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LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY VOLUME TWENTY FOUR

LENIN AND STALIN ON PROPAGANDA

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ON
PROPAGANDA

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The present volume contains extracts from the following sources:

LENIN: *What is To be Done? Left-Wing Communism; On Slogans.*

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CLARA ZETKIN: *Reminiscences of Lenin.*

N. KRUPSKAYA: *Memories of Lenin.*

Quotations from Lenin are referred to in the abbreviated form: S.W.—*Selected Works*. L.L.L.—*Little Lenin Library* followed by the number of the volume in the series and the page number.

Readers are advised to study the *Memories of Lenin* by N. Krupskaya, including the Appendix entitled: "Lenin on How to Write for the Masses."

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LENIN SPEAKS

I MET Lenin for the first time in December 1905 at a conference of Bolsheviks in Tammerfors (Finland). I was looking forward to seeing the mountain eagle of our Party, the great man—great, not only politically, but if you will, physically—because in my imagination I pictured Lenin as a giant, well-built and imposing. Imagine my disappointment when I saw an ordinary man, below average height; in no way, literally in no way, to be distinguished from ordinary mortals. . . .

It is the accepted thing for a 'great man' to come late to meetings so that the other people gathered at the meeting should wait on tenterhooks in expectation of his appearance; and just before the appearance of the great man, the people at the meeting say 'Sh—Silence—He is coming'. This rite seemed to me not to be superfluous because it makes an impression, it imbues one with respect. Imagine my disappointment when I learned that Lenin had arrived at the meeting before the delegates, and having ensconced himself in a corner was conversing, holding an ordinary conversation, with the ordinary delegates to the conference. I will not conceal from you that at that time this seemed to me to be somewhat of a violation of certain necessary rules.

Only later on did I realize that this simplicity and modesty of Lenin, this striving to remain unobserved, or at all events not to make himself prominent, not to emphasize his high position, this feature was one of Lenin's strongest traits as a new leader of new masses, of simple and ordinary masses, of the very 'rank and file' of humanity.

The two speeches that Lenin delivered at this conference, on the current situation, and on the agrarian question, were remarkable. Unfortunately, the reports of them have not been preserved. These were inspired speeches, which roused the whole conference to an outburst of enthusiasm. Extraordinary power of conviction, simplicity and clarity in argumentation, short sentences intelligible to all, an absence of posing, an absence of violent gesticulations and high-sounding phrases, playing for effect—all this favourably distinguished Lenin's speeches from the speeches of ordinary 'parliamentary' orators.

But it was not this aspect of Lenin's speeches that captivated me at the time. I was captivated by the invincible power of logic in Lenin's speeches, which, though somewhat dry, nevertheless completely held the audience, gradually electrified it, and then captured it, body and soul, as they say. I remember many of the delegates saying: 'The logic in Lenin's speeches can be compared to all-powerful tentacles which seize one in their grip on all sides and from the embrace of which it is impossible to release oneself: surrender or submit to utter annihilation.'

I think that this peculiar feature of Lenin's speeches was the strongest side of his oratorical art.¹

* * * * *

LENIN gets up to speak. The speech is a masterpiece of eloquence. No trace of rhetoric. Only the weight of clear thought working, the inexorable logic of argument, the consistent, firmly-held line. Like unhewn blocks of granite the sentences are thrown out and fused into a unified whole. Lenin does not want to dazzle, to enchant; he wants to convince. He convinces and enchants. Not by beautiful, sonorous words which intoxicate, but by the luminous spirit which, without self-deception, comprehends the world of social phenomena in its reality and which "speaks out" with cruel truthfulness, what is. Like lashes of a whip, like blows of a club, Lenin's words fell on those "who make a sport of hunting the 'Right,'" and do not understand what will lead us to victory. 'Only if we get on our side in the struggle the majority of the working-class, and not the majority of the workers alone, but the majority of the exploited and oppressed, only then shall we really triumph.'

Everyone feels that the decisive blow has been struck. When I shook Lenin's hand in enthusiasm, I could not refrain from saying: 'Do you know, Lenin, that a speaker at a meeting in the most out of the way place would be shy of speaking as simply, as plainly, as you do? He would be afraid of not being 'educated' enough. I know only one counterpart to your way of speaking. It is Tolstoy's great art. Like him, you have the broad, unified, firm line, the sense of inexorable truth. That is beauty. Perhaps it is a peculiarly Slav characteristic?'

'I don't know,' Lenin replied. 'I only know that when I 'became a speaker' I always thought of the workers and peasants rather than of my audience. Wherever a Communist speaks he must think of the masses, must speak for them.'²

¹ J. Stalin: *On Lenin* (Little Stalin Library 3, p.25).

² Clara Zetkin: *Reminiscences of Lenin*, 1929; pp.37-38.

PROPAGANDIST AND AGITATOR

A PROPAGANDIST, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the reasons why crises are inevitable in modern society, must describe how present society must inevitably become transformed into socialistic society, etc. In a word, he must present "many ideas," so many indeed that they will be understood as a whole only by a (comparatively) few persons.

An agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most widely known and outstanding among his audience, say, the death from starvation of the family of an unemployed worker, the growing impoverishment, etc., and utilising this fact, which is known to all and sundry, will direct all his efforts to presenting a single idea to the "masses," *i.e.*, the idea of the senseless contradiction between the increase of wealth and increase of poverty; he will strive to rouse discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, and leave a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist.

Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the printed word; the agitator operates with the living word. The qualities that are required of an agitator are not the same as the qualities that are required of a propagandist.

To single out a third sphere, or third function, of a practical activity, and to include in this third function, "calling the masses to certain concrete actions," is sheer nonsense, because the "call," as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical tract, propagandist pamphlet and agitational speech, or represents a purely executive function. Take, for example, the struggle now being carried on by the German Social-Democrats against the grain duties. The theoreticians write works of research on tariff policy and "call," say, for a fight for commercial treaties and for free trade. The propagandist does the same in the periodical press, and the agitator does it in public speeches. At the present time, the "concrete action" of the masses takes the form of signing petitions to the Reichstag against the raising of the grain duties. The call for this action comes directly from the theoreticians, the propagandists and the agitators, and, indirectly, from those workers who carry the petition lists to the factories and to private houses to get signatures.¹

¹Lenin: *What is to be Done?* (S.W. 2, p.85; L.L.L. 4, p.65).

WINNING THE MASSES

AS long as the question was, and in so far as it still is, one of winning over the vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Communism, so long, and to that extent, propaganda took first place; even propaganda circles, with all the imperfections that circles suffer from, are useful under these conditions and produce fruitful results. But when it is a question of the practical activities of the masses, a question of the disposition, if one may so express it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces of the given society *for the final and decisive battle*, then propaganda habits alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" Communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances one must count, not up to a thousand, as the propagandist who belongs to a small group that has not yet led the masses really does; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances one must not only ask oneself whether the vanguard of the revolutionary class has been convinced but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes in the given society without exception—are aligned in such a way that (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently confused, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle beyond their strength; that (2) 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 and have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and that (3) among the proletariat a mass mood in favour of supporting the most determined, unreservedly bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begins to grow powerfully. Then, indeed, revolution is ripe; then indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions outlined above and if we have chosen the moment rightly our victory is assured. . . .

History generally, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more many-sided, more lively and "subtle" than the best parties and the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes imagine. This is understandable because the best vanguards express the class-

consciousness, the will, the passion, the fantasy of tens of thousands, while the revolution is made, at the moment of its climax and of the exertion of all human capabilities, by the class consciousness, the will, the passions and the fantasy of tens of millions who are spurred on by the most acute class struggle. From this follow two very important practical conclusions: first, that, in order to fulfil its task, the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or sides of social activity without exception (and complete, after the capture of political power, sometimes at great risk and very great danger, what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be ready to pass from one form to another in the quickest and most unexpected manner.

Everyone will agree that an army which does not train itself to wield all arms, all means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses or may possess is behaving in an unwise or even in a criminal manner. This applies to politics to a greater degree than it does to war. In politics it is harder to forecast what methods of warfare will be applied and be considered useful for us under certain future conditions. Unless we are able to master all means of warfare, we stand the risk of suffering great and sometimes decisive defeat if the changes in the position of the other classes, which we cannot determine, should bring to the front forms of activity in which we are particularly weak. If, however, we are able to master all methods of warfare, we shall certainly be victorious, because we represent the interests of the really advanced, of the really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to use weapons that are most dangerous for the enemy, weapons that are most quickly death-dealing.

Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because in this field the bourgeoisie very frequently (especially in "peaceful," non-revolutionary times) deceived and fooled the workers, and they think that illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. But this is not true

It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when the revolution has already flared up and is raging, when everybody joins the revolution simply because they are carried away by it, because it is the fashion and sometimes even because it might open a career. After the victory, the proletariat has to exert extreme effort, to suffer pain and one might say martyrdom to "liberate" itself from such sorry revolutionaries. It is much more difficult—and much more useful—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle *do not yet* exist, to be able to defend the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organisation) in non-revolutionary bodies and even in downright reactionary bodies, in non-revolutionary circumstances,

among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the necessity for revolutionary methods of action. The main task of contemporary Communism in Western Europe and America is to acquire the ability to seek, to find, to determine correctly the concrete path, or the particular turn of events that will *bring* the masses *right up* to the real decisive, last, great revolutionary struggle

In England the Communists should uninterruptedly, unflinching and undeviatingly utilise the parliamentary elections and all the vicissitudes of the Irish, colonial and world imperialist policy of the British Government, and all other spheres and sides of social life, and work in all of them in a new way, in a Communist way, in the spirit, not of the Second, but of the Third International. I have neither the time nor the space here to describe the methods of "Russian" "Bolshevik" participation in parliamentary elections and in the parliamentary struggle, but I can assure the foreign Communists that this was totally unlike the usual West European parliamentary campaign. From this the conclusion is often drawn: 'Well, that was in Russia, but in our country parliamentarism is something different.' This conclusion is wrong. The very purpose of the existence of Communists in the world, adherents to the Third International in all countries, is to *change* all along the line, in all spheres of life, the old Socialist, craft unionist, syndicalist parliamentary work into *new*, Communist work. In Russia, too, we had a very great deal of opportunist and purely bourgeois commercialism and capitalist swindling during elections.

The Communists in Western Europe and America must learn to create a new, unusual, non-opportunist, non-careerist parliamentarism; the Communist Parties must issue their slogans; real proletarians with the help of the unorganised and very poorest people, should scatter and distribute leaflets, canvass the workers' houses and the cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are not nearly so many remote villages in Europe as there are in Russia, and in England there are very few), they should go into the most common taverns, penetrate into the unions, societies and casual meetings where the common people gather, and talk to the people, not in scientific (and not very parliamentary) language, not in the least to strive to 'get seats' in parliament, but everywhere to rouse the thoughts of the masses and draw them into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at their word, to utilise the apparatus they have set up, the elections they have called for, the appeal to the country that they have made, and to tell the people what Bolshevism is in a way that has not been possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (not counting, of course, times of big strikes, when in Russia

a similar apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively).

It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and America, very, very difficult; but it can and must be done, because the tasks of Communism cannot be fulfilled without effort; and every effort must be made to fulfil the *practical* tasks, ever more varied, ever more connected with all branches of social life, *winning* branch after branch, sphere after sphere, *from the bourgeoisie*.¹

IV

POLITICAL EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

AS soon as the workers realised that the Social-Democratic¹ circles desired to and could supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their poverty-stricken lives, about their excessive toil and their lack of rights, correspondence began to pour in from the factories and workshops. This 'exposure literature' created a huge sensation not only in the particular factory dealt with, the conditions of which were exposed in a given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news had spread about the facts exposed. And as the poverty and want among the workers in the various enterprises—and in the various trades—are pretty much the same, the "truth about the life of the workers" roused the admiration of *all*. Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion was roused to "go into print"—a noble passion for this rudimentary form of war against the whole of the modern social system which is based upon robbery and oppression. . .

In a word, economic (factory) exposures have been and are an important lever in the economic struggle and they will continue to be such as long as capitalism, which creates the need for the workers to defend themselves, exists. Even in the more advanced countries of Europe to-day, the exposure of the evils in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting point for the awakening of class consciousness, for the beginning of a trade union struggle, and for the spread of socialism.

Recently, the overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats were almost wholly engaged in this work of organising the exposure of factory conditions. . . . So much so, indeed, that they lost sight of the fact that this, *taken by itself*, is not in essence Social-Democratic work, but merely trade union work. As a matter of fact, these exposures merely dealt with the relations between workers *in a given trade* and their immediate employers, and all that they achieved was that the vendors of labour power learned to sell their "commodity" on better terms and to fight the purchasers of labour power over a purely commercial deal.

¹In this and other passages here quoted from *What is To be Done?* Lenin, writing in 1901-1902, uses the words 'Social Democrat', 'Social Democratic' in the sense in which the word 'Communist' would be used to-day. The Russian Social Democratic Party (Bolsheviks) took the name 'Communist' in 1917.—*Ed.*

¹Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism*. S.W. 10, pp. 137-142; L.L.L. 16, pp. 73-78

These exposures could have served (if properly utilised by revolutionaries) as a beginning and a constituent part of Social-Democratic activity, but they could also have led (and with subservience to spontaneity inevitably had to lead) to a "pure and simple" trade union struggle and to a non-Social-Democratic labour movement.

Social-Democrats lead the struggle of the working class not only for better terms for the sale of labour power, but also for the abolition of the social system which compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in relation to a given group of employers, but in relation to all classes in modern society, to the state as an organised political force. Hence, it not only follows that Social-Democrats must not confine themselves entirely to the economic struggle; they must not even allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must actively take up the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness

The question now arises: what does political education mean? Is it sufficient to confine oneself to the propaganda of working-class hostility to autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough to *explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (no more than it was to *explain* to them that their interests were antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Advantage must be taken of every concrete example of this oppression for the purpose of agitation (in the same way that we began to use concrete examples of economic oppression for the purpose of agitation). And inasmuch as *political* oppression affects all sorts of classes in society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in various spheres of life and activity, in industrial life, in civic life, in personal and family life, in religious life, scientific life, etc., etc., is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers *if we do not undertake* the organisation or the *political exposure of autocracy in all its aspects*? In order to carry on agitation around concrete examples of oppression, these examples must be exposed (just as it was necessary to expose factory evils in order to carry on economic agitation¹. . . .

* * * * *

IT is possible to "raise the activity of the masses of the workers" only provided this activity is not restricted entirely to "political agitation on an economic basis." And one of the fundamental conditions for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the

¹Lenin: *What is to be Done?* S.W. 2, pp. 76-79. L.L.L. 4, pp. 55-57.

organisation of *all-sided* political exposure. In *no other way* can the masses be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity except by means of such exposures. Hence, to conduct such activity is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even the existence of political liberty does not remove the necessity for such exposures; it merely changes the sphere against which they are directed

Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all cases* of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected. Moreover, that response must be a Social-Democratic response, and not one from any other point of view. The consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class-consciousness unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events, *every other social class* and *all* the manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply practically the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and the consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; because, for its self-realisation the working class must not only have a theoretical . . . rather it would be more true to say . . . not so much a theoretical as a practical understanding, acquired through experience of political life, of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society. That is why the idea preached by our Economists, that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, is so extremely harmful and extremely reactionary in practice.

In order to become a Social-Democrat, a workingman must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord, of the priest, of the high state official and of the peasant, of the student and of the tramp; he must know their strong and weak sides; he must understand all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish strivings and its real "nature"; he must understand what interests certain institutions and certain laws reflect and how they reflect them. This "clear picture" cannot be obtained from books. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures, following hot after their occurrence, of what goes on around us at a given moment, of what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way, of the meaning of such and such events, of such and such statistics, of such and such court sentences, etc., etc., etc. These universal political ex-

posures are an essential and fundamental condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why is it that the Russian workers as yet display so little revolutionary activity in connection with the brutal way in which the police maltreat the people, in connection with the persecution of the religious sects, with the flogging of the peasantry, with the outrageous censorship, with the torture of soldiers, with the persecution of the most innocent cultural enterprises, etc.? Is it because the "economic struggle" does not "stimulate" them to this, because such political activity does not "promise palpable results," because it produces little that is "positive"? No. To advance this argument, we repeat, is merely to shift the blame to the shoulders of others, to blame the masses of the workers for our philistinism We must blame ourselves, our remoteness from the mass movement; we must blame ourselves for being unable as yet to organise a sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposure of these despicable outrages¹. . . .

* * * * *

WE have seen that the carrying-on of wide political agitation, and consequently the organisation of all-sided political exposures, is an absolutely necessary and *paramount* task of activity, that is, if that activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. We arrived at this conclusion *solely* on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But this presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy in general, and of modern Russian Social-Democracy in particular. In order to explain the situation more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is 'nearer' to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. 'Everyone agrees' that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. But the question arises, how is that to be done? What must be done to bring this about? The economic struggle merely brings the workers 'up against' questions concerning the attitude of the government towards the working class. Consequently, *however much we may try to give the 'economic struggle itself a political character,' we shall never be able to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the degree of Social-Democratic consciousness) by confining ourselves to the economic struggle, for the limits of this task are too narrow*. . . .

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside

¹What is to be Done? S.W. 2, pp. 88-91; L.L.L. 4, pp. 67-69.

the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationship between *all* the various classes and strata and the state and the government—the sphere of the inter-relations between *all* the various classes. For that reason, the reply to the question; what must be done in order to bring political knowledge to the workers? cannot be merely the one which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those who are inclined towards Economism, usually content themselves with, *i.e.*, 'go among the workers.' To bring political knowledge to the workers, the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*, must despatch units of their army *in all directions*. . . .

Take the type of Social-Democratic circle that has been most widespread during the past few years, and examine its work. It has 'contacts with the workers,' it issues leaflets—in which abuses in the factories, the government's partiality towards the capitalists and the tyranny of the police are strongly condemned—and it rests content with this. At workers' meetings the discussions never, or rarely, go beyond the limits of these subjects. Lectures and discussions on the history of the revolutionary movement, on questions of the home and foreign policy of our government, on questions of the economic evolution of Russia and of Europe, and the position of the various classes in modern society, etc., are extremely rare. Of systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society, no one even dreams. The ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something more in the nature of a trade union secretary than a Socialist political leader.

Any trade union secretary, an English one for instance, helps the workers to conduct the economic struggle, helps to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures which hamper the freedom to strike and the freedom to picket (*i.e.*, to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade union secretary conducts and helps to conduct 'the economic struggle against the employers and the government.' It cannot be too strongly insisted that *this is not enough* to constitute Social-Democracy. The Social-Democrat's ideal should not be a trade union secretary, but a *tribune of the people*, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; he must be able to group all these manifestations into a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; he must be able to take advantage of every petty event in order to explain his social-

istic convictions and his Social-Democratic demands to all, in order to explain to all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat¹

* * *

ATENTION must be devoted *principally* to the task of *raising* the workers to the level of revolutionaries, and not to *degrading* ourselves to the level of the 'labour masses,' as the Economists wish to do, or necessarily to the level of the average worker, as *Svoboda* desires to do (and by this raises itself to the second grade of Economist 'pedagogics').

I am far from denying the necessity for popular literature for the workers, and especially popular (but, of course, not vulgar) literature for the especially backward workers. But what annoys me is that pedagogics are constantly confused with questions of politics and organisation. You, gentlemen, who are so much concerned about the 'average worker,' as a matter of fact, rather insult the workers by your desire to *talk down* to them when discussing labour politics and labour organisation. Talk about serious things in a serious manner; leave pedagogics to the pedagogues, and not to politicians and organisers

Try to understand that these questions about 'politics' and 'organisation' are so serious in themselves that they cannot be dealt with in any other but a serious way. We can and must *educate* workers (and university and high-school students) so as to enable them to understand us when we speak to them about these questions; and when you do come to us to talk about these questions, give us real replies to them, do not fall back on the 'average' or on the 'masses'; don't evade them by quoting adages or mere phrases.²

* * * * *

IN the political activity of a social-democratic party there always is, and will be, a certain element of tutoring: it is necessary to train the entire class of employed workers in their role as fighters for the emancipation of the whole of humanity from all oppression. It is necessary continually to teach every new strata of this class. We must be capable of approaching the rawest, undeveloped members of this class—those least touched by our science and by the science of life—in such a way as to get closer to them. We must be able, with restraint and patience, to educate

¹What is to be Done?—S.W. 2, pp. 97-102; L.L.L. 4, pp. 75-78
²Lenin: What is to be Done? S.W. 2, pp. 145-6. L.L.L. 4, pp. 122-123

them up to social-democratic consciousness. In doing so, we must not turn our teaching into a dry dogma, we must instruct not by books alone, but also by participating in the day-to-day life-struggle of these very same raw, these very same undeveloped strata of the proletariat. In this everyday activity there is, we repeat, an element of tutoring. A Social Democrat who forgot such activity would cease to be a Social Democrat. That is true. But in these days some of us often forget that a Social Democrat who reduces political tasks to those of a teacher alone, also—though for a different reason—ceases to be a Social Democrat. Whoever should think to make such 'tutorship' a special slogan—to oppose it to 'politics,' to build upon such an opposition a special tendency, appealing to the masses in the name of this slogan against social-democrat 'politics'—whoever did this would immediately sink to the depths of demogogy."¹

¹Lenin—June 1905 (Vol. VII. pp. 308-309 Russian edition) *Memories of Lenin* by M. Kruyskaya, p. 288.

COMMUNIST WORK AMONG WOMEN

YOU will draw up proposals for Communist work among women, I know your principles and practical experience in the matter. So there need not be much for us to discuss . . . The thesis must clearly point out that real freedom for women is possible only through Communism. The inseparable connection between the social and human position of the woman and private property in the means of production, must be strongly brought out. That will draw a clear and ineradicable line of distinction between our policy and feminism. And it will also supply the basis for regarding the woman question as a part of the social question, of the workers' problem, and so bind it firmly to the proletarian class struggle and the revolution.

The Communist women's movement must itself be a mass movement, a part of the general mass movement, not only of the proletariat, but of all the exploited and oppressed, all the victims of capitalism or any other mastery. In that lies its significance for the class struggles of the proletariat and for its historical creation—Communist society. We can rightly be proud of the fact that in the Party, in the Communist International, we have the flower of revolutionary womankind. But that is not enough. We must win over to our side the millions of toiling women in the towns and villages. Win them for our struggles and in particular for the Communist transformation of society. There can be no real mass movement without women.

Our ideological conceptions give rise to principles of organisation. No special organisations for women. A woman Communist is a member of the Party just as a man Communist is. With equal rights and duties. There can be no difference of opinion on that score. Nevertheless, we must not close our eyes to the fact that the Party must have bodies, working groups, commissions, committees, bureaux or whatever you like, whose particular duty it is to arouse the masses of women workers, to bring them into contact with the Party, and to keep them under its influence. That, of course, involves systematic work among them. We must train those whom we arouse and win, and equip them for the proletarian class struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party.

I am thinking not only of proletarian women, whether they work in the factory or at home. The poor peasant women, the petty bourgeoisie—they, too, are the prey of capitalism, and more so than ever since the war. The unpolitical, unsocial, backward

psychology of these women, their isolated sphere of activity, the entire manner of their life—these are facts. It would be absurd to overlook them, absolutely absurd. We need appropriate bodies to carry out work amongst them, special methods of agitation and forms of organisation. That is not feminism, that is practical, revolutionary expediency. . . .

Why have we never had as many women as men in the Party—not at any time in Soviet Russia? Why is the number of women workers organised in trade unions so small? Facts give food for thought. The rejection of the necessity for separate bodies for our work among the women masses is a conception allied to those of our highly principled and most radical friends of the Communist Labour Party. According to them there must be only one form of organisation, workers' unions. I know them. Many revolutionary but confused minds appeal to principle 'whenever ideas are lacking.' That is, when the mind is closed to the sober facts, which must be considered. How do such guardians of 'pure principle' square their ideas with the necessities of the revolutionary policy forced upon us?

All that sort of talk breaks down before inexorable necessity. Unless millions of women are with us we cannot exercise the proletarian dictatorship, cannot construct on Communist lines. We must find our way to them, we must study and try to find that way.

Of course, we shan't put forward our demands for women as though we were mechanically counting our beads. No, according to the prevailing circumstances, we must fight now for this, now for that. And, of course, always in connection with the general interests of the proletariat.

Every such struggle brings us in opposition to respectable bourgeois relationships, and to their not less respectable reformist admirers whom it compels, either to fight together with us under our leadership—which they don't want to do—or to be shown up in their true colours. That is, the struggle clearly brings out the differences between us and other parties, brings out our Communism. It wins us the confidence of the masses of women who feel themselves exploited, enslaved, suppressed, by the domination of the man, by the power of the employer, by the whole of bourgeois society.

But the women of the working people will not feel irresistibly driven into sharing our struggles for the State power if we only and always put forward that one demand, as though it were the trumpets of Jericho. No, no! The women must be made conscious of the political connection between our demands and their own suffering, needs and wishes. They must realise what the proletarian dictatorship means for them: complete equality with man in law, in practice, in the family, in the State, in society; and an end to the power of the bourgeoisie. . . .

Soviet Russia puts our demands for women in a new light. Under the proletarian dictatorship those demands are not objects of struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. They are parts of the structure of Communist society. That indicates to women in other countries the decisive importance of the winning of power by the proletariat. . .

But don't let us deceive ourselves. Our national sections still lack a correct understanding of this matter. They are standing idly by while there is this task of creating a mass movement of working women under Communist leadership. They don't understand that the development and management of such a mass movement is an important part of an entire Party activity, indeed a half of general Party work. Their occasional recognition of the necessity and value of a powerful, clear-headed Communist women's movement is a platonic verbal recognition, not the constant care and obligation of the Party.

Agitation and propaganda work among women, their awakening and revolutionisation, is regarded as an incidental matter, as an affair which only concerns women comrades. They alone are reproached because work in that direction does not proceed more quickly and more vigorously. That is wrong, quite wrong—real separatism and as the French say, feminism *a la rebours*, feminism upside down! What is at the basis of the incorrect attitude of our national sections? In the final analysis it is nothing but an under-estimation of woman and her work. Yes, indeed!

Unfortunately, it is still true to say of many of our comrades, 'scratch a Communist and find a Philistine.' Of course, you must scratch the sensitive spot, their mentality as regards woman. Could there be a more damning proof of this than the calm acquiescence of men who see how women grow worn in the petty, monotonous household work, their strength and time dissipated and wasted, their minds growing narrow and stale, their hearts beating slowly, their will weakened? Of course, I am not speaking of the ladies of the bourgeoisie who shove on to servants the responsibility for all household work, including the care of children. What I am saying applies to the overwhelming majority of women, to the wives of workers and to those who stand all day in a factory.

So few men—even among the proletariat—realise how much effort and trouble they could save women, even quite do away with, if they were to lend a hand in 'woman's work.' But no, that is contrary to the 'right and dignity of a man.' They want their peace and comfort. The home life of the woman is a daily sacrifice to a thousand unimportant trivialities. The old master right of the man still lives in secret. His slave takes her revenge, also secretly. The backwardness of women, their lack of understanding

for the revolutionary ideals of the man decrease his joy and determination in fighting. They are like little worms which, unseen, slowly but surely, rot and corrode. I know the life of the worker, and not only from books.

Our Communist work among women, our political work, embraces a great deal of educational work among men. We must root out the old 'master' idea to its last and smallest root, in the Party and among the masses. That is one of our political tasks, just as is the urgently necessary task of forming a staff of men and women comrades, well trained in theory and practice, to carry on Party activity among working women.

The Government of the proletarian dictatorship, together with the Communist Party and the trade unions, is, of course, leaving no stone unturned in the effort to overcome the backward ideas of men and women, to destroy the old un-Communist psychology. In law there is naturally complete equality of rights for men and women. And everywhere there is evidence of a sincere wish to put this equality into practice. We are bringing the women into the social economy, into legislation and government. All educational institutions are open to them, so that they can increase their professional and social capacities.

We are establishing communal kitchens and public eating houses, laundries and repairing shops, infant asylums, kindergartens, children's homes, educational institutes of all kinds. That will mean freedom for the woman from the old household drudgery and dependence on men. That enables her to exercise to the full her talents and her inclinations. The children are brought up under more favourable conditions than at home. We have the most advanced protective laws for women workers in the world, and the officials of the organised workers carry them out. We are establishing maternity hospitals, homes for mothers and children, mothercraft clinics, organising lecture courses on child care, exhibitions teaching mothers how to look after themselves and their children, and similar things. We are making the most serious efforts to maintain women who are unemployed and unprovided for.

We realise clearly that that is not very much, in comparison with the needs of the working women, that it is far from being all that is required for their real freedom. But still it is tremendous progress, as against conditions in tsarist-capitalist Russia. It is even a great deal compared with conditions in countries where capitalism has still a free hand. It is a good beginning in the right direction, and we shall develop it further. With all our energy, you may believe that. For every day of the existence of the Soviet State proves more clearly that we cannot go forward without the women.¹

¹Clara Zetkin: *Reminiscences of Lenin*. 1929. pp. 62-70.

VI

THE NEED FOR A PAPER

IN our opinion, the starting point of all our activities, the first practical step towards creating the organisation we desire, the thread that will guide us in unswervingly developing, deepening and expanding that organisation, is the establishment of an all-Russian political newspaper. A paper is what we need above all ; without it we cannot systematically carry on that extensive and theoretically sound propaganda and agitation which is the principal and constant duty of the Social-Democrats in general, and the essential task of the present moment in particular, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the widest sections of the population.

Never before has the need been so strongly felt for supplementing individual agitation in the form of personal influence, local leaflets, pamphlets, etc., with general and regularly conducted agitation, such as can be carried on only with the assistance of a periodical press. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the frequency and regularity of publication (and distribution) of the paper would serve as an exact measure of the extent to which that primary and most essential branch of our military activities has been firmly established. Moreover, the paper must be an all-Russian paper. Unless we are able to exercise united influence upon the population and upon the government with the aid of the printed word, it will be utopian to think of combining other more complex, difficult but more determined forms of exercising influence. Our movement, intellectually as well as practically and organisationally, suffers most of all from being scattered, from the fact that the vast majority of Social-Democrats are almost entirely immersed in purely local work, which narrows their horizon, limits their activities, and affects their conspiratorial skill and training. It is in this state of disintegration that we must seek the deepest roots of the instability and vacillation to which I referred above. The *first step* towards removing this defect, and transforming several local movements into a united all-Russian movement, is the establishment of a national all-Russian newspaper.

Finally, it is a *political* paper we need. Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable

in modern Europe. Without such a paper, it will be absolutely impossible to fulfil our task

But the role of a paper is not confined solely to the spreading of ideas, to political education and to attracting political allies. A paper is not merely a collective propagandist and collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this respect, it can be compared to the scaffolding erected around a building in construction ; it marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, permitting them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of, and around, a paper, there will automatically develop an organisation that will engage, not only in local activities, but also in regular, general work ; it will teach its members carefully to watch political events, to estimate their importance and their influence on the various sections of the population, and to devise suitable methods of influencing these events through the revolutionary party.

The mere technical problem of procuring a regular supply of material for the newspaper and its regular distribution will make it necessary to create a network of agents of a united party, who will be in close contact with each other, will be acquainted with the general situation, will be accustomed to fulfilling the detailed functions of the national (all-Russian) work, and who will test their strength in the organisation of various kinds of revolutionary activities. This network of agents¹ will form the skeleton of the organisation we need, namely, one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country ; sufficiently wide and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour ; sufficiently tried and tempered unswervingly to carry out its own work under all circumstances, at all ' turns ' and in unexpected contingencies ; sufficiently flexible to be able to avoid open battle against the overwhelming and concentrated forces of the enemy and attack him at a time and place where he least expects attack. . . If we unite our forces for conducting a common paper, that work will prepare and bring forward, not only the most competent propagandists, but also the most skilled organisers and the most talented political Party leaders, who will be able at the right moment to issue the call for the decisive battle, and will be capable of leading that battle.

Lenin : *Where to Begin?* S.W. 2, pp. 19-22.

¹It is understood, of course, that these agents can act successfully only if they work in close conjunction with the local committees (groups or circles) of our Party. Indeed, the whole plan we have sketched can be carried out only with the most active support of the committees, which have already made more than one attempt to achieve a united party, and which, I am certain, sooner or later, and in one form or another, will achieve that unity.

VII

LEADERSHIP : SLOGANS AND DIALECTICS.

TOO often has it happened when history has taken a sharp turn that even the most advanced of parties have been unable for a long time to adapt themselves to the new situation; they continued to repeat the slogans that were formerly true, but which now had no meaning, having lost that meaning as 'suddenly' as the turn in history was 'sudden.'¹

* * * * *

THE experience of leaders of the Second International, highly erudite Marxists who were devoted to Socialism, such as Kautsky, Otto Bauer and others, could (and should) serve as a useful lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they learned and taught Marxism dialectics (and much of what they have done in this respect will forever remain a valuable contribution to Socialist literature); but *in the application* of these dialectics they committed such a mistake, or, rather, proved in practice to be so undialectical, so incapable of taking into account the rapid change of forms and the rapid filling of old forms with new content, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde and Plekhanov.

The main reason for their bankruptcy was that they 'concentrated their gaze' on one definite form of growth of the working class movement and of Socialism, they forgot all about the one-sidedness of this form, they were afraid of seeing the sharp break which, by virtue of objective conditions, became inevitable, and continued to repeat the simple, routine, and at first glance, uncontested truths, such as: 'three is more than two.' But politics is more like algebra than arithmetic; it is more like higher than lower mathematics. In reality, all the old forms of the Socialist movement have been filled with a new content, and, consequently, a new sign, the 'minus' sign, appeared in front of all figures; but our wiseacres stubbornly continued (and continue) to persuade themselves and others that 'minus three' is more than 'minus two!'

We must see to it that Communists do not repeat the same mistake the other way round. . . .²

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¹Lenin: *On Slogans*. S.W. 6, p. 167.

²Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism*. S.W. 10, p. 145. L.L.L. 16, p. 81.

IF the Party wants to remain the party of the proletariat, it must know that it is, above all and mainly, the *guide*, the *leader*, the *teacher* of the working-class. We must not forget what Lenin said in this connection in his pamphlet, *State and Revolution* :

'By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat capable of assuming power of of *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organising the new order, of being the *teacher, guide and leader* (My italics.—J.S.) of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.'¹

Can we regard the Party as the real leader of the working class if its policy is wrong, if its policy comes into collision with the interests of the class? Of course not! In such cases the Party, if it wants to remain the leader, must revise its policy, must rectify its policy, must acknowledge its mistake and rectify it. In support of this thesis one could cite, for example, a fact in the history of our Party relating to the period of the abolition of the surplus appropriation system, when the masses of workers and peasants were obviously discontented with our policy and when the Party openly and honestly agreed to revise this policy. This is what Lenin said at the time, at the Tenth Party Congress, on the question of abolishing the surplus-appropriation system and introducing the New Economic Policy :

'We must not try to conceal anything but must say straightforwardly that the peasants are not satisfied with the form of relationships that has been established with them, that they do not want this form of relationships and will not tolerate it any longer. This is indisputable. They have definitely expressed this will it is the will of the vast mass of the labouring population. We must reckon with this and we are sufficiently sober politicians to say straightforwardly: '*Let us reconsider the question of our policy toward the peasantry.*' (My italics.—J.S.)²

Should the Party take the initiative and leadership in organizing decisive action of the masses merely on the ground that its policy is correct in general, *if* that policy does not yet meet the confidence and support of the class because, say, of its political backwardness; *if* the Party has not yet succeeded in convincing the class of the correctness of its policy because, say, events have not yet matured? No, it should not. In such cases, the Party, if it wants to be a real leader, must know how to bide its time, must convince the masses that its policy is correct, must help the masses to become convinced by their own experience that this policy is correct.

¹*Selected Works* Vol. 7, p. 26

²*Selected Works*, Vol. 9, p. 109

Lenin writes :

‘ If a revolutionary party has not a majority in the vanguards of the revolutionary classes and in the country generally, there can be no question of insurrection.’¹

‘ Revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class and this change is brought about by the political experience of the masses . . . ’²

‘ The proletarian vanguard has been ideologically won over. That is the main thing. Without it not even the first step towards victory can be taken. But it is still quite a long way from victory. With the vanguard alone victory cannot be achieved. 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 and one in which they cannot possibly support the enemy, would be not merely folly, but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the toilers and 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.’³

We know that this is precisely how our Party acted during the period from the time Lenin wrote his April Theses down to the time of the October insurrection of 1917. And it was precisely because it acted according to these directions of Lenin that it was successful in the insurrection.

Such, in the main, are the conditions of correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class.

What does *leadership* mean when the Party policy is correct and the relations between the vanguard and the class are not disturbed ?

Leadership in such circumstances means the ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party’s policy; the ability to put forward and to carry out such slogans as bring the masses to the Party position, and help them to realize by their own experience the correctness of the Party’s policy; the ability to raise the masses to the Party’s level of consciousness, and thus secure the support of the masses and their readiness for the decisive struggle.

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

‘ If we, in Russia to-day,’ says Lenin, ‘ after two and a half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente, were to make the “recognition of the dictatorship” a condition of trade union membership, we should be

¹Selected Works, Vol. 6, p. 293

²Selected Works, Vol. 10, p. 126

³Selected Works, Vol. 10, p. 136.

committing a folly, we should be damaging our influence over the masses, we should be helping the Mensheviks. For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to work *among* them, and *not to fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childishly “Left” slogans.’¹

This does not mean, of course, that the Party must first convince all the workers down to the last man, and only then proceed to action, that only after this may it commence operations. Nothing of the sort. It only means that before entering upon decisive political actions the Party must, by means of prolonged revolutionary work, ensure for itself the support of the majority of the working masses, or at least the benevolent neutrality of the majority of the class. Otherwise there would be absolutely no meaning in Lenin’s proposition that a necessary condition for a victorious revolution is that the Party must win over the majority of the working class to its side.’²

* * * * *

The Importance of Slogans in Strategy and Tactics.

SKILFULLY formulated decisions expressing the aims of the war or of individual engagements, and popular among the troops, are sometimes of paramount importance at the front in inspiring the army to action, in maintaining its spirit, and so forth. Proper orders, slogans or appeals to the troops are as important to the success of the war as first-class heavy artillery or first-class fast tanks.

Still more important are slogans in the political sphere, where one has to deal with vast numbers of the population, with their various demands and requirements.

A slogan is a brief and clear formation of the aims of the struggle, near or remote, given by the leading group, let us say, of the proletariat, its party. Slogans vary in accordance with the different aims of the struggle, which embrace either a whole historical period or individual phases and episodes of the given historical period. The slogan, ‘ Down with the Autocracy,’ which was first put forward by the *Group for the Emancipation of Labour* in the ‘eighties of the last century, was a *propagandist* slogan since its aim was to win over to the Party individuals and groups of the more steadfast and sturdy fighters. During the Russo-Japanese War, when the instability of the autocracy became more or less apparent to large sections of the working class, this slogan became an *agitational*

¹Selected Works, Vol. 10, p. 95.

²J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, (*Leninism*, pp. 144-146.)

slogan, for it was designed to win over large masses of the toilers. In the period just prior to the February 1917 Revolution, when tsarism had already completely discredited itself in the eyes of the masses, the slogan, 'Down with the Autocracy' was transformed from an agitational slogan into a slogan of *action*, since it was designed to move vast masses to attack tsarism. During the February Revolution this slogan became a Party *directive*, in other words it became a direct call to seize definite institutions and definite positions of the tsarist system, for it was already a question of overthrowing and destroying tsarism. A directive is a direct call to action by the Party, to act at a certain time and in a certain place, which is obligatory upon all members of the Party and, if the call properly and aptly formulates the demands of the masses, and if it is really ripe, it is usually taken up by large masses of toilers.

To confuse slogans with directives, or an agitational slogan with a slogan of action, is dangerous; just as premature or belated action is dangerous and sometimes even fatal. In April 1917 the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets' was an *agitational* slogan. The well-known demonstration which took place in Petrograd in April 1917 under the slogan, 'All Power to the Soviets,' and which surrounded the Winter Palace, was an attempt, a premature and therefore fatal attempt, to convert the slogan into a slogan of *action*. This was a very dangerous example of the misinterpretation of an agitational slogan as a slogan of action. The Party was right when it condemned the initiators of this demonstration, for it knew that the conditions had not yet arrived which would make the transformation of this slogan into a slogan of action possible, and that premature action on the part of the proletariat which might result in the destruction of its forces.

On the other hand, there are times when the Party must, within twenty-four hours, 'cancel' or change a slogan (or directive) which has already been adopted and which is ripe—in order to guard its ranks against a trap set by the enemy—or to defer the fulfilment of a directive to a more favourable moment. Such a case arose in Petrograd in June 1917, when a demonstration of workers and soldiers, carefully prepared and appointed for June 9, was 'suddenly' cancelled by the Central Committee of our Party owing to the fact that the situation had changed. The task of the Party is to be able skillfully and at the proper time to transform agitational slogans into slogans of action, or slogans of action into definite and concrete directives, or, if the situation demands, to display enough flexibility and determination to cancel any slogans in good time, however popular and however ripe they may be.¹

¹J. Stalin, "Strategy and Tactics of the Russian Communists," *Pravda*, 1923, No. 56.

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LENIN says that 'the main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power.'¹ In the hands of which class, or which classes, is power concentrated; which class, or which classes, must be overthrown; which class, or which classes must take power—such is 'the main question of every revolution.'¹

The basic strategic slogans of the Party that retain their validity during the whole period of any particular stage of the revolution cannot be designated basic slogans if they are not fully and completely founded on this cardinal thesis of Lenin's. Basic slogans are correct slogans only if they are built on the basis of a Marxian analysis of class forces, only if they indicate the correct plan of disposition of the revolutionary forces along the front of the class struggle, only if they assist in bringing the masses up to the front of the struggle for the triumph of the revolution and for the seizure of power by the new class, and only if they assist the Party in forming a large and powerful political army from among the broad masses of the people, which is essential for the fulfilment of this task.

Defeats and retreats, failures and tactical errors may occur during any given stage of the revolution; but that does not mean that the fundamental strategical slogan is wrong.

The strategic slogans of our Party cannot be judged from the point of view of episodic successes or defeats of the revolutionary movement in any particular period; still less can it be judged from the point of view of the times or forms of achieving any particular demands that arise out of those slogans. The strategic slogan of the Party can be judged only from the point of view of a Marxian analysis of the class forces and of the correct disposition of the revolutionary forces on the battle front of the struggle for the triumph of the revolution and the concentration of power in the hands of the new class.²

¹Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, 2 p. "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution."

²J. Stalin: *The October Revolution*, pp. 120-122, 134-136.