LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY
VOLUME 18

FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

BY

JOSEPH STALIN

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
381 FOURTH AVENUE · NEW YORK

FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

by Joseph Stalin

NEW TRANSLATION

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS, NEW YORK

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

72

Note: This book contains a series of lectures delivered at the Sverdlov University, Moscow, in the beginning of April 1924, shortly after the death of Lenin. The book was dedicated by the author to the new members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union recruited in the Lenin memorial enrollment.

CONTENTS

Introduction 9

I. The Historical Roots of Leninism 13

II. Method 20

III. Theory 28

IV. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat 47

V. The Peasant Problem 61

VI. The National Problem 76

VII. Strategy and Tactics 88

VIII. The Party 107

IX. Style in Work 125

Introduction

THE foundations of Leninism is a big subject. To exhaust it a whole volume would be required. Indeed, a number of volumes would be required. Naturally, therefore, my lectures cannot pretend to be an exhaustive exposition of Leninism; at best they can offer but a concise synopsis of the principles of Leninism. Nevertheless, I consider it useful to give this synopsis, in order to lay down some basic points of departure necessary for the successful study of Leninism.

Expounding the foundations of Leninism does not yet mean expounding the basis of Lenin's world outlook. Lenin's world outlook and the foundations of Leninism are not conterminous. Lenin was a Marxist, and Marxism is, of course, the basis of his world outlook. But from this it does not at all follow that an exposition of Leninism ought to begin with an exposition of the foundations of Marxism. To expound Leninism means to expound the distinctive and new in the works of Lenin that Lenin contributed to the general treasury of Marxism and that is naturally connected with his name. Only in this sense will I speak in my lectures of the foundations of Leninism.

And so, what is Leninism?

Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the peculiar conditions of the situation in Russia. This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way. But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the peculiar situation in Russia it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian and only a Russian, phenomenon. We know, however,

that Leninism is not merely a Russian, but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from onesidedness.

Others say that Leninism is the revival of the revolutionary elements of Marxism of the 'forties of the nineteenth century, as distinct from the Marxism of subsequent years, when, it is alleged, it became moderate, non-revolutionary. If we disregard this foolish and vulgar division of the teachings of Marx into two parts, revolutionary and moderate, we must admit that even this totally inadequate and unsatisfactory definition contains a particle of truth. That particle of truth is that Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International. Still, that is but a particle of the truth. The whole truth about Leninism is that Leninism not only restored Marxism, but also took a step forward, developing Marxism further under the new conditions of capitalism and of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What, then, in the last analysis, is Leninism?

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and of 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. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for a revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet a direct, practical inevitability. Lenin, however, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had

smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

That is why Leninism is the further development of Marxism.

It is usual to point to the exceptionally militant and exceptionally revolutionary character of Leninism. This is quite correct. But this feature of Leninism is due to two causes: firstly, to the fact that Leninism emerged from the proletarian revolution, the imprint of which it cannot but bear; secondly, to the fact that it grew and became strong in contests with the opportunism of the Second International, the fight against which was and remains an essential preliminary condition for a successful fight against capitalism. It must not be forgotten that between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of undivided domination of the opportunism of the Second International, and the ruthless struggle against this opportunism could not but constitute one of the most important tasks of Leninism.

I. The Historical Roots of Leninism

LENINISM grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached their extreme, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for the revolution had culminated in a new period, the period of the direct onslaught upon capitalism.

Lenin called imperialism "moribund capitalism." Why? Because imperialism carries the contradictions of capitalism to their last bounds, to the extreme limit, beyond which revolution begins. Of these contradictions, there are three which must be regarded as the most important.

The *first contradiction* is the contradiction between labour and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and co-operative organizations, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, linger in misery as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.

The *second contradiction* is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a redivision of the already divided world, a struggle waged

with particular fury by new financial groups and powers seeking a "place in the sun" against the old groups and powers which cling tightly to what they have grabbed. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element imperialist wars, wars for the annexation of foreign territories. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general, to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical inevitability of this revolution.

(3) The *third contradiction* is the contradiction between the handful of ruling "civilised" nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhuman oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build railroads, factories and mills there, to create industrial and commercial centres. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the movement for emancipation—such are the inevitable results of this "policy." The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat in that it radically undermines the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.

Such, in general, are the principal contradictions of imperialism which have converted the old, "flourishing" capitalism into moribund capitalism.

The significance of the imperialist war which broke loose ten

years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them onto the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

In other words, imperialism has brought it about, not only that revolution has become a practical inevitability, but also that favourable conditions have been created for a direct onslaught upon the citadels of capitalism.

Such is the international situation which gave birth to Leninism.

Some may say: this is all very well, but what has it to do with Russia, which was not and could not be a classical land of imperialism? What has it to do with Lenin, who worked primarily in Russia and for Russia? Why did Russia, of all countries, become the home of Leninism, the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Because Russia represented the focus of all these contradictions of imperialism.

Because Russia, more than any other country, was pregnant with revolution, and she alone was therefore in a position to solve these contradictions in a revolutionary way.

To begin with, tsarist Russia was the home of every kind of oppression—capitalist, colonial and militarist—in its most inhuman and barbarous form. Who does not know that in Russia the omnipotence of capital coalesced with the despotism of tsarism, the aggressiveness of Russian nationalism with tsarism's role of executioner in regard to the non-Russian peoples, the exploitation of entire regions—Turkey, Persia, China—with the seizure of these regions by tsarism, with wars of conquest? Lenin was right in saying that tsarism was "militarist-feudal imperialism." Tsarism was the concentration of the worst features of imperialism, raised to the second power.

To proceed. Tsarist Russia was an immense reserve of Western

imperialism, not only in that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metal industries, but also in that it could supply the Western imperialists with millions of soldiers. Remember the Russian army, twelve million strong, which shed its blood on the imperialist fronts to safeguard the staggering profits of the British and French capitalists.

Further. Tsarism was not only the watchdog of imperialism in the east of Europe, but, in addition, it was the agent of Western imperialism for squeezing out of the population hundreds of millions by way of interest on loans floated in Paris and London, Berlin and Brussels.

Finally, tsarism was the most faithful ally of Western imperialism in the partition of Turkey, Persia, China, etc. Who does not know that the imperialist war was waged by tsarism in alliance with the imperialists of the Entente, and that Russia was an essential element in that war?

That is why the interests of tsarism and of Western imperialism were interwoven and ultimately became merged in a single skein of imperialist interests. Could Western imperialism resign itself to the loss of such a powerful support in the East and of such a rich reservoir of power and resources as old, tsarist, bourgeois Russia was without exerting all its strength to wage a life and death struggle against the Russian revolution, with the object of defending and preserving tsarism? Of course not.

But from this it follows that whoever wanted to strike at tsarism necessarily raised his hand against imperialism, whoever rose against tsarism had to rise against imperialism as well; for whoever was bent on overthrowing tsarism had to overthrow imperialism too, if he really intended not merely to defeat tsarism, but to make a clean sweep of it. Thus the revolution

against tsarism verged on and had to pass into a revolution against imperialism, into a proletarian revolution.

Meanwhile, in Russia a tremendous popular revolution was rising, headed by the most revolutionary proletariat in the world, which possessed such an important ally as the revolutionary peasantry of Russia. Need it be argued that such a revolution could not stop halfway, that in the event of success it was bound to advance further and raise the banner of revolt against imperialism?

That is why Russia was bound to become the focus of the contradictions of imperialism, not only in the sense that it was in Russia that these contradictions were revealed most plainly, in view of their particularly repulsive and particularly intolerable character, and not only because Russia was the most important prop of Western imperialism, connecting Western finance capital with the colonies in the East, but also because Russia was the only country in which there existed a real force capable of solving the contradictions of imperialism in a revolutionary way.

From this it follows, however, that the revolution in Russia could not but become a proletarian revolution, that from its very inception it could not but assume an international character, and that, therefore, it could not but shake the very foundations of world imperialism.

Under these circumstances, could the Russian Communists confine their work within the narrow national bounds of the Russian revolution? Of course not. On the contrary, the whole situation, both domestic (the profound revolutionary crisis) and foreign (the war), impelled them to go beyond these bounds in their work, to transfer the struggle to the international arena, to expose the ulcers of imperialism, to prove that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable, to smash social-chauvinism and social-pacifism, and, finally, to overthrow capitalism in their own country and to forge a new fighting weapon for the proletariat—

the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution—in order to facilitate the task of overthrowing capitalism for the proletarians of all countries. Nor could the Russian Communists act otherwise, for only this path offered the chance of producing certain changes in the international situation which could safeguard Russia against the restoration of the bourgeois order.

That is why Russia became the home of Leninism, and why Lenin, the leader of the Russian Communists, became its creator.

The same thing, approximately, "happened" in the case of Russia and Lenin as had happened in the case of Germany and Marx and Engels in the 'forties of the last century. Like Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany was then pregnant with the bourgeois revolution. Marx wrote at that time in *The Communist Manifesto:*

"The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilisation and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works,* Vol. I, p. 241.)

In other words, the centre of the revolutionary movement was shifting to Germany.

There can hardly be any doubt that it was this very circumstance, noted by Marx in the above-quoted passage, that served as the probable reason why it was precisely Germany that became the birthplace of Scientific Socialism and why the leaders of the German proletariat, Marx and Engels, became its creators.

The same, only to a still greater degree, must be said of Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. Russia was then on the eve of a bourgeois revolution; she had to accomplish this revolution at a time when conditions in Europe were more

advanced, and with a proletariat that was more developed than that of Germany (let alone England and France); moreover, all the evidence went to show that this revolution would serve as a ferment and as a prelude to the proletarian revolution. We cannot regard it as a mere accident that as early as 1902, when the Russian revolution was still in an embryonic state, Lenin wrote the following prophetic words in his pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?:*

"History has now confronted us [*i.e.,* the Russian Marxists—*J.S.*] with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks that confront the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." (V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 50.) *

In other words, the centre of the revolutionary movement was bound to shift to Russia.

As we know, the course of the revolution in Russia has more than vindicated Lenin's prediction.

Is it surprising, after all this, that a country which has accomplished such a revolution and possesses such a proletariat should have been the birthplace of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

Is it surprising that Lenin, the leader of this proletariat, became the creator of this theory and tactics and the leader of the international proletariat?

* Quotations from English translations of Lenin have been checked with the original and in some cases revised.—*Ed.*

II. Method

I HAVE already said that between Marx and Engels, on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of domination of the opportunism of the Second International. For the sake of exactitude I must add that it is not formal domination of opportunism I have in mind, but only its actual domination. Formally, the Second International was headed by "faithful" Marxists, by the "orthodox"—Kautsky and others. Actually, however, the main work of the Second International followed the line of opportunism. The opportunists adapted themselves to the bourgeoisie, because of their adaptive, petty-bourgeois nature; the "orthodox," in their turn, adapted themselves to the opportunists in order to "preserve unity" with them, to preserve "peace within the party." As a result, opportunism dominated; for there always proved to be a link between the policy of the bourgeoisie and the policy of the "orthodox."

This was the period of the relatively peaceful development of capitalism, the pre-war period, so to speak, when the catastrophic contradictions of imperialism had not yet become so glaringly evident, when workers' economic strikes and trade unions were developing more or less "normally," when election campaigns and parliamentary parties yielded "dizzying" successes, when legal forms of struggle were lauded to the skies, and when it was thought that capitalism would be "killed" by legal means—in short, when the parties of the Second International were vegetating and there was no inclination to think seriously about revolution, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, or about the revolutionary education of the masses.

Instead of an integral revolutionary theory there were con-

tradictory theoretical postulates and fragments of theory, which were divorced from the actual revolutionary struggle of the masses and had degenerated into threadbare dogmas. For the sake of appearances, Marx's theory was mentioned, of course, but only to rob it of its living, revolutionary spirit.

Instead of a revolutionary policy there was flabby philistinism and sober political bargaining, parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary scheming. For the sake of appearances, of course, "revolutionary" resolutions and slogans were adopted, but only to be pigeonholed.

Instead of training the party and teaching it correct revolutionary tactics by helping it learn from its own mistakes, there was a studied evasion of acute questions, which they glossed over and veiled. For the sake of appearances, of course, they were not averse to talking about the acute questions, but only to wind up with some sort of "elastic" resolution.

Such was the physiognomy of the Second International, its method of work, its arsenal.

Meanwhile, a new period of imperialist wars and of revolutionary battles of the proletariat was approaching. The old methods of fighting were proving obviously inadequate and impotent in face of the omnipotence of finance capital.

It became necessary to overhaul the entire activity of the Second International, its entire method of work, and to drive out all philistinism, narrow-mindedness, political scheming, renegacy, social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. It became necessary to examine the entire arsenal of the Second International, to throw out all that was rusty and antiquated, to forge new weapons. Without this preliminary work it was useless embarking upon war against capitalism. Without this work the proletariat ran the risk of finding itself inadequately armed, or even completely unarmed, in the future revolutionary battles.

The honour of bringing about this general overhauling and

general cleansing of the Augean stables of the Second International fell to Leninism.

Such were the conditions under which the method of Leninism was born and hammered out.

What are the requirements of this method?

First, the *testing* of the theoretical dogmas of the Second International in the crucible of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, in the crucible of living practice—that is to say, the restoration of the disturbed unity between theory and practice, the healing of the rift between them; for only in this way can a truly proletarian party armed with revolutionary theory be created.

Second, the *testing* of the policy of the parties of the Second International, not by their slogans and resolutions (which cannot be trusted), but by their deeds, by their actions; for only in this way can the confidence of the proletarian masses be won and deserved.

Third, the *reorganization* of all Party work on new revolutionary lines, with a view to training and preparing the masses for the revolutionary struggle; for only in this way can the masses be prepared for the proletarian revolution.

Fourth, *self-criticism* inside the proletarian parties, their education and training by their learning from their own mistakes; for only in this way can genuine cadres and genuine leaders of the Party be trained.

Such is the basis and substance of the method of Leninism.

How was this method applied in practice?

The opportunists of the Second International have a number of theoretical dogmas to which they always revert as their starting point. Let us take a few of these.

First dogma: concerning the conditions for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The opportunists assert that the proletariat cannot and ought not to take power unless it constitutes

a majority in the country. No proofs are adduced, for there are no proofs, either theoretical or practical, that can justify this absurd thesis. Let us assume that this is so, Lenin replies to these gentlemen of the Second International; but suppose a historical situation has arisen (a war, an agrarian crisis, etc.) in which the proletariat, constituting a minority of the population, has an opportunity to rally around itself the vast majority of the labouring masses; why should it not take power then? Why should not the proletariat take advantage of a favourable international and internal situation to pierce the front of capitalism and hasten the general issue? Did not Marx say as far back as the 'fifties of the last century that things could have gone "splendidly" with the proletarian revolution in Germany had it been possible to assist it by, "so to speak, a second edition of the Peasant War"? Is it not a generally known fact that in those days the number of proletarians in Germany was relatively smaller than, for example, in Russia in 1917? Has not the practical experience of the Russian proletarian revolution shown that this favourite dogma of the heroes of the Second International is devoid of all vital significance for the proletariat? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses confutes and defeats this obsolete dogma?

Second dogma: the proletariat cannot retain power if it lacks an adequate number of trained educational and administrative cadres capable of organizing the administration of the country; these cadres must first be trained under capitalist conditions, and only then can power be taken. Let us assume that this is so, replies Lenin; but why not turn it this way: first take power, create favourable conditions for the development of the proletariat, then proceed with seven-league strides to raise the cultural level of the labouring masses and train numerous cadres of leaders and administrators from among the workers? Has not Russian experience shown that the cadres of leaders re-

cruited from the ranks of the workers grow a hundred times more rapidly and effectually under the rule of the proletariat than under the rule of capital? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses ruthlessly smashes also this theoretical dogma of the opportunists?

Third dogma: the proletariat cannot accept the method of the political general strike, because it is unsound in theory (see Engels' criticism) and dangerous in practice (it may disturb the normal course of economic life in the country, it may deplete the coffers of the trade unions), and cannot serve as a substitute for the parliamentary forms of struggle, which are the principal forms of the class struggle of the proletariat. Very well, reply the Leninists; but, firstly, Engels did not criticize every kind of general strike. He criticized a certain kind of general strike, namely, the *economic* general strike advocated by the Anarchists *in place of* the political struggle of the proletariat. What has this to do with the method of the *political* general strike? Secondly, where and by whom has it ever been proved that the parliamentary struggle is the principal form of struggle of the proletariat? Does not the history of the revolutionary movement show that the parliamentary struggle is only a school for and an aid in organizing the extra-parliamentary struggle of the proletariat, that under capitalism the fundamental problems of the working-class movement are solved by force, by the direct struggle of the proletarian masses, their general strike, their insurrection? Thirdly, who suggested that the method of the political general strike be substituted for the parliamentary struggle? Where and when have the supporters of the political general strike tried to substitute extra-parliamentary forms of struggle for parliamentary forms? Fourthly, has not the revolution in Russia shown that the political general strike is the greatest school for the proletarian revolution and an indispensable means of mobilizing and organizing the vast masses of

the proletariat on the eve of storming the citadels of capitalism? Why then the philistine lamentations over the disturbance of the normal course of economic life and over the coffers of the trade unions? Is it not clear that the experience of the revolutionary struggle smashes also this dogma of the opportunists?

And so on and so forth.

That is why Lenin said that "revolutionary theory is not a dogma," that it "undergoes final formulation only when brought into close contact with the practice of the really mass and really revolutionary movement" (*"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*); for theory must serve practice, for "theory must answer the questions raised by practice" (*What the "Friends of the People" Are*), for it must be tested by the data of practice.

As to the political slogans and the political resolutions of the parties of the Second International, it is sufficient to recall the history of the slogan "war against war" to realize how utterly false and utterly putrid are the political practices of these parties, which use pompous revolutionary slogans and resolutions to cloak their anti-revolutionary deeds. We all remember the pompous demonstration of the Second International at the Basle Congress, at which it threatened the imperialists with all the horrors of insurrection if they should dare to start war, and proclaimed the menacing slogan "war against war." But who does not remember that some time after, on the very eve of the war, the Basle resolution was pigeonholed and the workers were given a new slogan—to exterminate each other for the glory of their capitalist fatherlands? Is it not clear that revolutionary slogans and resolutions are not worth a farthing if they are not backed by deeds? One need only contrast the Leninist policy of transforming the imperialist war into civil war with the treacherous policy of the Second International during the war to under-

stand the utter vulgarity of the opportunist politicians and the full grandeur of the method of Leninism. I cannot refrain from quoting at this point a passage from Lenin's book, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky,* in which Lenin severely castigates an opportunist attempt by the leader of the Second International, K. Kautsky, to judge parties not by their deeds, but by their paper slogans and documents:

"Kautsky is pursuing a characteristically petty-bourgeois, philistine policy by pretending ... that *putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced and still advance all sorts of 'slogans' in order to deceive the people. The point is to *test* their sincerity, to compare their words with their *deeds,* not to be satisfied with idealistic or charlatan *phrases,* but to get down to *class reality.*" (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 172.)

I need not speak of the fear the parties of the Second International have of self-criticism, of their habit of concealing their mistakes, of glossing over sore questions, of covering up their shortcomings by a false parade of well-being—a habit which blunts living thought and hinders the Party's revolutionary training by its learning from its own mistakes, a habit which was ridiculed and pilloried by Lenin. Here is what Lenin wrote about self-criticism in proletarian parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder:*

"The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is, and how it *in practice* fulfils its obligations towards its *class* and the toiling *masses.* Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions which led to it, and thoroughly discussing the means of correcting it—that is the earmark of a serious party, that is the way it should perform its duties, that is the way it should educate and train the *class,* and then the masses." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 98.)

Some say that the exposure of its own mistakes and self-criticism are dangerous for the Party, because the enemy may use this against the Party of the proletariat. Lenin regarded such objections as trivial and entirely wrong. Here is what he wrote apropos of this as far back as 1904, in his pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back,* when our Party was still weak and small:

"They [*i.e.,* the opponents of the Marxists—*J.S.*] gloat and grimace over our controversies; they will try, of course, to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and use them for their own ends. The Russian Marxists have already been sufficiently steeled in battle not to let themselves be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, with their work of self-criticism and the ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will inevitably and certainly be overcome as the working-class movement grows." (*Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 410.)

Such, in general, are the characteristic features of the method of Leninism.

What is contained in Lenin's method was in the main already contained in the teachings of Marx, which, according to Marx himself, were "in essence critical and revolutionary." It is precisely this critical and revolutionary spirit that pervades Lenin's method from beginning to end. But it would be wrong to suppose that Lenin's method is merely the restoration of the method of Marx. As a matter of fact, Lenin's method is not only the restoration, but also the concretization and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.

III. Theory

FROM this theme I take three questions: (1) the importance of theory for the proletarian movement; (2) criticism of the "theory" of spontaneity; (3) the theory of the proletarian revolution.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THEORY

Some think that Leninism is the precedence of practice over theory in the sense that its main point is the translation of the Marxian theses into deeds, their "execution"; as for theory, it is alleged that Leninism is rather unconcerned about it. We know that Plekhanov occasionally chaffed Lenin about his "unconcern" for theory, and particularly for philosophy. We also know that theory is not held in great favour by many present-day Leninist practical workers, particularly in view of the overwhelming amount of practical work imposed upon them by present circumstances. I must declare that this more than odd opinion about Lenin and Leninism is quite wrong and bears no relation whatever to the truth; that the attempt of practical workers to brush theory aside runs counter to the whole spirit of Leninism and is fraught with serious dangers to the cause.

Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes aimless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for it, and it

alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inherent connection between surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to discern not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well-known thesis that:

"Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." * (*Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 47.)

Lenin, better than anyone else, understood the great importance of theory, particularly for a Party such as ours, in view of the role of vanguard fighter of the international proletariat which has fallen to its lot, and in view of the complicated internal and international situation in which it finds itself. Foreseeing this special role of our Party as far back as 1902, he thought it necessary even then to point out that:

"...the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (*Ibid.,* p. 48.)

It need hardly be proved that now, when Lenin's prediction about the role of our Party has come true, this thesis of Lenin's acquires particular force and particular importance.

Perhaps the most striking expression of the great importance which Lenin attached to theory is the fact that none other than Lenin undertook the very serious task of generalising, in line with the materialist philosophy, the most important achievements of science from the time of Engels down to his own time, as well as of subjecting to comprehensive criticism the anti-materialistic trends among Marxists. Engels said that "materialism must assume a new aspect with every new great discovery." It is well known that none other than Lenin accom-

* My italics.—*J.S.*

plished this task for his own time in his remarkable work *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. It is well known that Plekhanov, who loved to chaff Lenin about his "unconcern" for philosophy, did not even dare to make a serious attempt to undertake such a task.

2. CRITICISM OF THE "THEORY" OF SPONTANEITY, OR THE ROLE OF THE VANGUARD IN THE MOVEMENT

The "theory" of spontaneity is a theory of opportunism, a theory of worshipping the spontaneity of the labour movement, a theory which actually repudiates the leading role of the vanguard of the working class, of the party of the working class.

The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to the revolutionary character of the working-class movement; it is opposed to the movement taking the line of struggle against the foundations of capitalism; it stands for the idea of the movement proceeding exclusively along the line of "realizable" demands, of demands "acceptable" to capitalism; it stands entirely for the "line of least resistance." The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade unionism.

The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to lending the spontaneous movement consciousness and system. It is opposed to the idea of the Party marching at the head of the working class, of the Party raising the masses to the level of class consciousness, of the Party leading the movement; it stands for the idea that the class-conscious elements of the movement must not hinder the movement from taking its own course; it stands for the idea that the Party is only to heed the spontaneous movement and follow in its tail. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious

element in the movement, the ideology of *"khvostism"* *—the logical basis of *all* opportunism.

In practice this theory, which appeared on the scene even before the first revolution in Russia, led its adherents, the so-called "Economists," to deny the need for an independent workers' party in Russia, to oppose the revolutionary struggle of the working class for the overthrow of tsardom, to preach a purely trade unionist policy in the movement, and, in general, to surrender the labour movement to the hegemony of the liberal bourgeoisie.

The fight of the old *Iskra* and the brilliant criticism of the theory of "khvostism" in Lenin's pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* not only smashed so-called "Economism," but also created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class.

Without this fight it would have been quite useless even to think of creating an independent workers' party in Russia and of its playing a leading part in the revolution.

But the theory of worshipping spontaneity is not peculiar to Russia. It is extremely widespread—in a somewhat different form, it is true—in all the parties of the Second International, without exception. I have in mind the so-called "productive forces" theory, vulgarized by the leaders of the Second International—a theory that justifies everything and conciliates everybody, that states facts and explains them only after everyone has become sick and tired of them, and, having stated them, rests content with that. Marx said that the materialist theory could not confine itself to explaining the world, that it must also change it. But Kautsky and Co. are not concerned with this; they prefer to rest content with the first part of Marx's formula. Here is one of the numerous examples of the application of this "theory." It is said that before the imperialist war

* *I.e.*, following in the tail; from the Russian word *khvost*, meaning tail.—*Ed.*

the parties of the Second International threatened to declare "war against war" if the imperialists should start a war. It is said that on the very eve of the war these parties pigeonholed the "war against war" slogan and applied an opposite slogan, *viz.*, "war for the imperialist fatherland." It is said that as a result of this change of slogans millions of workers were sent to their death. But it would be a mistake to think that there must have been people who were to blame for this, that someone was unfaithful to the working class or betrayed it. Not at all! Everything happened as it should have happened. Firstly, because the International is "an instrument of peace," and not of war. Secondly, because, in view of the "level of the productive forces" which then prevailed, there was nothing else that could be done. The "productive forces" are "to blame." This is the precise explanation vouchsafed to "us" by Mr. Kautsky's "productive forces" theory. And whoever does not believe in this "theory" is not a Marxist. The role of the parties? Their part in the movement? But what can a party do against so decisive a factor as the "level of the productive forces"?

One could cite a host of similar examples of the falsification of Marxism.

It is hardly necessary to prove that this spurious Marxism, designed to hide the nakedness of opportunism, is merely a European variety of the selfsame theory of "khvostism" which Lenin fought even before the first Russian revolution.

It is hardly necessary to prove that the demolition of this theoretical falsification is a prerequisite for the creation of truly revolutionary parties in the West.

3. THE THEORY OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution proceeds from three fundamental theses.

First Thesis: The domination of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries; the issue of stocks and bonds as the principal operation of finance capital; the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, which is one of the foundations of imperialism; the omnipotence of a financial oligarchy, which is the result of the domination of finance capital—all this reveals the grossly parasitic character of monopolist capitalism, makes the yoke of the capitalist trusts and syndicates a hundred times more burdensome, quickens the revolt of the working class against the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation. (*Cf.* Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism.*)

Hence the first conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the internal, proletarian front in the "mother countries."

Second Thesis: The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the extension of "spheres of influence" and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a *world system* of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the earth by a handful of "advanced" countries—all this has, on the one hand, converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called world economy and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of "advanced" capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast

colonies and dependencies, and the vast majority of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to fight for their liberation from the imperialist yoke. (*Cf. Imperialism.*)

Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

Third Thesis: The monopolistic possession of "spheres of influence" and colonies; the uneven development of the different capitalist countries, leading to a frenzied struggle for the redivision of the world between the countries which have already seized territories and those claiming their "share"; imperialist wars as the only method of restoring the disturbed "equilibrium" —all this leads to the aggravation of the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the amalgamation of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation. (*Cf. Imperialism.*)

Hence the third conclusion: that under imperialism wars cannot be averted, and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable.

Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclusion that *"imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution."** (*Selected Works,* Vol. V, p. 5.)

The very approach to the question of the proletarian revolution, of the character of the revolution, of its scope, of its depth, the scheme of the revolution in general, changes accordingly.

Formerly, the analysis of the conditions for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of

* My italics.—*J.S.*

the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old "cultured" capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the earth by a handful of "advanced" countries.

Formerly, it was the accepted thing to speak of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries, or, to be more precise, in one or another developed country. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the existence of objective conditions for the revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy as an integral unit; the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed industrially cannot serve as an insurmountable obstacle to the revolution, *if* the system as a whole, or, more correctly, *because* the system as a whole is already ripe for revolution.

Formerly it was the accepted thing to speak of the proletarian revolution in one or another developed country as of something separate and self-sufficient, facing a separate national front of capital as its opposite. Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now we must speak of the world proletarian revolution; for the separate national fronts of capital have become links in a single chain called the world front of imperialism, which must be opposed by a common front of the revolutionary movement in all countries.

Formerly, the proletarian revolution was regarded exclusively as the result of the internal development of a given country.

Now this point of view is no longer adequate. Now the proletarian revolution must be regarded primarily as the result of the development of the contradictions within the world system of imperialism, as the result of the snapping of the chain of the imperialist world front in one country or another.

Where will the revolution begin? Where, in what country, can the front of capital be pierced first?

Where industry is more developed, where the proletariat constitutes the majority, where there is more culture, where there is more democracy—that was the reply usually given formerly.

No, objects the Leninist theory of revolution; *not necessarily where industry is more developed,* and so forth. The front of capital will be pierced where the chain of imperialism is weakest, for the proletarian revolution is the result of the breaking of the chain of the world imperialist front at its weakest link; and it may turn out that the country which has started the revolution, which has made a breach in the front of capital, is less developed in a capitalist sense than other, more developed, countries, which have, however, remained within the framework of capitalism.

In 1917 the chain of the imperialist world front proved to be weaker in Russia than in the other countries. It was there that the chain gave way and provided an outlet for the proletarian revolution. Why? Because in Russia a great popular revolution was unfolding, and at its head marched the revolutionary proletariat, which had such an important ally as the vast mass of the peasantry who were oppressed and exploited by the landlords. Because the revolution there was opposed by such a hideous representative of imperialism as tsarism, which lacked all moral prestige and was deservedly hated by the whole population. The chain proved to be weaker in Russia, although that country was less developed in a capitalist sense than, say, France or Germany, England or America.

Where will the chain break in the near future? Again, where it is weakest. It is not precluded that the chain may break, say, in India. Why? Because that country has a young, militant, revolutionary proletariat, which has such an ally as the national liberation movement—an undoubtedly powerful and undoubtedly important ally. Because there the revolution is opposed by such a well-known foe as foreign imperialism, which lacks all moral credit and is deservedly hated by the oppressed and exploited masses of India.

It is also quite possible that the chain will break in Germany. Why? Because the factors which are operating, say, in India are beginning to operate in Germany as well; but, of course, the enormous difference in the level of development between India and Germany cannot but leave its impress on the progress and outcome of a revolution in Germany.

That is why Lenin said that:

"The West-European capitalist countries are accomplishing their development towards socialism not by the even 'ripening' of socialism, 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 been finally drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been drawn into the common maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement." (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, p. 399.)

Briefly, the chain of the imperialist front must, as a rule, give way where the links are weaker and, at all events, not necessarily where capitalism is more developed, where there is such and such a percentage of proletarians and such and such a percentage of peasants, and so on.

This is why in deciding the question of proletarian revolution statistical calculations of the percentage of the proletarian population in a given country lose the exceptional importance so

eagerly attached to them by the pedants of the Second International, who have not understood imperialism and who fear revolution like the plague.

To proceed: the heroes of the Second International asserted (and continue to assert) that between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian revolution there is a chasm, or at any rate a Chinese Wall, separating one from the other by a more or less protracted interval of time, during which the bourgeoisie, having come into power, develops capitalism, while the proletariat accumulates strength and prepares for the "decisive struggle" against capitalism. This interval is usually calculated to extend over many decades, if not longer. It need hardly be proved that this Chinese Wall "theory" is totally devoid of scientific meaning under the conditions of imperialism, that it is and can be only a means of concealing and camouflaging the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie. It need hardly be proved that under the conditions of imperialism, which is pregnant with collisions and wars; under the conditions of the "eve of the socialist revolution," when "flourishing" capitalism is becoming "moribund" capitalism and the revolutionary movement is growing in all countries of the world; when imperialism is allying itself with all reactionary forces without exception, down to and including tsarism and serfdom, thus making imperative the coalition of all revolutionary forces, from the proletarian movement of the West to the national liberation movement of the East; when the overthrow of the survivals of the regime of feudal serfdom becomes impossible without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism—it need hardly be proved that the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a more or less developed country, must under such circumstances verge upon the proletarian revolution, that the former must pass into the latter. The history of the revolution in Russia has provided palpable proof that this thesis is correct and incon-

trovertible. It was not without reason that Lenin, as far back as 1905, on the eve of the first Russian revolution, in his pamphlet *Two Tactics*, depicted the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution as two links in the same chain, as a single and integral picture of the sweep of the Russian revolution:

> *"The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie.* Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new *Iskra*-ists always present so narrowly in their arguments and resolutions about the scope of the revolution." (*Selected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 110-11.)

I do not even mention other, later works of Lenin's in which the idea of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution stands out in greater relief than in *Two Tactics* as one of the cornerstones of the Leninist theory of revolution.

It transpires that certain people believe that Lenin arrived at this idea only in 1916, that up to that time he had thought that the revolution in Russia would remain within the bourgeois framework, that power, consequently, would pass from the hands of the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry to the hands of the bourgeoisie and not of the proletariat. It is said that this assertion has even penetrated into our Communist press. I must say that this assertion is absolutely wrong, that it is totally at variance with the facts.

I might refer to Lenin's well-known speech at the Third Congress of the Party (1905), in which he described the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, *i.e.*, the victory of

the democratic revolution, not as the "organization of order" but as the "organization of war." (*Cf. Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. VII, p. 264.)

Further, I might refer to Lenin's well-known articles *On the Provisional Government* (1905), where, depicting the prospects of the unfolding Russian revolution, he assigns to the Party the task of "striving to make the Russian revolution not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years, so that it may lead, not merely to slight concessions on the part of the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers"; where, enlarging further on these prospects and linking them with the revolution in Europe, he goes on to say:

"And if we succeed in doing that, then ... then the revolutionary conflagration will spread all over Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and will show us 'how it is done'; then the revolutionary wave in Europe will sweep back again into Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an epoch of several revolutionary decades. ..." (*Selected Works,* Vol. III, p. 31.)

I might also refer to a well-known article by Lenin published in November 1915, in which he writes:

"The proletariat is fighting, and will fight valiantly, to capture power, for a republic, for the confiscation of the land ... for the participation of the 'non-proletarian masses of the people' in freeing *bourgeois* Russia from *military-feudal* 'imperialism' (= tsarism). And the proletariat will *immediately* * take advantage of this liberation of bourgeois Russia from tsarism, from the agrarian power of the landlords, not to aid the rich peasants in their struggle against the rural worker, but to bring about the socialist revolution in alliance with the proletarians of Europe." (*Selected Works,* Vol. V, p. 163.)

* My italics.—*J.S.*

Finally, I might refer to the well-known passage in Lenin's pamphlet *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky,* where, referring to the above-quoted passage in *Two Tactics* on the scope of the Russian revolution, he arrives at the following conclusion:

"Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First,* with the 'whole' of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the mediaeval regime (and to that extent, the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then,* with the poorest peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism,* including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist* one. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them by *anything else than* the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means monstrously to distort Marxism, to vulgarize it, to substitute liberalism in its place." (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 191.)

Enough, I think.

Very well, we may be told; but if this be the case, why did Lenin combat the idea of "permanent (uninterrupted) revolution"?

Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be utilized "to the utmost" and that the fullest use be made of their revolutionary energy for the complete liquidation of tsarism and for the transition to the proletarian revolution, whereas the adherents of "permanent revolution" did not understand the important role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution, underestimated the strength of the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, underestimated the strength and capacity of the Russian proletariat to lead the peasantry, and

thereby hampered the work of emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie, the work of rallying the peasantry around the proletariat.

Because Lenin proposed that the work of the revolution *be crowned* with the transfer of power to the proletariat, whereas the adherents of "permanent" revolution wanted to *begin* at once with the establishment of the power of the proletariat, failing to realize that in so doing they were closing their eyes to such a "trifle" as the survivals of serfdom and were leaving out of account so important a force as the Russian peasantry, failing to understand that such a policy could only retard the winning of the peasantry to the side of the proletariat.

Consequently, Lenin fought the adherents of "permanent" revolution, not over the question of "uninterruptedness," for he himself maintained the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, which is an enormous reserve force for the proletariat, because they failed to understand the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

The idea of "permanent" revolution is not a new idea. It was first advanced by Marx at the end of the 'forties in his well-known *Address to the Communist League* (1850). It is from this document that our "permanentists" took the idea of uninterrupted revolution. It should be noted, however, that in taking it from Marx, our "permanentists" altered it somewhat, and in altering it spoilt it and made it unfit for practical use. The experienced hand of Lenin was needed to rectify this mistake, to take Marx's idea of uninterrupted revolution in its pure form and make it a cornerstone of his theory of revolution.

Here is what Marx, in his *Address,* after enumerating a number of revolutionary-democratic demands which he calls upon the Communists to win, says about uninterrupted revolution:

"While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been displaced from domination, until the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians of these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians." (Karl Marx, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 161.)

In other words:

(a) Marx did not propose to *begin* the revolution in the Germany of the 'fifties with the immediate establishment of the proletarian power—*contrary* to the plans of our Russian "permanentists."

(b) Marx proposed only that the work of the revolution *be crowned* with the establishment of proletarian state power, by hurling, step by step, one section of the bourgeoisie after another from the heights of power, in order, after the attainment of power by the proletariat, to kindle the fire of revolution in every country—*fully in line* with everything that Lenin taught and carried out in the course of our revolution in pursuit of his theory of the proletarian revolution under the conditions of imperialism.

It follows, then, that our Russian "permanentists" have not only underestimated the role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution and the importance of the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, but have altered (for the worse) Marx's idea of "permanent" revolution, making it unfit for practical use.

That is why Lenin ridiculed the theory of our "permanentists," calling it "original" and "fine," and accusing them of refusing to "stop to think why, for ten whole years, life has passed by

this fine theory." (Lenin's article was written in 1915, ten years after the appearance of the theory of the "permanentists" in Russia.) (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. V, p. 162.)

That is why Lenin regarded this theory as a semi-Menshevik theory and said that it "borrows from the Bolsheviks their call for a decisive revolutionary struggle and the conquest of political power by the proletariat, and from the Mensheviks the 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry." (*Ibid.*)

This, then, is the position in regard to Lenin's idea of the bourgeois-democratic revolution passing into the proletarian revolution, of utilising the bourgeois revolution for the "immediate" transition to the proletarian revolution.

To proceed. Formerly, the victory of the revolution in one country was considered impossible, on the assumption that it would require the combined action of the proletarians of all or at least of a majority of the advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer accords with the facts. Now we must proceed from the possibility of such a victory, for the uneven and spasmodic character of the development of the various capitalist countries under the conditions of imperialism, the development, within imperialism, of catastrophic contradictions leading to inevitable wars, the growth of the revolutionary movement in all countries of the world—all this leads, not only to the possibility, but also to the necessity of the victory of the proletariat in individual countries. The history of the Russian revolution is direct proof of this. At the same time, however, it must be borne in mind that the overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be successfully accomplished only when certain absolutely necessary conditions exist, in the absence of which there can be even no question of the proletariat taking power.

Here is what Lenin says about these conditions in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder:*

"The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, consists in the following: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; for revolution it is necessary that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the 'lower classes' *do not want* the old way, and when the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way*—only then can revolution triumph. This truth may be expressed in other words: *Revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters).** It follows that for revolution it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class conscious, thinking, politically active workers) should fully understand the necessity for revolution and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis which would draw even the most backward masses into politics . . . weaken the government and make it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 127.)

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country still does not mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and taking the peasantry in tow, the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build up a socialist society. But does this mean that it will thereby achieve the complete and final victory of socialism, *i.e.,* does it mean that with the forces of only one country it can finally consolidate socialism and fully guarantee that country against intervention and, consequently, also against restoration? No, it does not. For this the victory of the revolution in at least several countries is needed. Therefore, the development and

* My italics.—*J.S.*

support of revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution in the victorious country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity but as an aid, as a means of hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

Lenin expressed this thought in a nutshell when he said that the task of the victorious revolution is to do "the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries.*" (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 182.)

These, in general, are the characteristic features of Lenin's theory of proletarian revolution.

IV. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

FROM this theme I take the three main questions: (1) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution; (2) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie; (3) the Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

1. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The question of the proletarian dictatorship is above all a question of the main content of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution, its movement, its scope and its achievements acquire flesh and blood only through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the proletarian revolution, its organ, its most important mainstay, brought into being for the purpose of, firstly, crushing the resistance of the overthrown exploiters and consolidating the achievements of the proletarian revolution, and, secondly, carrying the proletarian revolution to its completion, carrying the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. The revolution can vanquish the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay.

"The fundamental question of revolution is the question of power." (*Lenin.*) Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not mean that. The seizure of power is only the beginning. For many reasons the bourgeoisie that is overthrown in one country remains for a long time stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it. Therefore, the whole point is to retain power, to consolidate it, to make it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this it is necessary to carry out at least the three main tasks that confront the dictatorship of the proletariat "on the morrow" of victory:

(a) to break the resistance of the landlords and capitalists who have been overthrown and expropriated by the revolution, to liquidate every attempt on their part to restore the power of capital;

(b) to organize construction in such a way as to rally all the labouring people around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the liquidation, the abolition of classes;

(c) to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution for the struggle against foreign enemies, for the struggle against imperialism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to carry out, to fulfil these tasks.

"The transition from capitalism to communism," says Lenin, "represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* will be converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—will throw themselves with tenfold energy, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of their lost 'paradise,' on behalf of their families, who

had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the 'common herd' is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to 'common' work).... In the train of the capitalist exploiters will be found the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom the historical experience of every country for decades testifies that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel, and rush from one camp to the other." (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, pp. 140-41.)

And the bourgeoisie has its grounds for making attempts at restoration, because for a long time after its overthrow it remains stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it.

"If the exploiters are defeated in one country only," says Lenin, "and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception, they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited." (*Ibid.,* p. 140.)

Wherein lies the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie?

Firstly, "in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 60.)

Secondly, in the fact that:

"for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to enjoy a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once), some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organization and management, knowledge of all the 'secrets' (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management, superior education, close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie), incom-

parably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on, and so forth." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 140.)

Thirdly,

"in the *force of habit,* in the strength of *small-scale production.* For unfortunately, there is still very, very much of small-scale production left in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale; . . ." for "the abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease; it means also *getting rid of the small commodity producers,* and they *cannot be driven out,* they cannot be crushed, we must live *in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 60, 83.)

That is why Lenin says:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow"; that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 60, 84.)

It need hardly be proved that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of doing all this in a few years. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "super-revolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats. This historical era is needed not only to create the

economic and cultural prerequisites for the complete victory of socialism, but also to enable the proletariat, first, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to re-educate and remould the petty-bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organization of socialist production.

Marx said to the workers:

"You will have to go through fifteen, twenty or fifty years of civil wars and international conflicts, not only to change existing conditions, but also to change yourselves and to make yourselves capable of wielding political power."

Continuing and developing Marx's idea still further, Lenin wrote that: It will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate:

"millions of peasants and small proprietors and hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals," to subordinate "all these to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership," to overcome "their bourgeois habits and traditions . . ." just as it will be necessary "to re-educate—in a protracted struggle, on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 157, 156.)

2. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AS THE DOMINATION OF THE PROLETARIAT OVER THE BOURGEOISIE

From the foregoing it is evident that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of personalities in the govern-

ment, a change of "cabinet," etc., leaving the old economic and political order intact. The Mensheviks and opportunists of all countries, who fear dictatorship like fire and in their fright substitute the concept "conquest of power" for the concept "dictatorship of the proletariat," usually reduce the meaning of "conquest of power" to a change of "cabinet," to the accession to power of a new ministry made up of people like Scheidemann and Noske, MacDonald and Henderson. It is hardly necessary to explain that these and similar cabinet changes have nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the conquest of real power by the real proletariat. The MacDonalds and Scheidemanns in power, while the old bourgeois order is allowed to remain, their so-called governments cannot be anything else than an apparatus serving the bourgeoisie, a screen to hide the ulcers of imperialism, a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the oppressed and exploited masses. Capital needs such governments as a screen when it finds it inconvenient, unprofitable, difficult to oppress and exploit the masses without the aid of a screen. Of course, the appearance of such governments is a symptom that "over there" (*i.e.*, in the capitalist camp) "all is not quiet at the Shipka Pass" *; nevertheless, governments of this kind necessarily remain governments of capital in disguise. The government of a MacDonald or a Scheidemann is as far removed from the conquest of power by the proletariat as the sky from the earth. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of government, but a new state, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the state of the

* A Russian saying carried over from the Russo-Turkish War. Heavy fighting was taking place at the Shipka Pass, in which the Russians were suffering severe losses; but Russian Headquarters in their communiques reported: "All quiet at the Shipka Pass."—*Ed.*

proletariat, which has arisen on the ruins of the old state, the state of the bourgeoisie.

The dictatorship of the proletariat arises not on the basis of the bourgeois order, but in the process of the breaking up of this order after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in the process of the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, in the process of the socialization of the principal instruments and means of production, in the process of violent proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a revolutionary power based on the use of force against the bourgeoisie.

The state is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. But there is one *substantial* difference. This difference consists in the fact that all hitherto existing class states have been dictatorships of an exploiting minority over the exploited majority, whereas the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.

Briefly: *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses.* (*The State and Revolution.*)

From this follow two main conclusions:

First conclusion: The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be "complete" democracy, democracy for *all,* for the rich as well as for the poor; the dictatorship of the proletariat "must be a state that is democratic *in a new way—for* * the proletarians and the propertyless in general—and dictatorial *in a new way—against* * the bourgeoisie. . . ." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 34.) The talk of Kautsky and Co. about universal equality,

* My italics.—*J.S.*

about "pure" democracy, about "perfect" democracy, and the like, is but a bourgeois screen to conceal the indubitable fact that equality between exploited and exploiters is impossible. The theory of "pure" democracy is the theory of the upper stratum of the working class, which has been broken in and is being fed by the imperialist robbers. It was brought into being for the purpose of concealing the ulcers of capitalism, of touching up imperialism and lending it moral strength in the struggle against the exploited masses. Under capitalism there are no real "liberties" for the exploited, nor can there be, if for no other reason than that the premises, printing plants, paper supplies, etc., indispensable for the actual enjoyment of "liberties" are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited masses do not, nor can they, really participate in the administration of the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, governments, under the conditions of capitalism, are not set up by the people but by the Rothschilds and Stinneses, the Rockefellers and Morgans. Democracy under capitalism is *capitalist* democracy, the democracy of the exploiting minority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority and directed against this majority. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat are real "liberties" for the exploited and real participation in the administration of the country by the proletarians and peasants possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is *proletarian* democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

Second conclusion: The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic machine, the bourgeois police.

In a preface to *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote, quoting from *The Civil War in France:*

"The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and wield it for its own purposes." (Marx, *Selected Works,* Vol. I, p. 190.)

In a letter to Kugelmann (1871) Marx wrote that the task of the proletarian revolution is

"no longer as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and that is a preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the Continent." (Marx, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, p. 528.)

Marx's qualifying phrase about the Continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for proclaiming that Marx had thus conceded the possibility of the peaceful evolution of bourgeois democracy into a proletarian democracy, at least in certain countries outside the European continent (England, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to England and America in the 'seventies of the last century, when monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not yet exist, and when these countries, owing to the special conditions of their development, had as yet no developed militarism and bureaucracy. That was the situation before the appearance of developed imperialism. But later, after a lapse of thirty or forty years, when the situation in these countries had radically changed, when imperialism had developed and had embraced all capitalist countries without exception, when militarism and bureaucracy had appeared in England and America also, when the special conditions for peaceful development in England and the United States had disappeared—then the qualification in regard to these countries necessarily could no longer hold good.

"Today," said Lenin, "in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this qualification made by Marx is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and the last representatives —in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty,' in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy were absent, have slid down entirely into the all-European, filthy, bloody morass of military-bureaucratic institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything underfoot. Today, both in England and in America, the 'preliminary condition for every real people's revolution' is the smashing, the *destruction* of the 'ready-made state machine' (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general 'European' imperialist perfection)." (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 37.)

In other words, the law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of the smashing of the bourgeois state machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries of the world.

Of course, in the remote future, if the proletariat is victorious in the most important capitalist countries, and if the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, a "peaceful" path of development is quite possible for certain capitalist countries, whose capitalists, in view of the "unfavourable" international situation, will consider it expedient "voluntarily" to make substantial concessions to the proletariat. But this supposition applies only to a remote and possible future. With regard to the immediate future, there is no ground whatsoever for this supposition.

Therefore, Lenin is right in saying:

"The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one*...." (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 124.)

3. THE SOVIET POWER AS THE STATE FORM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies the suppression of the bourgeoisie, the smashing of the bourgeois state machine, and the substitution of proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy. That is clear. But by means of what organizations can this colossal task be carried out? The old forms of organization of the proletariat, which grew up on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism, are inadequate for this task—of that there can hardly be any doubt. What then, are the new forms of organization of the proletariat that are capable of serving as the gravediggers of the bourgeois state machine, that are capable not only of smashing this machine, not only of substituting proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy, but also of becoming the foundation of the proletarian state power?

This new form of organization of the proletariat is the Soviets.

Wherein lies the strength of the Soviets as compared with the old forms of organization?

In that the Soviets are the most *all-embracing* mass organizations of the proletariat, for they and they alone embrace all workers without exception.

In that the Soviets are the *only* mass organizations which embrace all the oppressed and exploited, workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, and in which the vanguard of the masses, the proletariat, can, for this reason, most easily and most completely exercise its political leadership of the mass struggle.

In that the Soviets are the *most powerful organs* of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, of the political actions of the masses, of the insurrection of the masses—organs capable of breaking the omnipotence of finance capital and of its political appendages.

In that the Soviets are the *immediate* organizations of the masses themselves, *i.e.*, they are *the most democratic* and therefore the most authoritative organizations of the masses, which facilitate to the utmost their participation in the work of building up the new state and in its administration, and which bring into full play the revolutionary energy, initiative and creative abilities of the masses in the struggle for the destruction of the old order, in the struggle for the new, proletarian order.

The Soviet power is the amalgamation and formation of the local Soviets into one common state organization, into the state organization of the proletariat as the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited masses and as the ruling class—their amalgamation into the republic of Soviets.

The essence of the Soviet power is contained in the fact that these organizations of a most pronounced mass character, these most revolutionary organizations of precisely those classes that were oppressed by the capitalists and landlords are now the "*permanent and sole* basis of the whole power of the state, of the whole state apparatus"; that

> "precisely those masses which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while being equal in law, have in fact been prevented by thousands of tricks and devices from taking part in political life and from enjoying democratic rights and liberties, are now drawn unfailingly into *constant* and, moreover, *decisive* participation in the democratic administration of the state." * (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 231.)

This is why the Soviet power is a *new form* of state organization, different in principle from the old bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary form, a *new type* of state, adapted not to the task of exploiting and oppressing the labouring masses, but to the task of completely emancipating them from all oppression and

* My italics.—*J.S.*

exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin rightly says that with the appearance of the Soviet power "the era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to an end, and a new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has commenced."

What are the characteristic features of the Soviet power?

The Soviet power has a most pronounced mass character and is the most democratic state organization of all possible state organizations while classes continue to exist; for, being the arena of the bond and collaboration between the workers and the exploited peasants in their struggle against the exploiters, and basing itself in its work on this bond and on this collaboration, it represents, by virtue of this, the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

The Soviet power is the most internationalist of all state organizations in class society, for, since it destroys every kind of national oppression and rests on the collaboration of the labouring masses of the various nationalities, it facilitates, by virtue of this, the amalgamation of these masses into a single state union.

The Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses for the vanguard of these masses—for the proletariat, as the most consolidated and most class-conscious core of the Soviets.

"The experience of all revolutions and of all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches," says Lenin, "that the proletariat alone is able to unite and lead the scattered and backward strata of the toiling and exploited population" (*Selected Works,* Vol. VII, p. 232.)

The structure of the Soviet power facilitates the practical application of the lessons drawn from this experience.

The Soviet power, by combining the legislative and executive

functions in a single state body and replacing territorial electoral constituencies by industrial units, factories and mills, thereby directly links the workers and the labouring masses in general with the apparatus of state administration, teaches them how to administer the country.

The Soviet power alone is capable of releasing the army from its subordination to bourgeois command and of converting it from the instrument of oppression of the people, which it is under the bourgeois order, into an instrument for the liberation of the people from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, both native and foreign.

"The Soviet organization of the state alone is capable of immediately and effectively smashing and finally destroying the old, *i.e.*, the bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus." (*Ibid.*)

The Soviet form of state alone, by drawing the mass organizations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in state administration, is capable of preparing the ground for the withering away of the state, which is one of the basic elements of the future stateless communist society.

The republic of Soviets is thus the political form, so long sought and finally discovered, within the framework of which the economic emancipation of the proletariat, the complete victory of socialism, is to be accomplished.

The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; the Soviet power is its development and culmination.

That is why Lenin says:

"The republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies is not only the form of a higher type of democratic institution . . . but is the *only* * *form* capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism." (*Selected Works,* Vol. VI, p. 447.)

* My italics.—*J.S.*

V. The Peasant Problem

FROM this theme I take four questions: (1) the presentation of the problem; (2) the peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution; (3) the peasantry during the proletarian revolution; (4) the peasantry after the consolidation of the Soviet power.

1. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant problem, that the point of departure of Leninism is the problem of the peasantry, of its role and relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental problem of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant problem, but the problem 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 problem, as the problem of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative problem.

This circumstance, however, does not in the least deprive the peasant problem of the serious and vital importance it unquestionably has for the proletarian revolution. It is known that the serious study of the peasant problem in the ranks of Russian Marxists began precisely on the eve of the first revolution (1905), when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realizing the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the Party in its full scope, and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution assumed immediate vital importance. It is also known that the peasant problem in Russia assumed a still more urgent character during the proletarian revolution, when the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat,

of achieving and maintaining it, led to the problem of allies for the proletariat in the impending proletarian revolution. And this was natural. Those who are marching towards and preparing to assume power cannot but be interested in the question of who are their real allies.

In this sense the peasant problem is part of the general problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as such it is one of the most vital problems of Leninism.

The attitude of indifference and sometimes even of positive dislike displayed by the parties of the Second International towards the peasant problem is to be explained not only by the specific conditions of development in the West. It is to be explained primarily by the fact that these parties do not believe in the proletarian dictatorship, that they fear revolution and do not think of leading the proletariat to power; and those who are afraid of revolution, who do not want to lead the proletarians to power, cannot be interested in the question of allies for the proletariat in the revolution—to them the question of allies is a matter of indifference, a question of no immediate significance. An ironical attitude towards the peasant problem is regarded by the heroes of the Second International as a sign of good breeding, a sign of "true" Marxism. As a matter of fact, there is not a grain of Marxism in this, for indifference towards so important a problem as the peasant problem on the eve of the proletarian revolution is the reverse side of the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat; it is an unmistakable sign of downright betrayal of Marxism.

The question presents itself as follows: Are the revolutionary possibilities latent in the peasantry by virtue of certain conditions of its existence *already exhausted,* or not; and if not, *is there any hope, any basis,* for utilizing these possibilities *for* the proletarian revolution, for transforming the peasantry, the exploited majority of it, from the reserve of the bourgeoisie which it was during

the bourgeois revolutions in the West and still is even now, into a reserve of the proletariat, into its ally?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, *i.e.,* to the effect that it recognizes the existence of revolutionary capabilities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and to the effect that it is possible to use these in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship. The history of the three revolutions in Russia fully corroborates the conclusions of Leninism on this score.

Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported—supported without fail—in their struggle against bondage and exploitation, in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and poverty. This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* peasant movement. What we have in mind here is support for those movements and those struggles of the peasantry which, directly or indirectly, assist the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, bring grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, which help to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class.

2. THE PEASANTRY DURING THE BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

This period extends from the first Russian revolution (1905) to the second revolution (February 1917), inclusive. The characteristic feature of this period is the emancipation of the peasantry from the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie, the *defection* of the peasantry from the Cadets (Constitutional-Democrats), the *turn* of the peasantry towards the proletariat, towards the Bolshevik Party. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Cadets (the liberal bourgeoisie) and the Bolsheviks (the proletariat) for the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the Duma period, for the period

of the four Dumas served as an object lesson to the peasantry, and this lesson brought home to the peasantry the fact that they would receive neither land nor liberty at the hands of the Cadets; that the tsar was entirely in favour of the landlords, and that the Cadets were supporting the tsar; that the only force they could count on was the urban workers, the proletariat. The imperialist war merely confirmed the lessons of the Duma period and completed the defection of the peasantry from the bourgeoisie, completed the isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie; for the years of the war revealed the utter futility, the utter deceptiveness of all hopes of obtaining peace from the tsar and his bourgeois allies. Without the object lessons of the Duma period the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

This is how the alliance between the workers and the peasants in the bourgeois-democratic revolution was brought about. This is how the hegemony (leadership) of the proletariat in the common struggle for the overthrow of tsarism was brought about—the hegemony which led to the February Revolution of 1917.

The bourgeois revolutions in the West (England, France, Germany and Austria) took, as is well known, a different road. There, hegemony in the revolution belonged not to the proletariat, which by reason of its weakness did not and could not represent an independent political force, but to the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry obtained its emancipation from feudal usages, not from the hands of the proletariat, which was numerically weak and unorganized, but from the hands of the bourgeoisie. There the peasantry marched against the old order side by side with the liberal bourgeoisie. There the peasantry acted as the reserve of the bourgeoisie. There the revolution, in consequence of this, led to an enormous increase in the political weight of the bourgeoisie.

In Russia, on the contrary, the bourgeois revolution produced quite opposite results. The revolution in Russia led not to the

strengthening, but to the weakening of the bourgeoisie as a political force, not to an increase in its political reserves, but to the loss of its main reserve, to the loss of the peasantry. The bourgeois revolution in Russia brought to the forefront not the liberal bourgeoisie but the revolutionary proletariat, rallying around the latter the millions of the peasantry.

Incidentally, this explains why the bourgeois revolution in Russia passed into a proletarian revolution in a comparatively short space of time. The hegemony of the proletariat was the embryo of, and the transition stage to, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

How is this peculiar phenomenon of the Russian revolution, which has no precedent in the history of the bourgeois revolutions of the West, to be explained? Whence this peculiarity?

It is to be explained by the fact that the bourgeois revolution unfolded in Russia under more advanced conditions of class struggle than in the West; that the Russian proletariat had at that time already become an independent political force, whereas the liberal bourgeoisie, frightened by the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, lost all semblance of a revolutionary attitude (especially after the lessons of 1905) and entered into an alliance with the tsar and the landlords against the revolution, against the workers and peasants.

We should bear in mind the following circumstances, which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

(a) The unprecedented concentration of Russian industry on the eve of the revolution. It is known, for instance, that in Russia more than 54 per cent of all the workers were employed in enterprises employing over 500 workers each, whereas in so highly developed a country as the United States of America no more than 33 per cent of all the workers were employed in such enterprises. It need hardly be proved that this circumstance alone,

in view of the existence of such a revolutionary party as the Party of the Bolsheviks, transformed the working class of Russia into an immense force in the political life of the country.

(b) The hideous forms of exploitation in the factories, coupled with the intolerable police regime of the tsarist hangmen—a circumstance which transformed every important strike of the workers into an imposing political action and steeled the working class as a force that was revolutionary to the end.

(c) The political flabbiness of the Russian bourgeoisie, which after the Revolution of 1905 turned into servility to tsarism and downright counter-revolution—a fact to be explained not only by the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat, which flung the Russian bourgeoisie into the arms of tsarism, but also by the direct dependence of this bourgeoisie upon government contracts.

(d) The existence in the rural districts of the most hideous and most unbearable survivals of serfdom, coupled with the domineering of the landlords—a circumstance which threw the peasantry into the arms of the revolution.

(e) Tsarism, which stifled everything that was alive, and whose tyranny aggravated the oppression of the capitalist and the landlord, a circumstance which united the struggle of the workers and of the peasants into a single torrent of revolution.

(f) The imperialist war, which fused all these contradictions in the political life of Russia into one profound revolutionary crisis, and which lent the revolution tremendous striking force.

Whither could the peasantry turn under these circumstances? Where could it seek support against the domineering of the landlords, against the tyranny of the tsar, against the devastating war which was ruining it? The liberal bourgeoisie? But it was an enemy, as the long years of experience of all four Dumas had proved. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party? The Socialist-Revolutionaries were "better" than the Cadets, of course, and their program was more "suitable," almost a peasant program; but what

could the Socialist-Revolutionaries offer, considering that they thought of relying only on the peasants and were weak in the cities, which the enemy drew upon primarily in recruiting his forces? Where was the new force which would stop at nothing either in town or country, which would boldly march in the front ranks to fight the tsar and the landlords, which would help the peasantry to extricate itself from bondage, from land hunger, from oppression, from war? Was there such a force in Russia at all? Yes, there was. It was the Russian proletariat, which had shown its strength, its ability to fight to the end, its boldness and revolutionary spirit, as far back as 1905.

At any rate, there was no other such force; nor could any other be found anywhere.

That is why the peasantry, when it turned its back on the Cadets and attached itself to the Socialist-Revolutionaries, at the same time came to realize the necessity of submitting to the leadership of such a courageous leader of the revolution as the Russian proletariat.

Such were the circumstances which determined the peculiar character of the Russian bourgeois revolution.

3. THE PEASANTRY DURING THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

This period extends from the February Revolution of 1917 to the October Revolution of 1917. This period is comparatively short, eight months in all; but from the point of view of the political enlightenment and revolutionary training of the masses these eight months can safely be put on a par with decades of ordinary constitutional development, for they were eight months of *revolution*. The characteristic feature of this period was the further revolutionization of the peasantry, their disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the *defection* of the peasantry

from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, a new *turn* of the peasantry 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 (petty-bourgeois democracy) and the Bolsheviks (proletarian democracy) for the peasantry, for winning the majority of the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the coalition period, the Kerensky period, the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to confiscate the land of the landlords, the fight of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov mutiny.

Whereas before, in the preceding period, the fundamental problem of the revolution had been the overthrow of the tsar and of the power of the landlords, now, in the period after the February Revolution, when there was no longer any tsar, and when the interminable war had exhausted the economic forces of the country and had utterly ruined the peasantry, the problem of liquidating the war became the main problem of the revolution. The centre of gravity had manifestly shifted from purely internal problems to the main problem—the war. "End the war," "Let's get out of this war"—these were the cries heard everywhere throughout the war-weary land, and primarily among the peasantry.

But in order to get out of the war it was necessary to overthrow the Provisional Government, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, for they, and they alone, were dragging out the war to a "victorious finish." Practically, there was no way of getting out of the war except by overthrowing the bourgeoisie.

This was a new revolution, a proletarian revolution, for it ousted from power the last, the extreme Left wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks, in order to set up a new, proletarian power, the power of the Soviets, in order to put in power the party of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolshevik Party, the party of the revolutionary struggle against the imperialist war and for a democratic peace. The majority of the peasantry supported the struggle of the workers for peace and for the power of the Soviets.

There was no other way out for the peasantry. Nor could there be any other way out.

Thus, the Kerensky period was a great object lesson for the toiling masses of the peasantry, for it showed clearly that with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks in power the country would not extricate itself from the war, and the peasants would never get either land or liberty; that the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries differed from the Cadets only in their honeyed phrases and false promises, while they actually pursued the same imperialist, Cadet policy; that the only power that could lead the country on to the proper road was the power of the Soviets. The further prolongation of the war merely confirmed the truth of this lesson, spurred on the revolution, and drove millions of peasants and soldiers to *rally directly* around the proletarian revolution. The isolation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks became an incontrovertible fact. Without the object lessons of the coalition period the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been impossible.

Such were the circumstances which facilitated the process of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution.

That is how the dictatorship of the proletariat took shape in Russia.

4. THE PEASANTRY AFTER THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE SOVIET POWER

Whereas before, in the first period of the revolution, the main objective was the overthrow of tsarism, and later, after the February Revolution, the primary objective was to get out of the imperialist war by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, now, after the liquidation of the Civil War and the consolidation of the Soviet power, problems of economic construction come to the forefront. Strengthen and develop the nationalized industry; for this purpose link up industry with agriculture through state-regulated trade; replace the surplus-appropriation system by the tax in kind so as, later on, by gradually lowering the tax in kind, to reduce it to the exchange of products of industry for the products of peasant farming; revive trade and develop the cooperative societies by drawing into them the vast masses of the peasantry—this is how Lenin depicted the immediate tasks of economic construction on the way to laying the foundation of socialist economy.

It is said that this task may prove beyond the strength of a peasant country like Russia. Some sceptics even say that it is simply utopian, impossible, for the peasantry is a peasantry—it consists of small producers, and therefore cannot be of use in organizing the foundations of socialist production.

But the sceptics are mistaken; for they fail to take into account certain circumstances which in the present case are of decisive significance. Let us examine the most important of these:

First. The peasantry in the Soviet Union must not be confused with the peasantry in the West. A peasantry that has been schooled in three revolutions, that fought against the tsar and the power of the bourgeoisie side by side with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat, a peasantry that has received land and peace at the hands of the proletarian revolution and by reason of this has become the reserve of the proletariat—

such a peasantry cannot but be different from a peasantry which during the bourgeois revolution fought under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, which received land at the hands of that bourgeoisie, and in view of this became the reserve of the bourgeoisie. It need hardly be proved that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which obtained its freedom because of this friendship and collaboration, cannot but represent exceptionally favourable material for economic collaboration with the proletariat.

Engels said that "the conquest of political power by the Socialist Party has become a question of the near future," that "in order to achieve power the Party must first go from the towns into the countryside and become strong in the rural districts." (Engels, *The Peasant Question.*) He wrote this in the 'nineties of the last century, having in mind the Western peasantry. Need it be proved that the Russian Communists, after accomplishing an enormous amount of work in this field in the course of three revolutions, have already succeeded in creating for themselves an influence and backing in the rural districts such as our Western comrades dare not even dream of? How can it be denied that this circumstance must decidedly facilitate the organization of economic collaboration between the working class and the peasantry of Russia?

The sceptics maintain that the small peasants are a factor that is incompatible with socialist construction. But listen to what Engels says about the small peasants of the West:

"And indeed we stand decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we will do everything possible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the cooperative, if he decides to take this step; if he cannot as yet bring himself to this decision, we will give him plenty of time to ponder over it on his holding. We shall do this not only because we consider it possible for the small peasant

who does his own work to come over to our side, but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from actual downfall into the proletariat and win for ourselves while they are still peasants, the more rapidly and easily will the social transformation take place. It cannot be to our advantage to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere up to its final consequences, until the last petty artisan and the last small peasant has fallen a victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifices which will have to be made out of public funds in this direction in the interests of the peasants can only appear as money thrown away from the point of view of capitalist economy, but they are nevertheless an excellent investment, for they will save perhaps ten times the amount in the costs of social reorganization in general. In this sense, therefore, we can afford to deal very liberally with the peasants." (*Ibid.*)

This is what Engels said, having in mind the Western peasantry. But is it not clear that nowhere can what Engels said be realized so easily and so completely as in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Is it not clear that only in Soviet Russia is it possible now and to the fullest extent for "the small peasant who does his own work to come over to our side," can the "material sacrifices" necessary for this be made, and the "liberality towards the peasants" necessary for this displayed? Is it not clear that these and similar measures for the benefit of the peasantry are already being carried out in Russia? How can it be denied that this circumstance, in its turn, must facilitate and advance the work of economic construction in the Land of the Soviets?

Second. Agriculture in Russia must not be confused with agriculture in the West. There, agriculture is developing along the ordinary lines of capitalism, under conditions of profound differentiation among the peasantry, with large landed estates and private capitalist latifundia at one extreme, and pauperism, destitution and wage slavery at the other. Owing to this, disintegration

and decay are quite natural there. Not so in Russia. Here agriculture cannot develop along such a path, if for no other reason than that the existence of the Soviet power and the nationalization of the principal instruments and means of production do not permit of such a development. In Russia the development of agriculture must proceed along a different path, along the path of organizing millions of small and middle peasants in cooperative societies, along the path of developing in the countryside mass cooperation supported by the state by means of credit on easy terms. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on cooperation that the development of agriculture in our country must proceed along a new path, along the path of drawing the majority of the peasants into socialist construction through the cooperative societies, along the path of gradually introducing into agriculture the principles of collectivism, first in the sphere of marketing and later in the sphere of production of agricultural products.

Of extreme interest in this respect are several new phenomena observed in the countryside in connection with the work of the farming cooperatives. It is well known that new, large organizations have sprung up in the *Selskosoyuz*,* in different branches of agriculture, such as flax, potatoes, butter, etc., which have a great future before them. Of these, the Flax Centre,** for instance, unites a whole network of peasant flax growers' associations. The Flax Centre supplies the peasants with seeds and implements; then it buys all the flax raised by these peasants, disposes of it on the market in mass quantities, guarantees the peasants a share in the profits, and in this way links peasant farming with state industry through the *Selskosoyuz*. What shall we call this form of organization of production? In my opinion, it is the domestic system of large-scale state-socialist production in the sphere of agriculture. In speaking of the domestic system of

* *Selskosoyuz*, the central organization of rural cooperative societies.—*Ed.*

** The Central Cooperative Society for Flax Growing and Marketing.—*Ed.*

state-socialist production I draw an analogy with the domestic system under capitalism, let us say, in the textile industry, where the handicraftsmen received their raw material and tools from the capitalist and turned over to him the entire product of their labour, thus being in fact semi-wage earners working in their own homes. This is one of numerous indices showing the path along which our agriculture must develop. I will not mention similar indices in other branches of agriculture.

It is hardly necessary to prove that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take this new path of development and abandon the old path of private capitalist latifundia and wage slavery, the path of poverty and ruin.

Here is what Lenin says about the path of development of our agriculture:

"The power of the state over all large-scale means of production, the power of state in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc.—is not this all that is necessary in order to build a complete socialist society from the cooperatives, from the cooperatives alone, which we formerly treated as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under N.E.P.*? Is this not all that is necessary for the purpose of building a complete socialist society? This is not yet the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building." (*Selected Works*, Vol. IX, p. 403.)

Further on, in speaking of the necessity of giving financial and other assistance to the cooperatives, as a "new principle of organizing the population" and a new "social system" under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin continues:

* New Economic Policy.—*Ed.*

"Every social system arises only with the financial assistance of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds and hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of 'free' capitalism costs. Now we must realize, and apply in our practical work, the fact that the social system which we must now assist more than usual is the cooperative system. But it must be assisted in the real sense of the word, *i.e.*, it will not be enough to interpret assistance to mean assistance for any kind of cooperative trade; by assistance we must mean assistance for cooperative trade in which *really large masses of the population really take part.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 404.)

What do all these things prove?

That the sceptics are wrong.

That Leninism is right in regarding the masses of labouring peasants as the reserve of the proletariat.

That the proletariat in power can and must use this reserve in order to link industry with agriculture, to advance socialist construction, and to provide for the dictatorship of the proletariat that necessary foundation without which the transition to socialist economy is impossible.

VI. The National Problem

FROM this theme I take the two main questions: (1) the presentation of the problem; (2) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

During the last twenty years the national problem has undergone a number of very important changes. The national problem in the period of the Second International and the national problem in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their intrinsic character.

Formerly, the national problem was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "cultured" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of disfranchised peoples in whose destinies the heroes of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, "civilized" and "uncivilized" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies—that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national problem has been brought to an end. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between

whites and blacks, between Europeans and Asiatics, between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national problem with the problem of the colonies. The national problem was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually misinterpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the idea of the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to represent the right to self-determination as meaning the right to cultural autonomy, *i.e.*, the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions, leaving all political power in the hands of the ruling nation. As a consequence the idea of self-determination stood in danger of becoming transformed from an instrument for combating annexations into an instrument for justifying them. Now we can say that this confusion has been cleared up. Leninism broadened the conception of self-determination and interpreted it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states. This precluded the possibility of justifying annexations by interpreting the right of self-determination to mean the right to autonomy. Thus the principle of self-determination itself was transformed from an instrument for deceiving the masses, which it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war, into an instrument for exposing all and sundry imperialist aspirations and chauvinist machinations, into an instrument for the political education of the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations was usually regarded as purely a juridical question. Solemn proclamations

regarding "national equality," innumerable declarations about the "equality of nations"—that was the fare of the parties of the Second International which glossed over the fact that "equality of nations" under imperialism, where one group of nations (a minority) lives by exploiting another group of nations, is sheer mockery of the oppressed nations. Now we can say that this bourgeois-juridical point of view on the national question has been exposed. Leninism brought the national problem down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the "equality of nations" which are not backed by the direct support of the proletarian parties for the liberation struggle of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of supporting, of rendering real and continuous assistance to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national problem was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent problem having no connection with the general problems of the rule of capital, of the overthrow of imperialism, of the proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the victory of the proletariat in Europe was possible without a direct alliance with the liberation movement in the colonies, that the national-colonial problem could be solved on the quiet, "of its own accord," off the high road of the proletarian revolution, without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Now we can say that this anti-revolutionary point of view has been exposed. Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia have confirmed, that the national problem can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries

against imperialism. The national problem is a part of the general problem of the proletarian revolution, a part of the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question presents itself as follows: Are the revolutionary possibilities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted* or not; and if not, is there any hope, any ground to expect that these possibilities can be utilized for the proletarian revolution, that the dependent and colonial countries can be transformed from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, *i.e.,* it recognizes the latent revolutionary capacities of the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries and the possibility of utilizing these capacities for the purpose of overthrowing the common enemy, for the purpose of overthrowing imperialism. The mechanics of the development of imperialism, the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia wholly confirm the conclusions of Leninism on this score.

Hence the necessity for the proletariat to support—resolutely and actively to support—the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.

This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* national movement, everywhere and always, in every single concrete case. It means that support must be given to such national movements as tend to weaken, to overthrow imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletarian movement. In such cases support is, of course, entirely out of the question. The question of the rights of nations is not an isolated, self-sufficient question; it is a part of the general problem

of the proletarian revolution, subordinate to the whole, and must be considered from the point of view of the whole. In the 'forties of the last century Marx supported the national movement of the Poles and Hungarians and was opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs. Why? Because the Czechs and the South Slavs were then "reactionary nations," "Russian outposts" in Europe, outposts of absolutism; whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were "revolutionary nations," fighting against absolutism. Because support of the national movement of the Czechs and the South Slavs was at that time equivalent to indirect support for tsarism, the most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

"The various demands of democracy," writes Lenin, "including self-determination, are not an absolute, but a *small part* of the general democratic (now: general socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 257-58.) *

This is the position in regard to the question of certain national movements, of the possible reactionary character of these movements—if, of course, they are appraised not from the formal point of view, not from the point of view of abstract rights, but concretely, from the point of view of the interests of the revolutionary movement.

The same must be said of the revolutionary character of national movements in general. The unquestionably revolutionary character of the overwhelming majority of national movements is as relative and peculiar as is the possible reactionary character of certain particular national movements. The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression

* *Cf.* Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism* (N. Y., 1935), p. 147.—*Ed.*

does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican program of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism; whereas the struggle waged by "desperate" Democrats and "Socialists," "revolutionaries" and republicans, such as, for example, Kerensky and Tsereteli, Renaudel and Scheidemann, Chernov and Dan, Henderson and Clynes, during the imperialist war was a *reactionary* struggle, for its result was the whitewashing, the strengthening, the victory of imperialism. For the same reasons the struggle the Egyptian merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of Egypt is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the bourgeois origin and bourgeois title of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement, despite the fact that they are opposed to socialism; whereas the fight the British Labour Government is waging to perpetuate Egypt's dependent position is for the same reasons a *reactionary* struggle, despite the proletarian origin and the proletarian title of the members of that government, despite the fact that they are "for" socialism. I need not speak of the national movement in other, larger, colonial and dependent countries, such as India and China, every step of which along the road to liberation, even if it runs counter to the demands of formal democracy, is a steam-hammer blow at imperialism, *i.e.,* is undoubtedly a *revolutionary* step.

Lenin was right in saying that the national movement of the oppressed countries should be appraised not from the point of view of formal democracy, but from the point of view of the actual results obtained, as shown by the general balance sheet

of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, "not in isolation, but on . . . a world scale." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. XIX, p. 257.) *

2. THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

In solving the national problem Leninism proceeds from the following theses:

(a) The world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilized nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe; and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, who comprise that majority.

(b) The colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a very large reserve and a very important source of strength for imperialism.

(c) The revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples in the dependent and colonial countries against imperialism is the only road that leads to their emancipation from oppression and exploitation.

(d) The most important colonial and dependent countries have already taken the path of the national liberation movement, which cannot but lead to the crisis of world capitalism.

(e) The interests of the proletarian movement in the developed countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies call for the amalgamation of these two forms of the revolutionary movement into a common front against the common enemy, against imperialism.

(f) The victory of the working class in the developed countries

* *Cf.* Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism,* p. 147.—*Ed.*

and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of a common revolutionary front.

(g) The formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against the imperialism of its "own country," for "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (Marx).

(h) This support implies the advocacy, defence and carrying out of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states.

(i) Unless this slogan is carried out, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of socialism, cannot be brought about.

(j) This union can only be voluntary, and can arise only on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among nations.

Hence the two sides, the two tendencies in the national problem: the tendency towards political emancipation from the shackles of imperialism and towards the formation of an independent national state—a tendency which arose as a consequence of imperialist oppression and colonial exploitation; and the tendency towards an economic rapprochement among nations, which arose as a result of the formation of a world market and a world economic system.

"Developing capitalism," says Lenin, "knows of two historical tendencies in the national problem. First: the awakening of national life and of national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, the creation of national states. Second: the development and growing frequency of all sorts of intercourse among nations; the breaking down of national barriers; the creation of the inter-

national unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, of science, and so forth. Both tendencies are the universal law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of the development of capitalism; the second characterises mature capitalism, heading towards its transformation into socialist society." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. XVII, pp. 139-40.)

For imperialism these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within the framework of the "integral whole"; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of annexations and colonial conquest, without which it is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are but two sides of a single cause—the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism; because communism knows that the union of the nations in a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that the road to the formation of a voluntary union of nations lies through the separation of the colonies from the "integral" imperialist "whole," through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity of a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the imperialist chauvinism of the "Socialists" of the ruling nations (Great Britain, France, America, Italy, Japan, etc.), who do not want to fight their imperialist governments, who do not want to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples in "their" colonies for emancipation from oppression, for succession.

Without such a struggle the education of the working class of the ruling nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of rapprochement with the toiling masses of the dependent countries and colonies, in the spirit of real preparation for the proletarian revolution, is inconceivable. The revolution

would not have been victorious in Russia, and Kolchak and Denikin would not have been crushed, had not the Russian proletariat enjoyed the sympathy and support of the oppressed peoples of the former Russian empire. But to win the sympathy and support of these peoples it had first of all to break the fetters of Russian imperialism and free these peoples from the yoke of national oppression. Without this it would have been impossible to consolidate the Soviet power, to implant true internationalism and to create that remarkable organization for the collaboration of nations which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—the living prototype of the future union of nations in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting against the national insularity, narrowness and aloofness of the Socialists in the oppressed countries, who do not want to rise above their national steeple and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement in their various countries and the proletarian movement in the ruling countries.

Without such a struggle it is inconceivable that the proletariat of the oppressed nations can maintain an independent policy and its class solidarity with the proletariat of the ruling countries in the fight for the overthrow of the common enemy, in the fight for the overthrow of imperialism; without such a struggle, internationalism would be impossible.

This is how the toiling masses of the ruling nations and of the oppressed nations should be educated in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

Here is what Lenin says about this twofold task of communism in educating the workers in the spirit of internationalism:

"... Can such education ... be *concretely identical* in great, oppressing nations and in small, oppressed nations, in annexing nations and in annexed nations?

"Obviously not. The way to the one goal—to complete equality, to the closest intimacy and the subsequent *amalgamation of all* nations—obviously proceeds here by different routes in each concrete case: in the same way, let us say, as the route to a point in the middle of a given page lies towards the left from one edge and towards the right from the opposite edge. If a Socialist belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for a moment that 'his' Nicholas II, 'his' Wilhelm, George, Poincaré, etc., *also stands for amalgamation* with small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II being for 'amalgamating' with Galicia, Wilhelm II for 'amalgamating' with Belgium, etc.—such a Socialist would be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

"The weight of emphasis in the internationalist education of the workers in the oppressing countries must necessarily consist in advocating and urging them to demand freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Socialist of an oppressing nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as an imperialist and a scoundrel. This is an absolute demand, even if the *chance* of secession being possible and 'feasible' before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand. . . .

"On the other hand, a Socialist belonging to a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: 'voluntary *union*' of nations. He may, without violating his duties as an internationalist, be in favour of *either* the political independence of his nation *or* its inclusion in a neighbouring state X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, insularity and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the whole and the general, for the subordination of the interests of the particular to the interests of the general.

"People who have not gone thoroughly into the question think there is a 'contradiction' in Socialists of oppressing nations insisting on 'freedom of *secession,*' while Socialists of oppressed nations insist on 'freedom of *union.*' However, a little reflection will show that

there is not, nor can there be, any *other* road leading from the *given* situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. XIX, pp. 261-62.) *

* *Cf.* Lenin, *Marx-Engels-Marxism,* pp. 151-53.—*Ed.*

VII. Strategy and Tactics

FROM this theme I take six questions: (1) strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat; (2) stages of the revolution, and strategy; (3) the flow and ebb of the movement, and tactics; (4) strategic leadership; (5) tactical leadership; (6) 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 armies amidst conditions of more or less peaceful development. This was the period when parliamentarism was the principal form of class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary battles, of the ways and 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 utilizing all paths of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilizing parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat was (and as it seemed then, had to remain) that of an Opposition. It need hardly be proved 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 the tactics of utilizing the 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, in the period of direct action by the proletariat, in the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate 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 organization, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics) had fully manifested themselves and became well-defined—only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be drawn up. It was precisely in that period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring certain 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; State and Revolution; The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky; "Left-Wing" Communism,* etc., will undoubtedly always be treasured as priceless contributions to the general store of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership of 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 (the main and secondary reserves), the fight to carry out this plan throughout the given stage of the revolution.

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

First stage. 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of mediaevalism. 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 *compromising* 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." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. III, p. 110.)

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 the 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 terminate the revolution

by *compromising* 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.*, p. 111.)

Third stage. Commenced after the October Revolution. Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the overthrow of imperialism in all countries. The revolution is spreading beyond the confines of one country; the period of world revolution has commenced. The main forces 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 in 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 essentially 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 organization 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 the struggle against tsarism or against the bourgeoisie to its end, tactics concern themselves with less important objects, for they aim not at winning the war as a whole, but at winning a particular engagement, or a particular battle, at carrying through successfully a particular campaign or a particular action 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, insurrection, revolutionary fighting slogans—such were the successive forms of the struggle during that period. These changes in the forms of struggle were accompanied by corresponding changes in the forms of organization. Factory committees, revolutionary peasant committees, strike committees, Soviets of workers' deputies, a workers' party oper-

ating more or less openly—such were the forms of organization 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 organization, changed accordingly: Instead of boycott of the Duma there was participation in the Duma; instead of open, direct revolutionary action outside the Duma, there were parliamentary speeches and work in the Duma; instead of general political strikes, there were partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in activities. Of course, the Party had to go underground during that period, while the revolutionary mass organizations were superseded by cultural, educational, cooperative, insurance and other legal organizations.

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

Tactics deal with the forms of struggle and the forms of organization of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times, depending on the flow and ebb, the rise and 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 the neighbouring countries; (c) the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries; (d) the gains and achievements of the dictatorship of the proletariat—part of which the proletariat may give up temporarily, while retaining su-

periority 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 utilized 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 utilized 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 understood by everyone. As for the reserves of the second category, whose significance is not always 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 conflict between the petty-bourgeois democrats (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie (the Constitutional-Democrats) 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 imperialists, 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 the work of organizing 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:

First: 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 well illustrates this manner of utilizing 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 the Soviets in the rear and the soldiers' committees at the front. The outcome of the revolution has shown that the reserves were properly utilized.

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

"Never *play* with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realize that you must *go to the end*. You must 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 organization, will destroy the insurgents. 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 rising.' You must try to take the enemy by

surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered. You must strive for *daily* successes, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain *'moral ascendancy.'"* (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. XXI, Russian edition, pp. 319-20.) *

Second: 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 fully apparent 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 *when* "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"; *when* "all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves before the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy"; *when* "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, indeed, revolution is 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." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 137-38.)

The manner in which the October insurrection 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.

* *Cf.* Lenin and Stalin, *The Russian Revolution* (N. Y., 1938), p. 207.—*Ed.*

An example of such "loss of tempo," an example of how the moment of insurrection should not be chosen, may be seen in the attempt made by a section of our comrades to begin the insurrection by arresting the Democratic Conference in August, 1917, when hesitation was still rife in the Soviets, when the front was still at the crossroads, when the reserves had not yet been brought up to the vanguard.

Third: 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 the course." As an example of this "loss of course" we may mention 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 up all the cards 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.

Fourth: 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 alignment of forces, retreat becomes the only way to ward off a blow against the vanguard and to keep the reserves intact.

"The revolutionary parties," says Lenin, "must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realize that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realize—and the revolutionary class is taught to realize by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 65-66.)

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

The signing of the Brest-Litovsk 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 demoralize 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 is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare, which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. XXII, p. 198.)

"Now even the biggest fool," said Lenin, three years after the Brest-Litovsk Peace, "can see that the 'Brest Peace' was a concession that strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism." (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, p. 247.)

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 organization of the proletariat and to ensure that they are used properly so as to achieve, with the given alignment of forces, the maximum results necessary to prepare for strategic success.

What does making proper use of the forms of struggle and organization of the proletariat mean?

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

First: to put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organization 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 shall realize the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, shall 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 realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organization as will make it easier for the masses to learn from experience to recognize 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 at the time to participate

in the Duma, if it had not decided to concentrate its forces on work in the Duma and to base the struggle on this work, in order to make it easier for the masses to realize from their own experience the futility of the Duma, the falsity of the promises of the Constitutional-Democrats, 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 Constitutional-Democrats 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 insurrection in April 1917, when the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries had not yet exposed themselves as advocates of war and imperialism, when the masses had not yet learned from their own experience to recognize the falsity of the speeches of the Mensheviks and the 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

* From the Russian *Otozvat*—to recall; the name given to a group of Bolsheviks who advocated the recall of the Social-Democratic deputies from the Duma.—*Ed.*

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

"With the vanguard alone victory cannot be achieved," 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 not merely be folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the toilers and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not sufficient. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with amazing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. It has been necessary, not only for the uncultured, often illiterate, masses of Russia, but also for the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany, to realize from their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility before 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 alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely toward communism." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 136.)

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

The point here is to single out from all the problems confronting the Party that particular immediate problem, the answer to which constitutes the central point, and the solution of which will ensure the successful solution of the other immediate problems.

The importance of this thesis may be illustrated by two

examples, one of which may 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 New Economic Policy).

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 a 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. Why? Because only by means of an all-Russian illegal newspaper was it possible under the conditions then prevailing to create a harmonious nucleus of a party, one capable of linking up the innumerable circles and organizations into a single organization, to prepare the conditions for ideological and tactical unity, and thus to lay the foundations for the formation of a real Party.

During the period of transition from war to economic construction, when industry was in the clutches of ruin and agriculture was suffering from a shortage of city manufactures, 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 New Economic Policy (N.E.P.) the bond between industry and peasant economy cannot be established except through trade; because under the conditions of N.E.P. 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, thus creating 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 hold 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.'" (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, pp. 298-99.)

These 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 utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporise and compromise with possible (even

though transient, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not the same as if in the difficult ascent of an unexplored and heretofore inaccessible mountain we were to renounce beforehand the idea that at times we might have to go in zigzags, sometimes retracing our steps, sometimes giving up the course once selected and trying various others?" (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 111.)

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

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 bourgeois regime, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that regime, 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 by-products of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the bourgeois regime, reforms are naturally transformed into instruments for disintegrating this regime, into instruments for strengthening the revolution, into a base 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.

This is what making revolutionary use of reforms and agreements under the conditions of imperialism means.

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.

This is what reformist tactics mean.

This is the position in regard to reforms and agreements under 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 constrained 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 "On the Importance of Gold," 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 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 broad 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 the bourgeois regime, 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 and 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 extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in a single country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation 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 principle, 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 the international scale) they [*i.e.,* reforms—*J.S.*] 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 a 'reserve of strength' upon which one can sustain oneself even in a forced retreat, sustain oneself both materially and morally." (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, pp. 301-02.)

VIII. The Party

IN THE pre-revolutionary period, in the period of more or less peaceful development, when the parties of the Second International were the predominant force in the working-class movement and parliamentary forms of struggle were regarded as the principal forms, the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary battle. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are instruments of peace and not of war, and that for this very reason they were powerless to take any important steps during the war, during the period of revolutionary action by the proletariat. That is quite true. But what does it mean? It means that the parties of the Second International are unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they are not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle. This, in fact, explains why, in the days when the opportunists of the Second International were in the ascendancy, it was not the Party but its parliamentary group that was the chief political organization of the proletariat. It is well known that the Party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It goes without saying that under such circumstances and with such a Party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.

But matters have changed radically with the dawn of the new period. The new period is one of open class collisions, of

revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganizing all Party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up the reserves; of establishing an alliance with the proletarians of neighbouring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc., etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic parties, brought up as they were under the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair and inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties it would be completely unarmed. It goes without saying that the proletariat could not consent to such a state of affairs.

Hence the necessity for a new party, a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians to the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks on the way to its goal.

Without such a party it is useless even to think of overthrowing imperialism and achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This new party is the party of Leninism.

What are the specific features of this new party?

1. THE PARTY AS THE VANGUARD OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Party must be, first of all, the *vanguard* of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit, their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the vanguard, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it follows in the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertness and the political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of the proletariat, if it is unable to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat. The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not follow in the tail of the spontaneous movement. The parties of the Second International, which preach "khvostism," are vehicles of bourgeois policy, which condemns the proletariat to the role of a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only a party which takes the standpoint of the vanguard of the proletariat and is able to elevate the masses to the level of the class interests of the proletariat—only such a party can divert the working class from the path of trade unionism and convert it into an independent political force. The Party is the political leader of the working class.

I have spoken of the difficulties of the struggle of the working class, of the complicated conditions of the struggle, of strategy

and tactics, of reserves and manoeuvring, of attack and retreat. These conditions are no less complicated, if not more so, than the conditions of war. Who can find his bearings in these conditions, who can give correct guidance to the proletarian millions? No army at war can dispense with an experienced General Staff if it does not want to court certain defeat. Is it not clear that the proletariat can still less dispense with such a General Staff if it does not want to give itself up to be devoured by its mortal enemies? But where is this General Staff? Only the revolutionary party of the proletariat can serve as this General Staff. The working class without a revolutionary party is an army without a General Staff. The Party is the General Staff of the proletariat.

But the Party cannot be only a *vanguard* detachment. It must at the same time be a detachment of the *class,* part of the class, closely bound up with it by all the fibres of its being. The distinction between the vanguard and the main body of the working class, between Party members and non-Party people, cannot disappear until classes disappear; it will exist as long as the ranks of the proletariat continue to be replenished with newcomers from other classes, as long as the working class as a whole lacks the possibility of rising to the level of the vanguard. But the Party would cease to be a party if this distinction were widened into a gap, if it shut itself up in its own shell and became divorced from the non-Party masses. The Party cannot lead the class if it is not connected with the non-Party masses, if there is no bond between the Party and the non-Party masses, if these masses do not accept its leadership, if the Party enjoys no moral and political credit among the masses. Recently two hundred thousand new members from the ranks of the workers were admitted into our Party. The remarkable thing about this is the fact that these people did not merely join the Party themselves, but were rather sent there

by the main body of non-Party workers, who took an active part in the work of accepting the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact proves that the broad masses of non-Party workers regard our Party as *their* Party, as a Party *near and dear* to them, in whose expansion and consolidation they are vitally interested and to whose leadership they voluntarily entrust their destiny. It need hardly be proved that without these intangible moral threads which connect the Party with the non-Party masses, the Party could not have become the decisive force of its class. The Party is an inseparable part of the working class.

"We are the Party of a class," says Lenin, "and therefore *almost the entire class* (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the entire class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism * and 'khvostism' to think that at any time under capitalism the entire class, or almost the entire class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, of its socialist party. No sensible socialist has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace the entire, or almost the entire, working class. To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the vanguard to *raise* ever wider strata to this most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. VI, pp. 205-06.)

* Smug complacency. From the name of Manilov, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls.—Ed.*

2. THE PARTY AS THE ORGANIZED DETACHMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

The Party is not only the *vanguard* of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the *organized* detachment of its class. The Party's tasks under the conditions of capitalism are extremely serious and varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat in retreat when the situation calls for retreat in order to ward off the blows of a powerful enemy; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in the struggle, with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the *organized* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no talk of the Party really leading the proletarian millions. The Party is the organized detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organized whole is embodied in Lenin's well-known formulation of the first paragraph of our Party Rules, in which the Party is regarded as the *sum* of its organizations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organizations of the Party. The Mensheviks, who objected to this formulation as early as 1903, proposed to substitute for it a "system" of self-enrolment in the Party, a "system" of conferring the "title" of Party member upon every "professor" and "high school student," upon every "sympathizer" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not desire to join any one of the

Party organizations. It need hardly be proved that had this singular "system" become firmly entrenched in our Party it would inevitably have led to our Party becoming inundated with professors and high school students and to its degeneration into a loose, amorphous, disorganized "formation," lost in a sea of "sympathizers," that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party's task of elevating the unorganized masses to the level of the vanguard. Needless to say, under such an opportunist "system" our Party would have been unable to fulfil the role of the organizing nucleus of the working class in the course of our revolution.

"From Martov's point of view," says Lenin, "the boundary line of the Party remains entirely undefined, for 'every striker' can 'declare himself a member of the Party.' What advantage is there in this looseness? The widespread dissemination of an 'appellation.' Its harmfulness lies in that it introduces the *disorganizing* idea of confusing the class with the Party." (*Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. VI, p. 211.)

But the Party is not merely the *sum* of Party organizations. The Party at the same time represents a single *system* of these organizations, their formal amalgamation into a single whole, with higher and lower leading bodies, with subordination of the minority to the majority, with practical decisions binding on all members of the Party. Without these conditions the Party cannot be a single organized whole capable of exercising systematic and organized leadership in the struggle of the working class.

"Formerly," says Lenin, "our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. *Now* we have become an organized Party, and this

implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher Party bodies." (*Ibid.*, p. 291.)

The principle of the minority submitting to the majority, the principle of directing Party work from a centre, not infrequently gives rise to attacks on the part of wavering elements, to accusations of "bureaucracy," "formalism," etc. It need hardly be proved that systematic work by the Party, as one whole, and the directing of the struggle of the working class would have been impossible if these principles had not been adhered to. Leninism in the organizational question means unswerving application of these principles. Lenin terms the fight against these principles "Russian nihilism" and "aristocratic anarchism," deserving only of being ridiculed and swept aside.

Here is what Lenin has to say about these wavering elements in his book *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back:*

"This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as 'serfdom' . . . division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against people being transformed into 'wheels and cogs' . . . mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark . . . that one can very well dispense with rules altogether. . . . It is clear, I think, that the outcries against the much talked of bureaucracy are simply a screen to conceal dissatisfaction with the personnel of these centres, a fig leaf. . . . You are a bureaucrat, because you were appointed by the Congress not in accordance with my wishes but in spite of them; you are a formalist, because you base yourself on the formal decisions of the Congress and not on my consent; you act in a crudely mechanical way, because your authority is the 'mechanical' majority of the Party Congress and you do not consult my desire to be co-

opted; you are an autocrat, because you do not want to deliver power into the hands of the old gang." * (*Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. VI, pp. 310, 287.)

3. THE PARTY AS THE HIGHEST FORM OF CLASS ORGANIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot properly wage the struggle against capital: trade unions, cooperative societies, factory and works organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only a certain part of them adhere directly to the Party, or represent its offshoots. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class, for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergency in leadership? It might be argued that each of these organizations

* The "old gang" here referred to is that of Axelrod, Martov, Potresov and others, who would not submit to the decisions of the Second Congress and who accused Lenin of being a "bureaucrat."—*J.S.*

carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. This, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction, for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is that central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige for that, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to preclude the possibility of working at cross purposes?

This organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this because, in the first place, it is the rallying centre of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying centre for the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is by reason of its experience and prestige the only organization capable of centralising the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class. The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organizations, trade unions, cooperative societies, etc., should be officially sub-

ordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organizations and are doubtlessly influential in them, should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organizations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and to accept voluntarily its political guidance.

That is why Lenin says that "the Party is the *highest* form of class association of the proletarians," whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 91.)

That is why the opportunist theory of the "independence" and "neutrality" of the non-Party organizations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade unionists and cooperative society officials *grown smug and philistine,* is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

4. THE PARTY AS THE INSTRUMENT OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat. The Party is the principal guiding force within the class of the proletarians and among the organizations of that class. But it does not by any means follow from this that the Party can be regarded as an end in itself, as a self-sufficient force. The Party is not only the highest form of class association of the proletarians; it is at the same time an *instrument* in the hands of the proletariat *for* achieving the dictatorship where that has not yet been achieved and *for* consolidating and expanding the dictatorship where it has already been achieved. The Party could not have risen so high in importance and could not have overshadowed all other forms of organization

of the proletariat, if the latter were not confronted with the problem of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis did not demand the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement into one spot in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs the Party first of all as its General Staff, which it must have for the successful seizure of power. It need hardly be proved that without a Party capable of rallying around itself the mass organizations of the proletariat, and of centralizing the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle, the proletariat in Russia could never have established its revolutionary dictatorship.

But the proletariat needs the Party not only to achieve the dictatorship; it needs it still more to maintain the dictatorship, to consolidate and expand it in order to achieve the complete victory of socialism.

"Certainly almost everyone now realizes," says Lenin, "that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone for two and a half years, without the strictest and truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and most unreserved support rendered it by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements in it who are capable of leading or of attracting the backward strata." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 60.)

Now, what does it mean to "maintain" and "expand" the dictatorship? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organization; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influences of the petty-bourgeois elements and petty-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the

organizing work of the proletarians in re-educating and re-moulding the petty-bourgeois strata; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes and of preparing the conditions for the organization of socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a Party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and discipline.

"The dictatorship of the proletariat," says Lenin, "is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 84.)

The proletariat needs the Party for the purpose of achieving and maintaining the dictatorship. The Party is an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But from this it follows that when classes disappear and the dictatorship of the proletariat withers away, the Party will also wither away.

5. THE PARTY AS THE EMBODIMENT OF UNITY OF WILL, INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTENCE OF FACTIONS

The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without

complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of contests of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and contest of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be "blind." On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a contest of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary condition without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

"In the present epoch of acute civil war," says Lenin, "a Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised manner, only if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its Party centre is a powerful and authoritative organ, wielding wide powers and enjoying the universal confidence of the members of the Party." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 204.)

This is the position in regard to discipline in the Party in the period of struggle preceding the achievement of the dictatorship.

The same, but to an even greater degree, must be said about discipline in the Party after the dictatorship has been achieved.

"Whoever in the least," says Lenin, "weakens the iron discipline of the Party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship) actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, p. 84.)

But from this it follows that the existence of factions is incompatible either with the Party's unity or with its iron discipline.

It need hardly be proved that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centres, and the existence of a number of centres connotes the absence of one common centre in the Party, the breaking up of the unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship. Of course, the parties of the Second International, which are fighting against the dictatorship of the proletariat and have no desire to lead the proletarians to power, can afford such liberalism as freedom of factions, for they have no need at all for iron discipline. But the parties of the Communist International, which base their activities on the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions. The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.

Hence Lenin's warning about the "danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of effecting the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat," which is embodied in the special resolution of the Tenth Congress of our Party "On Party Unity." (Lenin, *Selected Works,* Vol. IX, p. 132.)

Hence Lenin's demand for the "complete elimination of all factionalism" and the "immediate dissolution of all groups, without exception, that had been formed on the basis of various platforms," on pain of "unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party." (*Ibid.,* pp. 133-34.)

6. THE PARTY IS STRENGTHENED BY PURGING ITSELF OF OPPORTUNIST ELEMENTS

The source of factionalism in the Party is its opportunist elements. The proletariat is not an isolated class. It is constantly replenished by the influx of peasants, petty bourgeois and intellectuals who have become proletarianized by the development of capitalism. At the same time the upper stratum of the proletariat, principally trade union leaders and labour members of parliament who are fed by the bourgeoisie out of the superprofits extracted from the colonies, is undergoing a process of decay.

"This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, of the 'labour aristocracy,'" says Lenin, "who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings, and in their outlook, serves as the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal social (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. They are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement,* the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism." (*Selected Works,* Vol. V, p. 12.)

In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to expose oneself to the danger of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

The theory of "overcoming" opportunist elements by ideologi-

cal struggle within the Party, the theory of "outliving" these elements within the confines of a single Party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism. Our Party could not have emerged onto the high road, it could not have seized power and organized the dictatorship of the proletariat, it could not have emerged victorious from the Civil War, if it had had within its ranks people like Martov and Dan, Potresov and Axelrod. Our Party succeeded in creating internal unity and unexampled cohesion in its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators, the Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The Party becomes consolidated by purging itself of opportunist elements.

"With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks," says Lenin, "it is *impossible* to achieve victory in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to retain it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience both of Russia and Hungary. ... In Russia difficult situations have arisen *many times,* when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party.... In Italy ... as is generally admitted, decisive battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the possession of state power are imminent. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks, reformists, the Turatists from the Party, but it may even be useful to remove excellent Communists who are liable to waver, and who reveal a tendency to waver towards 'unity' with the reformists, to remove them from all

responsible posts.... On the eve of a revolution, and at a moment when a most fierce struggle is being waged for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything,* frustrate the revolution, wrest the power from the hands of the proletariat; for this power is not yet consolidated, the attack upon it is still very strong. The retirement of wavering leaders at such a time does not weaken but strengthens the Party, the working-class movement and the revolution." (*Selected Works,* Vol. X, pp. 256-58.)

IX. Style in Work

I AM not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work, that which is specific and peculiar in the practice of Leninism which creates the special type of Leninist worker. Leninism is a school of theory and practice which trains a special type of Party and state worker, creates a special Leninist style in work. What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its peculiarities?

It has two specific features: (a) the Russian revolutionary sweep and (b) American efficiency. The style of Leninism is a combination of these two specific features in Party and state work.

The Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertness, routine, conservatism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancestral traditions. The Russian revolutionary sweep is the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels things forward, breaks the past and opens up perspectives. Without it no progress is possible. But there is every chance of it degenerating in practice into empty "revolutionary" Manilovism if it is not combined with American efficiency in work. Examples of this degeneration are only too numerous. Who does not know the disease of "revolutionary" improvisation and "revolutionary" plan concocting, which springs from the belief in the power of decrees to arrange everything and reform everything? A Russian writer, I. Ehrenbourg, in his story *The Percomman* (*The Perfect Communist Man*), has portrayed the type of "Bolshevik" afflicted with this "disease," who set himself the task of finding a formula for the ideally perfect man and . . . became "submerged" in this "work." Some gross exaggerations are spun

into this story, but it certainly gives a correct likeness of the disease. But no one, I think, has so ruthlessly and bitterly ridiculed those afflicted with this disease as Lenin has done. Lenin stigmatised this morbid belief in improvisation and in concocting decrees as "Communist vanity."

"Communist vanity," says Lenin, "is characteristic of a man who, while still a member of the Communist Party, not having yet been combed out of it, imagines that he can solve all his problems by issuing Communist decrees." (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, p. 273.)

Lenin usually contrasted *hollow "revolutionary" phrase-mongering* with plain everyday work, thus emphasising that "revolutionary" improvisation is repugnant to the spirit and the letter of true Leninism.

"Fewer pompous phrases, more plain *everyday work,*" says Lenin. "Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but vital . . . facts of Communist construction. . . ." (*Selected Works,* Vol. IX, pp. 440, 430.)

American efficiency, on the other hand, is an antidote to "revolutionary" Manilovism and fantastic improvisation. American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognizes obstacles; which with its business-like perseverance brushes aside all obstacles; which continues at a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is inconceivable. But American efficiency has every chance of degenerating into narrow and unprincipled commercialism if not combined with the Russian revolutionary sweep. Who has not heard of that disease of narrow practicality and unprincipled commercialism which has not infrequently caused certain "Bolsheviks" to degenerate and to abandon the cause of the revolution? We find a reflection of this peculiar disease in a story by B. Pilnyak, entitled *The*

Barren Year, which depicts types of Russian "Bolsheviks" of strong will and practical determination, who "function" very "energetically," but without vision, without knowing "what it is all about," and who, therefore, stray from the path of revolutionary work. No one has been more incisive in his ridicule of this disease of narrow commercialism than Lenin. He branded it as "narrow-minded practicality" and "brainless commercialism." He usually contrasted it with vital revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary perspective in all our daily activities, thus emphasizing that this unprincipled commercialism is as repugnant to true Leninism as "revolutionary" improvisation.

The combination of the Russian revolutionary sweep with American efficiency is the essence of Leninism in Party and state work.

This combination alone produces the finished type of Leninist worker, the style of Leninism in work.

LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY

These volumes contain Lenin's and Stalin's shorter writings which have become classics of the theory and practice of Leninism, as well as selections from their writings dealing with special topics.

1.	THE TEACHINGS OF KARL MARX	$0.20
2.	THE WAR AND THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL	0.20
3.	THE ROAD TO POWER, by Joseph Stalin	0.15
4.	WHAT IS TO BE DONE?	0.60
5.	THE PARIS COMMUNE	0.20
6.	THE REVOLUTION OF 1905	0.20
7.	RELIGION	0.15
8.	LETTERS FROM AFAR	0.15
9.	THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION	0.15
10.	THE APRIL CONFERENCE	0.20
11.	THE THREATENING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO FIGHT IT	0.20
12.	WILL THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?	0.15
13.	ON THE EVE OF OCTOBER	0.15
14.	STATE AND REVOLUTION	0.35
15.	IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM	0.30
16.	LENIN, Three Speeches by Joseph Stalin	0.10
17.	A LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS	0.05
18.	FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM, by Joseph Stalin	0.35
19.	PROBLEMS OF LENINISM, by Joseph Stalin	0.30
20.	"LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM	0.30
21.	PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND RENEGADE KAUTSKY	0.30
22.	TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION	0.30
23.	WOMEN AND SOCIETY	0.10
24.	WAR AND THE WORKERS	0.10
25.	DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, by Joseph Stalin	0.20
26.	THE YOUNG GENERATION	0.15
27.	THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH, by Joseph Stalin	0.15
28.	THE WAR OF NATIONAL LIBERATION, I & II, by Joseph Stalin	each, 0.15
29.	MARXISM AND REVISIONISM, by V. I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin	0.20
30.	CAPITALISM AND AGRICULTURE	0.30

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
381 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK