannot be prevented or abolished within the framework of capitalism. Is it surprising that the present-day bourgeois leaders are also suffering defeat? Is it surprising that far from mitigating the crisis, far from easing the situation of the vast masses of the working people, the measures taken by the bourgeois governments actually lead to new outbreaks of bankruptcy, to new waves of unemployment, to the swallowing up of the less powerful capitalist combines by the more powerful capitalist combines?

The basis, the cause, of economic crises of over-production lies in the capitalist system of economy itself. The basis of the crisis lies in the contradiction between the social character of production and the capitalist form of appropriation of the results of production. An expression of this fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the colossal growth of capitalism's potentialities of production, calculated to yield the maximum of capitalist profit, and the relative reduction of the

effective demand of the vast masses of the working people whose standard of living the capitalists always try to keep at the minimum level. To be successful in competition and to squeeze out the utmost profit, the capitalists are compelled to develop their technical equipment, to introduce rationalisation, to intensify the exploitation of the workers and to increase the production potentialities of their enterprises to the utmost limits. So as not to lag behind one another, all the capitalists are compelled, in one way or another, to take this path of furiously developing production potentialities. The home market and the foreign market, however, the purchasing power of the vast masses of workers' and peasants who, in the last analysis, constitute the bulk of the purchasers, remain on a low level. Hence overproduction crises. Hence the well-known results, recurring more or less periodically, as a consequence of which goods remain unsold, production is reduced, unemployment grows and wages are cut, and all this still further intensifies the contradiction between the level of production and the level of effective demand. Overproduction crises are a manifestation of this contradiction in turbulent and destructive forms.

If capitalism could adapt production not to the obtaining of the utmost profit but to the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the masses of the people, and if it could turn profits not to the satisfaction of the whims of the parasitic classes, not to perfecting the methods of exploitation, not to the export of capital, but to the systematic improvement of the material conditions of the workers and peasants, then there would be no crises. But then capitalism would not be capitalism. To abolish crises, it is necessary to abolish capitalism.

Such is the basis of economic crises of overproduction in general.

We cannot, however, confine ourselves to this in characterising the present crisis. The present crisis cannot be regarded as a mere

recurrence of the old crises. It is occurring and developing under certain new conditions, which must be brought out if we are to obtain a complete picture of the crisis. It is complicated and deepened by a number of special circumstances which must be understood if we are to obtain a clear idea of the present economic crisis.

What are these special circumstances?

These special circumstances can be reduced to the following characteristic facts:

1. The crisis has most severely affected the principal country of capitalism, its citadel, the United States, in which is concentrated not less than half the total production and consumption of all those countries in the world. Obviously, this circumstance cannot but lead to a colossal expansion of the sphere of influence of the crisis, to the intensification of the crisis and to the accumulation of extra difficulties for world capitalism.
2. In the course of development of the economic crisis, the industrial crisis in the chief capitalist countries did not merely coincide but became interwoven with the agricultural crisis in the agrarian countries, thereby aggravating the difficulties and predetermining the inevitability of a general decline in economic activity. Needless to say, the industrial crisis will intensify the agricultural crisis, and the agricultural crisis will prolong the industrial crisis, which cannot but lead to the intensification of the economic crisis as a whole.
3. Present-day capitalism, unlike the old capitalism, is monopoly capitalism, and this predetermines the inevitability of the capitalist combines fighting to keep up the high monopolist prices of goods, in spite of over-production. Naturally, this circumstance, which makes the crisis particularly painful and ruinous for the masses of the people who constitute the main

consumers of goods, cannot but lead to prolonging the crisis, cannot but be an obstacle to resolving it.

4. The present economic crisis is developing on the basis of the general crisis of capitalism, which came into being already in the period of the imperialist war and is sapping the foundations of capitalism and has facilitated the advent of the economic crisis.

What does that mean?

It means, first of all, that the imperialist war and its aftermath intensified the decay of capitalism and upset its equilibrium, that we are now living in an epoch of wars and revolutions, that capitalism has already ceased to be the sole and all-embracing system of world economy, that side by side with the capitalist system of economy there is the socialist system, which is growing, thriving, stands opposed to the capitalist system and by its very existence demonstrates the decaying state of capitalism, shakes its foundations.

It means, further, that the imperialist war and the victory of the revolution in the USSR have shaken the foundations of imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries, that the prestige of imperialism has already been undermined in those countries, that it is no longer able to lord it in those countries in the old way.

It means, further, that during the war and after it, a young native capitalism appeared and grew up in the colonial and dependent countries, which is successfully competing in the markets with the old capitalist countries, intensifying and complicating the struggle for markets.

It means, lastly, that the war left the majority of capitalist countries a burdensome heritage in the shape of enterprises chronically working under capacity and of an army of

unemployed numbering millions, which has been transformed from a reserve into a permanent army of unemployed; this created for capitalism a mass of difficulties even before the present economic crisis, and must complicate matters still more during the crisis.

Such are the circumstances which intensify and aggravate the world economic crisis.

It must be admitted that the present economic crisis is the gravest and most profound world economic crisis that has ever occurred.

2. The Intensification of the contradictions of capitalism

2. THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

A most important result of the world economic crisis is that it is laying bare and intensifying the contradictions inherent in world capitalism.

a) It is laying bare and intensifying the contradictions between the major imperialist countries, the struggle for markets, the struggle for raw materials, the struggle for the export of capital. None of the capitalist states is now satisfied with the old distribution of spheres of influence and colonies. They see that the relation of forces has changed and that it is necessary in accordance with it to redivide markets, sources of raw materials, spheres of influence, and so forth. The chief contradiction here is that between the United States and Britain. Both in the sphere of the export of manufactured goods and in the sphere of the export of capital, the struggle is raging chiefly between the United States and Britain. It is enough to read any journal dealing with economics, any document concerning exports of goods and capital, to be convinced of this. The principal arena of the struggle is South America, China, the colonies and dominions of

the old imperialist states. Superiority of forces in this struggle - and a definite superiority - is on the side of the United States.

After the chief contradiction come contradictions which, while not the chief ones, are, however, fairly important: between America and Japan, between Germany and France, between France and Italy, between Britain and France, and so forth.

There can be no doubt whatever that owing to the developing crisis, the struggle for markets, for raw materials and for the export of capital will grow more intense month by month and day by day.

Means of struggle: tariff policy, cheap goods, cheap credits, regrouping of forces and new military-political alliances, growth of armaments and preparation for new

I have spoken about the crisis embracing all branches of production. There is one branch, however, has not been affected by the crisis. That branch is the armament industry. It is growing continuously, notwithstanding the crisis. The bourgeois states are furiously arming and rearming. What for? Not for friendly chats, of course, but for war. And the imperialists need war, for it is the only means by which to redivide the world, to redivide markets, sources of raw materials and spheres for the investment of capital.

It is quite understandable that in this situation so-called pacifism is living its last days, that the League of Nations is rotting alive, that "disarmament schemes" come to nothing, while conferences for the reduction of naval armaments become transformed into conferences for renewing and enlarging navies.

This means that the danger of war will grow at an accelerated pace.

Let the Social-Democrats chatter about pacifism, peace, the peaceful development of capitalism, and so forth. The experience of Social-Democrats being in power in Germany and Britain shows that for them pacifism is only a screen needed to conceal the preparation for new wars.

b) It is laying bare and will intensify the contradictions between the victor countries and the vanquished countries. Among the latter I have in mind chiefly Germany. Undoubtedly, in view of the crisis and the aggravation of the problem of markets, increased pressure will be brought to bear upon Germany, which is not only a debtor, but also a very big exporting country. The peculiar relations that have developed between the victor countries and Germany could be depicted in the form of a pyramid at the apex of which America, France, Britain and the others are seated in lordly fashion, holding in their hands the Young Plan [27] (Original Footnote: The Young Plan - named after its author, the American banker Young - was a plan for exacting reparations from Germany. It was adopted on June 7, 1929, by a committee of French, British, Italian, Japanese, Belgian, American and German experts, and was finally endorsed at the Hague Conference on January 20, 1930. The plan fixed total German reparations at 113,900 million marks (in foreign currency), to be paid over a period of 59 years. All reparations receipts and payments were to be handled by the Bank for International Settlements, in which the U.S.A. occupied a dominant position. The establishment of this bank was one of the cardinal points of the Young Plan and was a means by which American monopoly capital could control the trade and currencies of the European countries. The plan relieved German industry of contributions to reparations, the whole burden of which was laid upon the working people. The Young Plan made it possible to speed up the rebuilding of Germany's industrial war potential, which the U.S. imperialists were seeking to

achieve with a view to launching aggression against the USSR) with the inscription: "Pay up!"; while underneath lies Germany, flattened out, exhausting herself and compelled to exert all her efforts to obey the order to pay thousands of millions in indemnities. You wish to know what this is? It is "the spirit of Locarno" [28]. (Original Footnote: This refers to the treaties and agreements concluded by the imperialist states at a conference in Locarno, Switzerland, held October 5-16, 1925. The Locarno agreements were designed to strengthen the post-war system established in Europe by the Treaty of Versailles, but their effect was to sharpen still more the contradictions between the chief imperialist countries and to stimulate preparation for new wars. [For the Locarno Conference, see J. V. Stalin, Works: Vol. 7, pp. 277-83.]) To think that such a situation will have no effect upon world capitalism means not to understand anything in life. To think that the German bourgeoisie will be able to pay 20,000 million marks within the next ten years and that the German proletariat, which is living under the double yoke of "its own" and the "foreign" bourgeoisie, will allow the German bourgeoisie to squeeze these 20,000 million marks out of it without serious battles and convulsions, means to go out of one's mind. Let the German and French politicians pretend that they believe in this miracle. We Bolsheviks do not believe in miracles.

c) It is laying bare and intensifying the contradictions between the imperialist states and the colonial and dependent countries. The growing economic crisis cannot but increase the pressure of the imperialists upon the colonies and dependent countries, which are the chief markets for goods and sources of raw materials. Indeed, this pressure is increasing to the utmost degree. It is a fact that the European bourgeoisie is now in a state of war with "its" colonies in India, Indo-China, Indonesia and North Africa. It is a fact that "independent" China is already virtually partitioned into spheres of influence, while the cliques

of counter-revolutionary Kuomintang generals, warring among themselves and ruining the Chinese people, are obeying the will of their masters in the imperialist camp.

d) It is laying bare and intensifying the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the capitalist countries. The crisis has already increased the pressure exerted by the capitalists on the working class. The crisis has already given rise to another wave of capitalist rationalisation, to a further deterioration of the conditions of the working class, to increased un-employment, to an enlargement of the permanent army of unemployed, to a reduction of wages. It is not surprising that these circumstances are revolutionising the situation, intensifying the class struggle and pushing the workers towards new class battles.

As a result of this, Social-Democratic illusions among the masses of workers are being shattered and dispelled. After the experience of Social-Democrats being in power, when they broke strikes, organised lockouts and shot down workers, the false promises of "industrial democracy, peace in industry," and "peaceful methods" of struggle sound like cruel mockery to the workers. Will many workers be found today capable of believing the false doctrines of the social-fascists? The well-known workers' demonstrations of August 1, 1929 (against the war danger) and of March 6, 1930 (against unemployment) (Original footnote: Anti-war demonstrations and strikes on August 1, 1929 (the fifteenth anniversary of the outbreak of the imperialist first world war) and protest demonstrations on March 8, 1930, against the rapid growth of unemployment [29](as a result of the world economic crisis of 1929) took place in many cities and industrial centres of France, Germany, Britain, the U.S.A., Poland and other European and American countries. The protest movement took place wholly under the leadership of the Communist Parties and the Communist International) show that the best members of the

working class have already turned away from the social-fascists. The economic crisis will strike a fresh blow at Social-Democratic illusions among the workers. Not many workers will be found now, after the bankruptcies and ruination caused by the crisis, who believe that it is possible for "every worker" to become rich by holding shares in "democratised" joint-stock companies. Needless to say, the crisis will strike a crushing blow at all these and similar illusions.

The desertion of the masses of the workers from the Social-Democrats, however, signifies a turn on their part towards communism. That is what is actually taking place. The growth of the trade-union movement that is associated with the Communist Party, the electoral successes of the Communist Parties, the wave of strikes in which the Communists are taking a leading part, the development of economic strikes into political protests organised by the Communists, the mass demonstrations of workers who sympathise with communism, which are meeting a lively response in the working class - all this shows that the masses of the workers regard the Communist Party as the only party capable of fighting capitalism, the only party worthy of the workers' confidence, the only party under whose leadership it is possible to enter, and worthwhile entering, the struggle for emancipation from capitalism. This means that the masses are turning towards communism. It is the guarantee that our fraternal Communist Parties will become big mass parties of the working class. All that is necessary is that the Communists should be capable of appraising the situation and making proper use of it. By developing an uncompromising struggle against Social-Democracy, which is capital's agency in the working class, and by reducing to dust all and sundry deviations from Leninism, which bring grist to the mill of Social-Democracy, the Communist Parties have shown that they are on the right road. They must definitely fortify themselves on this road; for only if

they do that can they count on winning over the majority of the working class and successfully prepare the proletariat for the coming class battles. Only if they do that can we count on a further increase in the influence and prestige of the Communist International.

Such is the state of the principal contradictions of world capitalism, which have become intensified to the utmost by the world economic crisis.

What do all these facts show?

That the stabilisation of capitalism is coming to an end.

That the upsurge of the mass revolutionary movement will increase with fresh vigour.

That in a number of countries the world economic crisis will grow into a political crisis.

This means, firstly, that the bourgeoisie will seek a way out of the situation through further fascisation in the sphere of domestic policy, and will utilise all the reactionary forces, including Social-Democracy, for this purpose.

It means, secondly, that in the sphere of foreign policy the bourgeoisie will seek a way out through a new imperialist war.

It means, lastly, that the proletariat, in fighting capitalist exploitation and the war danger, will seek a way out through revolution.

3. The relation between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist states

a) I have spoken above about the contradictions of world capitalism. In addition to these, however, there is one other contradiction. I am referring to the contradiction between the capitalist world and the USSR True, this contradiction must not

be regarded as being of the same order as the contradiction within capitalism. It is a contradiction between capitalism as a whole and the country that is building socialism. This, however, does not prevent it from corroding and shaking the very foundations of capitalism. More than that, it lays bare all the contradictions of capitalism to the roots and gathers them into a single knot, transforming them into an issue of the life and death of the capitalist order itself. That is why, every time the contradictions of capitalism become acute, the bourgeoisie turns its gaze towards the USSR, wondering whether it would not be possible to solve this or that contradiction of capitalism, or all the contradictions together, at the expense of the USSR, of that Land of Soviets, that citadel of revolution which, by its very existence, is revolutionising the working class and the colonies, which is hindering the organisation of a new war, hindering a new redivision of the world, hindering the capitalists from lording it in its extensive home market which they need so much, especially now, in view of the economic crisis.

REPORT TO THE SEVENTEENTH PARTY CONGRESS ON
THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE
C.P.S.U.(B.)

January 26, 1934

Pravda, No. 27 January 28, 1934

Works, Volume 13

(Excerpts)

1. The course of the economic crisis in the capitalist countries

The present economic crisis in the capitalist countries differs from all analogous crises, among other things, in that it is the longest and most protracted crisis. Formerly crises would come to an end in a year or two; the present crisis, however, is now in its fifth year, devastating the economy of the capitalist countries year after year and draining it of the fat accumulated in previous years. It is not surprising that this is the most severe of all the crises that have taken place.

How is this unprecedentedly protracted character of the present industrial crisis to be explained?

It is to be explained, first of all, by the fact that the industrial crisis has affected every capitalist country without exception, which has made it difficult for some countries to manoeuvre at the expense of others.

Secondly, it is to be explained by the fact that the industrial crisis has become interwoven with the agrarian crisis which has affected all the agrarian and semi-agrarian countries without exception, which could not but make the industrial crisis more complicated and more profound.

Thirdly, it is to be explained by the fact that the agrarian crisis has grown more acute in this period, and has affected all branches of agriculture, including livestock farming; that it has brought about a retrogression of agriculture, a reversion from machines to hand labour, a substitution of horses for tractors, a sharp reduction in the use of artificial fertilizers, and in some cases a complete abandonment of them—all of which has caused the industrial crisis to become still more protracted.

Fourthly, it is to be explained by the fact that the monopolist cartels which dominate industry strive to maintain high commodity prices, a circumstance which makes the crisis particularly painful and hinders the absorption of commodity stocks.

Lastly—and this is the chief thing—it is to be explained by the fact that the industrial crisis broke out in the conditions of the general crisis of capitalism, when capitalism no longer has, nor can have, either in the major countries or in the colonial and dependent countries, the strength and stability it had before the war and the October Revolution; when industry in the capitalist countries has acquired, as a heritage from the imperialist war, chronic under-capacity operation of plants and armies of millions of unemployed, of which it is no longer able to rid itself.

Such are the circumstances that have given rise to the extremely protracted character of the present industrial crisis.

It is these circumstances also that explain the fact that the crisis has not been confined to the sphere of production and trade, but has also affected the credit system, foreign exchange, the debt settlements, etc., and has broken down the traditionally established relations both between countries and between social groups in the various countries.

Capitalism has succeeded in somewhat alleviating the position of industry at the expense of the workers, by heightening their exploitation through increased intensity of labour; at the expense of the farmers, by pursuing a policy of paying the lowest prices for the products of their labour, for foodstuffs and, partly, raw materials; and at the expense of the peasants in the colonies and economically weak countries, by still further forcing down prices for the products of their labour, principally for raw materials, and also for foodstuffs.

Does this mean that we are witnessing a transition from a crisis to an ordinary depression, to be followed by a new upswing and flourishing of industry? No, it does not. At any rate, at the present time there is no evidence, direct or indirect, to indicate the approach of an upswing of industry in the capitalist countries. More than that, judging by all things, there can be no such evidence, at least in the near future. There can be no such evidence, because all the unfavourable conditions which prevent industry in the capitalist countries from making any considerable advance continue to operate. I have in mind the continuing general crisis of capitalism, in the circumstances of which the economic crisis is proceeding; the chronic under-capacity operation of the enterprises; chronic mass unemployment; the interweaving of the industrial crisis with an agricultural crisis; the absence of tendencies towards a more or less serious renewal of fixed capital, which usually heralds the approach of a boom, etc., etc.

Evidently, what we are witnessing is a transition from the lowest point of decline of industry, from the lowest point of the industrial crisis, to a depression—not an ordinary depression, but a depression of a special kind, which does not lead to a new upswing and flourishing of industry, but which, on the other hand, does not force industry back to the lowest point of decline.

2. The growing tension in the political situation of the capitalist countries

A result of the protracted economic crisis has been an unprecedented increase in the tension of the political situation in the capitalist countries, both within those countries and in their mutual relations.

The intensified struggle for foreign markets, the abolition of the last vestiges of free trade, the prohibitive tariffs, the trade war, the foreign currency war, dumping, and many other analogous measures which demonstrate extreme nationalism in economic policy have strained to the utmost the relations among the various countries, have created the basis for military conflicts, and have put war on the order of the day as a means for a new redivision of the world and of spheres of influence in favour of the stronger states.

Japan's war against China, the occupation of Manchuria, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations, and her advance in North China, have made the situation still more tense. The intensified struggle for the Pacific and the growth of naval armaments in Japan, the United States, Britain and France are results of this increased tension.

Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations and the spectre of revanchism have further added to the tension and have given a fresh impetus to the growth of armaments in Europe.

It is not surprising that bourgeois pacifism is now dragging out a miserable existence, and that idle talk of disarmament is giving way to "business-like" talk about armament and rearmament.

Once again, as in 1914, the parties of bellicose imperialism, the parties of war and revanchism are coming to the foreground.

Quite clearly things are heading for a new war.

The internal situation of the capitalist countries, in view of the operation of these same factors, is becoming still more tense. Four years of industrial crisis have exhausted the working class and reduced it to despair. Four years of agricultural crisis have utterly ruined the poorer strata of the peasantry, not only in the principal capitalist countries, but also—and particularly—in the dependent and colonial countries.

This, indeed, explains why the ruling classes in the capitalist countries are so zealously destroying or nullifying the last vestiges of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy which might be used by the working class in its struggle against the oppressors, why they are driving the Communist Parties underground and resorting to openly terrorist methods of maintaining their dictatorship.

Chauvinism and preparation of war as the main elements of foreign policy; repression of the working class and terrorism in the sphere of home policy as a necessary means for strengthening the rear of future war fronts — that is what is now particularly engaging the minds of contemporary imperialist politicians.

It is not surprising that fascism has now become the most fashionable commodity among war-mongering bourgeois politicians. I am referring not only to fascism in general, but, primarily, to fascism of the German type, which is wrongly called national-socialism—wrongly because the most searching examination will fail to reveal even an atom of socialism in it.

In this connection the victory of fascism in Germany must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and a result of the betrayals of the working class by Social-Democracy, which paved the way for fascism; it must also be regarded as a sign of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, a sign that

the bourgeoisie is no longer able to rule by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terrorist methods of rule—as a sign that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, and, as a consequence, is compelled to resort to a policy of war. Such is the situation.

As you see, things are heading towards a new imperialist war as a way out of the present situation.

Of course, there are no grounds for assuming that war can provide a real way out. On the contrary, it is bound to confuse the situation still more. More than that, it is sure to unleash revolution and jeopardise the very existence of capitalism in a number of countries, as happened in the course of the first imperialist war. And if, in spite of the experience of the first imperialist war, the bourgeois politicians clutch at war as a drowning man clutches at a straw, that shows that they have got into a hopeless muddle, have landed in an impasse, and are ready to rush headlong into the abyss.

But while the bourgeoisie chooses the path of war, the working class in the capitalist countries, brought to despair by four years of crisis and unemployment, is beginning to take the path of revolution. This means that a revolutionary crisis is maturing and will continue to mature. And the more the bourgeoisie becomes entangled in its war schemes, the more frequently it resorts to terrorist methods of fighting against the working class and the labouring peasantry, the more rapidly will the revolutionary crisis develop.

Some comrades think that, once there is a revolutionary crisis, the bourgeoisie is bound to get into a hopeless position, that its end is therefore a foregone conclusion, that the victory of the

revolution is thus assured, and that all they have to do is to wait for the fall of the bourgeoisie and to draw up victorious resolutions. That is a profound mistake. The victory of the revolution never comes of itself. It must be prepared for and won. And only a strong proletarian revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory. Moments occur when the situation is revolutionary, when the rule of the bourgeoisie is shaken to its very foundations, and yet the victory of the revolution does not come, because there is no revolutionary party of the proletariat with sufficient strength and prestige to lead the masses and to take power. It would be unwise to believe that such "cases" cannot occur.

It is worthwhile in this connection to recall Lenin's prophetic words on revolutionary crisis, uttered at the Second Congress of the Communist International [30]:

"We have now come to the question of the revolutionary crisis as the basis of our revolutionary action. And here we must first of all note two widespread errors. On the one hand, the bourgeois economists depict this crisis as mere 'unrest,' as the English so elegantly express it. On the other hand, revolutionaries sometimes try to prove that the crisis is absolutely hopeless. That is a mistake. There is no such thing as an absolutely hopeless situation. The bourgeoisie behaves like an arrogant plunderer who has lost his head; it commits folly after folly, making the situation more acute and hastening its own doom. All this is true. But it cannot be 'proved' that there is absolutely no chance of its gulling some minority of the exploited with some kind of minor concessions, or of suppressing some movement or uprising of some section or another of the oppressed and exploited. To try to 'prove' beforehand that a situation is 'absolutely' hopeless would be sheer pedantry or juggling with concepts and catchwords. In this and similar questions the only real 'proof' is practice. The

bourgeois system all over the world is experiencing a most profound revolutionary crisis. The revolutionary parties must now 'prove' by their practical actions that they are sufficiently intelligent and organised, are sufficiently in contact with the exploited masses, are sufficiently determined and skillful, to utilise this crisis for a successful and victorious revolution" (Lenin, Vol. XXV, pp. 340-41).

REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE TO
THE EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE C.P.S.U.(B.)

Delivered March 10, 1939.

Works, Volume 14

(Excerpts)

1. New economic crises in the capitalist countries.

Intensification of the struggle for markets and sources of raw materials, and for a new redivision of the world

The economic crisis which broke out in the capitalist countries in the latter half of 1929 lasted until the end of 1933. After that the crisis passed into a depression, and was then followed by a certain revival, a certain upward trend of industry. But this upward trend of industry did not develop into a boom, as is usually the case in a period of revival. On the contrary, in the latter half of 1937 a new economic crisis began which seized the United States first of all and then England, France and a number of other countries.

The capitalist countries thus found themselves faced with a new economic crisis before they had even recovered from the ravages of the recent one.

This circumstance naturally led to an increase of unemployment. The number of unemployed in capitalist countries, which had fallen from thirty million in 1933 to fourteen million in 1937, has now again risen to eighteen million as a result of the new economic crisis.

A distinguishing feature of the new crisis is that it differs in many respects from the preceding one, and, moreover, differs for the worse and not for the better.

Firstly, the new crisis did not begin after an industrial boom, as was the case in 1929, but after a depression and a certain revival, which, however, did not develop into a boom. This means that the present crisis will be more severe and more difficult to cope with than the previous crisis.

Further, the present crisis has broken out not in time of peace, but at a time when a second imperialist war has already begun; at a time when Japan, already in the second year of her war with China, is disorganizing the immense Chinese market and rendering it almost inaccessible to the goods of other countries; when Italy and Germany have already placed their national economy on a war footing, squandering their reserves of raw material and foreign currency for this purpose; and when all the other big capitalist powers are beginning to reorganize themselves on a war footing. This means that capitalism will have far less resources at its disposal for a normal way out of the present crisis than during the preceding crisis.

Lastly, as distinct from the preceding crisis, the present crisis is not a general one, but as yet involves chiefly the economically powerful countries which have not yet placed themselves on a war economy basis. As regards the aggressive countries, such as Japan, Germany and Italy, who have already reorganized their economy on a war footing, they, because of the intense development of their war industry, are not yet experiencing a crisis of overproduction, although they are approaching it. This means that by the time the economically powerful, non-aggressive countries begin to emerge from the phase of crisis the aggressive countries, having exhausted their reserves of gold and raw material in the course of the war fever, are bound to enter a phase of very severe crisis.

here can be no doubt that unless something unforeseen occurs, German industry must enter the same downward path as Japan

and Italy have already taken. For what does placing the economy of a country on a war footing mean? It means giving industry a one-sided war direction; developing to the utmost the production of goods necessary for war and not for consumption by the population; restricting to the utmost the production and, especially, the sale of articles of general consumption - and, consequently, reducing consumption by the population and confronting the country with an economic crisis.

Such is the concrete picture of the trend of the new economic crisis in the capitalist countries.

Naturally, such an unfavourable turn of economic affairs could not but aggravate relations among the powers. The preceding crisis had already mixed the cards and intensified the struggle for markets and sources of raw materials. The seizure of Manchuria and North China by Japan, the seizure of Abyssinia by Italy - all this reflected the acuteness of the struggle among the powers. The new economic crisis must lead, and is actually leading, to a further sharpening of the imperialist struggle. It is no longer a question of competition in the markets, of a commercial war, of dumping. These methods of struggle have long been recognized as inadequate. It is now a question of a new redivision of the world, of spheres of influence and colonies, by military action.

Japan tried to justify her aggressive actions by the argument that she had been cheated when the Nine-Power Pact was concluded and had not been allowed to extend her territory at the expense of China, whereas Britain and France possess vast colonies. Italy recalled that she had been cheated during the division of the spoils after the first imperialist war and that she must recompense herself at the expense of the spheres of influence of Britain and France. Germany, who had suffered severely as a result of the first imperialist war and the Peace of Versailles,

joined forces with Japan and Italy, and demanded an extension of her territory in Europe and the return of the colonies of which the victors in the first imperialist war had deprived her.

Thus, the bloc of three aggressive states came to be formed.

A new redivision of the world by means of war became imminent.

NOTES

[1] Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution was written by Lenin in Geneva, in June-July 1905.

The book was published in late July 1905, in Geneva, by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. It was twice republished in Russia in the same year, once by the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., and the second time by the Moscow Committee of the Party, this time in 10,000 copies.

The book was illegally distributed throughout the country - particularly in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kazan, Tiflis and Baku. On February 19, 1907 it was banned by the St. Petersburg Press Department, and on December 22 of the same year the St. Petersburg Court issued an injunction for its destruction.

In 1907 Lenin had Two Tactics published in the miscellany Twelve Years, supplementing the book with new notes. The material prepared by Lenin for this book, his plans, précis, and other notes were published in Lenin Miscellany V, and XVI. - 20.

[2] L'Humanité - a daily paper founded in 1904 by Jean Jaures as the organ of the French Socialist Party. Soon after the split in the Socialist Party at the Tours Congress (December 1920) and the formation of the Communist Party of France, the paper became the latter's organ. It now appears in Paris as the central organ of the C.P.F. - 24.

[3] See K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Albanian Edition 1975, Vol. I, p. 217. - 28.

[4] Lenin quotes F. Engels article «Socialism in Germany»

(Marx - Engels - Lenin, Zur Deutschen Geschichte, Band II,2. Halbband, Berlin, 1954, S. 1140-1141). - 45.

[5]The article «Differences in the European Labour Movement»was published in No. 1 of the newspaper Zvezda (The Star),in the section entitled «Letters from Abroad”, Zvezda - a Bolshevik legal newspaper, the predecessor, of Pravda; it was issued in St. Petersburg from December.16 (29), 1910 to April 22 (May 5), 1912. - 48.

[6] The «Young» faction - a petty-bourgeois semi-anarchist group formed in the German Social-Democratic Party in1890 and composed chiefly of undergraduate students and young writers (hence the name). It put forward a platform that rejected any Social-Democratic participation in parliament. They were expelled from the Party by the Erfurt Congress in October 1891. - 52.

[7] The Stuttgart Congress of the Second International was held on August 18-24, 1907. The RS.D.L.P. delegation consisted of 37 members, the Bolshevik delegates including Lenin, Lunacharsky and Litvinov.

The Congress conducted its main work in committees setup to draft resolutions for the plenary meetings. Lenin worked on the committee which drafted a resolution on “Militarism and International Conflicts», Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg introduced into Bebel's draft the historic amendment on the duty of the socialists to use the war-created crisis to arouse the masses for the overthrow of capitalism.

The amendment was adopted by the Congress (concerning the Congress, see Lenin's articles «The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart» in Volume 13 of the present edition. 75-8.1 and 82-93). - 63.

[8] The Copenhagen Congress of the Second International was held between August 28 and September 3, 1910, the R.S.D.L.P.

being represented by Lenin, Plekhanov, Lunacharsky, Kollontai, Pokrovsky and others. The Congress appointed several committees for preliminary discussion and drafting of resolution on the agenda items. Lenin worked on the cooperative committee.

The Congress's resolution «The Struggle Against Militarism and War» confirmed the Stuttgart Congress's resolution on «Militarism and International Conflicts» and listed the demands to be advanced by the socialist parliamentary deputies: (a) all conflicts between states to be unfailingly submitted for settlement by international courts of arbitration;(b) general disarmament; (c) abolition of secret diplomacy; (d) autonomy for all nations and their protection against military attacks and oppression. - 63.

[9] The Basle Congress of the Second International was held on November 24-25, 1912. It was the extraordinary congress called in connection with the Balkan War and the imminent European war. The Congress adopted a manifesto emphasising the imperialist nature of the approaching world war and called on the socialists of all countries to wage a vigorous struggle against war. - 63.

[10] Lenin began his article «Karl Marx», which was intended for the Granat Encyclopaedic Dictionary, in Poronin (Galicia)in the spring of 1914 and finished it in Berne in November1914. In the preface to the 1918 edition of the article, which was published as a pamphlet, Lenin himself said he recollected1913 as the year it was written in.

The article was published in 1915 in the Dictionary, over the signature of V. I. Lenin, and was followed by a supplement «Bibliography of Marxism». Because of the censorship, the editors of the Dictionary omitted two chapters, «Socialism- and

«Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat» and made a number of changes in the text.

In 1918 Priboi Publishers published the original article as a separate pamphlet, with a preface written specially for it by Lenin, but without the «Bibliography of Marxism» supplement.

The article was first published in full according to the manuscript in 1925 in the collection «Marx-Engels-Marxism "prepared by the Lenin Institute of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). - 71.

[11] See K. Marx and F. Engels. Selected Letters, Russ. Ed., 1953, p, 139. - 74.

[12] The Internationale Group - a revolutionary organization of Left German Social-Democrats, founded in the early days of the First German Social-Democrats, founded in the early days of the First World War by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin, Julian Marchlewski, Leon Jogiches (Tyszka) and Wilhelm Pieck. In April 1915, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring started the International magazine, which served to unite the core of the Left forces in Germany. A national conference of these forces was held in Berlin on January 1, 1916, and officially inaugurated the Internationale group. It also adopted its platform of «Basic Principles» ("Leitsätze"), drawn up by Rosa Luxemburg in cooperation with Liebknecht, Mehring and Clara Zetkin. In 1915 the group issued a number of political leaflets and in 1916 began illegal publication of its Political Letters signed Spartacus (they appeared regularly up to October 1918), and the group came to be known by that name.

It conducted mass revolutionary propaganda, organized mass anti-war demonstrations, directed strike struggles and exposed the imperialist nature of the world war and the treachery of the

opportunist Social-Democratic leaders. However, the Spartacus group made serious mistakes on questions of theory policy; they negated the possibility of national Liberation wars in the imperialist era, were inconsistent on the question of turning the imperialist war into a civil war, underestimated the vanguard role of the proletarian party, and did not work for a decisive break with the opportunists.

In April 1917 the group joined the Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany as an organizationally autonomous unit but broke with the Independents following the November 1918 Revolution in Germany and organized the Spartacus League. It published its programme on December 14, 1918 and at its inaugural Congress (December 30, 1918 - January 1, 1919) founded the Communist Party of Germany. Lenin repeatedly criticized the errors and inconsistency of the Germany Left Social-Democrats, but had a

high regard for their revolutionary activity. - 121.

[13] Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata was founded by Lenin and published by the newspaper Sotsial-Demokrat: Two issues appeared, in October and December 1916 (see also Note 17), - 122.

[14] See K. Marx and F. Engels. Selected Letters, Russ. Ed. 1947, pp. 356-357. - 127.

[15] Reference is to the International socialist conferences at Zimmerwald and Kienthal.

The first, Zimmerwald Conference, met on September 6-8, 1915, and was attended by 38 delegates from 11 European countries - Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Norway, Holland and Switzerland.

Lenin led the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee delegation, The Conference discussed : (1) reports from the various countries ; (2)

a joint declaration by the German and French representatives; (3) the Zimmerwald Left proposal for a policy resolution; (4) the Zimmerwald Manifesto; (5) elections to the International Socialist Committee ; (6) a message of sympathy with war victims.

It adopted the Manifesto "To the European Proletariat "in which, at the insistence of Lenin and the Left Social-Democrats, several basic propositions of revolutionary Marxism were included. The Conference also adopted a joint declaration by the German and French delegations, a message of sympathy with war victims and fighters persecuted for their political activities and elected the International Socialist Committee (I.S.C.).

The Second International Conference was held between April 24 and 30, 1916 in Kienthal, a village near Berne, and was attended by 43 delegates from 10 countries - Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Poland, Norway, Austria, Serbia, Portugal. In addition, there were a fraternal delegate from Britain and a representative of the Youth International Secretariat. Representatives of the British Independent Labour Party, the U.S. socialists, and delegates from Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Sweden were denied passports and could not therefore attend. Some Left groups were represented by delegates of other parties: the Latvian Social-Democrats transferred their mandate to the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee; Henriette Roland-Holst, delegated by the Dutch Lefts, gave her mandate to the Polish and Lithuanian Social-Democratic representative. The R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee was represented by Lenin and two other delegates. - 131.

[16] The Basle Manifesto on the war issue was adopted at the emergency International Socialist Congress held in Basle, Switzerland, on November 24-25, 1912, to discuss the struggle

against the imminent danger of a world imperialist war, heightened by the first Balkan war.

The manifesto disclosed the predatory aims of the war the imperialists were preparing and urged workers everywhere resolute to combat the danger, «to pit against the might of capitalist imperialism the international solidarity of the working class» and in the event of imperialist war breaking out, to take advantage of the economic and political crisis to hasten the socialist revolution.

Kautsky, Vandervelde and the other Second International leaders voted for the Manifesto, but as soon as the world war broke out, they went back on it, as on other anti-war decisions of international socialist congresses, and sided with their imperialist governments. - 131.

[17] K. Marx, Preface to the second edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 244). - 137.

[18] See K. Marx and F. Engels. *Selected Works*. Albanian Edition 1975, Vol. 1, p. 249. - 137.

[19] K. Marx and F. Engels. *Works*, Russ. Ed., 1953, Vol. XV, p. 229. - 155.

[20] J. V. Stalin's article «Concerning the Question of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists» was published on March 14, 1923, in *Pravda*, No. 56, which was devoted to the 25th anniversary of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and also in *Petrograskaya Pravda*, Nos. 57, 58 and 59, of March 14, 15 and 16, 1923 and in the magazine *Kommunisticheskaya Revolyutsia*, No. 7 (46), of April 1, 1923.

Later, a part of this article, under the heading: «The October Revolution and the Strategy of the Russian Communists» was published in the book: J. Stalin, *The October Revolution*, Moscow 1932. - 188.

[21] The «Contact Committee», consisting of Chkheidze, Steklov Sukhanov, Filippovsky and Skobelev (and later Chernov and Tsereteli) was set up by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on March 7, 1917, for the purpose of establishing contact with the Provisional Government, of «influencing» it and of "supervising" its activities. Actually, the «Contact Committee» helped to carry out the Provisional Government's bourgeois policy and tried to restrain the masses of the workers from waging a revolutionary struggle to transfer a power to the Soviets. The "Contact Committee» existed until May 1917, when representatives of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries actually entered the Provisional Government. - 199.

[22] V. I. Lenin, «The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution» (see Works, Albanian. Ed., Vol. 24, pp. 3-8). - 200.

[23] See V. I. Lenin's work «The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism» (Works, Albanian., Vol. 33, pp. 106-115). - 224.

[24] J. V. Stalin's book *On the Road to October* appeared in two editions, one in January and the other in May 1925. The articles and speeches published in that book are included in Vol. 3 of J. V. Stalin's Works. The author finished the preface in December 1924, but it was given in full only in the book *On the Road to October*. The greater part of the preface, under the general title *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, has appeared in all the editions of J. V. Stalin's

Problems of Leninism, as wells in various symposia and separate pamphlets. Apart of the preface Is given in Vol. 3 of J. V. Stalin's Works as an author's note to the article «Against Federalism». - 227.

[25] This refers to the Conference held in Locarno (Switzerland), October 5-16, 1925, at which Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany were represented. - 258.

[26] The Federal Reserve System was instituted in the U.S.A.in 1913. Twelve Federal Reserve Banks in the major centres the country co-ordinate and control all the activities of the American banks and are an instrument of monopoly capital. The System is headed by a Federal Reserve Board (re-named in 1933 the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System), the members of which are appointed by the U.S. President, and which is completely under the thumb of the financial magnates. The American bourgeois economists-apologists of American capitalism - and financial and government circles in the USA considered that the Federal Reserve System would safeguard the country's economy against crises. The attempts of President Hoover to cope with the crisis that broke out in 1929 with the help of the Federal Reserve System proved a complete failure. - 285.

27] The Young Plan - named after its author, the American banker Young - was a plan for exacting reparations from Germany. It was adopted on June 7, 1929, by a committee of French, British, Italian, Japanese, Belgian, American and German experts, and was finally endorsed at the Hague Conference on January 20, 1930. The plan fixed total German reparations at 113,900 million marks (in foreign currency), to be paid over a period of 59 years. All reparations receipts and payments were to be handled by the Bank for International Settlements, in which the U.S.A. occupied a dominant position. The establishment of

this bank was one of the cardinal points of the Young Plan and was a means by which American monopoly capital could control the trade and currencies of the European countries. The plan relieved German industry of contributions to reparations, the whole burden of which was laid upon the working people. The Young Plan made it possible to speed up the rebuilding of Germany's industrial war potential, which thus. imperialists were seeking to achieve with a view to launching aggression against the U.S.S.R. - 292.

[28] This refers to the treaties and agreements concluded by the imperialist states at a conference in Locarno, Switzerland, held October 5-16, 1925. The Locarno agreements were designed to strengthen the post-war system established in Europe by the Treaty of Versailles, but their effect was to sharpen still more the contradictions between the chief imperialist countries and to stimulate preparation for new wars, (For the Locarno Conference, see J. V. Stalin, Works, Vol, 7, pp.277-83). - 292.

[29] Anti-war demonstrations and strikes on August 1, 1929 (the fifteenth anniversary of the outbreak of the imperialist first world war) and protest demonstrations on March 6, 1930, against the rapid growth of unemployment (as a result of the world economic crisis of 1929) took place in many cities and industrial centres of France, Germany, Britain, the U.S.A., Poland and other European and American countries.

The protest movement took place wholly under the leadership of the Communist Parties and the Communist International. - 294.

[30] The Second Congress of the Communist international took place on July 19-August 7, 1920. It opened in Petrograd the subsequent sittings were held in Moscow. It was attended by more than 200 delegates representing working-class organizations from 37 countries. V. I. Lenin directed all the

preparatory work for convening the congress. At the congress Lenin delivered a report on the international situation and the chief tasks of the Communist International, as well as other reports and speeches. V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin were elected by the R.C.P.(B.) delegation to sit on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The Second Congress laid the foundations of the programme, organizational principles, strategy and tactics of the Communist International. - 303.