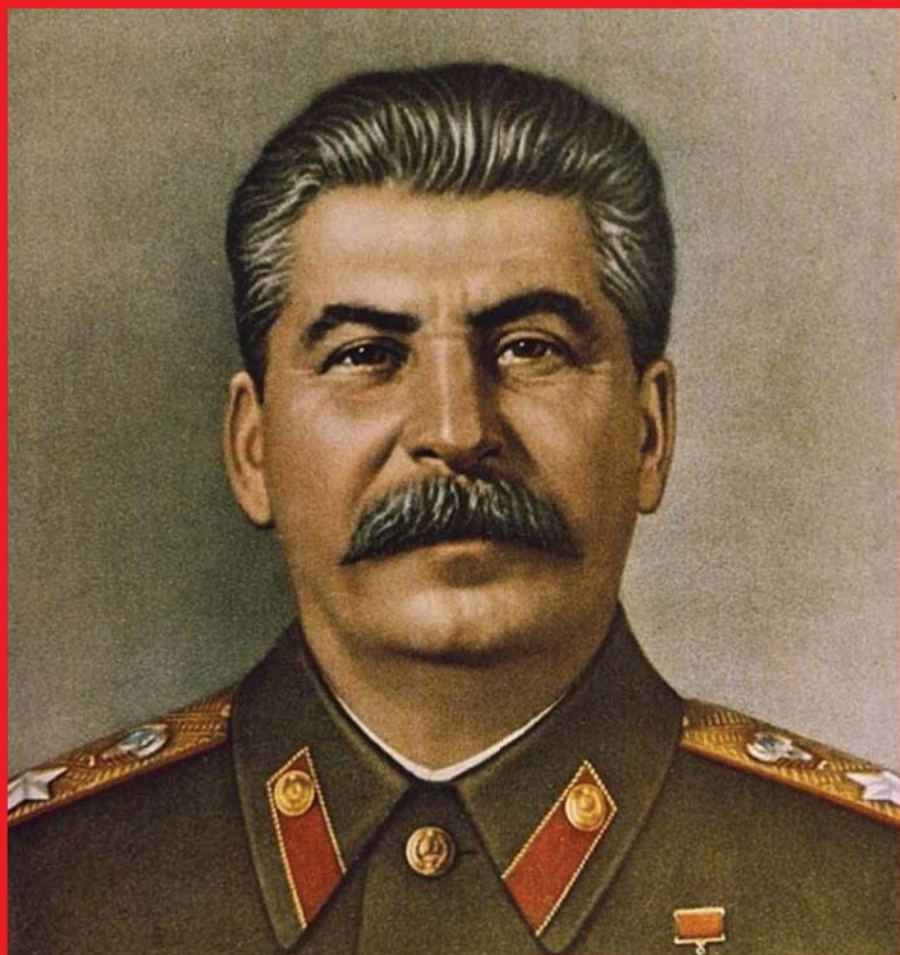


THE ESSENTIAL STALIN



BERSERKER

BOOKS





И. Сталин

Contents

Foundations of Leninism	3
Anarchism or Socialism & Trotskyism or Leninism	111
Marxism and the National and Colonial Question	263
Dialectical and Historical Materialism &	579
Concerning Questions of Leninism	

THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM

Contents

Introduction	6
Chapter I. The Historical Roots of Leninism	10
Chapter II. Method	16
Chapter III. Theory	24
Chapter IV. The Dictatorship of Proletariat	40
Chapter V. The Peasant Question	54
Chapter VI. The National Question	68
Chapter VII. Strategy and Tactics	78
Chapter VIII. The Party	94
Chapter IX. Style in Work	108

Introduction

Dedicated to the Lenin Enrollment¹

J. V. Stalin

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 be an exhaustive exposition of Leninism; at best they can only offer a concise synopsis of the foundations 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 still does not mean expounding the basis of Lenin's world outlook. Lenin's world outlook and the foundations of Leninism are not identical in scope. 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 conditions that are peculiar to 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 conditions that are peculiar to 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

¹ J. V. Stalin's lectures, *The Foundations of Leninism*, were published in *Pravda* in April and May 1924. In May 1924, J. V. Stalin's pamphlet *On Lenin and Leninism* appeared, containing the reminiscences on Lenin and the lectures *The Foundations of Leninism*. J. V. Stalin's work *The Foundations of Leninism* is included in all the editions of his book *Problems of Leninism*.

rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from one-sidedness.

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. This particle of truth is that Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been suppressed 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 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 revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, 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 specific 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 clashes 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.

Chapter I.

The Historical Roots of Leninism

Leninism grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached an extreme point, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for revolution had arrived at and passed into a new period, that of direct assault on 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 cooperatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence 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 re-division 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 tenaciously to what they have seized. 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 weaken-

ing 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 necessity of this revolution.

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 their railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement—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 inasmuch as it saps radically 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 out ten years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them on to the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

In other words, imperialism was instrumental not only in making the revolution a practical inevitability, but also in creating favourable conditions for a direct assault on the citadels of capitalism.

Such was 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 was the focus of all these contradictions of imperialism.

Because Russia, more than any other country, was pregnant with revolution, and she alone, therefore, was in a position to solve those 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 was combined 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 “military-feudal imperialism.” Tsarism was the concentration of the worst features of imperialism, raised to a high pitch.

To proceed. Tsarist Russia was a major reserve of Western imperialism, not only in the sense that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metallurgical industries, but also in the sense that it could supply the Western imperialists with millions of soldiers. Remember the Russian army, fourteen 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 obtained in Paris and London, Berlin and Brussels.

Finally, tsarism was a 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 manpower and resources as old, tsarist, bourgeois Russia was without exerting all its strength to

wage a life-and-death struggle against the revolution in Russia, 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. Does it need proof 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 a highly 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 resolving 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 internal (the profound revolutionary crisis) and external (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 in the case of Germany and Marx and Engels in the forties of the last century. Germany at that time was pregnant with bourgeois revolution just like Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. 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.²

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 in the forties of the nineteenth century (let alone Britain and France); moreover, all the evidence went to

² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 70.

show that this revolution was bound to serve as a ferment and as a prelude to the proletarian revolution. We cannot regard it as accidental that as early as 1902, when the Russian revolution was still in an embryonic state, Lenin wrote the prophetic words in his pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?*:

History has now confronted us³ 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 (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat.⁴

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 Russia's proletariat, became also the creator of this theory and tactics and the leader of the international proletariat?

³ I.e., the Russian Marxists—*J. St.*

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 28.

Chapter 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 the 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, petit-bourgeois nature; the “orthodox,” in their turn, adapted themselves to the opportunists in order to “preserve unity” with them, in the interests of “peace within the party.” Thus the link between the policy of the bourgeoisie and the policy of the “orthodox” was closed, and, as a result, opportunism reigned supreme.

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 groups 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 living in clover and had no inclination to think seriously about revolution, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the revolutionary education of the masses.

Instead of an integral revolutionary theory, there were contradictory theoretical postulates and fragments of theory, which were divorced from the actual revolutionary struggle of the masses and had been turned 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 sordid 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 the party being trained and taught correct revolutionary tactics on the basis of its own mistakes, there was a studied evasion of vexed questions, which were glossed over and veiled. For the sake of appearances, of course, there was no objection to talking about vexed questions, but only in order 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 the 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?

Firstly, 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 broken 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.

Secondly, 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.

Thirdly, the *reorganisation* 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.

Fourthly, *self-criticism* within the proletarian parties, their education and training on the basis of 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 brought forward, for there are no proofs, either theoretical or practical, that can bear out this absurd thesis. Let us assume that this is so, Lenin replies to the 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 the proletariat not take advantage of a favourable international and internal situation to pierce the front of capital and hasten the general denouement? Did not Marx say as far back as the fifties of the last century that things could go “splendidly” with the proletarian revolution in Germany were it possible to back it by, so to speak, a “second edition of the Peasants’ War?”⁵ 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

⁵ This refers to K. Marx, F. Engels, “Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, April 16, 1856” in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, International Publishers, New York, Vol. II, pp. 429-431.

proletariat? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses refutes and smashes this obsolete dogma?

Second dogma: the proletariat cannot retain power if it lacks an adequate number of trained cultural and administrative cadres capable of organising 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, and 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 recruited from the ranks of the workers develop 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 practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses ruthlessly smashes this theoretical dogma of the opportunists too?

Third dogma: the proletariat cannot accept the method of the *political* general strike because it is unsound in theory (see Engels's 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 parliamentary forms of struggle, which are the principal form of the class struggle of the proletariat. Very well, reply the Leninists; but, firstly, Engels did not criticise every kind of general strike. He only criticised a certain kind of general strike, namely, the *economic* general strike advocated by the Anarchists ⁶*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 form of 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 auxiliary in, organising 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 uprising? Thirdly, who suggested that the method of the political

⁶ This refers to Frederick Engels's article "The Bakuninists at Work" in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Revolution in Spain*, International Publishers, New York, 1939.

general strike be substituted for the parliamentary struggle? Where and when have the supporters of the political general strike sought to substitute extra-parliamentary forms of struggle for parliamentary forms? Fourthly, has not the revolution in Russia shown that the *political* general strike is a highly important school for the proletarian revolution and an indispensable means of mobilising and organising 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 practical experience of the revolutionary struggle smashes this dogma of the opportunists too?

And so on and so forth.

That is why Lenin said that “revolutionary theory is not a dogma,” that it “assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement” (*“Left-Wing” Communism*)⁷; for theory must serve practice, for “theory must answer the questions raised by practice” (*What the “Friends of the People” Are*)⁸, for it must be tested by practical results.

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 realise how utterly false and utterly rotten 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 Congress⁹, at which it threatened the imperialist with all the horrors of insurrection if they should dare to start a war, and with the menacing slogan “war against war.” But who does not remember that some time

⁷ V. I. Lenin, *“Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, p. 7.

⁸ V. I. Lenin, *What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1978.

⁹ The Basel Congress of the Second International was held on November 24-25, 1912. It was convened in connection with the Balkan War and the impending threat of a world war. Only one question was discussed: the international situation and joint action against war. The congress adopted a manifesto calling upon the workers to utilise their proletarian organisation and might to wage a revolutionary struggle against the danger of war, to declare “war against war.”

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 unless 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 understand the utter baseness 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 typically petit-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*.¹⁰

There is no need to mention the fear the parties of the Second International have of self-criticism, their habit of concealing their mistakes, of glossing over vexed questions, of covering up their shortcomings by a deceptive show of well-being which blunts living thought and prevents the Party from deriving revolutionary training 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*:

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

¹⁰ V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, p. 74.

towards its class and the toiling *masses*. Frankly admitting a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the circumstances which gave rise 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*.¹¹

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

They¹² gloat and grimace over our controversies; and, of course, they will try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle not to be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, their work of self-criticism and ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will unquestionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-class movement grows.¹³

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."¹⁴ 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

¹¹ "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.

¹² I.e., the opponents of the Marxists—*J. St.*

¹³ V. I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

¹⁴ See K. Marx, "Afterword to the Second German Edition" in *Capital*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, p. 20.

restoration, but also the concretisation and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.

Chapter III.

Theory

From this theme I take three questions:

- a) the importance of theory for the proletarian movement;
- b) criticism of the “theory” of spontaneity;
- c) 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 Marxist theses into deeds, their “execution”; as for theory, it is alleged that Leninism is rather unconcerned about it. We know that Plekhanov time and again 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 immense amount of practical work imposed upon them by the situation. 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 work.

Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless 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 theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realise 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.^{15, 16}

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 fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*¹⁷

It scarcely needs proof that now, when Lenin's prediction about the role of our Party has come true, this thesis of Lenin's acquires special force and special 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, on the basis of 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 has to change its form with each epoch-making discovery.¹⁸ It is well known that none other than Lenin accomplished this task for his own time in his remarkable work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.¹⁹ 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

¹⁵ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁶ *What Is to Be Done?*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

¹⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1972

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 is in favour of the movement proceeding exclusively along the line of “realisable” demands, of demands “acceptable” to capitalism; it is wholly in favour of the “line of least resistance.” The theory of spontaneity is the ideology of trade unionism.

The theory of worshipping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to giving the spontaneous movement a politically conscious, planned character. It is opposed to the Party marching at the head of the working class, to the Party raising the masses to the level of political consciousness, to the Party leading the movement; it is in favour of the politically conscious elements of the movement not hindering the movement from taking its own course; it is in favour of the Party only heeding the spontaneous movement and dragging at the tail of it. 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 tsarism, 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 an exclusively Russian phenomenon. It is extremely widespread—in a somewhat different form, it is true—in all the parties of the Second International, with-

out exception. I have in mind the so-called “productive forces” theory as debased by the leaders of the Second International, which justifies everything and conciliates everybody, which records facts and explains them after everyone has become sick and tired of them, and, having recorded them, rests content. Marx said that the materialist theory could not confine itself to explaining the world, that it must also change it.²⁰ 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 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 one, 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 were some people 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, it seems, is “an instrument of peace,” and not of war. Secondly, because, in view of the “level of the productive forces” which then prevailed, nothing else could be done. The “productive forces” are “to blame.” That is the precise explanation vouchsafed to “us” by Mr. Kautsky’s “theory of the productive forces.” And whoever does not believe in that “theory” is not a Marxist. The role of the parties? Their importance for 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 scarcely needs proof 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.

²⁰ See K. Marx, “Theses on Feuerbach” in *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-65.

It scarcely needs proof that the demolition of this theoretical falsification is a preliminary condition for the creation of truly revolutionary parties in the West.

3) *The theory of the proletarian revolution*. Lenin's 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 one of the principal operations 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, intensifies the indignation of the working class with the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation. (See Lenin, *Imperialism*).²¹

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 “metropolises.”

Second thesis: The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the expansion 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 world 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 huge majority consisting of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to wage a struggle for liberation from the imperialist yoke (see *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.

²¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020.

Third thesis: The monopolistic possession of “spheres of influence” and colonies; the uneven development of the 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 means of restoring the disturbed “equilibrium”—all this leads to the intensification of the struggle on the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the union of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation. (see *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.*”^{22, 23}

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 pre-requisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of 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 world 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

²² My italics —*J. St.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

existence of objective conditions for the revolution in the entire system of world imperialist economy as an integral whole; the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed industrially cannot serve as an insuperable 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 a separate and self-sufficient entity opposing a separate national front of capital as its antipode. 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 breaking of the chain of the world imperialist 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 broke 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, which was 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 Russia was less developed in a capitalist sense than, say, France or Germany, Britain 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 confronted by such a well-known foe as foreign imperialism, which has no moral credit and is deservedly hated by all 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 stamp its imprint on the progress and outcome of a revolution in Germany.

That is why Lenin said that:

The West-European capitalist countries will consummate their development towards socialism... not by the even 'maturing' of socialism in them, but by the exploitation of some countries by others, by the exploitation of the first of the countries to be vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has definitely come into revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement.²⁴

Briefly: the chain of the imperialist front must, as a rule, break where the links are weaker and, at all events, not necessarily where capitalism is

²⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, But Better" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

more developed, where there is such and such a percentage of proletarians and such and such a percentage of peasants, and so on.

That is why in deciding the question of proletarian revolution statistical estimates of the percentage of the proletarian population in a given country lose the exceptional importance so eagerly attached to them by the doctrinaires 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 scarcely needs proof 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 scarcely needs proof that under the conditions of imperialism, fraught as it is with collisions and wars; under the conditions of the “eve of the socialist revolution,” when “flourishing” capitalism becomes “moribund” capitalism (*Lenin*) 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 scarcely needs proof 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 incontrovertible. 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 petit bourgeoisie. Such are the tasks of the proletariat, which the new *Iskra*-ists present so narrowly in all their arguments and resolutions about the sweep of the revolution.²⁵

There is no need to 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.

Some comrades believe, it seems, 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 peasantry into 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 defined the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, i.e., the victory of the democratic revolution, not as the "organisation of 'order'" but as the "organisation of war."²⁶

Further, I might refer to Lenin's well-known articles "On a Provisional Government" (1905),²⁷ where, outlining the prospects of the

²⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Two Tactics of the Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, p. 104.

²⁶ V. I. Lenin, "The Third Congress of the R.S.D.L.P." in *Collected Works*, Vol. VIII.

²⁷ J. V. Stalin refers to the following articles written by V. I. Lenin in 1905: "Social-Democracy and a Provisional Revolutionary Government"; "The Revolutionary-Democratic

unfolding Russian revolution, he assigns to the Party the task of “ensuring that the Russian revolution is not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years, that it leads, 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...²⁸

I might further 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 liberating *bourgeois* Russia from *military-feudal* “imperialism” (=tsarism). And the proletariat will *immediately*²⁹ 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.³⁰

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 sweep of the Russian revolution, he arrives at the following conclusion:

Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry”; and “On the Provisional Revolutionary Government” (all from *Collected Works*, Vol. VIII).

²⁸ “Social-Democracy and a Provisional Revolutionary Government,” *op. cit.*

²⁹ My italics—*J. St.*

³⁰ V. I. Lenin, “On the Two Lines in the Revolution” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI.

Things turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First*, with the ‘whole’ of the peasantry against the monarchy, against the landlords, against the medieval regime (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poor 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 vulgarise it, to replace it by liberalism.³¹

That is sufficient, I think.

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

Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be “exhausted” 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 ability 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 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 realise that in so doing they were closing their eyes to such a “minor detail” as the survivals of serfdom and were leaving out of account so important a force as the Russian peasantry, failing to

³¹ *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

understand that such a policy could only retard the winning of the peasantry over to the side of the proletariat.

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

The idea of “permanent” revolution should not be regarded as 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 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 says in his *Address* about uninterrupted (permanent) revolution, after enumerating a number of revolutionary-democratic demands which he calls upon the Communists to win:

While the democratic petit 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 forced out of their position of dominance, 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.³²

In other words:

³² K. Marx, F. Engels, “Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League” in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, Vol. I, p. 106.

a) Marx did not at all propose *to begin* the revolution in the Germany of the fifties with the immediate establishment of proletarian power—*contrary* to the plans of our Russian “permanentists.”

b) Marx proposed only that 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—and 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 was *fully in line* with that proposition.

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 and made 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 “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.)³³

That is why Lenin regarded this theory as a semi-Menshevik theory and said that it “borrows from the Bolsheviks their call for a resolute revolutionary struggle by the proletariat and the conquest of political power by the latter, and from the Mensheviks the ‘repudiation’ of the role of the peasantry.”³⁴

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

³³ See “On the Two Lines in the Revolution,” *op. cit.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

advanced countries to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie. Now this point of view no longer fits in 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 revolution in Russia 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*:

The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: 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; it is essential for revolution 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)*.³⁵ 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 that revolution is necessary and be ready to sacrifice their lives for it; secondly, that the ruling classes should be passing through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward

³⁵ My italics.—*J. St.*

masses into politics... weakens the government and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to overthrow it rapidly.³⁶

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can and must build 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 support of revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution which has been victorious in one country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity, but as an aid, as a means for hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.

Lenin expressed this thought succinctly 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*.”³⁷

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

³⁶ “Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

³⁷ *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

Chapter IV.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

From this theme I take three fundamental questions:

- a) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution;
- b) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie;
- c) 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 sweep 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 defeat the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, even 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 every revolution is the question of power.” (Lenin)³⁸ Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not. 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

³⁸ V. I. Lenin, “One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV.

it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this it is necessary to carry out at least 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 organise construction in such a way as to rally all the working people around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the elimination, the abolition of classes;

c) to arm the revolution, to organise 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 inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* is 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—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the “paradise” of which they have been deprived, 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” labour...). In the train of the capitalist exploiters follow the broad masses of the petit bourgeoisie, with regard to whom decades of historical experience of all countries testify 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, rush about, snivel, and run from one camp into the other.³⁹

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 the typical case, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception, they *still remain stronger* than the exploited.⁴⁰

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.⁴¹

[Secondly, in the fact that] for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some movable property—often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organisation 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), incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on, and so forth.⁴²

[Thirdly,] in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small production*. For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale... [for] the abolition of classes

³⁹ *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴¹ “Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, op. cit., p. 5.

⁴² *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, op. cit., p. 34.

means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease—it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers, and they cannot be driven out*, or crushed; we *must live in harmony* with them, they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organisational work.⁴³

That is why Lenin says that:

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,⁴⁴

and that:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society.⁴⁵

It scarcely needs proof that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of accomplishing 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 organisational 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, firstly, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to re-educate and remould the petit-bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organisation of socialist production.

⁴³ “Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, fifty years of civil wars and international conflicts, [Marx said to the workers,] not only to change existing conditions, but also to change yourselves and to make yourselves capable of wielding political power.⁴⁶

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, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, to subordinate them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, to overcome their bourgeois habits and traditions, [...] just as we must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petit-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the bidding of the Virgin Mary, at the bidding of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petit-bourgeois influences.⁴⁷

2) *The dictatorship of the proletariat as the rule 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 government, a change of the “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 of dictatorship, usually reduce the “conquest of power” to a change of the “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. With the

⁴⁶ K. Marx, F. Engels, “Meeting of the Central Authority” in *Collected Works*, Vol. X, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, p. 626.

⁴⁷ “*Left-Wing*” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

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 conceal 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;”⁴⁸ nevertheless, governments of this kind inevitably 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 change of government, but a new state, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the state of the 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 socialisation 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.

⁴⁸ A Russian saying carried over from the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78. There was heavy fighting at the Shipka Pass, but tsarist Headquarters in their communiques reported: “All quiet at the Shipka Pass.”

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.*⁴⁹

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 non-propertied in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against⁵⁰ the bourgeoisie).”⁵¹ The talk of Kautsky and Co. about universal equality, about “pure” democracy, about “perfect” democracy, and the like, is a bourgeois disguise of 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 embellishing 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 enjoyment of “liberties” are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited masses do not, nor can they ever, really participate in governing the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, under conditions of capitalism, governments 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 proletarian dictatorship are real liberties for the exploited and real participation of the proletarians and peasants in governing the coun-

⁴⁹ Stalin sources this quote as coming from *The State and Revolution* where it does not appear. A similar quote can be found in “The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV: “The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets constitute precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a power resting not on the law but directly on the force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.”

⁵⁰ My italics—J. St.

⁵¹ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 34.

try possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is *proletarian* democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based on 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 apparatus, the bourgeois police.

“The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes,” say Marx and Engels in a preface to the *Communist Manifesto*.⁵²

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 this is the preliminary condition for every real people’s revolution on the continent.⁵³

Marx’s qualifying phrase about the continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for clamouring 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 (Britain, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to Britain 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 particular 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

⁵² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵³ K. Marx, F. Engels, “Letters to Dr. Kugelmann on the Paris Commune, April 17, 1871” in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, International Publishers, New York, Vol. II, p. 531.

in Britain and America also, when the particular conditions for peaceful development in Britain and America 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 Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon ‘liberty’ in the sense that they had no militarism and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves and trample everything underfoot. Today, in Britain and in America, too, “the preliminary condition for every real people’s revolution” is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the “ready-made state machinery” (perfected in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, up to the “European” general imperialist standard.)⁵⁴

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 principal 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.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *The State and Revolution*, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵⁵ *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, op. cit., p. 13.

3) *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 organisations can this colossal work be carried out? The old forms of organisation of the proletariat, which grew up on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism, are inadequate for this work—of that there can hardly be any doubt. What, then, are the new forms of organisation 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 organisation of the proletariat is the Soviets.

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

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

In that the Soviets are the *only* mass organisations which unite 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 uprising of the masses—organs capable of breaking the omnipotence of finance capital and its political appendages.

In that the Soviets are the *immediate* organisations of the masses themselves, i.e., they are *the most democratic* and therefore the most authoritative organisations 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.

Soviet power is the union and constitution of the local Soviets into one common state organisation, into the state organisation of the proletariat as the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited masses and as the ruling class—their union in the Republic of Soviets.

The essence of Soviet power consists in the fact that these most all-embracing and most revolutionary mass organisations 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 unflinching into *constant* and, moreover, *decisive* participation in the democratic administration of the state.”^{56, 57}

That is why Soviet power is a *new form* of state organisation, 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 exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin is right in saying that with the appearance of Soviet power “the era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has drawn to a close and a new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has been opened.”⁵⁸

Wherein lie the characteristic features of Soviet power?

In that Soviet power is the most all-embracing and most democratic state organisation of all possible state organisations 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,

⁵⁶ All italics mine.—*J. St.*

⁵⁷ V. I. Lenin, “First Congress of the Communist International” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVIII.

⁵⁸ V. I. Lenin, “The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory of Socialism” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

Soviet power is thus the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

In that Soviet power is the most internationalist of all state organisations in class society, for, by destroying every kind of national oppression and resting on the collaboration of the labouring masses of the various nationalities, it facilitates the uniting of these masses into a single state union.

In that Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses by the vanguard of these masses—by the proletariat, as the most united and most politically 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 us, [says Lenin,] that the proletariat alone is able to unite and lead the scattered and backward strata of the toiling and exploited population.⁵⁹

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

In that Soviet power, by combining legislative and executive power in a single state organisation 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 govern the country.

In that 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.

In that “the Soviet organisation of the state alone is capable of immediately and effectively smashing and finally destroying the old, i.e., the bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus.”⁶⁰

In that the Soviet form of state alone, by drawing the mass organisations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted partici-

⁵⁹ “First Congress of the Communist International,” *op. cit.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

pation 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, must be accomplished.

The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; 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*⁶¹ form capable of ensuring the most painless transition to socialism.⁶²

⁶¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁶² V. I. Lenin, "Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

Chapter V.

The Peasant Question

From this theme I take four questions:

- a) the presentation of the question;
- b) the peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution;
- c) the peasantry during the proletarian revolution;
- d) the peasantry after the consolidation of Soviet power.

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

This circumstance, however, does not in the least deprive the peasant question of the serious and vital importance it unquestionably has for the proletarian revolution. It is known that the serious study of the peasant question in the ranks of Russian Marxists began precisely on the eve of the first revolution (1905), when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realising the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the Party in all its magnitude, and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution became of vital importance. It is also known that the peasant question in Russia assumed a still more urgent character during the proletarian revolution, when the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of achieving and maintaining it, led to the question 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 question is part of the general question 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 outright aversion displayed by the parties of the Second International towards the peasant question 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 have no intention of leading the proletariat to power. And those who are afraid of revolution, who do not intend 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 one of indifference, of no immediate significance. The ironical attitude of the heroes of the Second International towards the peasant question is regarded by them 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 question as the peasant question 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 is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities 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 utilising these potentialities *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., it recognises the existence of revolutionary capacities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and the possibility of using 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 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 a movement or struggle of the peasantry which, directly or indirectly, facilitates the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, brings grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, and which helps 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 peasantry's *desertion* of the Cadets, its *turn* 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 wholly in favour of the landlords, and that the Cadets were supporting the tsar; that the only force they could rely on for assistance was the urban workers, the proletariat. The imperialist war merely confirmed the lessons of the Duma period and consummated the peasantry's desertion of the bourgeoisie, consummated 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.

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

The bourgeois revolutions in the West (Britain, France, Germany, 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 regimes, not at the hands of the proletariat, which was numeri-

cally weak and unorganised, but at 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 transitional 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 revolutionary spirit (especially after the lessons of 1905) and turned towards 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 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 scarcely needs proof that this circumstance alone, in view of the existence of a

revolutionary party like 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 henchmen—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 embrace of tsarism, but also by the direct dependence of this bourgeoisie upon government contracts.
- d) The existence in the countryside of the most hideous and most intolerable survivals of serfdom, coupled with the unlimited power of the landlords—a circumstance which threw the peasantry into the embrace 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 peasants into a single torrent of revolution.
- f) The imperialist war, which fused all these contradictions in the political life of Russia into a profound revolutionary crisis, and which lent the revolution tremendous striking force.

To whom could the peasantry turn under these circumstances? From whom could it seek support against the unlimited power of the landlords, against the tyranny of the tsar, against the devastating war which was ruining it? From the liberal bourgeoisie? But it was an enemy, as the long years of experience of all four Dumas had proved. From the Socialist-Revolutionaries? The Socialist-Revolutionaries were “better” than the Cadets, of course, and their programme was “suitable,” almost a peasant programme; but what could the Socialist-Revolutionaries offer, considering that they thought of relying only on the peasants and were weak in the

towns, from which the enemy primarily drew its 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 realise 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 whole decades of ordinary constitutional development, for they were eight months of *revolution*. The characteristic feature of this period was the further revolutionisation of the peasantry, its disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the peasantry's *desertion* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, its new *turn* towards a *direct rally* 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 (petit-bourgeois democracy) and the Bolsheviks (proletarian democracy) for the peasantry, to win over 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 landlords' land, the fight of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov revolt.

Whereas before, in the preceding period, the basic question of the revolution had been the overthrow of the tsar and of the power of the landlords, now, in the period following the February Revolution, when there was no longer any tsar, and when the interminable war had exhausted the economy of the country and utterly ruined the peasantry, the question of liquidating the war became the main problem of the revolution. The centre of gravity had manifestly shifted from purely internal questions to the main question—the war. “End the war,” “Let’s get out of the war”—such was the general outcry of the war-weary nation and primarily of 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 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 group of the imperialist bourgeoisie, its extreme Left wing, 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, 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 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 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 sol-

diers 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 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 Soviet power, questions of economic construction came to the forefront. Strengthen and develop the nationalised industry; for this purpose link up industry with peasant economy 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 matters to the exchange of products of industry for the products of peasant farming; revive trade and develop the co-operatives, drawing into them the vast masses of the peasantry—this is how Lenin outlined the immediate tasks of economic construction on the way to building the foundations 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 organising 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:

Firstly. 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 scarcely needs proof that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which owes its freedom to 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 matter of the not too distant future,” that “in order to conquer political power this party must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside.”⁶³ He wrote this in the nineties of the last century, having in mind the Western peasantry. Does it need proof that the Russian Communists, after accomplishing an enormous amount of work in this field in the course of three revolutions, have already succeeded in gaining in the countryside an influence and backing the like of which our Western comrades dare not even dream of? How can it be denied that this circumstance must decidedly facilitate the organisation 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:

We are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision. We do this not only because we consider the small peasant who does his own work as virtually belonging to us, but also in the direct interest of the Party. The greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win to our side while

⁶³ K. Marx, F. Engels, “The Peasant Question in France and Germany” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010, p. 484.

they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished. It will serve us nought to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and the last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifices to be made for this purpose in the interest of the peasants and to be defrayed out of public funds can, from the point of view of capitalist economy, be viewed only as money thrown away, but it is nevertheless an excellent investment because it will effect a perhaps tenfold saving in the cost of the social reorganisation in general. In this sense we can, therefore, afford to deal very liberally with the peasants.⁶⁴

That is what Engels said, having in mind the Western peasantry. But is it not clear that what Engels said can nowhere be realised 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 at once and to the fullest extent for “the small peasant who does his own work” to come over to our side, for the “material sacrifices” necessary for this to be made, and for the necessary “liberality towards the peasants” to be 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?

Secondly. 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 Soviet power and the nationalisation of the principal instruments and means of production preclude such a development. In Russia the development of agriculture must proceed along a

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498.

different path, along the path of organising millions of small and middle peasants in co-operatives, along the path of developing in the countryside a mass co-operative movement supported by the state by means of preferential credits. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on co-operation 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 co-operatives, 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 agricultural co-operatives. It is well known that new, large organisations have sprung up within the *Selskosoyuz*,⁶⁵ in different branches of agriculture, such as production of 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 produced by these peasants, disposes of it on the market on a large scale, guarantees the peasants a share in the profits, and in this way links peasant economy with state industry through the *Selskosoyuz*. What shall we call this form of organisation 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 state-socialist production I do so by 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. There is no need to mention here similar indices in other branches of agriculture.

It scarcely needs proof that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take this new path of development, rejecting the path of private capitalist latifundia and wage slavery, the path of destitution and ruin.

⁶⁵ *Selskosoyuz*—the All-Russian Union of Rural Cooperatives—existed from August 1921 to June 1929.

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

State power over all large-scale means of production, state power 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 for building a complete socialist society from the co-operatives, from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly looked down upon as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to look down upon as such now, under the NEP? Is this not all that is necessary for 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.⁶⁶

Further on, speaking of the necessity of giving financial and other assistance to the co-operatives, as a “new principal of organising the population” and a new “social system” under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin continues:

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 cost. Now we must realise, and apply in our practical work, the fact that the social system which we must now give more than usual assistance is the co-operative 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 co-operative trade; by assistance we must mean assistance for co-operative trade in which *really large masses of the population really take part*.⁶⁷

What do all these facts prove?
That the sceptics are wrong.

⁶⁶ “On Cooperation,” *op. cit.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

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.

Chapter VI.

The National Question

From this theme I take two main questions:

- a) the presentation of the question;
- b) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1) *The presentation of the question.* During the last two decades the national question has undergone a number of very important changes. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question 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 question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, “civilised” nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders 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, “civilised” and “uncivilised” 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 question 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 “civilised” and “uncivilised” slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question 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 turn the right to self-determination into 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 being 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, interpreting 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 to self-determination as 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 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 about “national equality of rights,” innumerable declarations about the “equality of nations”—that was the stock-in-trade 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 question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the “equality of nations” 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 one of supporting the oppressed nations, of rendering real and continuous assistance to them in their struggle against

imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national question was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent question having no connection with the general question of the power 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 question could be solved on the quiet, “of its own accord,” off the highway 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 question 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 question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted*, or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis, for utilising these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the dependent and colonial countries 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 recognises the existence of revolutionary capacities in the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and the possibility of using these for overthrowing the common enemy, for 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 of the “dominant” nations 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 individual 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 peoples,” “Russian outposts” in Europe, outposts of absolutism; whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were “revolutionary peoples,” 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.⁶⁸

This is the position in regard to the question of particular 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 vast majority of national movements is as relative and peculiar as is the possible reactionary character of certain particular national movements.

⁶⁸ V. I. Lenin, “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII

The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican programme of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle that 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 such “desperate” democrats and “Socialists,” “revolutionaries” and republicans 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 embellishment, the strengthening, the victory, of imperialism. For the same reasons, the struggle that 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 struggle that the British “Labour” Government is waging to preserve 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. There is no need to mention 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, as shown by the general balance sheet of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, “not in isolation, but on a world scale.”⁶⁹

2) *The liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.* In solving the national question Leninism proceeds from the following theses:

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

- a) the world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilised 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, which constitute that majority;
- b) the colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a vast 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 union 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 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” (*Engels*);
- h) this support implies the upholding, defence and implementation of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states;

- i) unless this slogan is implemented, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of world socialism, cannot be brought about;
- j) this union can only be voluntary, arising on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among peoples.

Hence the two sides, the two tendencies in the national question: 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 closer economic relations among nations, which arose as a result of the formation of a world market and a world economic system.

Developing capitalism [says Lenin,] knows two historical tendencies in the national question. First: the awakening of national life and national movements, struggle against all national oppression, creation of national states. Second: development and acceleration of all kinds of intercourse between nations, breakdown of national barriers, creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.

Both tendencies are a world-wide law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterises mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society.⁷⁰

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 imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

⁷⁰ V. I. Lenin, *Critical Remarks on the National Question*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951.

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 peoples 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 peoples lies through the separation of the colonies from the “integral” imperialist “whole,” through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity for a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the dominant-nation chauvinism of the “Socialists” of the ruling nations (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 secession.

Without such a struggle the education of the working class of the ruling nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of closer relations 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 Soviet power, to implant real internationalism and to create that remarkable organisation for the collaboration of peoples which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which is the living prototype of the future union of peoples in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting against the national isolationism, narrowness and aloofness of the Socialists in the oppressed countries, who do not want to rise above their national parochialism and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement in their own 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.

Such is the way in which the toiling masses of the dominant and of the oppressed nations must 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 relations 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 Social-Democrat belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for one moment that “his” Nicholas II, “his” Wilhelm, George, Poincare, etc., *also stands for amalgamation* with small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II being for “amalgamation” with Galicia, Wilhelm II for “amalgamation” with Belgium, etc.—such a Social-Democrat 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 their advocating and upholding freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat 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 be only one in a thousand...

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat belonging to a small nation must emphasise 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, isolationism 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 Social-Democrats of oppressing nations insisting on “freedom of *secession*,” while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on “freedom of *union*.” However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road leading from the *given* situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal.⁷¹

⁷¹ “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” *op. cit.*

Chapter VII.

Strategy and Tactics

From this theme I take six questions:

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

1) *Strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat.* The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly a period of the formation and training of the proletarian political armies under conditions of more or less peaceful development. It was the period of parliamentarism as the predominant form of the class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary clashes, of the means of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, did not seem to be on the order of the day at that time. The task was confined to utilising all means of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilising parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat remained, and, as it seemed, had to remain, that of an opposition. It scarcely needs proof that in such a period and with such a conception of the tasks of the proletariat there could be neither an integral strategy nor any elaborated tactics. There were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

The mortal sin of the Second International was not that it pursued at that time the tactics of utilising parliamentary forms of struggle, but that it overestimated the importance of these forms, that it considered them virtually the only forms; and that when the period of open revolutionary battles set in and the question of extra-parliamentary forms of struggle

came to the fore, the parties of the Second International turned their backs on these new tasks, refused to shoulder them.

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

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

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

First stage. 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of medievalism. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Direction of the main blow: the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution

by a *compromise* with tsarism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the working class with the peasantry. "The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyse the instability of the bourgeoisie."⁷²

Second stage. March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighbouring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as a favourable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petit-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to put an end to the revolution by a *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry. "The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie."⁷³

Third stage. Began after the October Revolution. Objective: to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, using it as a base for the defeat of imperialism in all countries. The revolution spreads beyond the confines of one country; the epoch of world revolution has begun. The main 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 petit-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.

⁷² *Two Tactics of the Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, op. cit., p. 104.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

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

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

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

In the period from 1907 to 1912 the Party was compelled to resort to tactics of retreat; for we then experienced a decline in the revolutionary movement, the ebb of the revolution, and tactics necessarily had to take this fact into consideration. The forms of struggle, as well as the forms of

organisation, changed accordingly: instead of the boycott of the Duma—participation in the Duma; instead of open revolutionary actions outside the Duma—actions and work in the Duma; instead of general political strikes—partial economic strikes, or simply a lull in activities. Of course, the Party had to go underground during that period, while the revolutionary mass organisations were replaced by cultural, educational, co-operative, insurance and other legal organisations.

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

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

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

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

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

There is no need to speak at length about the reserves of the first category, as their significance is clear to everyone. As for the reserves of the second category, whose significance is not 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 petit-bourgeois democrats (Socialist-Revolutionaries) and the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie (the Cadets) during and after the first revolution, which undoubtedly played its part in freeing the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie. Still less reason is there for denying

the colossal importance of the fact that the principal groups of imperialists were engaged in a deadly war during the period of the October Revolution, when the 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 organising its forces and consolidating its power, and to prepare the rout of Kolchak and Denikin. It must be presumed that now, when the contradictions among the imperialist groups are becoming more and more profound, and when a new war among them is becoming inevitable, reserves of this description will assume ever greater importance for the proletariat.

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

What does making proper use of reserves mean?

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

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

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

- 1) Never *play* with insurrection, but when beginning it firmly realise that you must *go to the end*.
- 2) Concentrate a great *superiority of forces* at the decisive point, at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.
- 3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed rising."
- 4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.
- 5) You must strive for *daily* successes, even if small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain the "*moral ascendancy*."⁷⁴

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

- (1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; [*if*]
- (2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petit bourgeoisie, the petit-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; [*if*]
- (3) among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously

⁷⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Advice of an Onlooker" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

to grow. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and briefly outlined above, and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured.⁷⁵

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

Failure to observe this condition leads to a dangerous error called “loss of tempo,” when the Party lags behind the movement or runs far ahead of it, courting the danger of failure. An example of such “loss of tempo,” of how the moment for an uprising should not be chosen, may be seen in the attempt made by a section of our comrades to begin the uprising by arresting the Democratic Conference in September 1917, when wavering was still apparent in the Soviets, when the armies at the front were still at the crossroads, when the reserves had not yet been brought up to the vanguard.

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

Fourthly. Manoeuvring the reserves with a view to effecting a proper retreat when the enemy is strong, when retreat is inevitable, when to accept

⁷⁵ “*Left-Wing*” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

battle forced upon us by the enemy is obviously disadvantageous, when, with the given relation of forces, retreat becomes the only way to escape a blow against the vanguard and to retain the reserves for the latter.

The revolutionary parties [says Lenin,] must complete their education. They have learned to attack. Now they have to realise that this knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge how to retreat properly. They have to realise—and the revolutionary class is taught to realise it by its own bitter experience—that victory is impossible unless they have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly.⁷⁶

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

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

In concluding a separate peace, [said Lenin at that time,] we free ourselves as much *as is possible at the present moment* from both warring imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare, which hinder them from making a deal against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution.⁷⁷

Now even the biggest fool [said Lenin three years after the Brest Peace, can see] that the “Brest Peace” was a concession that strengthened us and broke up the forces of international imperialism.⁷⁸

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct strategic leadership.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷⁷ V. I. Lenin, “On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

⁷⁸ V. I. Lenin, “New Times and Old Mistakes in a New Guise” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The danger of the tactics of the “Left” Communists was that they threatened to transform the Party from the leader of the proletarian revolution into a handful of futile conspirators with no ground to stand on.

Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone [says Lenin.] To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive battle, before the whole class, before the broad masses have taken up a position either of direct support of the vanguard, or at least of benevolent neutrality towards it... would be not merely folly but a crime. And in order that actually the whole class, that actually the broad masses of the working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, now confirmed with astonishing force and vividness not only in Russia but also in Germany. Not only the uncultured, often illiterate masses of Russia, but the highly cultured, entirely literate masses of Germany had to realise through their own painful experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, the utter vileness, of the govern-

ment of the knights of the Second International, the absolute inevitability of a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia, Kapp⁷⁹ and Co. in Germany) as the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to turn resolutely towards communism.⁸⁰

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

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

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

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

During the period of transition from war to economic construction, when industry was vegetating in the grip of disruption and agriculture was suffering from a shortage of urban manufactured goods, when the estab-

⁷⁹ Kapp (1868-1922) was the ringleader of the counter-revolutionary coup d'état of 1920 in Germany, which was known as the "Kapp putsch." He became the head of the new government which was short-lived, being overthrown by the general strike of the German workers.

⁸⁰ "Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

lishment of a bond between state industry and peasant economy became the fundamental condition for successful socialist construction—in that period it turned out that the main link in the chain of processes, the main task among a number of tasks, was to develop trade. Why? Because under the conditions of the NEP the bond between industry and peasant economy cannot be established except through trade; because under the conditions of the NEP production without sale is fatal for industry; because industry can be expanded only by the expansion of sales as a result of developing trade; because only after we have consolidated our position in the sphere of trade, only after we have secured control of trade, only after we have secured this link can there be any hope of linking industry with the peasant market and successfully fulfilling the other immediate tasks in order to create the conditions for building the foundations of socialist economy.

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

At the present time... this link is the revival of internal *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade—that is the “link” in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, “*which we must grasp with all our might...*”⁸¹

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct tactical leadership.

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

Some think that Leninism is opposed to reforms, opposed to compromises and to agreements in general. This is absolutely wrong. Bolsheviks know as well as anybody else that in a certain sense “every little helps,”

⁸¹ “The Importance of Gold Now and After the Complete Victory Of Socialism,” *op. cit.*

that under certain conditions reforms in general, and compromises and agreements in particular, are necessary and useful.

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, [says Lenin,] a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to reject agreements and compromises with possible (even though temporary, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies—is not this ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not as though, when making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain, we were to refuse beforehand ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace our steps, ever to abandon the course once selected and to try others?⁸²

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

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

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

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

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

⁸² *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

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

That is the essence of reformist tactics.

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

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself compelled temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the “reformist path,” as Lenin says in his well-known article “The Importance of Gold,”⁸³ the path of flanking movements, of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes—in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate one’s forces and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a “reformist” path. But it must be borne in mind that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite, its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

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

The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period was great enough and therefore provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics of flanking movements.

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

Only Marxism [says Lenin,] has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution. However, Marx

⁸³ *Op. cit.*

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 an international scale) they⁸⁴ are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate respite in those cases when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of this or that transition. Victory creates such a “reserve of strength” that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, to hold out both materially and morally.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ I.e., reforms—*J. St.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Chapter VIII.

The Party

In the pre-revolutionary period, 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—under these conditions the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary clashes. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are an instrument 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 organisation of the proletariat. It is well known that the party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It scarcely needs proof 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 reorganising all party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up 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 in the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair, to inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties, it would be completely unarmed. It scarcely needs proof 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 in 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 in the path to its goal.

Without such a party it is useless even to think of overthrowing imperialism, of 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 advanced detachment of the working class.* The Party must be, first of all, the *advanced* detachment 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 advanced detachment, 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 drags at the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertia 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 raise the masses to the level of understanding 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 drag at the tail of the spontaneous movement. The parties of the Second International, which preach “khvostism,” are vehicles of bourgeois policy, which condemn the proletariat to the role of a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only a party which adopts the standpoint of advanced

detachment of the proletariat and is able to raise the masses to the level of understanding 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 already 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 see clearly 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 be doomed to defeat. Is it not clear that the proletariat can still less dispense with such a General Staff if it does not want to allow itself 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 an *advanced* 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 advanced detachment and the rest 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 former members of other classes, as long as the working class as a whole is not in a position to rise to the level of the advanced detachment. But the Party would cease to be a party if this distinction developed into a gap, if the Party turned in on itself 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 all the rest of the non-Party workers, who took

an active part in the admission of the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact shows 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 scarcely needs proof 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 [says Lenin,] are the Party of a class, and therefore *almost the whole class* (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the whole class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism⁸⁶ and “khvostism” to think that at any time under capitalism almost the whole class, or the whole class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its advanced detachment, of its Social-Democratic Party. No sensible Social-Democrat has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organisations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace almost the whole, or the whole, working class. To forget the distinction between the advanced detachment and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the advanced detachment 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.⁸⁷

2) *The Party as the organised detachment of the working class.* The Party is not only the advanced detachment of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the organised detachment of its class. The Party’s tasks under the conditions of capitalism are immense and extremely varied. The Party must direct the struggle of

⁸⁶ Manilovism — smug complacency, futile daydreaming; from the landowner Manilov, a character in Gogol’s *Dead Souls*.

⁸⁷ *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, op. cit.*

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 so as to escape the blow of a powerful enemy when the situation calls for retreat; it must imbue the millions of unorganised non-Party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in struggle, with the spirit of organisation and endurance. But the Party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organisation, if it is itself the *organised* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the Party really leading the vast masses of the proletariat.

The Party is the organised detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organised 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 total* of its organisations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organisations 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 "sympathiser" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not want to join any one of the Party organisations. It scarcely needs proof that had this singular "system" become 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, disorganised "formation," lost in a sea of "sympathisers," that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party's task of raising the unorganised masses to the level of the advanced detachment. Needless to say, under such an opportunist "system" our Party would have been unable to fulfil the role of the organising core of the working class in the course of our revolution.

From the point of view of Comrade Martov, [says Lenin,] the border-line of the Party remains quite indefinite, for "every striker" may "proclaim himself a Party member." What is the use of this vagueness? A wide extension of the "title." Its harm

is that it introduces a *disorganising* idea, the confusing of class and Party.⁸⁸

But the Party is not merely the *sum total* of Party organisations. The Party is at the same time a single *system* of these organisations, their formal union 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 organised whole capable of exercising systematic and organised leadership in the struggle of the working class.

Formerly, [says Lenin,] our Party was not a formally organised 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 organised 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.⁸⁹

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 scarcely needs proof that systematic work by the Party as one whole, and the directing of the struggle of the working class, would be impossible without putting these principles into effect. Leninism in questions of organisation is the unswerving application of these principles. Lenin terms the fight against these principles “Russian nihilism” and “aristocratic anarchism,” which deserves to be ridiculed and swept aside.

Here is what Lenin says about these wavering elements in his book *One Step Forward*:

This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organisation as a monstrous “factory”; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority of “serfdom”...

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

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 organisational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful... remark that one could very well dispense with rules altogether.

It is clear, I think, that the cries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig leaf... You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the congress not by my will, but against it; you are a formalist because you rely on the formal decisions of the congress, and not on my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way because you plead the “mechanical” majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted; you are an autocrat because you refuse to hand over the power to the old gang.^{90, 91}

3) *The Party as the highest form of class organisation of the proletariat.* The Party is the organised detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organisation of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organisations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory organisations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women’s associations, the press, cultural and educational organisations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organisations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organisation (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organisations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organisations, 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 proletar-

⁹⁰ The “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. St.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

iat 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 organisations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organisations will not lead to divergency in leadership? It may be said that each of these organisations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organisations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organisations 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 organisations is to be conducted? Where is the central organisation 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, to induce all these organisations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organisation 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 organisations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying centre of the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organisation 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 organisation capable of centralising the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organisation 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 organisation of the proletariat.

This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc., should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organisations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organisations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership.

That is why Lenin says that the Party is “the *highest* form of proletarian class association,” whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organisation of the proletariat.⁹²

That is why the opportunist theory of the “independence” and “neutrality” of the non-Party organisations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade union leaders and *philistine* co-operative officials, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

4) *The Party as an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.* The Party is the highest form of organisation of the proletariat. The Party is the principal guiding force within the class of the proletarians and among the organisations 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 when that has not yet been achieved and for consolidating and expanding the dictatorship when it has already been achieved. The Party could not have risen so high in importance and could not have exerted its influence over all other forms of organisation of the proletariat, if the latter had not been confronted with the question of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis had not demanded the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement in 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 scarcely needs proof that without a party capable of rallying around itself the mass organisations of the proletariat, and of centralising the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle, the proletariat in Russia could not 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.

⁹² “Left-Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

Certainly, almost everyone now realises [says Lenin,] that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, without the strictest, truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and unreserved support of the latter by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements, capable of leading or of carrying with them the backward strata.⁹³

Now, what does to “maintain” and “expand” the dictatorship mean? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organisation; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influences of the petit-bourgeois elemental forces and petit-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the organising work of the proletarians in re-educating and remoulding the petit-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 organisation 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 stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit 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.⁹⁴

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.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

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

5) *The Party as the embodiment of unity of will, unity 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 conflicts of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and conflict 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 conflict 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 conditions without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

In the present epoch of acute civil war, [says Lenin,] the Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organised in the most centralised manner, 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.⁹⁵

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 [says Lenin,] weakens in the least the iron discipline of the Party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its

⁹⁵ V. I. Lenin, “Terms of Admission Into Communist International” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

dictatorship), actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.⁹⁶

But from this it follows that the existence of factions is compatible neither with the Party's unity nor with its iron discipline. It scarcely needs proof that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centres, and the existence of a number of centres means the absence of one common centre in the Party, the breaking up of 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, whose activities are conditioned by 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."⁹⁷

Hence Lenin's demand for the "complete elimination of all factionalism" and the "immediate dissolution of all groups, without exception, that have been formed on the basis of various platforms," on pain of "unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party."⁹⁸

6) *The Party becomes strong 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, petit bourgeois and intellectuals proletarianised by the development of capitalism. At the same time the upper stratum of the proletar-

⁹⁶ *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁹⁷ The resolution "On Party Unity," written by Lenin and adopted by the Tenth Congress of the RCP(B) held on March 8-16, 1921. See V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the RCP(B)" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

iat, principally trade union leaders and members of parliament who are fed by the bourgeoisie out of the super-profits extracted from the colonies, is undergoing a process of decay.

This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the “labour aristocracy,” [says Lenin,] who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. For they are real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement*, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism.⁹⁹

In one way or another, all these petit-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralisation and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganisation and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such “allies” in one’s rear means to put oneself in the position 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 pre-requisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

The theory of “defeating” opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of “overcoming” 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 on to the broad highway, it could not have seized power and organised 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 achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of 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 and Mensheviks. Proletarian

⁹⁹ *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism, op. cit.*, p. 8.

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 strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.

With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks, [says Lenin,] it is *impossible* to be victorious in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to defend it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience of both 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 petit-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party... in Italy, where, 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 desertion of wavering leaders at such a time does not weaken but strengthens the Party, the working-class movement and the revolution.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ V. I. Lenin, "On the Struggle of the Italian Socialist Party" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

Chapter IX.

Style in Work

I am not referring to literary style. What I have in mind is style in work, that specific and peculiar feature 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) Russian revolutionary sweep and
- b) American efficiency.

The style of Leninism consists in combining these two specific features in Party and state work.

Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertia, routine, conservatism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancient traditions. 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 Russian revolutionary sweep has every chance of 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” scheme concocting and “revolutionary” plan drafting, which springs from the belief in the power of decrees to arrange everything and re-make everything? A Russian writer, I. Ehrenburg, in his story *The Percommman* (*The Perfect Communist Man*), has portrayed the type of a “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.” The story contains a great exaggeration, 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. Lenin stigmatised this morbid belief in concocting schemes and in turning out decrees as “communist vainglory.”

Communist vainglory [says Lenin,] means that a man, who is a member of the Communist Party, and has not yet been purged from it, imagines that he can solve all his problems by issuing communist decrees.¹⁰¹

Lenin usually contrasted hollow “revolutionary” phrasemongering with plain everyday work, thus emphasising that “revolutionary” scheme concocting 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.¹⁰²

American efficiency, on the other hand, is an antidote to “revolutionary” Manilovism and fantastic scheme concocting. American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognises 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 practicalism if it is not combined with Russian revolutionary sweep. Who has not heard of that disease of narrow empiricism and unprincipled practicalism 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 ridiculed this disease of practicalism so incisively as Lenin. He branded it as “narrow-minded empiricism” and “brainless practicalism.” He usually contrasted it with

¹⁰¹ V. I. Lenin, “The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

¹⁰² V. I. Lenin, *A Great Beginning*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1977, pp. 10; 22.

vital revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary perspective in all our daily activities, thus emphasising that this unprincipled practicalism is as repugnant to true Leninism as “revolutionary” scheme concocting.

The combination of 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.

Pravda, Nos. 96, 97, 103,
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May 9, 11, 14, 15 and 18, 1924

ANARCHISM OR SOCIALISM?

TROTSKYISM OR LENINISM?

Contents

Anarchism or Socialism?	113
I. The Dialectical Method	118
II. The Materialist Theory	128
III. Proletarian Socialism	142
APPENDIX	175
Dialectical Materialism	176
Trotskyism or Leninism?	195
I. The Facts About the October Uprising	198
II. The Party and the Preparation for October	204
III. Trotskyism or Leninism?	218
The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now	227
I. Some Minor Questions	228
II. The Opposition's "Platform"	234
III. Lenin on Discussions and Oppositions in General	238
IV. The Opposition and the "Third Force"	240
V. How the Opposition Is "Preparing" for the Congress	244
VI. From Leninism to Trotskyism	248
VII. Some of the Most Important Results of the Party's Policy During the Past Few Years	252
VIII. Back to Axelrod	258

Anarchism or Socialism?

Anarchism or Socialism?¹

The hub of modern social life is the class struggle. In the course of this struggle each class is guided by its own ideology. The bourgeoisie has its own ideology—so-called *liberalism*. The proletariat also has its own ideology—this, as is well known, is *socialism*.

Liberalism must not be regarded as something whole and indivisible: it is subdivided into different trends, corresponding to the different strata of the bourgeoisie.

Nor is socialism whole and indivisible: in it there are also different trends.

We shall not here examine liberalism—that task had better be left for another time. We want to acquaint the reader only with socialism and its trends. We think that he will find this more interesting.

Socialism is divided into three main trends: *reformism*, *anarchism* and *Marxism*.

Reformism (Bernstein and others), which regards socialism as a remote goal and nothing more, reformism, which actually repudiates the socialist revolution and aims at establishing socialism by peaceful means, reformism, which advocates not class struggle but class collaboration—this reformism is decaying day by day, is day by day losing all semblance of socialism and, in our opinion, it is totally unnecessary to examine it in these articles when defining socialism.

It is altogether different with Marxism and anarchism: both are at the present time recognised as socialist trends, they are waging a fierce struggle

¹ At the end of 1905 and the beginning of 1906, a group of Anarchists in Georgia, headed by the well-known Anarchist and follower of Kropotkin, V. Cherkezishvili and his supporters Mikhako Tsereteli (Bâton), Shalva Gogelia (Sh. G.) and others conducted a fierce campaign against the Social-Democrats. This group published in Tiflis the newspapers *Nobati*, *Musha* and others. The Anarchists had no support among the proletariat, but they achieved some success among the declassed and petty-bourgeois elements. J. V. Stalin wrote a series of articles against the Anarchists under the general title of *Anarchism or Socialism?* The first four instalments appeared in *Akhali Tskhovreba* in June and July 1906. The rest were not published as the newspaper was suppressed by the authorities. In December 1906 and on January 1, 1907, the articles that were published in *Akhali Tskhovreba* were reprinted in *Akhali Droyeba*, in a slightly revised form, with the following editorial comment: “Recently, the Office Employees’ Union wrote to us suggesting that we should publish articles on anarchism, socialism, and cognate questions (see *Akhali Droyeba*, No. 3). The same wish was expressed by several other comrades. We gladly meet these wishes

against each other, both are trying to present themselves to the proletariat as genuinely socialist doctrines, and, of course, a study and comparison of the two will be far more interesting for the reader.

We are not the kind of people who, when the word “anarchism” is mentioned, turn away contemptuously and say with a supercilious wave of the hand: “Why waste time on that, it’s not worth talking about!” We think that such cheap “criticism” is undignified and useless.

Nor are we the kind of people who console themselves with the thought that the Anarchists “have no masses behind them and, therefore, are not so dangerous.” It is not who has a larger or smaller “mass” following today, but the essence of the doctrine that matters. If the “doctrine” of the Anarchists expresses the truth, then it goes without saying that it will certainly hew a path for itself and will rally the masses around itself. If, however, it is unsound and built up on a false foundation, it will not last long and will remain suspended in mid-air. But the unsoundness of anarchism must be proved.

Some people believe that Marxism and anarchism are based on the same principles and that the disagreements between them concern only tactics, so that, in the opinion of these people, it is quite impossible to draw a contrast between these two trends.

This is a great mistake.

We believe that the Anarchists are real enemies of Marxism. Accordingly, we also hold that a real struggle must be waged against real enemies.

and publish these articles. Regarding them, we think it necessary to mention that some have already appeared in the Georgian press (but for reasons over which the author had no control, they were not completed). Nevertheless we considered it necessary to reprint all the articles in full and requested the author to rewrite them in a more popular style, and this he gladly did.” This explains the two versions of the first four instalments of *Anarchism or Socialism?* They were continued in the newspapers *Chveni Tskhovreba* in February 1907, and in *Dro* in April 1907. The first version of the articles *Anarchism or Socialism?* as published in *Akhali Tskhovreba* is given as an appendix to the present volume.

Chveni Tskhovreba (*Our Life*)—a daily Bolshevik newspaper published legally in Tiflis under the direction of J. V. Stalin, began publication on February 18, 1907. In all, thirteen numbers were issued. It was suppressed on March 6, 1907, for its “extremist trend.”

Dro (*Time*)—a daily Bolshevik newspaper published in Tiflis after the suppression of *Chveni Tskhovreba*, ran from March 11 to April 15, 1907, under the direction of J. V. Stalin. M. Tskhakaya and M. Davitashvili were members of the editorial board. In all, thirty-one numbers were issued.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the “doctrine” of the Anarchists from beginning to end and weigh it up thoroughly from all aspects.

The point is that Marxism and anarchism are built up on entirely different principles, in spite of the fact that both come into the arena of the struggle under the flag of socialism. The cornerstone of anarchism is the *individual*, whose emancipation, according to its tenets, is the principal condition for the emancipation of the masses, the collective body. According to the tenets of anarchism, the emancipation of the masses is impossible until the individual is emancipated. Accordingly, its slogan is: “Everything for the individual.” The cornerstone of Marxism, however, is the *masses*, whose emancipation, according to its tenets, is the principal condition for the emancipation of the individual. That is to say, according to the tenets of Marxism, the emancipation of the individual is impossible until the masses are emancipated. Accordingly, its slogan is: “Everything for the masses.”

Clearly, we have here two principles, one negating the other, and not merely disagreements on tactics.

The object of our articles is to place these two opposite principles side by side, to compare Marxism with anarchism, and thereby throw light on their respective virtues and defects. At this point we think it necessary to acquaint the reader with the plan of these articles.

We shall begin with a description of Marxism, deal, in passing, with the Anarchists’ views on Marxism, and then proceed to criticise anarchism itself. Namely:

We shall expound the dialectical method, the Anarchists’ views on this method, and our criticism; the materialist theory, the Anarchists’ views and our criticism (here, too, we shall discuss the socialist revolution, the socialist dictatorship, the minimum programme, and tactics generally); the philosophy of the Anarchists and our criticism; the socialism of the Anarchists and our criticism; anarchist tactics and organisation—and, in conclusion, we shall give our deductions.

We shall try to prove that, as advocates of small community socialism, the Anarchists are not genuine Socialists.

We shall also try to prove that, in so far as they repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Anarchists are also not genuine revolutionaries...

Anarchism or Socialism?

And so, let us proceed with our subject.

I. The Dialectical Method

Everything in the world is in motion... Life changes, productive forces grow, old relations collapse.²

Karl Marx

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

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

Why is this system called dialectical materialism?

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

What is the dialectical method?

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

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

That which in life is born and grows day by day is invincible, its progress cannot be checked. That is to say, if, for example, in life the proletariat as a class is born and grows day by day, no matter how weak and small in numbers it may be *today*, in the long run it must triumph. Why? Because it is growing, gaining strength and marching forward. On the other hand, that which in life is growing old and advancing to its grave must inevitably suffer defeat, even if *today* it represents a titanic force. That

² K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1978, p.100.

is to say, if, for example, the bourgeoisie is gradually losing ground and is slipping farther and farther back every day, then, no matter how strong and numerous it may be today, it must, in the long run, suffer defeat. Why? Because as a class it is decaying, growing feeble, growing old, and becoming a burden to life.

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

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

To this the Marxists replied: It is true that the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie now constitute the majority and are really poor, but is that the point? The petty bourgeoisie has long constituted the majority, but up to now it has displayed no initiative in the struggle for “freedom” without the assistance of the proletariat. Why? Because the petty bourgeoisie as a class is not growing; on the contrary, it is disintegrating day by day and breaking up into bourgeois and proletarians. On the other hand, nor is poverty of decisive importance here, of course: “tramps” are poorer than the petty bourgeoisie, but nobody will say that they can undertake the task of “emancipating Russia.”

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

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

That is how the Marxists answered.

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

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

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

Clearly, movement assumes different forms.

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

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

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

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

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

As regards the forms of movement, as regards the fact that according to dialectics, minor, quantitative changes sooner or later lead to major, qualitative changes—this law applies with equal force to the history of nature Mendeleyev’s “periodic system of elements” clearly shows how very important in the history of nature is the emergence of *qualitative* changes

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

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

Such is the content of the dialectical method.

How do the Anarchists look upon the dialectical method?

Everybody knows that Hegel was the father of the dialectical method. Marx purged and improved this method. The Anarchists are aware of this, of course. They know that Hegel was a conservative, and so, taking advantage of this, they vehemently revile Hegel as a supporter of “restoration,” they try with the utmost zeal to “prove” that “Hegel is a philosopher of restoration ...that he eulogizes bureaucratic constitutionalism in its absolute form, that the general idea of his philosophy of history is subordinate to and serves the philosophical trend of the period of restoration,” and so on and so forth.³

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

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

True, nobody contests what they say on this point; on the contrary, everybody agrees that Hegel was not a revolutionary. Marx and Engels themselves proved before anybody else did, in their *Critique of Critical Criticism*, that Hegel’s views on history fundamentally contradict the idea of the sovereignty of the people. But in spite of this, the Anarchists go on trying to “prove,” and deem it necessary to go on day in and day out trying to “prove,” that Hegel was a supporter of “restoration.” Why do they do this? Probably, in order by all this to discredit Hegel and make their readers feel that the “reactionary” Hegel’s method also cannot be other than “repugnant” and unscientific.

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

³ See *Nobati*, No. 6. Article by V. Cherkezishvili. *Nobati* [*The Call*] was a weekly newspaper published by the Georgian Anarchists in Tiflis in 1906.

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

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

To proceed. In the opinion of the Anarchists, “dialectics is metaphysics,” and as they “want to free science from metaphysics, philosophy from theology,” they repudiate the dialectical method.⁴

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

Dialectics tells us that nothing in the world is eternal, everything in the world is transient and mutable; nature changes, society changes, habits and customs change, conceptions of justice change, truth itself changes—that is why dialectics regards everything critically; that is why it denies the existence of a once-and-for-all established truth. Consequently, it also repudiates abstract “dogmatic propositions, which, once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart.”⁵

Metaphysics, however, tells us something altogether different. From its standpoint the world is something eternal and immutable,⁶ it has been once and for all determined by someone or something—that is why the metaphysicians always have “eternal justice” or “immutable truth” on their lips.

Proudhon, the “father” of the Anarchists, said that there existed in the world an *immutable justice determined once and for all*, which must be

⁴ *Nobati*, Nos. 3 and 9. Sh. G. See also Kropotkin’s *Science and Anarchism*.

⁵ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976, p. 7.

⁶ See F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021.

made the basis of future society. That is why Proudhon has been called a metaphysician. Marx fought Proudhon with the aid of the dialectical method and proved that since every thing in the world changes, “justice” must also change, and that, consequently, “immutable justice” is metaphysical nonsense.⁷ The Georgian disciples of the metaphysician Proudhon, however, keep reiterating that “Marx’s dialectics is metaphysics”!

Metaphysics recognises various nebulous dogmas, such as, for example, the “unknowable,” the “thing-in itself,” and, in the long run, passes into empty theology. In contrast to Proudhon and Spencer, Engels combated these dogmas with the aid of the dialectical method;⁸ but the Anarchists—the disciples of Proudhon and Spencer—tell us that Proudhon and Spencer were scientists, whereas Marx and Engels were metaphysicians!

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

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

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

That is why Karl Marx, who subjected Hegel’s metaphysical system to devastating criticism, at the same time praised his dialectical method, which, as Marx said, “lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.”⁹

That is why Engels sees a big difference between Hegel’s method and his system. “Whoever placed the chief emphasis on the Hegelian *system* could be fairly conservative in both spheres; whoever regarded the dialectical *method* as the main thing could belong to the most extreme opposition, both in politics and religion.”¹⁰

⁷ See K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*

⁸ See F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *op. cit.*

⁹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, p. 20.

¹⁰ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

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

To proceed. The Anarchists say that the dialectical method is “subtle word-weaving,” “the method of sophistry,” “logical somersaults,”¹¹ “with the aid of which both truth and falsehood are proved with equal facility.”¹²

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

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

...His communication is: ‘Yea, yea; nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.’ For him a thing either exists, or it does not exist; it is equally impossible for a thing to be itself and at the same time something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another...¹³

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

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

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

So the same democratic republic can be “good” and “bad” at the same time—it is “yes” and “no.”

¹¹ See *Nobati*, No. 8, Sh. G.

¹² See *Nobati*, No. 4. Article by V. Cherkezishvili

¹³ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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

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

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

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

To proceed further. In the opinion of our Anarchists, “dialectical development is catastrophic development, by means of which, first the past is utterly destroyed, and then the future is established quite separately... Cuvier’s cataclysms were due to unknown causes, but Marx and Engels’s catastrophes are engendered by dialectics.”¹⁴

In another place the same author writes: “Marxism rests on Darwinism and treats it uncritically.”¹⁵ Now listen!

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

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

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

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

¹⁴ *Nobati*, No. 8. Sh. G.

¹⁵ *Nobati*, No. 6.

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

Let us turn to the facts. Marx says:

At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations... Then begins an epoch of social revolution. [But] no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed...¹⁶

If this thesis of Marx is applied to modern social life, we shall find that between the present-day productive forces, which are *social* in character, and the form of appropriation of the product, which is *private* in character, there is a fundamental conflict which must culminate in the socialist revolution.¹⁷

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁶ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976, pp. 3-4.

¹⁷ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, Part III, Chapter II (pp. 295-314).

Lastly, the Anarchists tell us reproachfully that “dialectics... provides no possibility of getting, or jumping, out of oneself, or of jumping over oneself.”¹⁸

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

That is the secret!...

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

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

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

¹⁸ *Nobati*, No. 8. Sh. G.

II. The Materialist Theory

*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.*¹⁹

Karl Marx

We already know what the dialectical method is.

What is the materialist theory?

Everything in the world changes, everything in life develops, but *how* do these changes take place and *in what form* does this development proceed?

We know, for example, that the earth was once an incandescent, fiery mass; then it gradually cooled, plants and animals appeared, the development of the animal kingdom was followed by the appearance of a certain species of ape, and all this was followed by the appearance of man.

This, broadly speaking, is the way nature developed.

We also know that social life did not remain static either. There was a time when men lived on a primitive-communist basis; at that time they gained their livelihood by primitive hunting; they roamed through the forests and procured their food in that way. There came a time when primitive communism was superseded by the matriarchate—at that time men satisfied their needs mainly by means of primitive agriculture. Later the matriarchate was superseded by the patriarchate, under which men gained their livelihood mainly by cattle breeding. The patriarchate was later superseded by the slave-owning system—at that time men gained their livelihood by means of relatively more developed agriculture. The slave-owning system was followed by feudalism, and then, after all this, came the bourgeois system.

That, broadly speaking, is the way social life developed.

Yes, all this is well known... But *how* did this development take place; did consciousness call forth the development of “nature” and of

¹⁹ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 3

“society,” or, on the contrary, did the development of “nature” and “society” call forth the development of consciousness?

This is how the materialist theory presents the question.

Some people say that “nature” and “social life” were preceded by the universal idea, which subsequently served as the basis of their development, so that the development of the phenomena of “nature” and of “social life” is, so to speak, the external form, merely the expression of the development of the universal idea.

Such, for example, was the doctrine of the *idealists*, who in the course of time split up into several trends.

Others say that from the very beginning there have existed in the world two mutually negating forces—idea and matter, consciousness and being, and that correspondingly, phenomena also fall into two categories—the ideal and the material, which negate each other, and contend against each other, so that the development of nature and society is a constant struggle between ideal and material phenomena.

Such, for example, was the doctrine of the *dualists*, who in the course of time, like the idealists, split up into several trends.

The materialist theory utterly repudiates both dualism and idealism.

Of course, both ideal and material phenomena exist in the world, but this does not mean that they negate each other. On the contrary, the ideal and the material sides are two different forms of one and the same nature or society, the one cannot be conceived without the other, they exist together, develop together, and, consequently, we have no grounds whatever for thinking that they negate each other.

Thus, so-called dualism proves to be unsound.

A single and indivisible nature expressed in two different forms—material and ideal; a single and indivisible social life expressed in two different forms—material and ideal—that is how we should regard the development of nature and of social life.

Such is the monism of the materialist theory.

At the same time, the materialist theory also repudiates idealism.

It is wrong to think that in its development the ideal side, and consciousness in general, precedes the development of the material side. So-called external “non-living” nature existed before there were any living

beings. The first living matter possessed no consciousness, it possessed only *irritability* and the first rudiments of *sensation*. Later, animals gradually developed the power of sensation, which slowly passed into *consciousness*, in conformity with the development of the structure of their organisms and nervous systems. If the ape had always walked on all fours, if it had never stood upright, its descendant—man—would not have been able freely to use his lungs and vocal chords and, therefore, would not have been able to speak; and that would have fundamentally retarded the development of his consciousness. If, furthermore, the ape had not risen up on its hind legs, its descendant—man—would have been compelled always to walk on all fours, to look downwards and obtain his impressions only from there; he would have been unable to look up and around himself and, consequently, his brain would have obtained no more impressions than the brain of a quadruped. All this would have fundamentally retarded the development of human consciousness.

It follows, therefore, that the development of consciousness needs a particular structure of the organism and development of its nervous system.

It follows, therefore, that the development of the ideal side, the development of consciousness, is preceded by the development of the material side, the development of the external conditions: first the external conditions change, first the material side changes, and then consciousness, the ideal side, changes accordingly.

Thus, the history of the development of nature utterly refutes so-called idealism.

The same thing must be said about the history of the development of human society.

History shows that if at different times men were imbued with different ideas and desires, the reason for this is that at different times men fought nature in different ways to satisfy their needs and, accordingly, their economic relations assumed different forms. There was a time when men fought nature collectively, on the basis of primitive communism; at that time their property was communist property and, therefore, at that time they drew scarcely any distinction between “mine” and “thine,” their consciousness was communistic. There came a time when the distinction between “mine” and “thine” penetrated the process of production; at that

time property, too, assumed a private, individualist character and, therefore, the consciousness of men became imbued with the sense of private property. Then came the time, the present time, when production is again assuming a social character and, consequently, property, too, will soon assume a social character—and this is precisely why the consciousness of men is gradually becoming imbued with socialism.

Here is a simple illustration. Let us take a shoemaker who owned a tiny workshop, but who, unable to withstand the competition of the big manufacturers, closed his workshop and took a job, say, at Adelkhanov's shoe factory in Tiflis. He went to work at Adelkhanov's factory not with the view to becoming a permanent wage-worker, but with the object of saving up some money, of accumulating a little capital to enable him to reopen his workshop. As you see, the position of this shoemaker is *already* proletarian, but his consciousness is *still* non-proletarian, it is thoroughly petit-bourgeois. In other words, this shoemaker has *already* lost his petty-bourgeois position, it has gone, but his petty-bourgeois consciousness has *not yet* gone, it has lagged behind his actual position.

Clearly, here too, in social life, first the external conditions change, first the conditions of men change and then their consciousness changes accordingly.

But let us return to our shoemaker. As we already know, he intends to save up some money and then reopen his workshop. This proletarianised shoemaker goes on working, but finds that it is a very difficult matter to save money, because what he earns barely suffices to maintain an existence. Moreover, he realises that the opening of a private workshop is after all not so alluring: the rent he will have to pay for the premises, the caprices of customers, shortage of money, the competition of the big manufacturers and similar worries—such are the many troubles that torment the private workshop owner. On the other hand, the proletarian is relatively freer from such cares; he is not troubled by customers, or by having to pay rent for premises. He goes to the factory every morning, “calmly” goes home in the evening, and as calmly pockets his “pay” on Saturdays. Here, for the first time, the wings of our shoemaker's petty-bourgeois dreams are clipped; here for the first time proletarian strivings awaken in his soul.

Time passes and our shoemaker sees that he has not enough money to satisfy his most essential needs, that what he needs very badly is a rise in

wages. At the same time, he hears his fellow-workers talking about unions and strikes. Here our shoemaker realises that in order to improve his conditions he must fight the masters and not open a workshop of his own. He joins the union, enters the strike movement, and soon becomes imbued with socialist ideas...

Thus, *in the long run*, the change in the shoemaker's material conditions was followed by a change in his consciousness: first his material conditions changed, and then, after a time, his consciousness changed accordingly.

The same must be said about classes and about society as a whole.

In social life, too, first the external conditions change, first the material conditions change, and then the ideas of men, their habits, customs and their world outlook change accordingly.

That is why Marx says:

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.²⁰

If we can call the material side, the external conditions, being, and other phenomena of the same kind, the content, then we can call the ideal side, consciousness and other phenomena of the same kind, the form. Hence arose the well-known materialist proposition: in the process of development content precedes form, form lags behind content.

And as, in Marx's opinion, economic development is the "material foundation" of social life, its content, while legal-political and religious-philosophical development is the "ideological form" of this content, its "superstructure," Marx draws the conclusion that:

With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.²¹

²⁰ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 3

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

This, of course, does not mean that in Marx's opinion content is possible without form, as Sh. G. imagines.²² Content is impossible without form, but the point is that since a given form lags behind its content, it never *fully* corresponds to this content; and so the new content is "obliged" to clothe itself for a time in the old form, and this causes a conflict between them. At the present time, for example, the form of appropriation of the product, which is *private* in character, does not correspond to the *social* content of production, and this is the basis of the present-day social "conflict."

On the other hand, the idea that consciousness is a form of being does not mean that by its nature consciousness, too, is matter. That was the opinion held only by the vulgar materialists (for example, Büchner and Moleschott), whose theories fundamentally contradict Marx's materialism, and whom Engels rightly ridiculed in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*. According to Marx's materialism, consciousness and being, idea and matter, are two different forms of the same phenomenon, which, broadly speaking, is called nature, or society. Consequently, they do not negate each other;²³ nor are they one and the same phenomenon. The only point is that, in the development of nature and society, consciousness, *i.e.*, what takes place in our heads, is preceded by a corresponding material change, *i.e.*, what takes place outside of us; any given material change is, sooner or later, inevitably followed by a corresponding ideal change.

Very well, we shall be told, perhaps this is true as applied to the history of nature and society. But how do different conceptions and ideas arise in our heads at the present time? Do so-called external conditions really exist, or is it only our conceptions of these external conditions that exist? And if external conditions exist, to what degree are they perceptible and cognizable?

On this point the materialist theory says that our conceptions, our "self," exist only in so far as external conditions exist that give rise to impressions in our "self." Whoever unthinkingly says that nothing exists

²² See *Nobati*, No. 1. "A Critique of Monism."

²³ This does not contradict the idea that there is a conflict between form and content. The point is that the conflict is not between content and form in general, but between the *old* form and the *new* content, which is seeking a new form and is striving towards it.

but our conceptions, is compelled to deny the existence of all external conditions and, consequently, must deny the existence of all other people and admit the existence only of his own “self,” which is absurd, and utterly contradicts the principles of science.

Obviously, external conditions do actually exist; these conditions existed before us, and will exist after us; and the more often and the more strongly they affect our consciousness, the more easily perceptible and cognizable do they become.

As regards the question as to how different conceptions and ideas arise in our heads at the present time, we must observe that here we have a repetition in brief of what takes place in the history of nature and society. In this case, too, the object outside of us preceded our conception of it; in this case, too, our conception, the form, lags behind the object—behind its content. When I look at a tree and see it—that only shows that this tree existed even before the conception of a tree arose in my head, that it was this tree that aroused the corresponding conception in my head...

Such, in brief, is the content of Marx’s materialist theory.

The importance of the materialist theory for the practical activities of mankind can be readily understood.

If the economic conditions change *first* and the consciousness of men undergoes a corresponding change *later*, it is clear that we must seek the grounds for a given ideal not in the minds of men, not in their imaginations, but in the development of their economic conditions. Only that ideal is good and acceptable, which is based on a study of economic conditions. All those ideals which ignore economic conditions and are not based upon their development are useless and unacceptable.

Such is the first practical conclusion to be drawn from the materialist theory.

If the consciousness of men, their habits and customs, are determined by external conditions, if the unsuitability of legal and political forms rests on an economic content, it is clear that we must help to bring about a radical change in economic relations in order, with this change, to bring about a radical change in the habits and customs of the people, and in their political system.

Here is what Karl Marx says on that score:

No great acumen is required to perceive the necessary inter-connection of materialism with... socialism. If man constructs all his knowledge, perceptions, etc., from the world of sense... then it follows that it is a question of so arranging the empirical world that he experiences the truly human in it, that he becomes accustomed to experiencing himself as a human being... If man is unfree in the materialist sense—that is, is free not by reason of the negative force of being able to avoid this or that, but by reason of the positive power to assert his true individuality, then one should not punish individuals for crimes, but rather destroy the anti-social breeding places of crime... If man is moulded circumstances, then the circumstances must be moulded humanly.²⁴

Such is the second practical conclusion to be drawn from the materialist theory.

What is the anarchist view of the materialist theory of Marx and Engels?

While the dialectical method originated with Hegel, the materialist theory is a further development of the materialism of Feuerbach. The Anarchists know this very well, and they try to take advantage of the defects of Hegel and Feuerbach to discredit the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. We have already shown with reference to Hegel and the dialectical method that these tricks of the Anarchists prove nothing but their own ignorance. The same must be said with reference to their attacks on Feuerbach and the materialist theory.

For example. The Anarchists tell us with great aplomb that “Feuerbach was a pantheist...” that he “deified man...”²⁵, that “in Feuerbach’s opinion man is what he eats...” alleging that from this Marx drew the following conclusion: “Consequently, the main and primary thing is economic conditions...”²⁶

²⁴ K. Marx, F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, pp. 175-176.

²⁵ *Nobati*, No. 7. D. Delendi.

²⁶ *Nobati*, No. 6, Sh. G.

True, nobody has any doubts about Feuerbach's pantheism, his deification of man, and other errors of his of the same kind. On the contrary, Marx and Engels were the first to reveal Feuerbach's errors. Nevertheless, the Anarchists deem it necessary once again to "expose" the already exposed errors. Why? Probably because, in reviling Feuerbach, they want indirectly to discredit the materialist theory of Marx and Engels. Of course, if we examine the subject impartially we shall certainly find that in addition to erroneous ideas, Feuerbach gave utterance to correct ideas, as has been the case with many scholars in history. Nevertheless, the Anarchists go on "exposing." ... We say again that by tricks of this kind they prove nothing but their own ignorance.

It is interesting to note (as we shall see later on) that the Anarchists took it into their heads to criticise the materialist theory from hearsay, without any acquaintance with it. As a consequence, they often contradict and refute each other, which, of course, makes our "critics" look ridiculous. If, for example, we listen to what Mr. Cherkezishvili has to say, it would appear that Marx and Engels detested monistic materialism, that their materialism was vulgar and not monistic materialism:

The great science of the naturalists, with its system of evolution, transformism and monistic materialism, which *Engels so heartily detested*... avoided dialectics, [etc.]²⁷

It follows, therefore, that natural-scientific materialism, which Cherkezishvili approves of and which Engels "detested," was monistic materialism and, *therefore*, deserves approval, whereas the materialism of Marx and Engels is not monistic and, of course, does not deserve recognition.

Another Anarchist, however, says that the materialism of Marx and Engels is monistic and *therefore* should be rejected.

Marx's conception of history is a throwback to Hegel. The monistic materialism of absolute objectivism in general, and Marx's economic monism in particular, are impossible in nature and fallacious in theory... Monistic materialism is

²⁷ *Nobati*, No. 4. V. Cherkezishvili.

poorly disguised dualism and a compromise between metaphysics and science...²⁸

It would follow, therefore, that monistic materialism is unacceptable, that Marx and Engels do not detest it, but, on the contrary, are themselves monistic materialists—and therefore, monistic materialism must be rejected.

They are all at sixes and sevens. Try and make out which of them is right, the former or the latter! They have not yet agreed among themselves about the merits and demerits of Marx's materialism, they have not yet understood whether it is monistic or not, and have not yet made up their minds themselves as to which is the more acceptable, vulgar or monistic materialism—but they already deafen us with their boastful claims to have shattered Marxism!

Well, well, if Messieurs the Anarchists continue to shatter each other's views as zealously as they are doing now, we need say no more, the future belongs to the Anarchists...

No less ridiculous is the fact that certain "celebrated" Anarchists, notwithstanding their "celebrity," have not yet made themselves familiar with the different trends in science. It appears that they are ignorant of the fact that there are various kinds of materialism in science which differ a great deal from each other: there is, for example, vulgar materialism, which denies the importance of the ideal side and the effect it has upon the material side; but there is also so-called monistic materialism—the materialist theory of Marx—which scientifically examines the interrelation between the ideal and the material sides. But the Anarchists *confuse* these different kinds of materialism, fail to see even the obvious differences between them, and at the same time affirm with great aplomb that they are regenerating science!

P. Kropotkin, for example, smugly asserts in his "philosophical" works that anarcho-communism rests on "contemporary materialist philosophy," but he does not utter a single word to explain on which "materialist philosophy" anarcho-communism rests: on vulgar, monistic, or some other. Evidently he is ignorant of the fact that there are fundamental contradictions between the different trends of materialism, and he fails to

²⁸ *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

understand that to confuse these trends means not “regenerating science,” but displaying one’s own downright ignorance.²⁹

The same thing must be said about Kropotkin’s Georgian disciples. Listen to this:

In the opinion of Engels, and also of Kautsky, Marx rendered mankind a great service in that he... [among other things, discovered the] materialist conception. Is this true? We do not think so, for we know ...that all the historians, scientists and philosophers who adhere to the view that the social mechanism is set in motion by geographic, climatic and telluric, cosmic, anthropological and biological conditions—*are all materialists*.³⁰

It follows, therefore, that there is no difference whatever between the “materialism” of Aristotle and Holbach, or between the “materialism” of Marx and Moleschott! This is criticism if you like! And people whose knowledge is on such a level have taken it into their heads to renovate science! Indeed, it is an apt saying: “It’s a bad lookout when a cobbler begins to bake pies!...”

To proceed. Our “celebrated” Anarchists heard somewhere that Marx’s materialism was a “belly theory,” and so they rebuke us, Marxists, saying:

“In the opinion of Feuerbach, man is what he eats. This formula had a magic effect on Marx and Engels,” and, as a consequence, Marx drew the conclusion that “the main and primary thing is economic conditions, relations of production...” And then the Anarchists proceed to instruct us in a philosophical tone: “It would be a mistake to say that the *sole* means of achieving this object of social life) is *eating* and economic production... If *ideology were determined* mainly, monistically, by *eating* and economic conditions—then some gluttons would be geniuses.”³¹

You see how easy it is to refute the materialism of Marx and Engels! It is sufficient to hear some gossip in the street from some schoolgirl about Marx and Engels, it is sufficient to repeat that street gossip with philosoph-

²⁹ See Kropotkin, *Science and Anarchism*, and also *Anarchy and Its Philosophy*.

³⁰ *Nobati*, No. 2

³¹ *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

ical aplomb in the columns of a paper like *Nobati*, to leap into fame as a “critic” of Marxism!

But tell me, gentlemen: Where, when, on which planet, and which Marx did you hear say that “*eating determines ideology*”? Why did you not cite a single sentence, a single word from the works of Marx to back your assertion? True, Marx said that the economic conditions of men determine their consciousness, their ideology, but who told you that eating and economic conditions are the same thing? Don’t you really know that physiological phenomena, such as *eating*, for example, differ fundamentally from sociological phenomena, such as the *economic conditions* of men, for example? One can forgive a schoolgirl, say, for confusing these two different phenomena; but how is it that you, the “vanquishers of Social Democracy,” “regenerators of science,” so carelessly repeat the mistake of a schoolgirl?

How, indeed, can eating determine social ideology? Ponder over what you yourselves have said: eating, the form of eating, does not change; in ancient times people ate, masticated and digested their food in the same way as they do now, but ideology changes all the time. Ancient, feudal, bourgeois and proletarian—such are the forms of ideology. Is it conceivable that *that which does not change* can determine *that which is constantly changing*?

To proceed further. In the opinion of the Anarchists, Marx’s materialism “is parallelism...” Or again: “monistic materialism is poorly disguised dualism and a compromise between metaphysics and science...” “Marx drops into dualism because he depicts relations of production as material, and human striving and will *as an illusion and a utopia*, which, even though it exists, *is of no importance*.”³²

Firstly, Marx’s monistic materialism has nothing in common with silly parallelism. From the standpoint of this materialism, the material side, content, necessarily *precedes* the ideal side, form. Parallelism, however, repudiates this view and emphatically affirms that neither the material nor the ideal *comes first*, that both develop together, side by side.

Secondly, even if Marx had in fact “depicted relations of production as material, and human striving and will as an illusion and a utopia having

³² *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

no importance,” does that mean that Marx was a dualist? The dualist, as is well known, ascribes *equal* importance to the ideal and material sides as two opposite principles. But if, as you say, Marx attaches higher importance to the material side and no importance to the ideal side because it is a “utopia,” how do you make out that Marx was a dualist, Messieurs “Critics”?

Thirdly, what connection can there be between materialist monism and dualism, when even a child knows that monism springs from *one principle*—nature, or being, which has a material and an ideal form, whereas dualism springs from *two principles*—the material and the ideal which, according to dualism, negate each other?

Fourthly, when did Marx depict “human striving and will as a utopia and an illusion”? True, Marx explained “human striving and will” by economic development, and when the strivings of certain armchair philosophers failed to harmonise with economic conditions, he called them utopian. But does this mean that Marx believed that human striving in general is utopian? Does this, too, really need explanation? Have you really not read Marx’s statement that: “*mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve*,”³³ *i.e.*, that, generally speaking, mankind does not pursue utopian aims? Clearly, either our “critic” does not know what he is talking about, or he is deliberately distorting the facts.

Fifthly, who told you that in the opinion of Marx and Engels “human striving and will are of no importance”? Why do you not point to the place where they say that? Does not Marx speak of the importance of “striving and will” in his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in his *Class Struggles in France*, in his *Civil War in France*, and in other pamphlets of the same kind? Why then did Marx try to develop the proletarians’ “will and striving” in the socialist spirit, why did he conduct propaganda among them if he attached no importance to “striving and will”? Or, what did Engels talk about in his well-known articles of 1891-94 if not the “importance of will and striving”? True, in Marx’s opinion human “will and striving” acquire their content from economic conditions, but does that mean that they themselves exert no influence on the development of

³³ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

economic relations? Is it really so difficult for the Anarchists to understand such a simple idea?

Here is another “accusation” Messieurs the Anarchists make: “form is inconceivable without content... “therefore, one cannot say that “form *comes after* content... [lags behind content.—K.] they ‘co-exist.’... Otherwise, monism would be an absurdity.”³⁴

Our “scholar” is somewhat confused again. It is quite true that content is inconceivable without form. But it is also true that the *existing form* never fully corresponds to the *existing content*: the former lags behind the latter, to a certain extent the new content is always clothed in the old form and, as a consequence, there is always a conflict between the old form and the new content. It is precisely on this ground that revolutions occur, and this, among other things, expresses the revolutionary spirit of Marx’s materialism. The “celebrated” Anarchists, however, have failed to understand this, and for this they themselves and not the materialist theory are to blame, of course.

Such are the views of the Anarchists on the materialist theory of Marx and Engels, that is, if they can be called views at all.

³⁴ *Nobati*, No.1. Sh. G.

III. Proletarian Socialism

We are now familiar with Marx's theoretical doctrine; we are familiar with his *method* and also with his *theory*.

What practical conclusions must we draw from this doctrine?

What connection is there between dialectical materialism and proletarian socialism?

The dialectical method affirms that only that class which is growing day by day, which always marches forward and fight unceasingly for a better future, can be progressive to the end, only that class can smash the yoke of slavery. We see that the only class which is steadily growing, which always marches forward and is fighting for the future is the urban and rural proletariat. Therefore, we must serve the proletariat and place our hopes on it.

Such is the first practical conclusion to be drawn from Marx's theoretical doctrine.

But there is service and service. Bernstein also "serves" the proletariat when he urges it to forget about socialism. Kropotkin also "serves" the proletariat when he offers it community "socialism," which is scattered and has no broad industrial base. And Karl Marx serves the proletariat when he calls it to proletarian socialism, which will rest on the broad basis of modern large-scale industry.

What must we do in order that our activities may benefit the proletariat? How should we serve the proletariat?

The materialist theory affirms that a given ideal may be of direct service to the proletariat only if it does not run counter to the economic development of the country, if it fully answers to the requirements of that development. The economic development of the capitalist system shows that present-day production is assuming a social character, that the social character of production is a fundamental negation of existing capitalist property; consequently, our main task is to help to abolish capitalist property and to establish socialist property. And that means that the doctrine of Bernstein, who urges that socialism should be forgotten, fundamentally contradicts the requirements of economic development—it is harmful to the proletariat.

Further, the economic development of the capitalist system shows that present-day production is expanding day by day; it is not confined within the limits of individual towns and provinces, but constantly overflows these limits and embraces the territory of the whole state—consequently, we must welcome the expansion of production and regard as the basis of future socialism not separate towns and communities, but the entire and indivisible territory of the whole state which, in the future, will, of course, expand more and more. And this means that the doctrine advocated by Kropotkin, which confines future socialism within the limits of separate towns and communities, is contrary to the interests of a powerful expansion of production—it is harmful to the proletariat.

Fight for a *broad* socialist life as the *principal* goal—this is how we should serve the proletariat.

Such is the second practical conclusion to be drawn from Marx's theoretical doctrine.

Clearly, proletarian socialism is the logical deduction from dialectical materialism.

What is proletarian socialism?

The present system is a capitalist system. This means that the world is divided up into two opposing camps, the camp of a small handful of capitalists and the camp of the majority—the proletarians. The proletarians work day and night, nevertheless they remain poor. The capitalists do not work, nevertheless they are rich. This takes place not because the proletarians are unintelligent and the capitalists are geniuses, but because the capitalists appropriate the fruits of the labour of the proletarians, because the capitalists exploit the proletarians.

Why are the fruits of the labour of the proletarians appropriated by the capitalists and not by the proletarians? Why do the capitalists exploit the proletarians and not *vice versa*?

Because the capitalist system is based on commodity production: here everything assumes the form of a commodity, everywhere the principle of buying and selling prevails. Here you can buy not only articles of consumption, not only food products, but also the labour power of men, their blood and their consciences. The capitalists know all this and purchase the labour power of the proletarians, they hire them. This means that the capitalists become the owners of the labour power they buy. The prole-

tarians, however, lose their right to the labour power which they have sold. That is to say, what is produced by that labour power no longer belongs to the proletarians, it belongs only to the capitalists and goes into their pockets. The labour power which you have sold may produce in the course of a day goods to the value of 100 rubles, but that is not your business, those goods do not belong to you, it is the business only of the capitalists, and the goods belong to them—all that you are due to receive is your daily wage which, perhaps, may be sufficient to satisfy your essential needs if, of course, you live frugally. Briefly: the capitalists buy the labour power of the proletarians, they hire the proletarians, and this is precisely why the capitalists appropriate the fruits of the labour of the proletarians, this is precisely why the capitalists exploit the proletarians and not vice versa.

But why is it precisely the capitalists who buy the labour power of the proletarians? Why do the capitalists hire the proletarians and not *vice versa*?

Because the principal basis of the capitalist system is the private ownership of the instruments and means of production. Because the factories, mills, the land and minerals, the forests, the railways, machines and other means of production have become the private property of a small handful of capitalists. Because the proletarians lack all this. That is why the capitalists hire proletarians to keep the factories and mills going—if they did not do that, their instruments and means of production would yield no profit. That is why the proletarians sell their labour power to the capitalists—if they did not, they would die of starvation.

All this throws light on the general character of capitalist production. Firstly, it is self-evident that capitalist production cannot be united and organised: it is all split up among the private enterprises of individual capitalists. Secondly, it is also clear that the immediate purpose of this scattered production is not to satisfy the needs of the people, but to produce goods for sale in order to increase the profits of the capitalists. But as every capitalist strives to increase his profits, each one tries to produce the largest possible quantity of goods and, as a result, the market is soon glutted, prices fall and—a general crisis sets in.

Thus, crises, unemployment, suspension of production, anarchy of production, and the like, are the direct results of present-day unorganised capitalist production.

If this unorganised social system still remains standing, if it still firmly withstands the attacks of the proletariat, it is primarily because it is protected by the capitalist state, by the capitalist government.

Such is the basis of present-day capitalist society.

There can be no doubt that future society will be built on an entirely different basis. Future society will be socialist society. This means primarily, that there will be no classes in that society; there will be neither capitalists nor proletarians and, consequently, there will be no exploitation. In that society there will be only workers engaged in collective labour.

Future society will be socialist society. This means also that, with the abolition of exploitation commodity production and buying and selling will also be abolished and, therefore, there will be no room for buyers and sellers of labour power, for employers and employed—there will be only free workers.

Future society will be socialist society. This means, lastly, that in that society the abolition of wage-labour will be accompanied by the complete abolition of the private ownership of the instruments and means of production; there will be neither poor proletarians nor rich capitalists—there will be only workers who collectively own all the land and minerals, all the forests, all the factories and mills, all the railways, etc.

As you see, the main purpose of production in the future will be to satisfy the needs of society and not to produce goods for sale in order to increase the profits of the capitalists. Where there will be no room for commodity production, struggle for profits, etc.

It is also clear that future production will be socialistically organised, highly developed production, which will take into account the needs of society and will produce as much as society needs. Here there will be no room whether for scattered production, competition, crises, or unemployment.

Where there are no classes, where there are neither rich nor poor, there is no need for a state, there is no need either for political power, which oppresses the poor and protects the rich. Consequently, in socialist society there will be no need for the existence of political power.

That is why Karl Marx said as far back as 1846:

The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be *no more political power properly so-called...*³⁵

That is why Engels said in 1884:

The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no conception of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity... We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. *Along with them the state will inevitably fall.* The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.³⁶

At the same time, it is self-evident that for the purpose of administering public affairs there will have to be in socialist society, in addition to local offices which will collect all sorts of information, a central statistical bureau, which will collect information about the needs of the whole of society, and then distribute the various kinds of work among the working people accordingly. It will also be necessary to hold conferences, and particularly congresses, the decisions of which will certainly be binding upon the comrades in the minority until the next congress is held.

Lastly, it is obvious that free and comradely labour should result in an equally comradely, and complete, satisfaction of all needs in the future socialist society. This means that if future society demands from each of its members as much labour as he can perform, it, in its turn, must provide each member with all the products he needs. From each according to his

³⁵ K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

³⁶ F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, pp. 155-156.

ability, to each according to his needs!—such is the basis upon which the future collectivist system must be created. It goes without saying that in the *first* stage of socialism, when elements who have not yet grown accustomed to work are being drawn into the new way of life, when the productive forces also will not yet have been sufficiently developed and there will still be “dirty” and “clean” work to do, the application of the principle: “to each according to his needs,” will undoubtedly be greatly hindered and, as a consequence, society will be obliged *temporarily* to take some other path, a middle path. But it is also clear that when future society runs into its groove, when the survivals of capitalism will have been eradicated, the only principle that will conform to socialist society will be the one pointed out above.

That is why Marx said in 1875:

In a higher phase of communist [*i.e.*, socialist] society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of livelihood but life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual... only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.³⁷

Such, in general, is the picture of future socialist society according to the theory of Marx.

This is all very well. But is the achievement of socialism conceivable? Can we assume that man will rid himself of his “savage habits”?

Or again: if everybody receives according to his needs, can we assume that the level of the productive forces of socialist society will be adequate for this?

Socialist society presupposes an adequate development of productive forces and socialist consciousness among men, their socialist enlightenment. At the present time the development of productive forces is hin-

³⁷ K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, pp. 15-16.

dered by the existence of capitalist property, but if we bear in mind that this capitalist property will not exist in future society, it is self-evident that the productive forces will increase tenfold. Nor must it be forgotten that in future society the hundreds of thousands of present-day parasites, and also the unemployed, will set to work and augment the ranks of the working people; and this will greatly stimulate the development of the productive forces. As regards men's "savage" sentiments and opinions, these are not as eternal as some people imagine; there was a time, under primitive communism, when man did not recognise private property; there came a time, the time of individualistic production, when private property dominated the hearts and minds of men; a new time is coming, the time of socialist production—will it be surprising if the hearts and minds of men become imbued with socialist strivings? Does not being determine the "sentiments" and opinions of men?

But what proof is there that the establishment of the socialist system is inevitable? Must the development of modern capitalism inevitably be followed by socialism? Or, in other words: How do we know that Marx's proletarian socialism is not merely a sentimental dream, a fantasy? Where is the scientific proof that it is not?

History shows that the form of property is directly determined by the form of production and, as a consequence, a change in the form of production is sooner or later inevitably followed by a change in the form of property. There was a time when property bore a communistic character, when the forests and fields in which primitive men roamed belonged to all and not to individuals. Why did communist property exist at that time? Because production was communistic, labour was performed in common, collectively—all worked together and could not dispense with each other. A different period set in, the period of petty-bourgeois production, when property assumed an individualistic (private) character, when everything that man needed (with the exception, of course, of air, sunlight, etc.) was regarded as private property. Why did this change take place? Because production became individualistic; each one began to work for himself, stuck in his own little corner. Finally there came a time, the time of large-scale capitalist production, when hundreds and thousands of workers gathered under one roof, in one factory, and engaged in collective labour. Here you do not see the old method of working individually, each pulling his own

way—here every worker is closely associated in his work with his comrades in his own shop, and all of them are associated with the other shops. It is sufficient for one shop to stop work for the workers in the entire plant to become idle. As you see, the process of production, labour, has already assumed a social character, has acquired a socialist hue. And this takes place not only in individual factories, but in entire branches of industry, and between branches of industry; it is sufficient for the railwaymen to go on strike for production to be put in difficulties, it is sufficient for the production of oil and coal to come to a standstill for whole factories and mills to close down after a time. Clearly, here the process of production has assumed a social, collective character. As, however, the private character of appropriation does not correspond to the social character of production, as present-day collective labour must inevitably lead to collective property, it is self-evident that the socialist system will follow capitalism as inevitably as day follows night.

That is how history proves the inevitability of Marx's proletarian socialism.

History teaches us that the class or social group which plays the principal role in social production and performs the main functions in production must, in the course of time, inevitably take control of that production. There was a time, under the matriarchate, when women were regarded as the masters of production. Why was this? Because under the kind of production then prevailing, primitive agriculture, women played the principal role in production, they performed the main functions, while the men roamed the forests in quest of game. Then came the time, under the patriarchate, when the predominant position in production passed to men. Why did this change take place? Because under the kind of production prevailing at that time, stock-raising, in which the principal instruments of production were the spear, the lasso and the bow and arrow, the principal role was played by men... There came the time of large-scale capitalist production, in which the proletarians begin to play the principal role in production, when all the principal functions in production pass to them, when without them production cannot go on for a single day (let us recall general strikes), and when the capitalists, far from being needed

for production, are even a hindrance to it. What does this signify? It signifies either that all social life must collapse entirely, or that the proletariat, sooner or later, but inevitably, must take control of modern production, must become its sole owner, its socialistic owner.

Modern industrial crises, which sound the death knell of capitalist property and bluntly put the question: capitalism *or* socialism, make this conclusion absolutely obvious; they vividly reveal the parasitism of the capitalists and the inevitability of the victory of socialism.

That is how history further proves the inevitability of Marx's proletarian socialism.

Proletarian socialism is based not on sentiment, not on abstract "justice," not on love for the proletariat, but on the scientific grounds referred to above.

That is why proletarian socialism is also called "scientific socialism."

Engels said as far back as 1877:

If for the imminent overthrow of the present mode of distribution of the products of labour... we had no better guarantee than the consciousness that this mode of distribution is unjust, and that justice must eventually triumph, we should be in a pretty bad way, and we might have a long time to wait..." The most important thing in this is that "the productive forces created by the modern capitalist mode of production and the system of distribution of goods established by it have come into crying contradiction with that mode of production itself, and in fact to such a degree that, if the whole of modern society is not to perish, a revolution of the mode of production and distribution must take place, a revolution which will put an end to all class divisions. On this tangible, material fact... and not on the conceptions of justice and injustice held by any armchair philosopher, is modern socialism's confidence of victory founded.³⁸

That does not mean, of course, that since capitalism is decaying, the socialist system can be established any time we like. Only Anarchists and

³⁸ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-171.

other petty-bourgeois ideologists think that. The socialist ideal is not the ideal of all classes. It is the ideal only of the proletariat; not all classes are directly interested in its fulfilment, the proletariat alone is so interested. This means that as long as the proletariat constitutes a small section of society, the establishment of the socialist system is impossible. The decay of the old form of production, the further concentration of capitalist production, and the proletarianisation of the majority in society—such are the conditions needed for the achievement of socialism. But this is still not enough. The majority in society may already be proletarianised, but socialism may still not be achievable. This is because, in addition to all this, the achievement of socialism calls for class consciousness, the unity of the proletariat and the ability of the proletariat to manage its own affairs. In order that all this may be acquired, what is called political freedom is needed, *i.e.*, freedom of speech, press, strikes and association, in short, freedom to wage the class struggle. But political freedom is not equally ensured everywhere. Therefore, the conditions under which it is obliged to wage the struggle: under a feudal autocracy (Russia), a constitutional monarchy (Germany), a big bourgeois republic (France), or under a democratic republic (which Russian Social-Democracy is demanding), are not a matter of indifference to the proletariat. Political freedom is best and most fully ensured in a democratic republic, that is, of course, in so far as it can be ensured under capitalism at all. Therefore, all advocates of proletarian socialism necessarily strive for the establishment of a democratic republic as the best “bridge” to socialism.

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

What must the proletariat do, what path must it take in order consciously to carry out its programme, to overthrow capitalism and build socialism?

The answer is clear: the proletariat cannot achieve socialism by making peace with the bourgeoisie—it must unfailingly take the path of struggle, and this struggle must be a class struggle, a struggle of the entire

proletariat against the entire bourgeoisie. Either the bourgeoisie and its capitalism, or the proletariat and its socialism! That must be the basis of the proletariat's actions, of its class struggle.

But the proletarian class struggle assumes numerous forms. A strike, for example—whether partial or general makes no difference—is class struggle. Boycott and sabotage are undoubtedly class struggle. Meetings, demonstrations, activity in public representative bodies, etc.—whether national parliaments or local government bodies makes no difference—are also class struggle. All these are different forms of the same class struggle. We shall not here examine which form of struggle is more important for the proletariat in its class struggle, we shall merely observe that, in its proper time and place, each is undoubtedly needed by the proletariat as essential means for developing its class consciousness and organisation; and the proletariat needs class consciousness and organisation as much as it needs air. It must also be observed, however, that for the proletariat, all these forms of struggle are merely *preparatory* means, that not one of them, taken separately, constitutes the *decisive* means by which the proletariat can smash capitalism. Capitalism cannot be smashed by the general strike alone: the general strike can only create some of the conditions that are necessary for the smashing of capitalism. It is inconceivable that the proletariat should be able to overthrow capitalism merely by its activity in parliament: parliamentarism can only prepare some of the conditions that are necessary for overthrowing capitalism.

What, then, is the *decisive* means by which the proletariat will overthrow the capitalist system?

The *socialist revolution* is this means.

Strikes, boycott, parliamentarism, meetings and demonstrations are all good forms of struggle as means for preparing and organising the proletariat. But not one of these means is capable of abolishing existing inequality. All these means must be concentrated in one principal and decisive means; the proletariat must rise and launch a determined attack upon the bourgeoisie in order to destroy capitalism to its foundations. This principal and decisive means is the socialist revolution.

The socialist revolution must not be conceived as a sudden and short blow, it is a prolonged struggle waged by the proletarian masses, who inflict defeat upon the bourgeoisie and capture its positions. And as the victory of

the proletariat will at the same time mean domination over the vanquished bourgeoisie, as, *in a collision of classes*, the defeat of one class signifies the domination of the other, the first stage of the socialist revolution will be the political domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

The socialist *dictatorship of the proletariat*, capture of power by the proletariat—this is what the socialist revolution must start with.

This means that *until the bourgeoisie is completely vanquished*, until its wealth has been confiscated, the proletariat must without fail possess a military force, it must without fail have its “proletarian guard,” with the aid of which it will repel the counter-revolutionary attacks of the dying bourgeoisie, exactly as the Paris proletariat did during the Commune.

The socialist dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to enable the proletariat to expropriate the bourgeoisie, to enable it to confiscate the land, forests, factories and mills, machines, railways, etc., from the entire bourgeoisie.

The expropriation of the bourgeoisie—this is what the socialist revolution must lead to.

This, then, is the principal and decisive means by which the proletariat will overthrow the present capitalist system.

That is why Karl Marx said as far back as 1847:

...The first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class... The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands... of the proletariat organised as the ruling class...³⁹

That is how the proletariat must proceed if it wants to bring about socialism.

From this general principle emerge all the other views on tactics. Strikes, boycott, demonstrations, and parliamentarism are important only in so far as they help to organise the proletariat and to strengthen and enlarge its organisations for accomplishing the socialist revolution.

³⁹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 55.

Thus, to bring about socialism, the socialist revolution is needed, and the socialist revolution must begin with the dictatorship of the proletariat, *i.e.*, the proletariat must capture political power as a means with which to expropriate the bourgeoisie.

But to achieve all this the proletariat must be organised, the proletarian ranks must be closely knit and united, strong proletarian organisations must be formed, and these must steadily grow.

What forms must the proletarian organisations assume?

The most widespread mass organisations are trade unions and workers' co-operatives (mainly producers' and consumers' co-operatives). The object of the trade unions is to fight (mainly) against industrial capital to improve the conditions of the workers within the limits of the present capitalist system. The object of the co-operatives is to fight (mainly) against merchant capital to secure an increase of consumption among the workers by reducing the prices of articles of prime necessity, also within the limits of the capitalist system, of course. The proletariat undoubtedly needs both trade unions and co-operatives as means of organising the proletarian masses. Hence, from the point of view of the proletarian socialism of Marx and Engels, the proletariat must utilise both these forms of organisation and reinforce and strengthen them, as far as this is possible under present political conditions, of course.

But trade unions and co-operatives alone cannot satisfy the organisational needs of the militant proletariat. This is because the organisations mentioned cannot go beyond the limits of capitalism, for their object is to improve the conditions of the workers under the capitalist system. The workers, however, want to free themselves entirely from capitalist slavery, they want to smash these limits, and not merely operate within the limits of capitalism. Hence, in addition, an organisation is needed that will rally around itself the class-conscious elements of the workers of *all* trades, that will transform the proletariat into a conscious class and make it its chief aim to smash the capitalist system, to prepare for the socialist revolution.

Such an organisation is the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat.

This Party must be a class party, and it must be quite independent of other parties—and this is because it is the party of the proletarian class, the emancipation of which can be brought about only by this class itself.

This Party must be a revolutionary party—and this because the workers can be emancipated only by revolutionary means, by means of the socialist revolution.

This Party must be an international party, the doors of the Party must be open to all class-conscious proletarians—and this because the emancipation of the workers is not a national but a social question, equally important for the Georgian proletarians, for the

Russian proletarians, and for the proletarians of other nations.

Hence, it is clear, that the more closely the proletarians of the different nations are united, the more thoroughly the national barriers which have been raised between them are demolished, the stronger will the Party of the proletariat be, and the more will the organisation of the proletariat in one indivisible class be facilitated.

Hence, it is necessary, as far as possible, to introduce the principle of centralism in the proletarian organisations as against the looseness of federation—irrespective of whether these organisations are party, trade union or co-operative.

It is also clear that all these organisations must be built on a democratic basis, in so far as this is not hindered by political or other conditions, of course.

What should be the relations between the Party on the one hand and the co-operatives and trade unions on the other? Should the latter be party or non-party? The answer to this question depends upon where and under what conditions the proletariat has to fight. At all events, there can be no doubt that the friendlier the trade unions and co-operatives are towards the socialist party of the proletariat, the more fully will both develop. And this is because both these economic organisations, if they are not closely connected with a strong socialist party, often become petty, allow narrow craft interests to obscure general class interests and thereby cause great harm to the proletariat. It is therefore necessary, in all cases, to ensure that the trade unions and co-operatives are under the ideological and political influence of the Party. Only if this is done will the organisations mentioned

be transformed into a socialist school that will organise the proletariat—at present split up into separate groups—into a conscious class.

Such, in general, are the characteristic features of the proletarian socialism of Marx and Engels.

How do the Anarchists look upon proletarian socialism?

First of all we must know that proletarian socialism is not simply a philosophical doctrine. It is the doctrine of the proletarian masses, their banner; it is honoured and “revered” by the proletarians all over the world. Consequently, Marx and Engels are not simply the founders of a philosophical “school”—they are the living leaders of the living proletarian movement, which is growing and gaining strength every day. Whoever fights against this doctrine, whoever wants to “overthrow” it, must keep all this well in mind so as to avoid having his head cracked for nothing in an unequal struggle. Messieurs the Anarchists are well aware of this. That is why, in fighting Marx and Engels, they resort to a most unusual and, in its way, a new weapon.

What is this new weapon? A new investigation of capitalist production? A refutation of Marx’s *Capital*? Of course not! Or perhaps, having armed themselves with “new facts” and the “inductive” method, they “scientifically” refute the “Bible” of Social-Democracy—the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels? Again no! Then what is this extraordinary weapon?

It is the accusation that Marx and Engels indulged in “plagiarism”! Would you believe it? It appears that Marx and Engels wrote nothing original, that scientific socialism is a pure fiction, because the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels was, from beginning to end, “stolen” from the *Manifesto* of Victor Considérant. This is quite ludicrous, of course, but V. Cherkezishvili, the “incomparable leader” of the Anarchists, relates this amusing story with such aplomb, and a certain Pierre Ramus, Cherkezishvili’s foolish “apostle,” and our home-grown Anarchists repeat this “discovery” with such fervour, that it is worthwhile dealing at least briefly with this “story.”

Listen to Cherkezishvili:

The entire theoretical part of the *Communist Manifesto*, namely, the first and second chapters... are taken from V. Considérant. Consequently, the *Manifesto* of Marx and Engels—that Bible of legal revolutionary democracy—is nothing but a clumsy paraphrasing of V. Considérant’s *Manifesto*. Marx and Engels not only appropriated the contents of Considérant’s *Manifesto* but even... borrowed some of its chapter headings.⁴⁰

This story is repeated by another Anarchist, P. Ramus:

It can be emphatically asserted that their (Marx-Engels’s) major work (the *Communist Manifesto*) is simply theft (a plagiarism), shameless theft; they did not, however, copy it word for word as ordinary thieves do, but stole only the ideas and theories...⁴¹

This is repeated by our Anarchists in *Nobati*, *Musha*,⁴² *Khma*,⁴³ and other papers.

Thus it appears that scientific socialism and its theoretical principles were “stolen” from Considérant’s *Manifesto*.

Are there any grounds for this assertion?

Who is V. Considérant?

Who is Karl Marx?

V. Considérant, who died in 1893, was a disciple of the utopian Fourier and remained an incorrigible *utopian*, who placed his hopes for the “salvation of France” on the *conciliation* of classes.

Karl Marx, who died in 1883, was a materialist, *an enemy of the utopians*. He regarded the development of the productive forces and the *struggle* between classes as the guarantee of the liberation of mankind.

Is there anything in common between them?

⁴⁰ See the symposium of articles by Cherkezishvili, Ramus and Labriola, published in German under the title of *The Origin of the “Communist Manifesto,”* p. 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴² *Musha* (*The Worker*)—a daily newspaper published by the Georgian Anarchists in Tiflis in 1906.

⁴³ *Khma* (*The Voice*)—another daily newspaper published by the Georgian Anarchists in Tiflis in 1906.

The *theoretical* basis of scientific socialism is the materialist theory of Marx and Engels. From the standpoint of this theory the development of social life is wholly determined by the development of the productive forces. If the feudal-landlord system was superseded by the bourgeois system, the “blame” for this rests upon the development of the productive forces, which made the rise of the bourgeois system inevitable. Or again: if the present bourgeois system will inevitably be superseded by the socialist system, it is because this is called for by the development of the modern productive forces. Hence the historical necessity of the destruction of capitalism and the establishment of socialism. Hence the Marxist proposition that we must seek our ideals in the history of the development of the productive forces and not in the minds of men.

Such is the *theoretical* basis of the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels.⁴⁴

Does V. Considerant’s *Democratic Manifesto* say anything of the kind? Did Considérant accept the materialist point of view?

We assert that neither Cherkezishvili, nor Ramus, nor our *Nobatists* quote a *single* statement, or a *single* word from Considérant’s *Democratic Manifesto* which would confirm that Considérant was a materialist and based the evolution of social life upon the development of the productive forces. On the contrary, we know very well that Considérant is known in the history of socialism as an idealist utopian.⁴⁵

What, then, induces these queer “critics” to indulge in this idle chatter? Why do they undertake to criticise Marx and Engels when they are even unable to distinguish idealism from materialism? Is it only to amuse people?...

The *tactical* basis of scientific socialism is the doctrine of uncompromising class struggle, for this is the *best* weapon the proletariat possesses. The proletarian class struggle is the weapon by means of which the proletariat will capture political power and then expropriate the bourgeoisie in order to establish socialism.

Such is the *tactical* basis of scientific socialism as expounded in the *Manifesto* of Marx and Engels.

⁴⁴ See K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Chapter I & II.

⁴⁵ See Paul Louis, *The History of Socialism in France*.

Is anything like this said in Considérant's *Democratic Manifesto*? Did Considérant regard the class struggle as the best weapon the proletariat possesses?

As is evident from the articles of Cherkezishvili and Ramus (see the above-mentioned symposium), there is not a word about this in Considérant's *Manifesto*—it merely notes the class struggle as a deplorable fact. As regards the class struggle as a means of smashing capitalism, Considérant spoke of it in his *Manifesto* as follows:

Capital, labour and talent—such are the three basic elements of production, the three sources of wealth, the three wheels of the industrial mechanism... The three classes which represent them have “common interests”; their function is to make the machines work for the capitalists and for the people... Before them... is the great goal of organising *the association of classes within the unity* of the nation...⁴⁶

All classes, unite!—this is the slogan that V. Considérant proclaimed in his *Democratic Manifesto*.

What is there in common between these tactics of class *conciliation* and the tactics of uncompromising class struggle advocated by Marx and Engels, whose resolute call was: *Proletarians of all countries, unite against all anti-proletarian classes*?

There is nothing in common between them, of course!

Why, then, do Messieurs Cherkezishvili and their foolish followers talk this rubbish? Do they think we are dead? Do they think we shall not drag them into the light of day?!

And lastly, there is one other interesting point. V. Considérant lived right up to 1893. He published his *Democratic Manifesto* in 1843. At the end of 1847 Marx and Engels wrote their *Communist Manifesto*. After that the *Manifesto* of Marx and Engels was published over and over again in all European languages. Everybody knows that the *Manifesto* of Marx and Engels was an epoch-making document. Nevertheless, *nowhere* did Considérant or his friends *ever* state during the lifetime of Marx and Engels

⁴⁶ See K. Kautsky's pamphlet *The Communist Manifesto—A Plagiarist*, p. 14, where this passage from Considérant's *Manifesto* is quoted.

that the latter had stolen “socialism” from Considérant’s *Manifesto*. Is this not strange, reader?

What, then, impels the “inductive” upstarts—I beg your pardon, “scholars”—to talk this rubbish? In whose name are they speaking? Are they more familiar with Considérant’s *Manifesto* than was Considérant himself? Or perhaps they think that V. Considérant and his supporters had not read the *Communist Manifesto*?

But enough... Enough because the Anarchists themselves do not take seriously the Quixotic crusade launched by Ramus and Cherkezishvili: the inglorious end of this ridiculous crusade is too obvious to make it worthy of much attention...

Let us proceed to the actual criticism.

The Anarchists suffer from a certain ailment: they are very fond of “criticising” the parties of their opponents, but they do not take the trouble to make themselves in the least familiar with these parties. We have seen the Anarchists behave precisely in this way when “criticising” the dialectical method and the materialist theory of the Social-Democrats (see Chapters I and II). They behave in the same way when they deal with the theory of scientific socialism of the Social-Democrats.

Let us, for example, take the following fact. Who does not know that fundamental disagreements exist between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats? Who does not know that the former repudiate Marxism, the materialist theory of Marxism, its dialectical method, its programme and the class struggle—whereas the Social-Democrats take their stand entirely on Marxism? These fundamental disagreements must be self-evident to anybody who has heard anything, if only with half an ear, about the controversy between *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* (the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries) and *Iskra* (the organ of the Social-Democrats). But what will you say about those “critics” who fail to see this difference between the two and shout that both the Socialist Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats are Marxists? Thus, for example, the Anarchists assert that both *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya* and *Iskra* are *Marxist organs*.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See the Anarchists’ symposium *Bread and Freedom*, p. 202

That shows how “familiar” the Anarchists are with the principles of Social-Democracy!

After this, the soundness of their “scientific criticism” will be self-evident...

Let us examine this “criticism.”

The Anarchists’ principal “accusation” is that they do not regard the Social-Democrats as genuine *Socialists*—you are not Socialists, you are enemies of socialism, they keep on repeating.

This is what Kropotkin writes on this score:

... We arrive at conclusions different from those arrived at by the majority of the Economists... of the Social-Democratic school... We... arrive at free communism, whereas the majority of Socialists (meaning Social-Democrats too—*The Author*) arrive at state capitalism and collectivism.⁴⁸

What is this “state capitalism” and “collectivism” of the Social-Democrats?

This is what Kropotkin writes about it:

The German Socialists say that all accumulated wealth must be concentrated in the hands of the state, which will place it at the disposal of workers’ associations, organise production and exchange, and control the life and work of society.⁴⁹

And further:

In their schemes... the collectivists commit... a double mistake. They want to abolish the capitalist system, but they preserve the two institutions which constitute the foundations of this system: representative government and wage-labour...⁵⁰

Collectivism, as is well known... preserves... wage-labour. Only... representative government... takes the place of the employer... [The representatives of this government] retain

⁴⁸ Kropotkin, *Modern Science and Anarchism*, pp. 74-75.

⁴⁹ Kropotkin, *The Speeches of a Rebel*, p. 64.

⁵⁰ *The Conquest of Bread*, p. 148.

the right to utilise in the interests of all the surplus value obtained from production. Moreover, in this system a distinction is made... between the labour of the common labourer and that of the trained man: the labour of the unskilled worker, in the opinion of the collectivists, is *simple* labour, whereas the skilled craftsman, engineer, scientist and so forth perform what Marx calls *complex* labour and have the right to higher wages.⁵¹ [Thus, the workers will receive their necessary products not according to their needs, but] in proportion to the services they render society.⁵²

The Georgian Anarchists say the same thing only with greater aplomb. Particularly outstanding among them for the recklessness of his statements is Mr. Bâton. He writes:

What is the collectivism of the Social-Democrats? Collectivism, or more correctly, state capitalism, is based on the following principle: each must work as much as he likes, or as much as the state determines, and receives in reward the value of his labour in the shape of goods... [Consequently, here] there is needed a legislative assembly... there is needed (also) an executive power, *i.e.*, ministers, all sorts of administrators, gendarmes and spies and, perhaps, also troops, if there are too many discontented.⁵³

Such is the first “accusation” of Messieurs the Anarchists against Social-Democracy.

Thus, from the arguments of the Anarchists it follows that:

1. In the opinion of the Social-Democrats, socialist society is impossible without a government which, in the capacity of principal master, will hire workers and will certainly have “ministers... gendarmes and spies.” 2. In socialist society, in the opinion of the Social-Democrats, the distinction between “dirty” and “clean” work will be retained, the principle “to each

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 157

⁵³ *Nobati*, No. 5, pp. 68-69.

according to his needs” will be rejected, and another principle will prevail, *viz.*, “to each according to his services.”

Those are the two points on which the Anarchists’ “accusation” against Social-Democracy is based.

Has this “accusation” advanced by Messieurs the Anarchists any foundation?

We assert that everything the Anarchists say on this subject is either the result of stupidity, or it is despicable slander.

Here are the facts.

As far back as 1846 Karl Marx said:

The working class in the course of its development will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be *no more political power properly so-called...*⁵⁴

A year later Marx and Engels expressed the same idea in the *Communist Manifesto*.⁵⁵

In 1877 Engels wrote:

The first act in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself... The state is not “abolished,” it *withers away*.⁵⁶

In 1884 the same Engels wrote:

The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no conception of the state... At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity... We are now rap-

⁵⁴ K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

⁵⁵ See K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Chapter II.

⁵⁶ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

idly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. *Along with them the state will inevitably fall.* The society that will organise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.⁵⁷

Engels said the same thing again in 1891.⁵⁸

As you see, in the opinion of the Social-Democrats, socialist society is a society in which there will be no room for the so-called state, political power, with its ministers, governors, gendarmes, police and soldiers. The last stage in the existence of the state will be the period of the socialist revolution, when the proletariat will capture political power and set up its own government (dictatorship) for the final abolition of the bourgeoisie. But when the bourgeoisie is abolished, when classes are abolished, when socialism becomes firmly established, there will be no need for any political power—and the so-called state will retire into the sphere of history.

As you see, the above-mentioned “accusation” of the Anarchists is mere tittle-tattle devoid of all foundation.

As regards the second point in the “accusation,” Karl Marx says the following about it:

In a higher phase of communist (i.e., socialist) society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and therewith also the *antithesis* between *mental* and *physical labour*, *has vanished*; after labour has become... life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual... only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be crossed in its

⁵⁷ F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, op. cit., pp. 155-156.

⁵⁸ See Engels’ “Introduction” in K. Marx, *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2021, pp. 1-17.

entirety and society in scribe on its banners: *From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.*⁵⁹

As you see, in Marx's opinion, the higher phase of communist (i.e., socialist) society will be a system under which the division of work into "dirty" and "clean," and the contradiction between mental and physical labour will be completely abolished, labour will be equal, and in society the genuine communist principle will prevail: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Here there is no room for wage-labour.

Clearly this "accusation" is also devoid of all foundation.

One of two things: either Messieurs the Anarchists have never seen the above-mentioned works of Marx and Engels and indulge in "criticism" on the basis of hearsay, or they are familiar with the above-mentioned works of Marx and Engels and are deliberately lying.

Such is the fate of the first "accusation."

The second "accusation" of the Anarchists is that they deny that Social-Democracy is *revolutionary*. You are not revolutionaries, you repudiate violent revolution, you want to establish socialism only by means of ballot papers—Messieurs the Anarchists tell us.

Listen to this:

...Social-Democrats... are fond of declaiming on the theme of 'revolution,' 'revolutionary struggle,' 'fighting with arms in hand.' ...But if you, in the simplicity of your heart, ask them for arms, they will solemnly hand you a ballot paper to vote in elections..." They affirm that "the only expedient tactics befitting revolutionaries are peaceful and legal parliamentarism, with the oath of allegiance to capitalism, to established power and to the entire existing bourgeois system."⁶⁰

The Georgian Anarchists say the same thing, with even greater aplomb, of course. Take, for example, Bâton, who writes:

The whole of Social-Democracy... openly asserts that fighting with the aid of rifles and weapons is a bourgeois method

⁵⁹ K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ See the symposium *Bread and Freedom*, pp. 21, 22-23.

of revolution, and that only by means of ballot papers, only by means of general elections, can parties capture power, and then, by means of a parliamentary majority and legislation, reorganise society.⁶¹

That is what Messieurs the Anarchists say about the Marxists. Has this “accusation” any foundation?

We affirm that here, too, the Anarchists betray their ignorance and their passion for slander.

Here are the facts.

As far back as the end of 1847, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their *ends can be obtained only by the forcible overthrow* of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic Revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. *Working men of all countries, unite!*⁶²

In 1850, in anticipation of another outbreak in Germany, Karl Marx wrote to the German comrades of that time as follows:

Arms and ammunition must not be surrendered on any pretext... the *workers* must... *organise themselves independently as a proletarian guard with commanders... and with a general staff*... [And this you] must keep in view during and after the impending insurrection.⁶³

In 1851-1852 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote:

The insurrectionary career once entered upon, *act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive*. The defensive is the death of every armed rising... Surprise your antagonists while

⁶¹ *The Capture of Political Power*, pp. 3-4

⁶² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁶³ K. Marx, F. Engels, “Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League” in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, Vol. I, p. 113.

their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily ...force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*⁶⁴

We think that something more than “ballot papers” is meant here.

Lastly, recall the history of the Paris Commune, recall how peacefully the Commune acted, when it was content with the victory in Paris and refrained from attacking Versailles, that hotbed of counter-revolution. What do you think Marx said at that time? Did he call upon the Parisians to go to the ballot box? Did he express approval of the complacency of the Paris workers (the whole of Paris was in the hands of the workers), did he approve of the good nature they displayed towards the vanquished Versailles? Listen to what Marx said:

What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! After six months of hunger... they rise, beneath Prussian bayonets... History has no like example of like greatness! If they are defeated only their “good nature” will be to blame. *They should have marched at once on Versailles*, after first Vinoy and then the reactionary section of the Paris National Guard had themselves retreated. They missed their opportunity because of conscientious scruples. They did not want to *start a civil war*, as if that mischievous *abortion* Thiers had not already started the civil war with his attempt to disarm Paris!⁶⁵

That is how Karl Marx and Frederick Engels thought and acted.

That is how the Social-Democrats think and act.

But the Anarchists go on repeating: Marx and Engels and their followers are interested only in ballot papers—they repudiate violent revolutionary action!

⁶⁴ F. Engels, *Revolutionary and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1977, pp. 128-129.

⁶⁵ K. Marx, F. Engels, “Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann” in *Selected Letters*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1977, pp. 36-37.

As you see, this “accusation” is also slander, which exposes the Anarchists’ ignorance about the essence of Marxism.

Such is the fate of the second “accusation.”

The third “accusation” of the Anarchists consists in denying that Social-Democracy is a popular movement, describing the Social-Democrats as bureaucrats, and affirming that the Social-Democratic plan for the dictatorship of the proletariat spells death to the revolution, and since the Social-Democrats stand for such a dictatorship they actually want to establish not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but their own dictatorship over the proletariat.

Listen to Mr. Kropotkin:

We Anarchists have pronounced final sentence upon dictatorship... We know that every dictatorship, no matter how honest its intentions, will lead to the death of the revolution. We know... that the idea of dictatorship is nothing more or less than the pernicious product of governmental fetishism which... has always striven to perpetuate slavery.⁶⁶

The Social-Democrats not only recognise revolutionary dictatorship, they also:

advocate dictatorship over the proletariat... The workers are of interest to them only in so far as they are a disciplined army under their control... Social-Democracy strives through the medium of the proletariat to capture the state machine.⁶⁷

The Georgian Anarchists say the same thing:

The dictatorship of the proletariat in the direct sense of the term is utterly impossible, because the advocates of dictatorship are state men, and their dictatorship will be not the free activities of the entire proletariat, but the establishment at the

⁶⁶ Kropotkin, *The Speeches of a Rebel*, p. 131.

⁶⁷ *Bread and Freedom*, pp. 62-63.

head of society of the same representative government that exists today.⁶⁸

The Social-Democrats stand for dictatorship not in order to facilitate the emancipation of the proletariat, but in order “...*by their own rule to establish a new slavery.*”⁶⁹

Such is the third “accusation” of Messieurs the Anarchists. It requires no great effort to expose this, one of the regular slanders uttered by the Anarchists with the object of deceiving their readers.

We shall not analyse here the deeply mistaken view of Kropotkin, according to whom every dictatorship spells death to revolution. We shall discuss this later when we discuss the Anarchists’ tactics. At present we shall touch upon only the “accusation” itself.

As far back as the end of 1847 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels said that to establish socialism the proletariat must achieve political dictatorship in order, with the aid of this dictatorship, to repel the counter-revolutionary attacks of the bourgeoisie and to take from it the means of production; that this dictatorship must be not the dictatorship of a few individuals, but the dictatorship of the entire proletariat as a class:

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands... of the proletariat organised as the ruling class...⁷⁰

That is to say, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be a dictatorship of the entire proletariat as a class over the bourgeoisie and not the domination of a few individuals over the proletariat.

Later they repeated this same idea in nearly all their other works, such as, for example, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, *The Class Struggles in France*, *The Civil War in France*, *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany*, *Anti-Dühring*, and other works.

But this is not all; To ascertain how Marx and Engels conceived of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to ascertain to what extent they regarded

⁶⁸ Bâton, *The Capture of Political Power*, p. 45.

⁶⁹ *Nobati*, No. 1, p. 5, Bâton.

⁷⁰ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

this dictatorship as possible, for all this it is very interesting to know their attitude towards the Paris Commune. The point is that the dictatorship of the proletariat is denounced not only by the Anarchists but also by the urban petty bourgeoisie, including all kinds of butchers and tavern-keepers—by all those whom Marx and Engels called philistines. This is what Engels said about the dictatorship of the proletariat, addressing such philistines:

Of late, the German philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.⁷¹

As you see, Engels conceived of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the shape of the Paris Commune.

Clearly, everybody who wants to know what the dictatorship of the proletariat is as conceived of by Marxists must study the Paris Commune. Let us then turn to the Paris Commune. If it turns out that the Paris Commune was indeed the dictatorship of a few individuals over the proletariat, then—down with Marxism, down with the dictatorship of the proletariat! But if we find that the Paris Commune was indeed the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, then... we shall laugh heartily at the anarchist slanderers who in their struggle against the Marxists have no alternative but to invent slander.

The history of the Paris Commune can be divided into two periods: the first period, when affairs in Paris were controlled by the well-known “Central Committee,” and the second period, when, after the authority of the “Central Committee” had expired, control of affairs was transferred to the recently elected Commune. What was this “Central Committee,” what was its composition? Before us lies Arthur Arnould’s *Popular History of the Paris Commune* which, according to Arnould, briefly answers this question. The struggle had only just commenced when about 300,000 Paris workers, organised in companies and battalions, elected delegates from their ranks. In this way the “Central Committee” was formed.

⁷¹ K. Marx, *The Civil War in France*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

“All these citizens (members of the ‘Central Committee’) elected during partial elections by their companies or battalions,” says Arnould, “were known only to the small groups whose delegates they were. Who were these people, what kind of people were they, and what did they want to do?” This was “an anonymous government consisting almost exclusively of common workers and minor office employees, the names of three-fourths of whom were unknown outside their streets or offices... Tradition was upset. Something unexpected had happened in the world. There was not a single member of the ruling classes among them. A revolution had broken out which was not represented by a single *lawyer, deputy, journalist or general*. Instead, there was a *miner* from Creusot, a *bookbinder*, a *cook*, and so forth.”⁷²

Arthur Arnould goes on to say:

The members of the “Central Committee” said: ‘We are obscure bodies, humble tools of the attacked people... Instruments of the people’s will, we are here to be its echo, to achieve its triumph. The people want a Commune, and we shall remain in order to proceed to the election of the Commune.’ Neither more nor less. These dictators do not put themselves above nor stand aloof from the masses. One feels that they are living with the masses, in the masses, by means of the masses, that they consult with them every second, that they listen and convey all they hear, striving only, in a concise form... to convey the opinion of three hundred thousand men.⁷³

That is how the Paris Commune behaved in the first period of its existence.

Such was the Paris Commune.

Such is the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let us now pass to the second period of the Commune, when the Commune functioned in place of the “Central Committee.” Speaking of these two periods, which lasted two months, Arnould exclaims with enthusiasm that this was a real dictatorship of the people. Listen:

⁷² *A Popular History of the Paris Commune*, p. 107.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

“The magnificent spectacle which this people presented during those two months imbues us with strength and hope... to look into the face of the future. During those two months there was a real dictatorship in Paris, a most complete and uncontested dictatorship not of one man, *but of the entire people*—the sole master of the situation... This dictatorship lasted uninterruptedly for over two months, from March 18 to May 22 (1871)... [In itself] the Commune was only a moral power and possessed no other material strength than the universal sympathy... of the citizens, *the people were the rulers*, the only rulers, they themselves set up their police and magistracy...”⁷⁴

That is how the Paris Commune is described by *Arthur Arnould*, a member of the Commune and an active participant in its hand-to-hand fighting.

The Paris Commune is described in the same way by another of its members and equally active participant *Lissagaray*.⁷⁵

The people as the “only rulers,” “not the dictatorship of one man, but of the whole people”—this is what the Paris Commune was.

“Look at the Paris Commune. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat”—exclaimed Engels for the information of philistines.

So this is the dictatorship of the proletariat as conceived of by Marx and Engels.

As you see, Messieurs the Anarchists know as much about the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Paris Commune, and Marxism, which they so often “criticise,” as you and I, dear reader, know about the Chinese language.

Clearly, there are two kinds of dictatorship. There is the dictatorship of the minority, the dictatorship of a small group, the dictatorship of the Trepovs and Ignatyevs, which is directed against the people. This kind of dictatorship is usually headed by a camarilla which adopts secret decisions and tightens the noose around the neck of the majority of the people.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 242, 244.

⁷⁵ *History of the Paris Commune*

Marxists are the enemies of such a dictatorship, and they fight such a dictatorship far more stubbornly and self-sacrificingly than do our noisy Anarchists.

There is another kind of dictatorship, the dictatorship of the proletarian majority, the dictatorship of the masses, which is directed against the bourgeoisie, against the minority. At the head of this dictatorship stand the masses; here there is no room either for a camarilla or for secret decisions, here everything is done openly, in the streets, at meetings—because it is the dictatorship of the street, of the masses, a dictatorship directed against all oppressors.

Marxists support this kind of dictatorship “with both hands”—and that is because such a dictatorship is the magnificent beginning of the great socialist revolution.

Messieurs the Anarchists confused these two mutually negating dictatorships and thereby put themselves in a ridiculous position: they are fighting not Marxism but the figments of their own imagination, they are fighting not Marx and Engels but windmills, as Don Quixote of blessed memory did in his day...

Such is the fate of the third “accusation.”

(TO BE CONTINUED)⁷⁶

Akhali Droyeba (New Times), Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8, December 11, 18-25, 1906 and January 1, 1907

Chveni Tskhovreba (Our Life), Nos. 3, 5, 8 and 9, February 21, 23, 27 and 28, 1907

Dro (Time), Nos. 21, 22, 23 and 26, April 4, 5, 6 and 10, 1907

Signed: *Koba*

Translated from *Georgian*

⁷⁶ The continuation did not appear in the press because, in the middle of 1907, Comrade Stalin was transferred by the Central Committee of the Party to Baku for Party work, and several months later he was arrested there. His notes on the last chapters of his work *Anarchism or Socialism?* were lost when the police searched his lodgings—*Ed.*

Appendix

Dialectical Materialism

I.

We are not the kind of people who, when the word “anarchism” is mentioned, turn away contemptuously and say with a supercilious wave of the hand: “Why waste time on that, it’s not worth talking about!” We think that such cheap “criticism” is undignified and useless.

Nor are we the kind of people who console themselves with the thought that the Anarchists “have no masses behind them and, therefore, are not so dangerous.” It is not who has a larger or smaller “mass” following today, but the essence of the doctrine that matters. If the “doctrine” of the Anarchists expresses the truth, then it goes without saying that it will certainly hew a path for itself and will rally the masses around itself. If, however, it is unsound and built up on a false foundation, it will not last long and will remain suspended in mid-air. But the unsoundness of anarchism must be proved.

We believe that the Anarchists are real enemies of Marxism. Accordingly, we also hold that a real struggle must be waged against real enemies. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the “doctrine” of the Anarchists from beginning to end and weigh it up thoroughly from all aspects.

But in addition to criticising anarchism we must explain our own position and in that way expound in general outline the doctrine of Marx and Engels. This is all the more necessary for the reason that some Anarchists are spreading false conceptions about Marxism and are causing confusion in the minds of readers.

And so, let us proceed with our subject.

*Everything in the world is in motion... Life changes, productive forces grow, old relations collapse... Eternal motion and eternal destruction and creation—such is the essence of life.*⁷⁷

Karl Marx

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

Why is this system called dialectical materialism?

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

What is the dialectical method?

What is the materialist theory?

It is said that life consists in constant growth and development. And that is true: social life is not something immutable and static, it never remains at one level, it is in eternal motion, in an eternal process of destruction and creation. It was with good reason that Marx said that eternal motion and eternal destruction and creation are the essence of life. Therefore, life always contains the *new* and the *old*, the growing and the dying, revolution and reaction—in it something is always dying, and at the same time something is always being born...

The dialectical method tells us that we must regard life as it actually is. Life is in continual motion, and therefore life must be viewed in its motion, in its destruction and creation. Where is life going, what is dying and what is being born in life, what is being destroyed and what is being created?—these are the questions that should interest us first of all.

Such is the first conclusion of the dialectical method.

That which in life is born and grows day by day is invincible, its progress cannot be checked, its victory is inevitable. That is to say, if, for example, in life the proletariat is born and grows day-by-day, no matter how weak and small in numbers it may be today, in the long run it must triumph. On the other hand, that which in life is dying and moving towards its grave must inevitably suffer defeat, i.e., if, for example, the bourgeoisie

⁷⁷ K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 103.

is losing ground and is slipping farther and farther back every day, then, no matter how strong and numerous it may be today, it must, in the long run, suffer defeat and go to its grave. Hence arose the well-known dialectical proposition: all that which really exists, i.e., all that which grows day by day is rational. Such is the second conclusion of the dialectical method.

In the eighties of the nineteenth century a famous controversy flared up among the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia. The Narodniks asserted that the main force that could undertake the task of “emancipating Russia” was the poor peasantry. Why?—the Marxists asked them. Because, answered the Narodniks, the peasantry is the most numerous and at the same time the poorest section of Russian society. To this the Marxists replied: It is true that today the peasantry constitutes the majority and that it is very poor, but is that the point? The peasantry has long constituted the majority, but up to now it has displayed no initiative in the struggle for “freedom” without the assistance of the proletariat. Why? Because the peasantry as a class is *disintegrating day-by-day*, it is breaking up into the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, whereas the proletariat as a class is *day-by-day growing* and gaining strength. Nor is poverty of decisive importance here: tramps are poorer than the peasants, but nobody will say that they can undertake the task of “emancipating Russia.” The only thing that matters is: Who is growing and who is becoming aged in life? As the proletariat is the only class which is steadily growing and gaining strength, our duty is to take our place by its side and recognise it as the main force in the Russian revolution—that is how the Marxists answered. As you see, the Marxists looked at the question from the dialectical standpoint, whereas the Narodniks argued metaphysically, because they regarded the phenomena of life as “immutable, static, given once and for all.”⁷⁸

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

But there is movement and movement. There was social movement in the “December days” when the proletariat, straightening its back, stormed arms depots and launched an attack upon reaction. But the movement of preceding years, when the proletariat, under the conditions of “peaceful” development, limited itself to individual strikes and the formation of

⁷⁸ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

small trade unions, must also be called social movement. Clearly, movement assumes different forms. And so the dialectical method says that movement has two forms: the evolutionary and the revolutionary form. Movement is evolutionary when the progressive elements spontaneously continue their daily activities and introduce minor *quantitative* changes in the old order. Movement is revolutionary when the same elements combine, become imbued with a single idea and sweep down upon the enemy camp with the object of uprooting the old order and its *qualitative* features and to establish a new order. Evolution prepares for revolution and creates the ground for it; revolution consummates the process of evolution and facilitates its further activity.

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

As regards the forms of movement, as regards the fact that according to dialectics, minor, *quantitative* changes sooner or later lead to major, *qualitative* changes—this law applies with equal force to the history of nature. Mendeleyev's "periodic system of elements" clearly shows how very important in the history of nature is the emergence of qualitative changes out of quantitative changes. The same thing is shown in biology by the theory of neo-Lamarckism, to which neo-Darwinism is yielding place.

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

Thus, we are now familiar with the dialectical method. We know that according to that method the universe is in eternal motion, in an eternal process of destruction and creation, and that, consequently, all phenomena in nature and in society must be viewed in motion, in process of destruction and creation and not as something static and immobile. We also know that this motion has two forms: evolutionary and revolutionary...

How do our Anarchists look upon the dialectical method? Everybody knows that Hegel was the father of the dialectical method. Marx merely purged and improved this method. The Anarchists are aware of this; they also know that Hegel was a conservative, and so, taking advantage of the “opportunity,” they vehemently revile Hegel, throw mud at him as a “reactionary, as a supporter of restoration, and zealously try to “prove” that “Hegel... is a philosopher of restoration ...that he eulogizes bureaucratic constitutionalism in its absolute form, that the general idea of his philosophy of history is subordinate to and serves the philosophical trend of the period of restoration,” and so on and so forth.⁷⁹ True, nobody contests what they say on this point; on the contrary, everybody agrees that Hegel was not a revolutionary, that he was an advocate of monarchy, nevertheless, the Anarchists go on trying to “prove” and deem it necessary to go on endlessly trying to “prove” that Hegel was a supporter of “restoration.” Why do they do this? Probably, in order by all this to discredit Hegel, to make their readers feel that the method of the “reactionary” Hegel is also “repugnant” and unscientific. If that is so, if Messieurs the Anarchists think they can refute the dialectical method *in this way*, then I must say that *in this way* they can prove nothing but their own simplicity. Pascal and Leibnitz were not revolutionaries, but the mathematical method they discovered is recognised today as a scientific method; Mayer and Helmholtz were not revolutionaries, but their discoveries in the field of physics became the basis of science; nor were Lamarck and Darwin revolutionaries, but their evolutionary method put biological science on its feet... Yes, *in this way* Messieurs the Anarchists will prove nothing but their own simplicity.

To proceed. In the opinion of the Anarchists “dialectics is metaphysics,”⁸⁰ and as they “want to free science from metaphysics, philosophy from theology,”⁸¹ they repudiate the dialectical method.

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

79 *Nobati*, No. 6. Article by V. Cherkezishvili

80 *Nobati*, No. 9. Sh. G.

81 *Nobati*, No. 3. Sh. G.

there existed in the world an “immutable justice” established *once and for all* and for this Proudhon has been called a metaphysician.⁸² Marx fought Proudhon with the aid of the dialectical method and proved that since everything in the world changes, “justice” must also change, and that, consequently, “immutable justice” is metaphysical fantasy.⁸³ Yet the Georgian disciples of the metaphysician Proudhon come out and try to “prove” that “dialectics is metaphysics,” that metaphysics recognises the “unknowable” and the “thing-in-itself,” and in the long run passes into empty theology. In contrast to Proudhon and Spencer, Engels combated metaphysics as well as theology with the aid of the dialectical method.⁸⁴ He proved how ridiculously vapid they were. Our Anarchists, however, try to “prove” that Proudhon and Spencer were scientists, whereas Marx and Engels were metaphysicians. One of two things: either Messieurs the Anarchists are deceiving themselves, or they fail to understand what is metaphysics. At all events, the dialectical method is entirely free from blame.

What other accusations do Messieurs the Anarchists hurl against the dialectical method? They say that the dialectical method is “subtle word-weaving,” “the method of sophistry,” “logical and mental somersaults,”⁸⁵ “with the aid of which both truth and falsehood are proved with equal facility.”⁸⁶

At first sight it would seem that the accusation advanced by the Anarchists is correct. Listen to what Engels says about the follower of the metaphysical method:

...His communication is: “Yea yea; nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” For him a thing either exists, or it does not exist; it is equally impossible for a thing to be itself and at the same time something else. Positive and negative absolutely exclude one another...⁸⁷

82 See Eltzbacher's *Anarchism*, pp. 64-68, foreign edition.

83 See K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *op. cit.*

84 See Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and Anti-Dühring*.

85 *Nobati*, No. 8. Sh. G.

86 *Nobati*, No. 4. V. Cherkezishvili.

87 F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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

Let us, however, go into the substance of the matter. Today we are demanding a democratic republic. The democratic republic, however, strengthens bourgeois property. Can we say that a democratic republic is good always and everywhere? No, we cannot! Why? Because a democratic republic is good only “*today*,” when we are destroying feudal property, but “*tomorrow*,” when we shall proceed to destroy bourgeois property and establish socialist property, the democratic republic will no longer be good; on the contrary, it will become a fetter, which we shall smash and cast aside. But as life is in continual motion, as it is impossible to separate the past from the present, and as we are *simultaneously* fighting the feudal rulers and the bourgeoisie, we say: in so far as the democratic republic destroys feudal property it is good and we advocate it, but in so far as it strengthens bourgeois property it is bad, and therefore we criticise it. It follows, therefore, that the democratic republic is simultaneously both “good” and “bad,” and thus the answer to the question raised may be both “yes” and “no.” It was *facts* of this kind that Engels had in mind when he proved the correctness of the dialectical method in the words quoted above. The Anarchists, however, failed to understand this and to them it seemed to be “sophistry”! The Anarchists are, of course, at liberty to note or ignore these *facts*, they may even ignore the sand on the sandy seashore—they have every right to do that. But why drag in the dialectical method, which, unlike the Anarchists, does not look at life with its eyes shut, which has its finger on the pulse of life and openly says: since life changes, since life is in motion, every phenomenon of life has two trends: a positive and a negative; the first we must defend and the second we must reject? What astonishing people those Anarchists are: they are constantly talking about “justice,” but they treat the dialectical method with gross injustice!

To proceed further. In the opinion of our Anarchists, “dialectical development is catastrophic development, by means of which, first the past is utterly destroyed, and then the future is established quite separately... Cuvier’s cataclysms were due to unknown causes, but Marx and

Engels's catastrophes are engendered by dialectics."⁸⁸ In another place the same author says that "Marxism rests on Darwinism and treats it uncritically."⁸⁹

Ponder well over that, reader!

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

Darwin rejects Cuvier's cataclysms, he recognises gradual evolution. But the same Anarchists say that "Marxism rests on Darwinism and treats it uncritically," therefore, the Marxists *do not advocate Cuvier's cataclysms*.

This is anarchy if you like! As the saying goes: the Sergeant's widow flogged herself! Clearly, Sh. G. of No. 8 of Nobati forgot what Sh. G. of No. 6 said. Which is right: No. 6 or No. 8? Or are they both lying?

Let us turn to the facts. Marx says: "At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations...Then begins an epoch of social revolution." But "no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed..."⁹⁰ If this idea of Marx is applied to modern social life, we shall find that between the present-day productive forces which are social in character, and the method of appropriating the product, which is private in character, there is a fundamental conflict which must culminate in the socialist revolution.⁹¹ As you see, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, "revolution" ("catastrophe") is engendered not by Cuvier's "unknown causes," but by very definite and vital social causes called "the development of the productive forces." As you see, in the opinion of Marx and Engels, revolution comes only when the productive forces have sufficiently matured, and not *unexpectedly*, as Cuvier imagined. Clearly, there is nothing in common between Cuvier's cataclysms and the dialectical method. On the other hand, Darwinism

⁸⁸ *Nobati*, No. 8. Sh. G.

⁸⁹ *Nobati*, No. 6

⁹⁰ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 3-4.

⁹¹ See F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Chapter II, Part III.

repudiates not only Cuvier's cataclysms, but also dialectically conceived revolution, whereas according to the dialectical method evolution and revolution, quantitative and qualitative changes, are two essential forms of the same motion. Clearly, it is also wrong to say that "Marxism... treats Darwinism uncritically." It follows therefore that *Nobati* is lying in both cases, in No. 6 as well as in No. 8.

And so these lying "critics" buttonhole us and go on repeating: Whether you like it or not our lies are better than your truth! Probably they believe that everything is pardonable in an Anarchist.

There is another thing for which Messieurs the Anarchists cannot forgive the dialectical method: "Dialectics... provides no possibility of getting, or jumping, out of oneself, or of jumping over oneself."⁹² Now that is the downright truth, Messieurs Anarchists! Here you are absolutely right, my dear sirs: the dialectical method does not provide such a possibility. But why not? Because "jumping out of oneself, or jumping over oneself," is an exercise for wild goats, while the dialectical method was created for human beings. That is the secret!...

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

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

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

92 *Nobati*, No. 8. Sh. G.

II.

*It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.*⁹³

Karl Marx

What is the materialist theory?

Everything in the world changes, everything in the world is in motion, but *how* do these changes take place and *in what form* does this motion proceed?—that is the question. We know, for example, that the earth was once an incandescent, fiery mass, then it gradually cooled, then the animal kingdom appeared and developed, then appeared a species of ape from which man subsequently originated. But how did this development take place? Some say that nature and its development were preceded by the universal idea, which subsequently served as the basis of this development, so that the development of the phenomena of nature, it would appear, is merely the *form* of the development of the idea. These people were called idealists, who later split up and followed different trends. Others say that from the very beginning there have existed in the world two opposite forces—idea and matter, and that correspondingly, phenomena are also divided into two categories, the ideal and the material, which are in constant conflict. Thus the development of the phenomena of nature, it would appear, represents a constant struggle between ideal and material phenomena. Those people are called dualists, and they, like the idealists, are split up into different schools.

Marx's materialist theory utterly repudiates both dualism and idealism. Of course, both ideal and material phenomena exist in the world, but this does not mean that they negate each other. On the contrary, the ideal and the material are two different forms of the same phenomenon; they exist together and develop together; there is a close connection between them. That being so, we have no grounds for thinking that they negate each other. Thus, so-called dualism crumbles to its foundations. A single and indivisible nature expressed in two different forms—material and

⁹³ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 3

ideal—that is how we should regard the development of nature. A single and indivisible life expressed in two different forms—ideal and material—that is how we should regard the development of life.

Such is the monism of Marx's materialist theory.

At the same time, Marx also repudiates idealism. It is wrong to think that the development of the idea, and of the spiritual side in general, *precedes* nature and the material side in general. So-called external, inorganic nature existed before there were any living beings. The first living matter—protoplasm—possessed no consciousness (idea), it possessed only irritability and the first rudiments of sensation. Later, animals gradually developed the power of sensation, which slowly passed into consciousness, in conformity with the development of their nervous systems. If the ape had never stood upright, if it had always walked on all fours, its descendant—man—would not have been able freely to use his lungs and vocal chords and, therefore, would not have been able to speak; and that would have greatly retarded the development of his consciousness. If, furthermore, the ape had not risen up on its hind legs, its descendant—man—would have been compelled always to look downwards and obtain his impressions only from there; he would have been unable to look up and around himself and, consequently, his brain would have obtained no more material (impressions) than that of the ape; and that would have greatly retarded the development of his consciousness. It follows that the development of the spiritual side is conditioned by the structure of the organism and the development of its nervous system. It follows that the development of the spiritual side, the development of ideas, *is preceded* by the development of the material side, the development of being. Clearly, first the external conditions change, first matter changes, and *then* consciousness and other spiritual phenomena change accordingly—the development of the ideal side *lags behind* the development of material conditions. If we call the material side, the external conditions, being, etc., the *content*, then we must call the ideal side, consciousness and other phenomena of the same kind, the *form*. Hence arose the well-known materialist proposition: in the process of development content precedes form, form lags behind content.

The same must be said about social life. Here, too, material development precedes ideal development, here, too, form lags behind its content. Capitalism existed and a fierce class struggle raged long before scientific

socialism was even thought of; the process of production already bore a social character long before the socialist idea arose.

That is why Marx says: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."⁹⁴ In Marx's opinion, economic development is the material foundation of social life, *its content*, while legal-political and religious-philosophical development is the "*ideological form*" of this content, its "superstructure." Marx, therefore, says: "With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is *more or less rapidly* transformed."⁹⁵

In social life too, first the external, material conditions change and then the thoughts of men, their world outlook, change. The development of content precedes the rise and development of form. This, of course, does not mean that in Marx's opinion content is possible without form, as Sh. G. imagines.⁹⁶ Content is impossible without form, but the point is that since a given form lags behind its content, it never *fully* corresponds to this content; and so the new content is often "obliged" to clothe itself for a time in the old form, and this causes a conflict between them. At the present time, for example, the private character of the appropriation of the product does not correspond to the *social* content of production, and this is the basis of the present-day social "conflict." On the other hand, the conception that the idea is a form of being does not mean that, by its nature, consciousness is the same as matter. That was the opinion held only by the vulgar materialists (for example, Büchner and Moleschott), whose theories fundamentally contradict Marx's materialism, and whom Engels rightly ridiculed in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*. According to Marx's materialism, consciousness and being, mind and matter, are two different forms of the same phenomenon, which, broadly speaking, is called nature. Consequently, they do not negate each other,⁹⁷ but nor are they one and the same phenomenon. The only point is that, in the development of nature and

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Nobati*, No. 1. "A Critique of Monism"

⁹⁷ This does not contradict the idea that there is a conflict between form and content. The point is that the conflict is not between content and form in general, but between the *old* form and the *new* content, which is seeking a new form and is striving towards it.

society, consciousness, *i.e.*, what takes place in our heads, is preceded by a corresponding material change, *i.e.*, what takes place outside of us. Any given material change is, sooner or later, inevitably followed by a corresponding ideal change. That is why we say that an ideal change is the form of a corresponding material change.

Such, in general, is the monism of the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels.

We shall be told by some: All this may well be true as applied to the history of nature and society. But how do different conceptions and ideas about given objects arise in our heads at the present time? Do so-called external conditions really exist, or is it only our conceptions of these external conditions that exist? And if external conditions exist, to what degree are they perceptible and cognizable?

On this point we say that our conceptions, our “self,” exist only in so far as external conditions exist that give rise to impressions in our “self.” Whoever unthinkingly says that nothing exists but our conceptions, is compelled to deny the existence of all external conditions and, consequently, must deny the existence of all other people except his own “self,” which fundamentally contradicts the main principles of science and vital activity. Yes, external conditions do actually exist; these conditions existed before us, and will exist after us; and the more often and the more strongly they affect our consciousness, the more easily perceptible and cognizable do they become. As regards the question as to how different conceptions and ideas about given objects arise in our heads *at the present time*, we must observe that here we have a repetition in brief of what takes place in the history of nature and society. In this case, too, the object outside of us precedes our conception of it; in this case, too, our conception, the form, lags behind the object, its content, and so forth. When I look at a tree and see it—that only shows that this tree existed even before the conception of a tree arose in my head; that it was this tree that aroused the corresponding conception in my head.

The importance of the monistic materialism of Marx and Engels for the practical activities of mankind can be readily understood. If our world outlook, if our habits and customs are determined by external conditions, if the unsuitability of legal and political forms rests on an economic content, it is clear that we must help to bring about a radical change in eco-

conomic relations in order, with this change, to bring about a radical change in the habits and customs of the people, and in the political system of the country. Here is what Karl Marx says on that score:

“No great acumen is required to perceive the necessary inter-connection of materialism with... socialism. If man constructs all his knowledge, perceptions, etc., from the world of sense... then it follows that it is a question of so arranging the empirical world that he experiences the truly human in it, that he becomes accustomed to experiencing himself as a human being... If man is unfree in the materialist sense—that is, is free not by reason of the negative force of being able to avoid this or that, but by reason of the positive power to assert his true individuality, then one should not punish individuals for crimes, but rather destroy the anti-social breeding places of crime... If man is moulded by circumstances, then the circumstances must be moulded humanly.”⁹⁸

Such is the connection between materialism and the practical activities of men.

What is the anarchist view of the monistic materialism of Marx and Engels?

While Marx's dialectics originated with Hegel, his materialism is a development of Feuerbach's materialism. The Anarchists know this very well, and they try to take advantage of the defects of Hegel and Feuerbach to discredit the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. We have already shown with reference to Hegel that these tricks of the Anarchists prove nothing but their own polemical impotence. The same must be said with reference to Feuerbach. For example, they strongly emphasise that “Feuerbach was a pantheist...” that he “deified man...”,⁹⁹ that “in Feuerbach's opinion man is what he eats...” alleging that from this Marx drew the following conclusion: “Consequently, the main and primary

⁹⁸ K. Marx, F. Engels, *The Holy Family*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-176.

⁹⁹ *Nobati*, No. 7. D. Delendi

thing is economic conditions,” etc.¹⁰⁰ True, nobody has any doubts about Feuerbach’s pantheism, his deification of man, and other errors of his of the same kind. On the contrary, Marx and Engels were the first to reveal Feuerbach’s errors; nevertheless, the Anarchists deem it necessary once again to “expose” the already exposed errors of Feuerbach. Why? Probably because, in reviling Feuerbach, they want at least in some way to discredit the materialism which Marx borrowed from Feuerbach and then scientifically developed. Could not Feuerbach have had correct as well as erroneous ideas? We say that by tricks of this kind the Anarchists will not shake monistic materialism in the least; all they will do is to prove their own impotence.

The Anarchists disagree among themselves about Marx’s materialism. If, for example, we listen to what Mr. Cherkezishvili has to say, it would appear that Marx and Engels detested monistic materialism; in his opinion their materialism is vulgar and not monistic materialism: “The great science of the naturalists, with its system of evolution, transformism and monistic materialism which *Engels so heartily detested*... avoided dialectics,” etc.¹⁰¹ It follows, therefore, that the natural-scientific materialism, which Cherkezishvili likes and which Engels detested, was monistic materialism. Another Anarchist, however, tells us that the materialism of Marx and Engels is monistic and should therefore be rejected. “Marx’s conception of history is a throwback to Hegel. The monistic materialism of absolute subjectivism in general, and Marx’s economic monism in particular, are impossible in nature and fallacious in theory... Monistic materialism is poorly disguised dualism and a compromise between metaphysics and science...”¹⁰²

It would follow that monistic materialism is unacceptable because Marx and Engels, far from detesting it, were actually monistic materialists themselves, and therefore monistic materialism must be rejected.

This is anarchy if you like! They have not yet grasped the substance of Marx’s materialism, they have not yet understood whether it is monistic materialism or not, they have not yet agreed among themselves about its merits and demerits, but they already deafen us with their boastful claims:

100 *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

101 *Nobati*, No. 4. V. Cherkezishvili.

102 *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

We criticise and raze Marx's materialism to the ground! This by itself shows what grounds their "criticism" can have.

To proceed further. It appears that certain Anarchists are even ignorant of the fact that in science there are various forms of materialism, which differ a great deal from one another: there is, for example, vulgar materialism (in natural science and history), which denies the importance of the ideal side and the effect it has upon the material side; but there is also so-called monistic materialism, which scientifically examines the interrelation between the ideal and the material sides. Some Anarchists confuse all this and at the same time affirm with great aplomb: Whether you like it or not, we subject the materialism of Marx and Engels to devastating criticism! Listen to this: "In the opinion of Engels, and also of Kautsky, Marx rendered mankind a great service in that he..." among other things, discovered the "materialist conception." "Is this true? We do not think so, for we know... that all the historians, scientists and philosophers who adhere to the view that the social mechanism is set in motion by geographic, climatic and telluric, cosmic, anthropological and biological conditions—*are all materialists.*"¹⁰³ How can you talk to such people? It appears, then, that there is no difference between the "materialism" of Aristotle and of Montesquieu, or between the "materialism" of Marx and of Saint-Simon. A fine example, indeed, of understanding your opponent and subjecting him to devastating criticism!

Some Anarchists heard somewhere that Marx's materialism was a "belly theory" and set about popularising this "idea," probably because paper is cheap in the editorial office of *Nobati* and this process does not cost much. Listen to this: "In the opinion of Feuerbach man is what he eats. This formula had a magic effect on Marx and Engels," and so, in the opinion of the Anarchists, Marx drew from this the conclusion that "consequently the main and primary thing is economic conditions, relations of production..." And then the Anarchists proceed to instruct us in a philosophical tone: "It would be a mistake to say that the sole means of achieving this object (of social life) is eating and economic production... If *ideology were determined* mainly monistically, by *eating* and economic existence—then some gluttons would be geniuses."¹⁰⁴ You see how easy it is to criticise

¹⁰³ *Nobati*, No. 2. Sh. G.

¹⁰⁴ *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

Marx's materialism! It is sufficient to hear some gossip in the street from some schoolgirl about Marx and Engels, it is sufficient to repeat that street gossip with philosophical aplomb in the columns of a paper like *Nobati*, to leap into fame as a "critic." But tell me one thing, gentlemen: Where, when, in what country, and which Marx did you hear say that "eating determines ideology"? Why did you not cite a single sentence, a single word from the works of Marx to back your accusation? Is economic existence and eating the same thing? One can forgive a schoolgirl, say, for confusing these entirely different concepts, but how is it that you, the "vanquishers of Social-Democracy," "regenerators of science," so carelessly repeat the mistake of a schoolgirl? How, indeed, can eating determine social ideology? Ponder over what you your selves have said; eating, the form of eating, does not change; in ancient times people ate, masticated and digested their food in the same way as they do now, but the forms of ideology constantly change and develop. Ancient, feudal, bourgeois and proletarian—such are the forms of ideology. Is it conceivable that that which generally speaking, does not change can determine that which is constantly changing? Marx does, indeed, say that economic existence determines ideology, and this is easy to understand, but is eating and economic existence the same thing? Why do you think it proper to attribute your own foolishness to Marx?

To proceed further. In the opinion of our Anarchists, Marx's materialism "is parallelism..." Or again: "monistic materialism is poorly disguised dualism and a compromise between metaphysics and science..." "Marx drops into dualism because he depicts relations of production as material, and human striving and will as an illusion and a utopia, which, even though it exists, is of no importance."¹⁰⁵ Firstly, Marx's monistic materialism has nothing in common with silly parallelism. From the standpoint of materialism, the material side, content, necessarily *precedes* the ideal side, form. Parallelism repudiates this view and emphatically affirms that neither the material nor the ideal *comes first*, that both move together, parallel with each other. Secondly, what is there in common between Marx's monism and dualism when we know perfectly well (and you, Messieurs Anarchists, should also know this if you read Marxist literature!) that the former springs from *one principle*—nature, which has a material and an

¹⁰⁵ *Nobati*, No. 6. Sh. G.

ideal form, whereas the latter springs from *two principles*—the material and the ideal which, according to dualism, mutually negate each other. Thirdly, who said that “human striving and will are not important”? Why don’t you point to the place where Marx says that? Does not Marx speak of the importance of “striving and will” in his *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in his *Class Struggles in France*, in his *Civil War in France*, and in other pamphlets? Why, then, did Marx try to develop the proletarians’ “will and striving” in the socialist spirit, why did he conduct propaganda among them if he attached no importance to “striving and will”? Or, what did Engels talk about in his well-known articles of 1891-94 if not the “importance of striving and will”? Human striving and will acquire their content from economic existence, but that does not mean that they exert no influence on the development of economic relations. Is it really so difficult for our Anarchists to digest this simple idea? It is rightly said that a passion for criticism is one thing, but criticism itself is another.

Here is another accusation Messieurs the Anarchists make: “form is inconceivable without content...” therefore, one cannot say that “form lags behind content... they ‘co-exist.’... Otherwise, monism would be an absurdity.”¹⁰⁶ Messieurs the Anarchists are somewhat confused. Content is inconceivable without form, but the existing form never fully corresponds to the existing content; to a certain extent the new content is always clothed in the old form, as a consequence, there is always a conflict between the old form and the new content. It is precisely on this ground that revolutions occur, and this, among other things, expresses the revolutionary spirit of Marx’s materialism. The Anarchists, however, have failed to understand this and obstinately repeat that there is no content without form...

Such are the Anarchists’ views on materialism. We shall say no more. It is sufficiently clear as it is that the Anarchists have invented their own Marx, have ascribed to him a “materialism” of their own invention, and are now fighting this “materialism.” But not a single bullet of theirs hits the true Marx and the true materialism...

What connection is there between dialectical materialism and proletarian socialism?

106 *Nobati*, No. 1. Sh. G.

Akhali Tskhovreba (New Life), Nos. 2, 4, 7 and 16, June 21, 24 and 28 and July 9, 1906

Signed: *Koba*

Translated from *Georgian*

Trotskyism or Leninism?

Speech Delivered, at the Plenum of the Communist Group in the A.U.C.C.T.U.

November 19, 1924

Comrades, after Kamenev's comprehensive report there is little left for me to say. I shall therefore confine myself to exposing certain legends that are being spread by Trotsky and his supporters about the October uprising, about Trotsky's role in the uprising, about the Party and the preparation for October, and so forth. I shall also touch upon Trotskyism as a peculiar ideology that is incompatible with Leninism, and upon the Party's tasks in connection with Trotsky's latest literary pronouncements.

I. The Facts About the October Uprising

First of all about the October uprising. Rumours are being vigorously spread among members of the Party that the Central Committee as a whole was opposed to an uprising in October 1917. The usual story is that on October 10, when the Central Committee adopted the decision to organise the uprising, the majority of the Central Committee at first spoke against an uprising, but, so the story runs, at that moment a worker burst in on the meeting of the Central Committee and said: "You are deciding against an uprising, but I tell you that there will be an uprising all the same, in spite of everything." And so, after that threat, the story runs, the Central Committee, which is alleged to have become frightened, raised the question of an uprising afresh and adopted a decision to organise it.

This is not merely a rumour, comrades. It is related by the well-known John Reed in his book *Ten Days [That Shook the World]*. Reed was remote from our Party and, of course, could not know the history of our secret meeting on October 10, and, consequently, he was taken in by the gossip spread by people like Sukhanov. This story was later passed round and repeated in a number of pamphlets written by Trotskyites, including one of the latest pamphlets on October written by Syrkin. These rumours have been strongly supported in Trotsky's latest literary pronouncements.

It scarcely needs proof that all these and similar "Arabian Nights" fairy tales are not in accordance with the truth, that in fact nothing of the kind happened, nor could have happened, at the meeting of the Central Committee. Consequently, we could ignore these absurd rumours; after all, lots of rumours are fabricated in the office rooms of the oppositionists or those who are remote from the Party. Indeed, we have ignored them till now; for example, we paid no attention to John Reed's mistakes and did not take the trouble to rectify them. After Trotsky's latest pronouncements, however, it is no longer possible to ignore such legends, for attempts are being made now to bring up our young people on them and, unfortunately, some results have already been achieved in this respect. In view of this, I must counter these absurd rumours with the actual facts.

I take the minutes of the meeting of the Central Committee of our Party on October 10 (23), 1917. Present: Lenin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, Uritsky, Dzerzhinsky, Kollontai, Bubnov, Sokol-

nikov, Lomov. The question of the current situation and the uprising was discussed. After the discussion, Comrade Lenin's resolution on the uprising was put to the vote. The resolution was adopted by a majority of 10 against 2. Clear, one would think: by a majority of 10 against 2, the Central Committee decided to proceed with the immediate, practical work of organising the uprising. At this very same meeting the Central Committee elected a *political* centre to direct the uprising; this centre, called the Political Bureau, consisted of Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Kamenev, Trotsky, Sokolnikov and Bubnov.

Such are the facts.

These minutes at one stroke destroy several legends. They destroy the legend that the majority on the Central Committee was opposed to an uprising. They also destroy the legend that on the question of the uprising the Central Committee was on the verge of a split. It is clear from the minutes that the opponents of an immediate uprising—Kamenev and Zinoviev—were elected to the body that was to exercise political direction of the uprising on a par with those who were in favour of an uprising. There was no question of a split, nor could there be.

Trotsky asserts that in October our Party had a Right wing in the persons of Kamenev and Zinoviev, who, he says, were almost Social-Democrats. What one cannot understand then is how, under those circumstances, it could happen that the Party avoided a split; how it could happen that the disagreements with Kamenev and Zinoviev lasted only a few days; how it could happen that, in spite of those disagreements, the Party appointed these comrades to highly important posts, elected them to the political centre of the uprising, and so forth. Lenin's implacable attitude towards Social-Democrats is sufficiently well known in the Party; the Party knows that Lenin would not for a single moment have agreed to have Social-Democratically minded comrades in the Party, let alone in highly important posts. How, then, are we to explain the fact that the Party avoided a split? The explanation is that in spite of the disagreements, these comrades were old Bolsheviks who stood on the common ground of Bolshevism. What was that common ground? Unity of views on the fundamental questions: the character of the Russian revolution, the driving forces of the revolution, the role of the peasantry, the principles of Party leadership, and so forth. Had there not been this common ground, a split

would have been inevitable. There was no split, and the disagreements lasted only a few days, because, and only because, Kamenev and Zinoviev were Leninists, Bolsheviks.

Let us now pass to the legend about Trotsky's special role in the October uprising. The Trotskyites are vigorously spreading rumours that Trotsky inspired and was the sole leader of the October uprising. These rumours are being spread with exceptional zeal by the so-called editor of Trotsky's works, Lentsner. Trotsky himself, by consistently avoiding mention of the Party, the Central Committee and the Petrograd Committee of the Party, by saying nothing about the leading role of these organisations in the uprising and vigorously pushing himself forward as the central figure in the October uprising, voluntarily or involuntarily helps to spread the rumours about the special role he is supposed to have played in the uprising. I am far from denying Trotsky's undoubtedly important role in the uprising. I must say, however, that Trotsky did not play any special role in the October uprising, nor could he do so; being chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, he merely carried out the will of the appropriate Party bodies, which directed every step that Trotsky took. To philistines like Sukhanov, all this may seem strange, but the facts, the true facts, wholly and fully confirm what I say.

Let us take the minutes of the next meeting of the Central Committee, the one held on October 16 (29), 1917. Present: the members of the Central Committee, plus representatives of the Petrograd Committee, plus representatives of the military organisation, factory committees, trade unions and the railwaymen. Among those present, besides the members of the Central Committee, were: Krylenko, Shotman, Kalinin, Volodarsky, Shlyapnikov, Lacis, and others, twenty-five in all. The question of the uprising was discussed from the purely practical-organisational aspect. Lenin's resolution on the uprising was adopted by a majority of 20 against 2, three abstaining. A *practical* centre was elected for the organisational leadership of the uprising. Who was elected to this centre? The following five: Sverdlov, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky, Bubnov, Uritsky. The functions of the practical centre: to direct all the practical organs of the uprising in conformity with the directives of the Central Committee. Thus, as you see, something "terrible" happened at this meeting of the Central Committee, i.e., "strange to relate," the "inspirer," the "chief figure," the "sole leader" of the

uprising, Trotsky, was not elected to the practical centre, which was called upon to direct the uprising. How is this to be reconciled with the current opinion about Trotsky's special role? Is not all this somewhat "strange," as Sukhanov, or the Trotskyites, would say? And yet, strictly speaking, there is nothing strange about it, for neither in the Party, nor in the October uprising, did Trotsky play any special role, nor could he do so, for he was a relatively new man in our Party in the period of October. He, like all the responsible workers, merely carried out the will of the Central Committee and of its organs. Whoever is familiar with the mechanics of Bolshevik Party leadership will have no difficulty in understanding that it could not be otherwise: it would have been enough for Trotsky to have gone against the will of the Central Committee to have been deprived of influence on the course of events. This talk about Trotsky's special role is a legend that is being spread by obliging "Party" gossips.

This, of course, does not mean that the October uprising did not have its inspirer. It did have its inspirer and leader, but this was Lenin, and none other than Lenin, that same Lenin whose resolutions the Central Committee adopted when deciding the question of the uprising, that same Lenin who, in spite of what Trotsky says, was not prevented by being in hiding from being the actual inspirer of the uprising. It is foolish and ridiculous to attempt now, by gossip about Lenin having been in hiding, to obscure the indubitable fact that the inspirer of the uprising was the leader of the Party, V. I. Lenin.

Such are the facts.

Granted, we are told, but it cannot be denied that Trotsky fought well in the period of October. Yes, that is true, Trotsky did, indeed, fight well in October; but Trotsky was not the only one who fought well in the period of October. Even people like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who then stood side-by-side with the Bolsheviks, also fought well. In general, I must say that in the period of a victorious uprising, when the enemy is isolated and the uprising is growing, it is not difficult to fight well. At such moments even backward people become heroes.

The proletarian struggle is not, however, an uninterrupted advance, an unbroken chain of victories. The proletarian struggle also has its trials, its defeats. The genuine revolutionary is not one who displays courage in the period of a victorious uprising, but one who, while fighting well during

the victorious advance of the revolution, also displays courage when the revolution is in retreat, when the proletariat suffers defeat; who does not lose his head and does not funk when the revolution suffers reverses, when the enemy achieves success; who does not become panic-stricken or give way to despair when the revolution is in a period of retreat. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries did not fight badly in the period of October, and they supported the Bolsheviks. But who does not know that those “brave” fighters became panic-stricken in the period of Brest, when the advance of German imperialism drove them to despair and hysteria? It is a very sad but indubitable fact that Trotsky, who fought well in the period of October, did not, in the period of Brest, in the period when the revolution suffered temporary reverses, possess the courage to display sufficient staunchness at that difficult moment and to refrain from following in the footsteps of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Beyond question, that moment was a difficult one; one had to display exceptional courage and imperturbable coolness not to be dismayed, to retreat in good time, to accept peace in good time, to withdraw the proletarian army out of range of the blows of German imperialism, to preserve the peasant reserves and, after obtaining a respite in this way, to strike at the enemy with renewed force. Unfortunately, Trotsky was found to lack this courage and revolutionary staunchness at that difficult moment.

In Trotsky’s opinion, the principal lesson of the proletarian revolution is “not to funk” during October. That is wrong, for Trotsky’s assertion contains only a *particle* of the truth about the lessons of the revolution. The *whole* truth about the lessons of the proletarian revolution is “not to funk” not only when the revolution is advancing, but also when it is in retreat, when the enemy is gaining the upper hand and the revolution is suffering reverses. The revolution did not end with October. October was only the beginning of the proletarian revolution. It is bad to funk when the tide of insurrection is rising; but it is worse to funk when the revolution is passing through severe trials after power has been captured. To retain power on the morrow of the revolution is no less important than to capture power. If Trotsky funk during the period of Brest, when our revolution was passing through severe trials, when it was almost a matter of “surrendering” power, he ought to know that the mistakes committed by Kamenev and Zinoviev in October are quite irrelevant here.

Trotskyism or Leninism?

That is how matters stand with the legends about the October uprising.

II. The Party and the Preparation for October

Let us now pass to the question of the preparation for October.

Listening to Trotsky, one might think that during the whole of the period of preparation, from March to October, the Bolshevik Party did nothing but mark time; that it was being corroded by internal contradictions and hindered Lenin in every way; that had it not been for Trotsky, nobody knows how the October Revolution would have ended. It is rather amusing to hear this strange talk about the Party from Trotsky, who declares in this same “preface” to Volume III that “the chief instrument of the proletarian revolution is the Party,” that “without the Party, apart from the Party, bypassing the Party, with a substitute for the Party, the proletarian revolution cannot be victorious.” Allah himself would not understand how our revolution could have succeeded if “its chief instrument” proved to be useless, while success was impossible, as it appears, “bypassing the Party.” But this is not the first time that Trotsky treats us to oddities. It must be supposed that this amusing talk about our Party is one of Trotsky’s usual oddities.

Let us briefly review the history of the preparation for October according to periods.

1) *The period of the Party’s new orientation (March-April).* The major facts of this period:

- a) The overthrow of tsarism;
- b) The formation of the Provisional Government (dictatorship of the bourgeoisie);
- c) The appearance of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies (dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry);
- d) Dual power;
- e) The April demonstration;
- f) The first crisis of power.

The characteristic feature of this period is the fact that there existed together, side by side and simultaneously, both the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry; the latter trusts the former, believes that it is striving for peace, voluntarily surrenders power to the bourgeoisie and thereby becomes an appendage of the

bourgeoisie. There are as yet no serious conflicts between the two dictatorships. On the other hand, there is the "Contact Committee."¹⁰⁷

This was the greatest turning point in the history of Russia and an unprecedented turning point in the history of our Party. The old, pre-revolutionary platform of direct overthrow of the government was clear and definite, but it was no longer suitable for the new conditions of the struggle. It was now no longer possible to go straight out for the overthrow of the government, for the latter was connected with the Soviets, then under the influence of the defencists, and the Party would have had to wage war against both the government and the Soviets, a war that would have been beyond its strength. Nor was it possible to pursue a policy of supporting the Provisional Government, for it was the government of imperialism. Under the new conditions of the struggle the Party' had to adopt a new orientation. The Party (its majority) groped its way towards this new orientation. It adopted the policy of pressure on the Provisional Government through the Soviets on the question of peace and did not venture to step forward at once from the old slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the new slogan of power to the Soviets. The aim of this halfway policy was to enable the Soviets to discern the actual imperialist nature of the Provisional Government on the basis of the concrete questions of peace, and in this way to wrest the Soviets from the Provisional Government. But this was a profoundly mistaken position, for it gave rise to pacifist illusions, brought grist to the mill of defencism and hindered the revolutionary education of the masses. At that time I shared this mistaken position with other Party comrades and fully abandoned it only in the middle of April, when I associated myself with Lenin's theses. A new orientation was needed. This new orientation was given to the Party by

¹⁰⁷ The "Contact Committee," consisting of Chkheidze, Steklov, Sukhanov, Filipovsky and Skobelev (and later Chernov and Tsereteli), was set up by the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on March 7, 1917, for the purpose of establishing contact with the Provisional Government, of "influencing" it and "controlling" its activities. Actually, the "Contact Committee" helped to carry out the bourgeois policy of the Provisional Government and restrained the masses of the workers from waging an active revolutionary struggle to transfer all power to the Soviets. The "Contact Committee" existed until May 1917, when representatives of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries entered the Provisional Government.

Lenin, in his celebrated April Theses.¹⁰⁸ I shall not deal with these theses, for they are known to everybody. Were there any disagreements between the Party and Lenin at that time? Yes, there were. How long did these disagreements last? Not more than two weeks. The City Conference of the Petrograd organisation¹⁰⁹ (in the latter half of April), which adopted Lenin's theses, marked a turning point in our Party's development. The All-Russian April Conference¹¹⁰ (at the end of April) merely completed on an all-Russian scale the work of the Petrograd Conference, rallying nine-tenths of the Party around this united Party position.

Now, seven years later, Trotsky gloats maliciously over the past disagreements among the Bolsheviks and depicts them as a struggle waged as if there were almost two parties within Bolshevism. But, firstly, Trotsky disgracefully exaggerates and inflates the matter, for the Bolshevik Party lived through these disagreements without the slightest shock. Secondly, our Party would be a caste and not a revolutionary party if it did not permit different shades of opinion in its ranks. Moreover, it is well known that there were disagreements among us even before that, for example, in the period of the Third Duma, but they did not shake the unity of our Party. Thirdly, it will not be out of place to ask what was *then* the position of Trotsky himself, who is *now* gloating so eagerly over the past disagreements among the Bolsheviks. Lentsner, the so-called editor of Trotsky's works, assures us that Trotsky's letters from America (March) "wholly anticipated" Lenin's *Letters from Afar*¹¹¹ (March), which served as the basis of Lenin's April Theses. That is what he says: "wholly anticipated." Trotsky does not object to this analogy; apparently, he accepts it with thanks. But, firstly, Trotsky's letters "do not in the least resemble" Lenin's letters either in spirit or in conclusions, for they wholly and entirely reflect Trotsky's anti-Bolshe-

¹⁰⁸ V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

¹⁰⁹ The Petrograd City Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) took place from April 14-22 (April 27-May 5), 1917, with 57 delegates present. V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin took part in the proceedings. V. I. Lenin delivered a report on the current situation based on his April Theses. J. V. Stalin was elected to the commission for drafting the resolution on V. I. Lenin's report.

¹¹⁰ Concerning the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the Bolshevik Party see the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, Short Course, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951.

¹¹¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letters From Afar" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII.

vik slogan of “no tsar, but a workers’ government,” a slogan which implies a revolution *without* the peasantry. It is enough to glance through these two series of letters to be convinced of this. Secondly, if what Lentsner says is true, how are we to explain the fact that Lenin on the very next day after his arrival from abroad considered it necessary to dissociate himself from Trotsky? Who does not know of Lenin’s repeated statements that Trotsky’s slogan of “no tsar, but a workers’ government” was an attempt “to skip the still unexhausted peasant movement,” that this slogan meant “playing at the seizure of power by a workers’ government?”¹¹²

What can there be in common between Lenin’s Bolshevik theses and Trotsky’s anti-Bolshevik scheme with its “playing at the seizure of power”? And what prompts this passion that some people display for comparing a wretched hovel with Mont Blanc? For what purpose did Lentsner find it necessary to make this risky addition to the heap of old legends about our revolution of still another legend, about Trotsky’s letters from America “anticipating” Lenin’s well-known *Letters from Afar*?¹¹³

¹¹² See V. I. Lenin, “Letters on Tactics” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV. See also the reports made at the Petrograd City Conference and at the All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) (middle and end of April 1917).

¹¹³ Among these legends must be included also the very widespread story that Trotsky was the “sole” or “chief organiser” of the victories on the fronts of the Civil War. I must declare, comrades, in the interest of truth, that this version is quite out of accord with the facts. I am far from denying that Trotsky played an important role in the Civil War. But I must emphatically declare that the high honour of being the organiser of our victories belongs not to individuals, but to the great collective body of advanced workers in our country, the Russian Communist Party. Perhaps it will not be out of place to quote a few examples. You know that Kolchak and Denikin were regarded as the principal enemies of the Soviet Republic. You know that our country breathed freely only after those enemies were defeated. Well, history shows that both those enemies, i.e., Kolchak and Denikin, were routed by our troops *in spite* of Trotsky’s plans.

Judge for yourselves.

1) *Kolchak*. This is in the summer of 1919. Our troops are advancing against Kolchak and are operating near Ufa. A meeting of the Central Committee is held. Trotsky proposes that the advance be halted along the line of the River Belaya (near Ufa), leaving the Urals in the hands of Kolchak, and that part of the troops be withdrawn from the Eastern Front and transferred to the Southern Front. A heated debate takes place. The Central Committee disagrees with Trotsky, being of the opinion that the Urals, with its factories and railway network, must not be left in the hands of Kolchak, for the latter could easily recuperate there, organise a strong force and reach the Volga again; Kolchak must first be driven beyond the Ural range into the Siberian steppes, and only after that has been done should forces be transferred to the South. The Central Committee rejects Trotsky’s plan. Trotsky hands in his resignation. The

No wonder it is said that an obliging fool is more dangerous than an enemy.

2) *The period of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses (May-August).*

The major facts of this period:

- a) The April demonstration in Petrograd and the formation of the coalition government with the participation of “Socialists”;
- b) The May Day demonstrations in the principal centres of Russia with the slogan of “a democratic peace”;
- c) The June demonstration in Petrograd with the principal slogan: “Down with the capitalist ministers!”;
- d) The June offensive at the front and the reverses of the Russian army;
- e) The July armed demonstration in Petrograd; the Cadet ministers resign from the government;
- f) Counter-revolutionary troops are called in from the front; the editorial offices of *Pravda* are wrecked; the counter-revolution launches a struggle against the Soviets and a new coalition government is formed, headed by Kerensky;
- g) The Sixth Congress of our Party, which issues the slogan to prepare for an armed uprising;
- h) The counter-revolutionary Conference of State and the general strike in Moscow;
- i) Kornilov’s unsuccessful march on Petrograd, the revitalising of the Soviets; the Cadets resign and a “Directory” is formed.

Central Committee refuses to accept it. Commander-in-Chief Vatsetis, who supported Trotsky’s plan, resigns. His place is taken by a new Commander-in-Chief, Kamenev. From that moment Trotsky ceases to take a direct part in the affairs of the Eastern Front.

2) *Denikin*. This is in the autumn of 1919. The offensive against Denikin is not proceeding successfully. The “steel ring” around Mamontov (Mamontov’s raid) is obviously collapsing. Denikin captures Kursk. Denikin is approaching Orel. Trotsky is summoned from the Southern Front to attend a meeting of the Central Committee. The Central Committee regards the situation as alarming and decides to send new military leaders to the Southern Front and to withdraw Trotsky. The new military leaders demand “no intervention” by Trotsky in the affairs of the Southern Front. Trotsky ceases to take a direct part in the affairs of the Southern Front. Operations on the Southern Front, right up to the capture of Rostov-on-Don and Odessa by our troops, proceed without Trotsky.

Let anybody try to refute these facts.

The characteristic feature of this period is the intensification of the crisis and the upsetting of the unstable equilibrium between the Soviets and the Provisional Government which, for good or evil, had existed in the preceding period. Dual power has become intolerable for both sides. The fragile edifice of the "Contact Committee" is tottering. "Crisis of power" and "ministerial reshuffle" are the most fashionable catchwords of the day. The crisis at the front and the disruption in the rear are doing their work, strengthening the extreme flanks and squeezing the defencist compromisers from both sides. The revolution is mobilising, causing the mobilisation of the counter-revolution. The counter-revolution, in its turn, is spurring on the revolution, stirring up new waves of the revolutionary tide. The question of transferring power to the new class becomes the immediate question of the day.

Were there disagreements in our Party then? Yes, there were. They were, however, of a purely practical character, despite the assertions of Trotsky, who is trying to discover a "Right" and a "Left" wing in the Party. That is to say, they were such disagreements as are inevitable where there is vigorous Party life and real Party activity.

Trotsky is wrong in asserting that the April demonstration in Petrograd gave rise to disagreements in the Central Committee. The Central Committee was absolutely united on this question and condemned the attempt of a group of comrades to arrest the Provisional Government at a time when the Bolsheviks were in a minority both in the Soviets and in the army. Had Trotsky written the "history" of October not according to Sukhanov, but according to authentic documents, he would easily have convinced himself of the error of his assertion.

Trotsky is absolutely wrong in asserting that the attempt, "on Lenin's initiative," to arrange a demonstration on June 10 was described as "adventurism" by the "Right-wing" members of the Central Committee. Had Trotsky not written according to Sukhanov he would surely have known that the June 10 demonstration was postponed with the full agreement of Lenin, and that he urged the necessity of postponing it in a big speech he delivered at the well-known meeting of the Petrograd Committee (see minutes of the Petrograd Committee).¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Speech on the Cancellation of the Demonstration, Delivered at a Meeting of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), June 11 (24), 1917" in

Trotsky is absolutely wrong in speaking about “tragic” disagreements in the Central Committee in connection with the July armed demonstration. Trotsky is simply inventing in asserting that some members of the leading group in the Central Committee “could not but regard the July episode as a harmful adventure.” Trotsky, who was then not yet a member of our Central Committee and was merely our Soviet parliamentary, might, of course, not have known that the Central Committee regarded the July demonstration only as a means of sounding the enemy, that the Central Committee (and Lenin) did not want to convert, did not even think of converting, the demonstration into an uprising at a time when the Soviets in the capitals still supported the defencists. It is quite possible that some Bolsheviks did whimper over the July defeat. I know, for example, that some of the Bolsheviks who were arrested at the time were even prepared to desert our ranks. But to draw inferences from this against certain supposed “Rights,” supposed to be members of the Central Committee, is a shameful distortion of history.

Trotsky is wrong in declaring that during the Kornilov days a section of the Party leaders inclined towards the formation of a bloc with the defencists, towards supporting the Provisional Government. He, of course, is referring to those same alleged “Rights” who keep him awake at night. Trotsky is wrong, for there exist documents, such as the Central Organ of the Party of that time, which refute his statements. Trotsky refers to Lenin’s letter to the Central Committee warning against supporting Kerensky; but Trotsky fails to understand Lenin’s letters, their significance, their purpose. In his letters Lenin sometimes deliberately ran ahead, pushing into the forefront mistakes that might possibly be committed, and criticising them in advance with the object of warning the Party and of safeguarding it against mistakes. Sometimes he would even magnify a “trifle” and “make a mountain out of a molehill” for the same pedagogical purpose. The leader of the Party, especially if he is in hiding, cannot act otherwise, for he must see further than his comrades-in-arms, he must sound the alarm over every possible mistake, even over “trifles.” But to infer from such letters of Lenin’s (and he wrote quite a number of such letters) the existence of “tragic” disagreements and to trumpet them forth means not

to understand Lenin's letters, means not to know Lenin. This, probably, explains why Trotsky sometimes is wide of the mark. In short: there were no disagreements in the Central Committee during the Kornilov revolt, absolutely none.

After the July defeat disagreement did indeed arise between the Central Committee and Lenin on the question of the future of the Soviets. It is known that Lenin, wishing to concentrate the Party's attention on the task of preparing the uprising outside the Soviets, warned against any infatuation with the latter, for he was of the opinion that, having been defiled by the defencists, they had become useless. The Central Committee and the Sixth Party Congress took a more cautious line and decided that there were no grounds for excluding the possibility that the Soviets would revive. The Kornilov revolt showed that this decision was correct. This disagreement, however, was of no great consequence for the Party. Later, Lenin admitted that the line taken by the Sixth Congress had been correct. It is interesting that Trotsky has not clutched at this disagreement and has not magnified it to "monstrous" proportions.

A united and solid party, the hub of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses—such was the picture presented by our Party in that period.

3) *The period of organisation of the assault (September-October).* The major facts of this period:

- a) The convocation of the Democratic Conference and the collapse of the idea of a bloc with the Cadets;
- b) The Moscow and Petrograd Soviets go over to the side of the Bolsheviks;
- c) The Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region;¹¹⁵ the Petrograd Soviet decides against the withdrawal of the troops;

¹¹⁵ The Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of the Northern Region took place in Petrograd on October 24-26 (11-13), 1917, under the direction of the Bolsheviks. Representatives were present from Petrograd, Moscow, Kronstadt, Novgorod, Reval, Helsingfors, Vyborg and other cities. In all there were 94 delegates, of whom 51 were Bolsheviks. The congress adopted a resolution on the need for immediate transference of all power to the Soviets, central and local.

It called upon the peasants to support the struggle for the transference of power to the Soviets and urged the Soviets themselves to commence active operations and to set up Revolutionary Military Committees for organising the military defence of the revolution. The congress set up a Northern Regional Committee and instructed it

- d) The decision of the Central Committee on the uprising and the formation of the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet;
- c) The Petrograd garrison decides to render the Petrograd Soviet armed support; a network of commissars of the Revolutionary Military Committee is organised;
- f) The Bolshevik armed forces go into action; the members of the Provisional Government are arrested;
- g) The Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet takes power; the Second Congress of Soviets sets up the Council of People's Commissars.

The characteristic feature of this period is the rapid growth of the crisis, the utter consternation reigning among the ruling circles, the isolation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and the mass flight of the vacillating elements to the side of the Bolsheviks. A peculiar feature of the tactics of the revolution in this period must be noted, namely, that the revolution strove to take every, or nearly every, step in its attack in the guise of defence. Undoubtedly, the refusal to allow the troops to be withdrawn from Petrograd was an important step in the revolution's attack; nevertheless, this attack was carried out under the slogan of protecting Petrograd from possible attack by the external enemy. Undoubtedly, the formation of the Revolutionary Military Committee was a still more important step in the attack upon the Provisional Government; nevertheless, it was carried out under the slogan of organising Soviet control over the actions of the Headquarters of the Military Area. Undoubtedly, the open transition of the garrison to the side of the Revolutionary Military Committee and the organisation of a network of Soviet Commissars marked the beginning of the uprising; nevertheless, the revolution took these steps under the slogan of protecting the Petrograd Soviet from possible action by the counter-revolution. The revolution, as it were, masked its actions in attack under the cloak of defence in order the more easily to draw the irresolute, vacillating elements into its orbit. This, no doubt, explains the outwardly defensive

to prepare for the convocation of the Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets and to co-ordinate the activities of all the Regional Soviets.

character of the speeches, articles and slogans of that period, the inner content of which, none the less, was of a profoundly attacking nature.

Were there disagreements in the Central Committee in that period? Yes, there were, and fairly important ones at that. I have already spoken about the disagreements over the uprising. They are fully reflected in the minutes of the meetings of the Central Committee of October 10 and 16. I shall, therefore, not repeat what I have already said. Three questions must now be dealt with: participation in the Pre-parliament, the role of the Soviets in the uprising, and the date of the uprising. This is all the more necessary because Trotsky, in his zeal to push himself into a prominent place, has “inadvertently” misrepresented the stand Lenin took on the last two questions.

Undoubtedly, the disagreements on the question of the Pre-parliament were of a serious nature. What was, so to speak, the aim of the Pre-parliament? It was: to help the bourgeoisie to push the Soviets into the background and to lay the foundations of bourgeois parliamentarism. Whether the Pre-parliament could have accomplished this task in the revolutionary situation that had arisen is another matter. Events showed that this aim could not be realised, and the Pre-parliament itself was a Kornilovite abortion. There can be no doubt, however, that it was precisely this aim that the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries pursued in setting up the Pre-parliament. What could the Bolsheviks’ participation in the Pre-parliament mean under those circumstances? Nothing but deceiving the proletarian masses about the true nature of the Pre-parliament. This is the chief explanation for the passion with which Lenin, in his letters, scourged those who were in favour of taking part in the Pre-parliament. There can be no doubt that it was a grave mistake to have taken part in the Pre-parliament.

It would be a mistake, however, to think, as Trotsky does, that those who were in favour of taking part in the Pre-parliament went into it for the purpose of constructive work, for the purpose of “directing the working-class movement” “into the channel of Social-Democracy.” That is not at all the case.

It is not true. Had that been the case, the Party would not have been able to rectify this mistake “in two ticks” by demonstratively walking out

of the Pre-parliament. Incidentally, the swift rectification of this mistake was an expression of our Party's vitality and revolutionary might.

And now, permit me to correct a slight inaccuracy that has crept into the report of Lentsner, the "editor" of Trotsky's works, about the meeting of the Bolshevik group at which a decision on the question of the Pre-parliament was taken. Lentsner says that there were two reporters at this meeting, Kamenev and Trotsky. That is not true. Actually, there were four reporters: two in favour of boycotting the Pre-parliament (Trotsky and Stalin), and two in favour of participation (Kamenev and Nogin).

Trotsky is in a still worse position when dealing with the stand Lenin took on the question of the form of the uprising. According to Trotsky, it appears that Lenin's view was that the Party should take power in October "independently of and behind the back of the Soviet." Later on, criticising this nonsense, which he ascribes to Lenin, Trotsky "cuts capers" and finally delivers the following condescending utterance: "That would have been a mistake." Trotsky is here uttering a falsehood about Lenin, he is misrepresenting Lenin's views on the role of the Soviets in the uprising. A pile of documents can be cited, showing that Lenin proposed that power be taken *through* the Soviets, either the Petrograd or the Moscow Soviet, and not *behind the back* of the Soviets. Why did Trotsky have to invent this more than strange legend about Lenin?

Nor is Trotsky in a better position when he "analyses" the stand taken by the Central Committee and Lenin on the question of the date of the uprising. Reporting the famous meeting of the Central Committee of October 10, Trotsky asserts that at that meeting "a resolution was carried to the effect that the uprising should take place not later than October 15." From this it appears that the Central Committee fixed October 15 as the date of the uprising and then itself violated that decision by postponing the date of the uprising to October 25. Is that true? No, it is not. During that period the Central Committee passed only two resolutions on the uprising—one on October 10 and the other on October 16. Let us read these resolutions.

The Central Committee's resolution of October 10:

The Central Committee recognises that the international position of the Russian revolution (the mutiny in the Ger-

man navy which is an extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of the world socialist revolution, and the threat of peace¹¹⁶ between the imperialists with the object of strangling the revolution in Russia) as well as the military situation (the indubitable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), and the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets—all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards our Party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being made for a second Kornilov affair (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the dispatch of Cossacks to Petrograd, the surrounding of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—all this places an armed uprising on the order of the day.

Considering, therefore, that an armed uprising is inevitable, and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all Party organisations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the actions of the people in Moscow and Minsk, etc.) from this point of view.¹¹⁷

The resolution adopted by the conference of the Central Committee with responsible workers on October 16:

This meeting fully welcomes and wholly supports the Central Committee's resolution, calls upon all organisations and all workers and soldiers to make thorough and most intense preparations for an armed uprising and for support of the centre set up by the Central Committee for this purpose, and expresses complete confidence that the Central Commit-

¹¹⁶ Obviously, this should be "a separate peace."—*J. St.*

¹¹⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) October 10 (23), 1917" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

tee and the Soviet will in good time indicate the favourable moment and the suitable means for launching the attack.¹¹⁸

You see that Trotsky's memory betrayed him about the date of the uprising and the Central Committee's resolution on the uprising.

Trotsky is absolutely wrong in asserting that Lenin underrated Soviet legality, that Lenin failed to appreciate the great importance of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets taking power on October 25, and that this was the reason why he insisted that power be taken before October 25. That is not true. Lenin proposed that power be taken before October 25 for two reasons. Firstly, because the counter-revolutionaries might have surrendered Petrograd at any moment, which would have drained the blood of the developing uprising, and so every day was precious. Secondly, because the mistake made by the Petrograd Soviet in *openly* fixing and announcing the day of the uprising (October 25) could not be rectified in any other way than by actually launching the uprising *before* the legal date set for it. The fact of the matter is that Lenin regarded insurrection as an art, and he could not help knowing that the enemy, informed about the date of the uprising (owing to the carelessness of the Petrograd Soviet) would certainly try to prepare for that day. Consequently, it was necessary to forestall the enemy, i.e., without fail to launch the uprising *before* the legal date. This is the chief explanation for the passion with which Lenin in his letters scourged those who made a fetish of the date—October 25. Events showed that Lenin was absolutely right. It is well known that the uprising was launched prior to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. It is well known that power was actually taken before the opening of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, and it was taken not by the Congress of Soviets, but by the Petrograd Soviet, by the Revolutionary Military Committee. The Congress of Soviets merely *took over* power from the Petrograd Soviet. That is why Trotsky's lengthy arguments about the importance of Soviet legality are quite beside the point.

A virile and mighty party standing at the head of the revolutionary masses who were storming and overthrowing bourgeois rule—such was the state of our Party in that period.

¹¹⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) October 16 (29), 1917" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

Trotskyism or Leninism?

That is how matters stand with the legends about the preparation for October.

III. Trotskyism or Leninism?

We have dealt above with the legends directed against the Party and those about Lenin spread by Trotsky and his supporters in connection with October and the preparation for it. We have exposed and refuted these legends. But the question arises: For what purpose did Trotsky need all these legends about October and the preparation for October, about Lenin and the Party of Lenin? What is the purpose of Trotsky's new literary' pronouncements against the Party? What is the sense, the purpose, the aim of these pronouncements now, when the Party does not want a discussion, when the Party is busy with a host of urgent tasks, when the Party needs united efforts to restore our economy and not a new struggle around old questions? For what purpose does Trotsky need to drag the Party back, to new discussions?

Trotsky asserts that all this is needed for the purpose of "studying" October. But is it not possible to study October without giving another kick at the Party and its leader Lenin? What sort of a "history" of October is it that begins and ends with attempts to discredit the chief leader of the October uprising, to discredit the Party, which organised and carried through the uprising? No, it is not a matter here of studying October. *That* is not the way to study October. *That* is not the way to write the history of October. Obviously, there is a different "design" here, and everything goes to show that this "design" is that Trotsky by his literary pronouncements is making another (yet another!) attempt to create the conditions for substituting Trotskyism for Leninism. Trotsky needs "desperately" to discredit the Party, and its cadres who carried through the uprising, in order, after discrediting the Party, to proceed to discredit Leninism. And it is necessary for him to discredit Leninism in order to drag in Trotskyism as the "sole" "proletarian" (don't laugh!) ideology. All this, of course (oh, of course!) under the flag of Leninism, so that the dragging operation may be performed "as painlessly as possible."

That is the essence of Trotsky's latest literary pronouncements.

That is why those literary pronouncements of Trotsky's sharply raise the question of Trotskyism.

And so, what is Trotskyism?

Trotskyism possesses three specific features which bring it into irreconcilable contradiction with Leninism.

What are these features?

Firstly. Trotskyism is the theory of “permanent” (uninterrupted) revolution. But what is permanent revolution in its Trotskyist interpretation? It is revolution that fails to take the poor peasantry into account as a revolutionary force.

Trotsky’s “permanent” revolution is, as Lenin said, “skipping” the peasant movement, “playing at the seizure of power.” Why is it dangerous? Because such a revolution, if an attempt had been made to bring it about, would inevitably have ended in failure, for it would have divorced from the Russian proletariat its ally, the poor peasantry. This explains the struggle that Leninism has been waging against Trotskyism ever since 1905.

How does Trotsky appraise Leninism from the standpoint of this struggle? He regards it as a theory that possesses “anti-revolutionary features.” What is this indignant opinion about Leninism based on? On the fact that at the proper time Leninism advocated and upheld the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and *peasantry*.

But Trotsky does not confine himself to this indignant opinion. He goes further and asserts: “The entire edifice of Leninism at the present time is built on lies and falsification and bears within itself the poisonous elements of its own decay” (see Trotsky’s letter to Chkhaidze, 1913). As you see, we have before us two opposite lines.

Secondly. Trotskyism is distrust of the Bolshevik Party principle, of the monolithic character of the Party, of its hostility towards opportunist elements. In the sphere of organization, Trotskyism is the theory that revolutionaries and opportunists can co-exist and form groups and coteries within a single party. You are, no doubt, familiar with the history of Trotsky’s August bloc, in which the Martovites and Otzovists, the Liquidators and Trotskyites, happily co-operated, pretending that they were a “real” party. It is well known that this patchwork “party” pursued the aim of destroying the Bolshevik Party. What was the nature of “our disagreements” at that time? It was that Leninism regarded the destruction of the August bloc as a guarantee of the development of the proletarian party, whereas Trotskyism regarded that bloc as the basis for building a “real” party.

Again, as you see, we have two opposite lines.

Thirdly. Trotskyism is distrust of the leaders of Bolshevism, an attempt to discredit, to defame them. I do not know of a single trend in the Party that could compare with Trotskyism in the matter of discrediting the leaders of Leninism or the central institutions of the Party. For example, what should be said of Trotsky's "polite" opinion of Lenin, whom he described as "a professional exploiter of every kind of backwardness in the Russian working-class movement" (ibid.)? And this is far from being the most "polite" of the "polite" opinions Trotsky has expressed.

How could it happen that Trotsky, who carried such a nasty stock-in-trade on his back, found himself, after all, in the ranks of the Bolsheviks during the October movement? It happened because at that time Trotsky abandoned (actually did abandon) that stock-in-trade; he hid it in the cupboard. Had he not performed that "operation," real co-operation with him would have been impossible. The theory of the August bloc, i.e., the theory of unity with the Mensheviks, had already been shattered and thrown overboard by the revolution, for how could there be any talk about unity when an armed struggle was raging between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks? Trotsky had no alternative but to admit that this theory was useless.

The same misadventure "happened" to the theory of permanent revolution, for not a single Bolshevik contemplated the immediate seizure of power on the morrow of the February Revolution, and Trotsky could not help knowing that the Bolsheviks would not allow him, in the words of Lenin, "to play at the seizure of power." Trotsky had no alternative but recognise the Bolsheviks' policy of fighting for influence in the Soviets, of fighting to win over the peasantry. As regards the third specific feature of Trotskyism (distrust of the Bolshevik leaders), it naturally had to retire into the background owing to the obvious failure of the first two features.

Under those circumstances, could Trotsky do anything else but hide his stock-in-trade in the cupboard and follow the Bolsheviks, considering that he had no group of his own of any significance, and that he came to the Bolsheviks as a political individual, without an army? Of course, he could not!

What is the lesson to be learnt from this? Only one: that prolonged collaboration between the Leninists and Trotsky is possible only if the latter

completely abandons his old stock-in-trade, only if he completely accepts Leninism. Trotsky writes about the lessons of October, but he forgets that, in addition to all the other lessons, there is one more lesson of October, the one I have just mentioned, which is of prime importance for Trotskyism. Trotskyism ought to learn that lesson of October too.

It is evident, however, that Trotskyism has not learnt that lesson. The fact of the matter is that the old stock-in-trade of Trotskyism that was hidden in the cupboard in the period of the October movement is now being dragged into the light again in the hope that a market will be found for it, seeing that the market in our country is expanding. Undoubtedly, Trotsky's new literary pronouncements are an attempt to revert to Trotskyism, to "overcome" Leninism, to drag in, implant, all the specific features of Trotskyism. The new Trotskyism is not a mere repetition of the old Trotskyism; its feathers have been plucked and it is rather bedraggled; it is incomparably milder in spirit and more moderate in form than the old Trotskyism; but, in essence, it undoubtedly retains all the specific features of the old Trotskyism. The new Trotskyism does not dare to come out as a militant force against Leninism; it prefers to operate under the common flag of Leninism, under the slogan of interpreting, improving Leninism. That is because it is weak. It cannot be regarded as an accident that the appearance of the new Trotskyism coincided with Lenin's departure. In Lenin's lifetime it would not have dared to take this risky step.

What are the characteristic features of the new Trotskyism?

1) *On the question of "permanent" revolution.* The new Trotskyism does not deem it necessary openly to uphold the theory of "permanent" revolution. It "simply" asserts that the October Revolution fully confirmed the idea of "permanent" revolution. From this it draws the following conclusion: the important and acceptable part of Leninism is the part that came after the war, in the period of the October Revolution; on the other hand, the part of Leninism that existed before the war, before the October Revolution, is wrong and unacceptable. Hence, the Trotskyites' theory of the division of Leninism into two parts: pre-war Leninism, the "old," "useless" Leninism with its idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, and the new, post-war, October Leninism, which they count on adapting to the requirements of Trotskyism. Trotskyism needs this theory

of the division of Leninism as a first, more or less “acceptable” step that is necessary to facilitate further steps in its struggle against Leninism.

But Leninism is not an eclectic theory stuck together out of diverse elements and capable of being cut into parts. Leninism is an integral theory, which arose in 1903, has passed the test of three revolutions, and is now being carried forward as the battle flag of the world proletariat.

Bolshevism, [Lenin said,] as a trend of political thought and as a political party, has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *whole* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it was able to build up and to maintain under most difficult conditions the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.¹¹⁹

Bolshevism and Leninism are one. They are two names for one and the same thing. Hence, the theory of the division of Leninism into two parts is a theory intended to destroy Leninism, to substitute Trotskyism for Leninism.

Needless to say, the Party cannot reconcile itself to this grotesque theory.

2) *On the question of the Party principle.* The old Trotskyism tried to undermine the Bolshevik Party principle by means of the theory (and practice) of unity with the Mensheviks. But that theory has suffered such disgrace that nobody now even wants to mention it. To undermine the Party principle, present-day Trotskyism has invented the new, less odious and almost “democratic” theory of contrasting the old cadres to the younger Party members. According to Trotskyism, our Party has not a single and integral history. Trotskyism divides the history of our Party into two parts of unequal importance: pre-October and post-October. The pre-October part of the history of our Party is, properly speaking, not history, but “pre-history,” the unimportant or, at all events, not very important preparatory period of our Party. The post-October part of the history of our Party, however, is real, genuine history. In the former, there are the “old,” “pre-historic,” unimportant cadres of our Party. In the latter there is the new, real, “historic” Party. It scarcely needs proof that this singular

119 V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, p. 6.

scheme of the history of the Party is a scheme to disrupt the unity between the old and the new cadres of our Party, a scheme to destroy the Bolshevik Party principle.

Needless to say, the Party cannot reconcile itself to this grotesque scheme.

3) *On the question of the leaders of Bolshevism.* The old Trotskyism tried to discredit Lenin more or less openly, without fearing the consequences. The new Trotskyism is more cautious. It tries to achieve the purpose of the old Trotskyism by pretending to praise, to exalt Lenin. I think it is worthwhile quoting a few examples.

The Party knows that Lenin was a relentless revolutionary; but it knows also that he was cautious, that he disliked reckless people and often, with a firm hand, restrained those who were infatuated with terrorism, including Trotsky himself. Trotsky touches on this subject in his book *On Lenin*, but from his portrayal of Lenin one might think that all Lenin did was “at every opportunity to din into people’s minds the idea that terrorism was inevitable.” The impression is created that Lenin was the most bloodthirsty of all the bloodthirsty Bolsheviks.

For what purpose did Trotsky need this uncalled-for and totally unjustified exaggeration?

The Party knows that Lenin was an exemplary Party man, who did not like to settle questions alone, without the leading collective body, on the spur of the moment, without careful investigation and verification. Trotsky touches upon this aspect, too, in his book. But the portrait he paints is not that of Lenin, but of a sort of Chinese mandarin, who settles important questions in the quiet of his study, by intuition.

Do you want to know how our Party settled the question of dispersing the Constituent Assembly? Listen to Trotsky:

“Of course, the Constituent Assembly will have to be dispersed,” said Lenin, “but what about the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries?”

But our apprehensions were greatly allayed by old Natanson. He came in to “take counsel” with us, and after the first few words he said:

“We shall probably have to disperse the Constituent Assembly by force.”

“Bravo!” exclaimed Lenin. “What is true is true! But will your people agree to it?”

“Some of our people are wavering, but I think that in the end they will agree,” answered Natanson.

That is how history is written.

Do you want to know how the Party settled the question about the Supreme Military Council? Listen to Trotsky:

“Unless we have serious and experienced military experts we shall never extricate ourselves from this chaos,” I said to Vladimir Ilyich after every visit to the Staff.

“That is evidently true, but they might betray us...”

“Let us attach a commissar to each of them.”

“Two would be better,” exclaimed Lenin, “and strong-handed ones. There surely must be strong-handed Communists in our ranks.”

That is how the structure of the Supreme Military Council arose.

That is how Trotsky writes history.

Why did Trotsky need these “Arabian Nights” stories derogatory to Lenin? Was it to exalt V. I. Lenin, the leader of the Party? It doesn’t look like it.

The Party knows that Lenin was the greatest Marxist of our times, a profound theoretician and a most experienced revolutionary, to whom any trace of Blanquism was alien, Trotsky touches upon this aspect, too, in his book. But the portrait he paints is not that of the giant Lenin, but of a dwarf-like Blanquist who, in the October days, advises the Party “to take power by its own hand, independently of and behind the back of the Soviet.” I have already said, however, that there is not a scrap of truth in this description.

Why did Trotsky need this flagrant... inaccuracy? Is this not an attempt to discredit Lenin "just a little"?

Such are the characteristic features of the new Trotskyism.

What is the danger of this new Trotskyism? It is that Trotskyism, owing to its entire inner content, stands every chance of becoming the centre and rallying point of the non-proletarian elements who are striving to weaken, to disintegrate the proletarian dictatorship.

You will ask: what is to be done now? What are the Party's immediate tasks in connection with Trotsky's new literary pronouncements?

Trotskyism is taking action now in order to discredit Bolshevism and to undermine its foundations. It is the duty of the Party *to bury Trotskyism as an ideological trend*.

There is talk about repressive measures against the opposition and about the possibility of a split. That is nonsense, comrades. Our Party is strong and mighty. It will not allow any splits. As regards repressive measures, I am emphatically opposed to them. What we need now is not repressive measures, but an extensive ideological struggle against renascent Trotskyism.

We did not want and did not strive for this literary discussion. Trotskyism is forcing it upon us by its anti-Leninist pronouncements. Well, we are ready, comrades.

Pravda, No. 269, November 26, 1924

The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now

*Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*¹²⁰

October 23, 1927

I. Some Minor Questions

Comrades, I have not much time; I shall therefore deal with separate questions.

First of all about the personal factor. You have heard here how assiduously the oppositionists hurl abuse at Stalin, abuse him with all their might. That does not surprise me, comrades. The reason why the main attacks were directed against Stalin is because Stalin knows all the opposition's tricks better, perhaps, than some of our comrades do, and it is not so easy, I dare say, to fool him. So they strike their blows primarily at Stalin. Well, let them hurl abuse to their heart's content.

And what is Stalin? Stalin is only a minor figure. Take Lenin. Who does not know that at the time of the August bloc the opposition, headed by Trotsky, waged an even more scurrilous campaign of slander against Lenin? Listen to Trotsky, for example:

"The wretched squabbling systematically provoked by Lenin, that old hand at the game, that professional exploiter of all that is backward in the Russian labour movement, seems like a senseless obsession" (see "Trotsky's Letter to Chkheidze," April 1913).

Note the language, comrades! Note the language! It is Trotsky writing. And writing about Lenin.

¹²⁰ The joint plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U.(B.) was held October 21-23, 1927. It discussed and approved the draft theses submitted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B.) on the questions of the agenda of the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), namely: directives for drawing up a five-year plan for the national economy; work in the countryside. The plenum approved the appointment of reporters, resolved to open a discussion in the Party, and decided to publish the theses for the Fifteenth Congress for discussion at Party meetings and in the press. In view of the attack of the leaders of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition against the Manifesto issued by the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, particularly against the point about going over to a seven-hour working day, the plenum discussed this question and in a special decision declared that the Political Bureau of the Central Committee had acted rightly in

Is it surprising, then, that Trotsky, who wrote in such an ill-mannered way about the great Lenin, whose shoelaces he was not worthy of tying, should now hurl abuse at one of Lenin's numerous pupils—Comrade Stalin?

More than that. I think the opposition does me honour by venting all its hatred against Stalin. That is as it should be. I think it would be strange and offensive if the opposition, which is trying to wreck the Party, were to praise Stalin, who is defending the fundamentals of the Leninist Party principle.

Now about Lenin's "will." The oppositionists shouted here—you heard them—that the Central Committee of the Party "concealed" Lenin's "will." We have discussed this question several times at the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, you know that. [*A voice*: "Scores of times."] It has been proved and proved again that nobody has concealed anything, that Lenin's "will" was addressed to the Thirteenth Party Congress, that this "will" was read out at the congress [*Voices*: "That's right!"], that the congress *unanimously* decided not to publish it because, among other things, Lenin himself did not want it to be published and did not ask that it should be published. The opposition knows all this just as well as we do. Nevertheless, it has the audacity to declare that the Central Committee is "concealing" the "will."

The question of Lenin's "will" was brought up, if I am not mistaken, as far back as 1924. There is a certain Eastman, a former American Communist who was later expelled from the Party. This gentleman, who mixed with the Trotskyists in Moscow, picked up some rumours and gossip about Lenin's "will," went abroad and published a book entitled *After Lenin's*

its initiative in the publication of the Manifesto of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. and approved the Manifesto itself. The plenum heard a report of the Presidium of the Central Control Commission on the factional activities of Trotsky and Zinoviev after the August (1927) plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U. (B.). During the discussion of this matter at the meeting of the plenum held on October 23, J. V. Stalin delivered the speech: "The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now." For deceiving the Party and waging a factional struggle against it, the plenum expelled Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee and decided to submit to the Fifteenth Party Congress all the documents relating to the splitting activities of the leaders of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition. For the resolutions and decisions of the plenum, see Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U. Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums, Part II, 1953, pp. 275-311.)

Death, in which he did his best to blacken the Party, the Central Committee and the Soviet regime, and the gist of which was that the Central Committee of our Party was “concealing” Lenin’s “will.” In view of the fact that this Eastman had at one time been connected with Trotsky, we, the members of the Political Bureau, called upon Trotsky to dissociate himself from Eastman who, clutching at Trotsky and referring to the opposition, had made Trotsky responsible for the slanderous statements against our Party about the “will.” Since the question was so obvious, Trotsky did, indeed, publicly dissociate himself from Eastman in a statement he made in the press. It was published in September 1925 in *Bolshevik*, No. 16.

Permit me to read the passage in Trotsky’s article in which he deals with the question whether the Party and its Central Committee were concealing Lenin’s “will” or not. I quote Trotsky’s article:

In several parts of his book Eastman says that the Central Committee “concealed” from the Party a number of exceptionally important documents written by Lenin in the last period of his life (it is a matter of letters on the national question, the so-called “will,” and others); *there can be no other name for this than slander against the Central Committee of our Party*.¹²¹ From what Eastman says it may be inferred that Vladimir Ilyich intended those letters, which bore the character of advice on internal organisation, for the press. In point of fact, that is absolutely untrue. During his illness Vladimir Ilyich often sent proposals, letters, and so forth, to the Party’s leading institutions and to its congress. It goes without saying that all those letters and proposals were always delivered to those for whom they were intended, were brought to the knowledge of the delegates at the Twelfth and Thirteenth Congresses, and always, of course, exercised due influence upon the Party’s decisions; and if not all of those letters were published, it was because the author did not intend them for the press. Vladimir Ilyich did not leave any “will,” and the very character of his attitude towards the Party, as well as the character of the Party itself, precluded the possibility of such a “will.” What is

¹²¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

usually referred to as a “will” in the emigre and foreign bourgeois and Menshevik press (in a manner garbled beyond recognition) is one of Vladimir Ilyich’s letters containing advice on organisational matters. The Thirteenth Congress of the Party paid the closest attention to that letter, as to all of the others, and drew from it conclusions appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of the time. All talk about I concealing or violating a “will” is a malicious invention and is entirely directed against Vladimir Ilyich’s real will* and against the interests of the Party he created.¹²²

Clear, one would think. That was written by none other than Trotsky. On what grounds, then, are Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev now spinning a yarn about the Party and its Central Committee “concealing” Lenin’s “will”? It is “permissible” to spin yarns, but one should know where to stop.

It is said that in that “will” Comrade Lenin suggested to the congress that in view of Stalin’s “rudeness” it should consider the question of putting another comrade in Stalin’s place as General Secretary. That is quite true. Yes, comrades, I am rude to those who grossly and perfidiously wreck and split the Party. I have never concealed this and do not conceal it now. Perhaps some mildness is needed in the treatment of splitters, but I am a bad hand at that. At the very first meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee after the Thirteenth Congress I asked the plenum of the Central Committee to release me from my duties as General Secretary. The congress itself discussed this question. It was discussed by each delegation separately, and all the delegations unanimously, including Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinoviev, obliged. Stalin to remain at his post.

What could I do? Desert my post? That is not in my nature; I have never deserted any post, and I have no right to do so, for that would be desertion. As I have already said before, I am not a free agent, and when the Party imposes an obligation upon me, I must obey.

A year later I again put in a request to the plenum to release me, but I was again obliged to remain at my post.

122 See Trotsky’s article “Concerning Fastman’s Book *After Lenin’s Death*,” *Bolshevik*, No. 16, September 1, 1925, p. 68)

What else could I do?

As regards publishing the “will,” the congress decided not to publish it, since it was addressed to the congress and was not intended for publication.

We have the decision of a plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission in 1926 to ask the Fifteenth Congress for permission to publish this document. We have the decision of the same plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission to publish other letters of Lenin’s, in which he pointed out the mistakes of Kamenev and Zinoviev just before the October uprising and demanded their expulsion from the Party.¹²³

Obviously, talk about the Party concealing these documents is infamous slander. Among these documents are letters from Lenin urging the necessity of expelling Zinoviev and Kamenev from the Party. The Bolshevik Party, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, have never feared the truth. The strength of the Bolshevik Party lies precisely in the fact that it does not fear the truth and looks the truth straight in the face.

The opposition is trying to use Lenin’s “will” as a trump card; but it is enough to read this “will” to see that it is not a trump card for them at all. On the contrary, Lenin’s “will” is fatal to the present leaders of the opposition.

Indeed, it is a fact that in his “will” Lenin accuses Trotsky of being guilty of “non-Bolshevism” and, as regards the mistake Kamenev and Zinoviev made during October, he says that that mistake was not “accidental.” What does that mean? It means that Trotsky, who suffers from “non-Bolshevism,” and Kamenev and Zinoviev, whose mistakes are not “accidental” and can and certainly will be repeated, cannot be *politically* trusted.

It is characteristic that there is not a word, not a hint in the “will” about Stalin having made mistakes. It refers only to Stalin’s rudeness. But rudeness is not and cannot be counted as a defect in Stalin’s political line or position.

Here is the relevant passage in the “will”:

¹²³ V. I. Lenin, “Letter To Bolshevik Party Members” and “Letter To The Central Committee Of The R.S.D.L.P.(B.)” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XVI.

I shall not go on to characterise the personal qualities of the other members of the Central Committee. I shall merely remind you that the October episode with Zinoviev and Kamenev was, of course, not accidental, but that they can be blamed for it personally as little as Trotsky can be blamed for his non-Bolshevism.

Clear, one would think.

II. The Opposition's "Platform"

Next question. Why did not the Central Committee publish the opposition's "platform"? Zinoviev and Trotsky say that it was because the Central Committee and the Party "fear" the truth. Is that true? Of course not. More than that. It is absurd to say that the Party or the Central Committee fear the truth. We have the verbatim reports of the plenums of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission. Those reports have been printed in several thousand copies and distributed among the members of the Party. They contain the speeches of the oppositionists as well as of the representatives of the Party line. They are being read by tens and hundreds of thousands of Party members, [*Voices*: "That's true!"] If we feared the truth we would not have circulated those documents. The good thing about those documents is precisely that they enable the members of the Party to compare the Central Committee's position with the views of the opposition and to make their decision. Is that fear of the truth?

In October 1926, the leaders of the opposition strutted about and asserted, as they are asserting now, that the Central Committee feared the truth, that it was hiding their "platform," concealing it from the Party, and so forth. That is why they went snooping among the Party units in Moscow (recall the Aviapribor Factory), in Leningrad (recall the Putilov Works), and other places. Well, what happened? The communist workers gave our oppositionists a good drubbing, such a drubbing indeed that the leaders of the opposition were compelled to flee from the battlefield. Why did they not at that time dare to go farther, to all the Party units, to ascertain which of us fears the truth—the opposition or the Central Committee? It was because they got cold feet, being frightened by the real (and not imaginary) truth.

And now? Speaking honestly, is not a discussion going on now in the Party units? Point to at least one unit, containing at least one oppositionist and where at least one meeting has been held during the past three or four months, in which representatives of the opposition have not spoken, in which there has been no discussion. Is it not a fact that during the past three or four months the opposition has been coming forward whenever it could in the Party units with its counter-resolutions? [*Voices*: "Quite

true!”] Why, then, do not Trotsky and Zinoviev try to go to the Party units and expound their views?

A characteristic fact. In August this year, after the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, Trotsky and Zinoviev sent in a statement that they wanted to speak at a meeting of the Moscow active if the Central Committee had no objection. To this the Central Committee replied (and the reply was circulated among the local organizations) that it had no objection to Trotsky and Zinoviev speaking at such a meeting, provided, however, that they, as members of the Central Committee, did not speak against the decisions of the Central Committee. What happened? They dropped their request. [*General laughter.*]

Yes, comrades, somebody among us does fear the truth, but it is not the Central Committee, and still less the Party; it is the leaders of our opposition.

That being the case, why did not the Central Committee publish the opposition’s “platform”?

Firstly, because the Central Committee did not want and had no right to legalise Trotsky’s faction, or any factional group. In the Tenth Congress resolution “On Unity,” Lenin said that the existence of a “platform” is one of the principal signs of factionalism. In spite of that, the opposition drew up a “platform” and demanded that it be published, thereby violating the decision of the Tenth Congress. Supposing the

Central Committee had published the opposition’s “platform,” what would it have meant? It would have meant that the Central Committee was willing to participate in the opposition’s factional efforts to violate the decisions of the Tenth Congress. Could the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission agree to do that? Obviously, no self-respecting Central Committee could take that factional step. [*Voices: “Quite true!”*]

Further. In this same Tenth Congress resolution “On Unity,” written by Lenin, it is said: “The congress orders the immediate *dissolution* of all groups without exception that have been formed on the basis of one platform or another,” that “non-observance of this decision of the congress shall involve certain and immediate expulsion from the Party.” The directive is clear and definite. Supposing the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission had published the opposition’s “platform,”

could that have been called the dissolution of all groups without exception formed on one "platform" or another? Obviously not. On the contrary, it would have meant that the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission themselves were intending not to dissolve, but to help to organise groups and factions on the basis of the opposition's "platform." Could the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission take that step towards splitting the Party? Obviously, they could not.

Finally, the opposition's "platform" contains slanders against the Party which, if published, would do the Party and our state irreparable harm.

In fact, it is stated in the opposition's "platform" that our Party is willing to abolish the monopoly of foreign trade and make payment on all debts, hence, also on the war debts. Everybody knows that this is a disgusting slander against our Party, against our working class, against our state. Supposing we had published the "platform" containing this slander against the Party and the state, what would have happened? The only result would have been that the international bourgeoisie would have begun to exert greater pressure upon us, it would have demanded concessions to which we could not agree at all (for example, the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade, payments on the war debts, and so forth) and would have threatened us with war.

When members of the Central Committee like Trotsky and Zinoviev supply false reports about our Party to the imperialists of all countries, assuring them that we are ready to make the utmost concessions, including the abolition of the monopoly of foreign trade, it can have only one meaning: Messieurs the bourgeois, press harder on the Bolshevik Party, threaten to go to war against them; the Bolsheviks will agree to every concession if you press hard enough.

False reports about our Party lodged with Messieurs the imperialists by Zinoviev and Trotsky in order to aggravate our difficulties in the sphere of foreign policy—that is what the opposition's "platform" amounts to.

Whom does this harm? Obviously, it harms the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., our whole state.

Whom does it benefit? It benefits the imperialists of all countries.

Now I ask you: could the Central Committee agree to publish such filth in our press? Obviously, it could not.

The Trotskyist Opposition Before and Now

Such are the considerations that compelled the Central Committee to refuse to publish the opposition's "platform."

III. Lenin on Discussions and Oppositions in General

The next question. Zinoviev vehemently tried to prove that Lenin was in favour of discussion always and at all times. He referred to the discussion of various platforms that took place before the Tenth Congress and at the congress itself, but he “forgot” to mention that Lenin regarded the discussion that took place before the Tenth Congress as a mistake. He “forgot” to say that the Tenth Congress resolution “On Party Unity,” which was written by Lenin and was a *directive* for the development of our Party, ordered not the discussion of “platforms,” but the dissolution of all groups whatsoever formed on the basis of one “platform” or another. He “forgot” that at the Tenth Congress Lenin spoke in favour of the “prohibition” in future of all oppositions in the Party. He “forgot” to say that Lenin regarded the conversion of our Party into a “debating society” as absolutely impermissible.

Here, for example, is Lenin’s appraisal of the discussion that took place prior to the Tenth Congress:

I have already had occasion to speak about this today and, of course, I could only cautiously observe that there can hardly be many among you who do not regard this discussion as an excessive luxury. I cannot refrain from adding that, speaking for myself. I think that this luxury was indeed absolutely impermissible, and that in permitting such a discussion we undoubtedly made a mistake.¹²⁴

And here is what Lenin said at the Tenth Congress about any possible opposition after the Tenth Congress:

Consolidation of the Party, prohibition of an opposition in the Party—such is the political conclusion to be drawn from the present situation... We do not want an opposition now, comrades. And I think that the Party congress will have to draw this conclusion, to draw the conclusion that we must

¹²⁴ V. I. Lenin, “Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)—Report Of The Political Work Of The Central Committee, March 8” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

now put an end to the opposition, finish with it, we have had enough of oppositions now!¹²⁵

That is how Lenin regarded the question of discussion and of opposition in general.

¹²⁵ V. I. Lenin, “Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)—Summing-Up Speech on the Report of the C.C. of the R.C.P.(B.), March 9” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

IV. The Opposition and the “Third Force”

The next question. What was the need for Comrade Menzhinsky's statement about the whiteguards with whom some of the “workers” at the Trotskyists' illegal, anti-Party printing press are connected?

Firstly, in order to dispel the lie and slander that the opposition is spreading in connection with this question in its anti-Party sheets. The opposition assures everyone that the report about whiteguards who are connected in one way or another with allies of the opposition like Shcherbakov, Tverskoy, and others, is fiction, an invention, put into circulation for the purpose of discrediting the opposition. Comrade Menzhinsky's statement, with the depositions made by the people under arrest, leaves no doubt whatever that a section of the “workers” at the Trotskyists' illegal, anti-Party printing press are connected, indubitably connected, with whiteguard counter-revolutionary elements. Let the opposition try to refute those facts and documents.

Secondly, in order to expose the lies now being spread by Maslow's organ in Berlin (*Die Fabne des Kommunismus*, that is, *The Banner of Communism*). We have just received the last issue of this filthy rag, published by this renegade Maslow, who is occupied in slandering the U.S.S.R. and betraying state secrets of the U.S.S.R. to the bourgeoisie. This organ of the press prints for public information, in a garbled form, of course, the depositions made by the arrested whiteguards and their allies at the illegal, anti-Party printing press. [*Voices*: “Scandalous!”] Where could Maslow get this information from? This information is secret, for not all the members of the whiteguard band that are involved in the business of organising a conspiracy on the lines of the Pilsudski conspiracy have as yet been traced and arrested. This information was made known in the Central Control Commission to Trotsky, Zinoviev, Smilga and other members of the opposition. They were forbidden to make a copy of those depositions for the time being. But evidently, they did make a copy and hastened to send it to Maslow. But what does sending that information to Maslow for publication mean? It means warning the whiteguards who have not yet been traced and arrested, warning them that the Bolsheviks intend to arrest them.

Is it proper, is it permissible for Communists to do a thing like that? Obviously not.

The article in Maslow's organ bears a piquant heading: "Stalin Is Splitting the C.P.S.U.(B.). A Whiteguard Conspiracy. A Letter from the U.S.S.R." [*Voices*: "Scoundrels!"] Could we, after all this, after Maslow, with the aid of Trotsky and Zinoviev, had printed for public information garbled depositions of people under arrest, could we, after all this, refrain from making a report to the plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission and from contrasting the lying stories with the actual facts and the actual depositions?

That is why the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission considered it necessary to ask Comrade Menzhinsky to make a statement about the facts.

What follows from these depositions, from Comrade Menzhinsky's statement? Have we ever accused or are we now accusing the opposition of organising a military conspiracy? Of course, not. Have we ever accused or are we now accusing the opposition of taking part in this conspiracy? Of course, not. [*Muralov*: "You did make the accusation at the last plenum."] That is not true, Muralov. We have two statements by the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission about the illegal, anti-Party printing press and about the non-Party intellectuals connected with that printing press. You will not find a single sentence, not a single word, in those documents to show that we are accusing the opposition of participating in a military conspiracy. In those documents the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission merely assert that, when organising its illegal printing press, the opposition got into contact with bourgeois intellectuals, and that some of these intellectuals were, in their turn, found to be in contact with whiteguards who were hatching a military conspiracy. I would ask Muralov to point out the relevant passage in the documents published by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission in connection with this question. Muralov cannot point out such a passage because it does not exist.

That being the case, what are the charges we have made and still make against the opposition?

Firstly, that the opposition, in pursuing a splitting policy, organised an anti-Party, illegal printing press.

Secondly, that the opposition, for the purpose of organising this printing press, entered into a bloc with bourgeois intellectuals, part of whom turned out to be in direct contact with counter-revolutionary conspirators.

Thirdly, that, by enlisting the services of bourgeois intellectuals and conspiring with them against the Party, the opposition, independently of its will or desire, found itself encircled by the so-called “third force.”

The opposition proved to have much more confidence in those bourgeois intellectuals than in its own Party. Otherwise it would not have demanded the release of “all those arrested” in connection with the illegal printing press, including Shcherbakov, Tverskoy, Bolshakov and others, who were found to be in contact with counter-revolutionary elements.

The opposition wanted to have an anti-Party, illegal printing press; for that purpose it had recourse to the aid of bourgeois intellectuals; but some of those intellectuals proved to be in contact with downright counter-revolutionaries—such is the chain that resulted, comrades. Independently of the opposition’s will or desire, anti-Soviet elements flocked round it and strove to utilise its splitting activities for their own ends.

Thus, what Lenin predicted as far back as the Tenth Congress of our Party (see the Tenth Congress resolution “On Party Unity”), where he said that the “third force,” that is, the bourgeoisie, would certainly try to hitch on to the conflict within our Party in order to utilise the opposition’s activities for its own class ends, has come true.

It is said that counter-revolutionary elements sometimes penetrate our Soviet bodies also, at the fronts for example, without having any connection with the opposition. That is true. In such cases, however, the Soviet authorities arrest those elements and shoot them. But what did the opposition do? It demanded the *release* of the bourgeois intellectuals who were arrested in connection with the illegal printing press and were found to be in contact with counter-revolutionary elements. That is the trouble, comrades. That is what the opposition’s splitting activities lead to. Instead of thinking of all these dangers, instead of thinking of the pit that is yawning in front of them, our oppositionists heap slander on the Party and try with all their might to disorganise, to split our Party.

There is talk about a former Wrangel officer who is helping the OGPU to unmask counter-revolutionary organisations. The opposition leaps and dances and makes a great fuss about the fact that the former Wrangel officer to whom the opposition's allies, all these Shcherbakovs and Tverskoys, applied for assistance, proved to be an agent of the OGPU. But is there anything wrong in this former Wrangel officer helping the Soviet authorities to unmask counter-revolutionary conspiracies? Who can deny the right of the Soviet authorities to win former officers to their side in order to employ them for the purpose of unmasking counter-revolutionary organisations?

Shcherbakov and Tverskoy addressed themselves to this former Wrangel officer not because he was an agent of the OGPU, but because he was a former Wrangel officer, and they did so in order to employ him *against* the Party and *against* the Soviet Government. That is the point, and that is the misfortune of our opposition. And when, following up these clues, the OGPU quite unexpectedly came across the Trotskyists' illegal, anti-Party printing press, it found that, while arranging a bloc with the opposition. Messieurs the Shcherbakovs, Tverskoys and Bolshakovs were already in a bloc with counter-revolutionaries, with former Kolchak officers like Kostrov and Novikov, as Comrade Menzhinsky reported to you today.

That is the point, comrades, and that is the trouble with our opposition.

The opposition's splitting activities lead it to linking up with bourgeois intellectuals, and the link with bourgeois intellectuals makes it easy for all sorts of counter-revolutionary elements to envelop it—that is the bitter truth.

V. How the Opposition Is “Preparing” for the Congress

The next question: about the preparations for the congress. Zinoviev and Trotsky vehemently asserted here that we are preparing for the congress by means of repression. It is strange that they see nothing but “repression.” But what about the decision to open a discussion taken by a plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission more than a month before the congress—is that in your opinion preparation for the congress, or is it not? And what about the discussion in the Party units and other Party organisations that has been going on incessantly for three or four months already? And the discussion of the verbatim reports and decisions of the plenum that has been going on for the past six months, particularly the past three or four months, on all questions concerning home and foreign policy? What else can all this be called if not stimulating the activity of the Party membership, drawing it into the discussion of the major questions of our policy, preparing the Party membership for the congress?

Who is to blame if, in all this, the Party organisations do not support the opposition? Obviously, the opposition is to blame, for its line is one of utter bankruptcy, its policy is that of a bloc with all the anti-Party elements, including the renegades Maslow and Souvarine, against the Party and the Comintern.

Evidently, Zinoviev and Trotsky think that preparations for the congress ought to be made by organising illegal, anti-Party printing presses, by organising illegal, anti-Party meetings, by supplying false reports about our Party to the imperialists of all countries, by disorganising and splitting our Party. You will agree that this is a rather strange idea of what preparations for the Party congress mean. And when the Party takes resolute measures, including expulsion, against the disorganisers and splitters, the opposition raises a howl about repression.

Yes, the Party resorts and will resort to repression against disorganisers and splitters, for the Party must not be split under any circumstances, either before the congress or during the congress. It would be suicidal for the Party to allow out-and-out splitters, the allies of all sorts of Shcher-

bakovs, to wreck the Party just because only a month remains before the congress.

Comrade Lenin saw things in a different light. You know that in 1921 Lenin proposed that Shlyapnikov be expelled from the Central Committee and from the Party not for organising an anti-Party printing press, and not for allying himself with bourgeois intellectuals, but merely because, at a meeting of a Party unit, Shlyapnikov dared to criticise the decisions of the Supreme Council of National Economy. If you compare this attitude of Lenin's with what the Party is now doing to the opposition, you will realise what licence we have allowed the disorganisers and splitters.

You surely must know that in 1917, just before the October uprising, Lenin several times proposed that Kamenev and Zinoviev be expelled from the Party merely because they had criticised unpublished Party decisions in the semi-socialist, in the semi-bourgeois newspaper *Novaya Zbiza*.¹²⁶ But how many secret decisions of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission are now being published by our opposition in the columns of Maslow's newspaper in Berlin, which is a bourgeois, anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary newspaper! Yet we tolerate all this, tolerate it without end, and thereby give the splitters in the opposition the opportunity to wreck our Party. Such is the disgrace to which the opposition has brought us! But we cannot tolerate it forever, comrades. [*Voices: "Quite right!" Applause.*]

It is said that disorganisers who have been expelled from the Party and conduct anti-Soviet activities are being arrested. Yes, we arrest them, and we shall do so in future if they do not stop undermining the Party and the Soviet regime. [*Voices: "Quite right! Quite right!"*]

It is said that such things are unprecedented in the history of our Party. That is not true. What about the Myasnikov group?¹²⁷ What about the "Workers' Truth" group? Who does not know that the members of those groups were arrested with the full consent of Zinoviev, Trotsky and Kamenev? Why was it permissible three or four years ago to arrest disor-

¹²⁶ *Novaya Zhizn* (*New Life*)—a Menshevik newspaper published in Petrograd from April 1917; closed down in July 1918.

¹²⁷ Myasnikov group—a counter-revolutionary underground group which called itself the "workers' group." It was formed in Moscow in 1923 by G. Myasnikov and others who had been expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) and had very few members. It was dissolved in the same year.

ganisers who had been expelled from the Party, but is impermissible now, when some of the former members of the Trotskyist opposition go to the length of directly linking up with counter-revolutionaries?

You heard Comrade Menzhinsky's statement. In that statement it is said that a certain Stepanov (an armyman), a member of the Party, a supporter of the opposition, is in direct contact with counter-revolutionaries, with Novikov, Kostrov, and others, which Stepanov himself does not deny in his depositions. What do you want us to do with this fellow, who is in the opposition to this day? Kiss him, or arrest him? Is it surprising that the OGPU arrests such fellows? [*Voices from the audience*: "Quite right! Absolutely right!" *Applause*.]

Lenin said that the Party can be completely wrecked if indulgence is shown to disorganisers and splitters. That is quite true. That is precisely why I think that it is high time to stop showing indulgence to the leaders of the opposition and to come to the conclusion that Trotsky and Zinoviev must be expelled from the Central Committee of our Party. [*Voices*: "Quite right!"] That is the elementary conclusion and the elementary, minimum measure that must be taken in order to protect the Party from the disorganisers' splitting activities.

At the last plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission, held in August this year, some members of the plenum rebuked me for being too mild with Trotsky and Zinoviev, for advising the plenum against the immediate expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee. [*Voices from the audience*: "That's right, and we rebuke you now."] Perhaps I was too kind then and made a mistake in proposing that a milder line be adopted towards Trotsky and Zinoviev. [*Voices*: "Quite right!" Comrade Petrovsky: "Quite right. We shall always rebuke you for a rotten 'piece of string'!"] But now, comrades, after what we have gone through during these three months, after the opposition has broken the promise to dissolve its faction that it made in its special "declaration" of August 8, thereby deceiving the Party once again, after all this, there can be no more room at all for mildness. We must now step into the front rank with those comrades who are demanding that Trotsky and Zinoviev be expelled from the Central Committee. [*Stormy applause. Voices*: "Quite right! Quite right!" A voice from the audience: "Trotsky should be expelled from the Party."] Let the congress decide that, comrades.'

In expelling Trotsky and Zinoviev from the Central Committee we must submit for the consideration of the Fifteenth Congress all the documents which have accumulated concerning the opposition's splitting activities, and on the basis of those documents the congress will be able to adopt an appropriate decision.

VI. From Leninism to Trotskyism

The next question. In his speech Zinoviev touched upon the interesting question of “mistakes” in the Party’s line during the past two years and of the “correctness” of the opposition’s line. I should like to answer this briefly by clearing up the question of the *bankruptcy* of the opposition’s line and the *correctness* of our Party’s line during the past two years. But I am taking up too much of your attention, comrades. [*Voices*: “Please go on!”] *The chairman*: “Anyone against?” *Voices*: “Please go on!”]

What is the main sin of the opposition, which determined the bankruptcy of its policy? Its main sin is that it tried, is trying, and will go on trying to embellish Leninism with Trotskyism and to *replace* Leninism by Trotskyism. There was a time when Kamenev and Zinoviev defended Leninism from Trotsky’s attacks. At that time Trotsky himself was not so bold. That was one line. Later, however, Zinoviev and Kamenev, frightened by new difficulties, deserted to Trotsky’s side, formed something in the nature of an inferior August bloc with him and thus became captives of Trotskyism. That was further confirmation of Lenin’s earlier statement that the mistake Zinoviev and Kamenev made in October was not “accidental.” From fighting for Leninism, Zinoviev and Kamenev went over to the line of fighting for Trotskyism. That is an entirely different line. And that indeed explains why Trotsky has now become bolder.

What is the chief aim of the present united bloc headed by Trotsky? It is little by little to switch the Party from the Leninist course to that of Trotskyism. That is the opposition’s main sin. But the Party wants to remain a Leninist party. Naturally, the Party turned its back on the opposition and raised the banner of Leninism ever higher and higher. That is why yesterday’s leaders of the Party have now become renegades.

The opposition thinks that its defeat can be “explained” by the personal factor, by Stalin’s rudeness, by the obstinacy of Bukharin and Rykov, and so forth. That is too cheap an explanation! It is an incantation, not an explanation. Trotsky has been fighting Leninism since 1904. From 1904 until the February Revolution in 1917 he hung around the Mensheviks, desperately fighting Lenin’s Party all the time. During that period Trotsky suffered a number of defeats at the hand of Lenin’s Party. Why? Perhaps Stalin’s rudeness was to blame? But Stalin was not yet the secretary of the

Central Committee at that time; he was not abroad, but in Russia, fighting tsarism underground, whereas the struggle between Trotsky and Lenin raged abroad. So what has Stalin's rudeness got to do with it?

During the period from the October Revolution to 1922, Trotsky, already a member of the Bolshevik Party, managed to make two "grand" sorties against Lenin and his Party: in 1918—on the question of the Brest Peace; and in 1921—on the trade-union question. Both those sorties ended in Trotsky being defeated. Why? Perhaps Stalin's rudeness was to blame here? But at that time Stalin was not yet the secretary of the Central Committee. The secretarial posts were then occupied by notorious Trotskyists. So what has Stalin's rudeness got to do with it?

Later, Trotsky made a number of fresh sorties against the Party (1925, 1924, 1926, 1927) and each sortie ended in Trotsky suffering a fresh defeat.

Is it not obvious from all this that Trotsky's fight against the Leninist Party has deep, far-reaching historical roots? Is it not obvious from this that the struggle the Party is now waging against Trotskyism is a continuation of the struggle that the Party, headed by Lenin, waged from 1904 onwards?

Is it not obvious from all this that the attempts of the Trotskyists to replace Leninism by Trotskyism are the chief cause of the failure and bankruptcy of the entire line of the opposition?

Our Party was born and grew up in the storm of revolutionary battles. It is not a party that grew up in a period of peaceful development. For that very reason it is rich in revolutionary traditions and does not make a fetish of its leaders. At one time Plekhanov was the most popular man in the Party. More than that, he was the founder of the Party, and his popularity was incomparably greater than that of Trotsky or Zinoviev. Nevertheless, in spite of that, the Party turned away from Plekhanov as soon as he began to depart from Marxism and go over to opportunism. Is it surprising, then, that people who are not so "great," people like Trotsky and Zinoviev, found themselves at the tail of the Party after they began to depart from Leninism?

But the most striking indication of the opposition's opportunist degeneration, the most striking sign of the opposition's bankruptcy and fall, was its vote against the Manifesto of the Central Executive Com-

mittee of the U.S.S.R. The opposition is against the introduction of a seven-hour working day! The opposition is against the Manifesto of the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.! The entire working class of the U.S.S.R., the entire advanced section of the proletarians in all countries, enthusiastically welcome the Manifesto, unanimously applaud the idea of introducing a seven-hour working day—but the opposition votes against the Manifesto and adds its voice to the general chorus of bourgeois and Menshevik “critics,” it adds its voice to those of the slanderers on the staff of *Vorwärts*.¹²⁸

I did not think that the opposition could sink to such a disgrace.

¹²⁸ *Vorwärts* (*Forward*)—a newspaper, central organ of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, published from 1876 to 1933. After the Great October Socialist Revolution it became a centre of anti-Soviet propaganda.

VII. Some of the Most Important Results of the Party's Policy During the Past Few Years

Let us pass now to the question of our Party's line during the past two years; let us examine and appraise it.

Zinoviev and Trotsky said that our Party's line has proved to be unsound. Let us turn to the facts. Let us take four principle questions of our policy and examine our Party's line during the past two years from the standpoint of these questions. I have in mind such decisive questions as that of the peasantry, that of industry and its re-equipment, that of peace, and, lastly, that of the growth of the communist elements throughout the world.

The question of the peasantry. What was the situation in our country two or three years ago? You know that the situation in the countryside was a serious one. Our Volost Executive Committee chairmen, and officials in the countryside generally, were not always recognised and were often the victims of terrorism. Village correspondents were met with sawn-off rifles. Here and there, especially in the border regions, there were bandit activities; and in a country like Georgia there were even revolts.¹²⁹ Naturally, in such a situation the kulaks gained strength, the middle peasants rallied round the kulaks, and the poor peasants became disunited. The situation in the country was aggravated particularly by the fact that the productive forces in the countryside grew very slowly, part of the arable land remained quite untilled, and the crop area was about 70 to 75 per cent of the pre-war area. This was in the period before the Fourteenth Conference of our Party.

At the Fourteenth Conference the Party adopted a number of measures in the shape of certain concessions to the middle peasants designed to

¹²⁹ This refers to the counter-revolutionary revolts that broke out in Georgia on August 28, 1924. They were organised by the remnants of the defeated bourgeois-nationalist parties and by the émigré Menshevik "government" of N. Jordania on the instructions, and with the financial assistance, of the imperialist states and the leaders of the Second International. The revolts were quelled on August 29, the day after they broke out, with the active assistance of the Georgian workers and labouring peasantry.

accelerate the progress of peasant economy, increase the output of agricultural produce—food and raw materials, establish a stable alliance with the middle peasants, and hasten the isolation of the kulaks. At the Fourteenth Congress of our Party, the opposition, headed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, tried to disrupt this policy of the Party and proposed that we adopt instead what was, in essence, the policy of dekulakisation, a policy of restoring the Poor Peasants' Committees. In essence, that was a policy of reverting to civil war in the countryside. The Party repulsed this attack of the opposition; it endorsed the decisions of the Fourteenth Conference, approved the policy of revitalising the Soviets in the countryside and advanced the slogan of industrialisation as the main slogan of socialist construction. The Party steadfastly kept to the line of establishing a stable alliance with the middle peasants and of isolating the kulaks.

What did the Party achieve by this?

What it achieved was that peace was established in the countryside, relations with the main mass of the peasantry were improved, conditions were created for organising the poor peasants into an independent political force, the kulaks were still further isolated and the state and co-operative bodies gradually extended their activities to the individual farms of millions of peasants.

What does peace in the countryside mean? It is one of the fundamental conditions for the building of socialism. We cannot build socialism if we have bandit activities and peasant revolts. The crop area has now been brought up to pre-war dimensions (95 per cent), we have peace in the countryside, an alliance with the middle peasants, a more or less organised poor peasantry, strengthened rural Soviets and the enhanced prestige of the proletariat and its Party in the countryside.

We have thus created the conditions that enable us to push forward the offensive against the capitalist elements in the countryside and to ensure further success in the building of socialism in our country.

Such are the results of our Party's policy in the countryside during the two years.

Thus, it follows that our Party's policy on the major question of the relations between the proletariat and the peasantry has proved to be correct.

The question of industry. History tells us that so far not a single young state in the world has developed its industry, and its heavy industry in particular, without outside assistance, without foreign loans, or without plundering other countries, colonies, and so forth. That is the ordinary path of capitalist industrialisation. Britain developed her industry in the past by draining the vital sap from all countries, from all colonies, for hundreds of years and investing the loot in her industry. Germany has begun to rise lately because she has received loans from America amounting to several thousand million rubles.

We, however, cannot proceed by any of these paths. Colonial plunder is precluded by our entire policy. And we are not granted loans. Only one path is left to us, the path indicated by Lenin, namely: to raise our industry, to re-equip our industry on the basis of internal accumulations. The opposition has been croaking all the time about internal accumulations not being sufficient for the re-equipment of our industry. As far back as April 1926, the opposition asserted at a plenum of the Central Committee that our internal accumulations would not suffice for making headway with the re-equipment of our industry. At that time the opposition predicted that we would suffer failure after failure. Nevertheless, on making a check it has turned out that we have succeeded in making headway with the re-equipment of our industry during these two years. It is a fact that during the two years we have managed to invest over two thousand million rubles in our industry. It is a fact that these investments have proved to be sufficient to make further headway with the re-equipment of our industry and the industrialisation of the country. We have achieved what no other state in the world has yet achieved: we have raised our industry, we have begun to re-equip it, we have made headway in this matter on the basis of our own accumulations.

There you have the results of our policy on the question of the re-equipment of our industry.

Only the blind can deny the fact that our Party's policy in this matter has proved to be correct.

The question of foreign policy. The aim of our foreign policy, if one has in mind diplomatic relations with bourgeois states, is to maintain peace. What have we achieved in this sphere? What we have achieved is that we have upheld—well or ill, nevertheless we have upheld—peace.

What we have achieved is that, in spite of the capitalist encirclement, in spite of the hostile activities of the capitalist governments, in spite of the provocative sorties in Peking,¹³⁰ London¹³¹ and Paris¹³²—in spite of all this, we have not allowed ourselves to be provoked and have succeeded in defending the cause of peace.

We are not at war in spite of the repeated prophecies of Zinoviev and others—that is the fundamental fact in face of which all the hysterics of our opposition are of no avail. And this is important for us, because only under peace conditions can we promote the building of socialism in our country at the rate that we desire. Yet how many prophecies of war there have been! Zinoviev prophesied that we should be at war in the spring of this year. Later he prophesied that in all probability war would break out in the autumn of this year. Nevertheless, we are already facing the winter, but still there is no war.

Such are the results of our peace policy.

Only the blind can fail to see these results.

Lastly, the fourth question—that of the state of the communist forces throughout the world. Only the blind can deny that the Communist Parties are growing throughout the world, from China to America, from Britain to Germany. Only the blind can deny that the elements of the crisis of capitalism are growing and not diminishing. Only the blind can deny that the progress in the building of socialism in our country, the successes of our policy within the country, are one of the chief reasons for the growth of the communist movement throughout the world. Only the blind can deny the progressive increase in influence and prestige of the Communist International in all countries of the world.

¹³⁰ This refers to the armed attack by a detachment of Chinese soldiers and police upon the Soviet Embassy in Peking (Peiping) on April 6, 1927. The attack was instigated by the foreign imperialists with the object of provoking an armed conflict between China and the U.S.S.R.

¹³¹ This refers to the police raid on the Soviet Trade Delegation and on Arcos (the Anglo-Russian-Co-operative Society) in London, carried out on May 12, 1927, on the order of the British Conservative Government.

¹³² This refers to the anti-Soviet campaign in France in the autumn of 1927. It was inspired by the French Government, which supported all kinds of anti-Soviet activities, conducted a campaign of slander against the official Soviet representatives and institutions in Paris, and viewed with favour Britain's rupture of diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R.

VII. Some of the Most Important Results of the Party's Policy

Such are the results of our Party's line on the four principal questions of home and foreign policy during the past two years.

What does the correctness of our Party's policy signify? Apart from everything else, it can signify only one thing: the utter bankruptcy of the policy of our opposition.

VIII. Back to Axelrod

That is all very well, we may be told. The opposition's line is wrong, it is an anti-Party line. Its tactics cannot be called anything else than splitting tactics. The expulsion of Zinoviev and Trotsky is therefore the natural way out of the situation that has arisen. All that is true.

But there was a time when we all said that the leaders of the opposition must be kept in the Central Committee, that they should not be expelled. Why this change now? How is this turn to be explained? And is there a turn at all?

Yes, there is. How is it to be explained? It is due to the radical change that has taken place in the fundamental policy and organisational "scheme" of the leaders of the opposition. The leaders of the opposition, and primarily Trotsky, have changed for the worse. Naturally, this was bound to cause a change in the Party's policy towards these oppositionists.

Let us take, for example, such an important question of principle as that of the degeneration of our Party. What is meant by the degeneration of our Party? It means denying the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. What was Trotsky's position in this matter, say, about three years ago? You know that at that time the liberals and Mensheviks, the Smena-Vekhists¹³³ and all kinds of renegades kept on reiterating that the degeneration of our Party was inevitable. You know that at that time they quoted examples from the French revolution and asserted that the Bolsheviks were bound to suffer the same collapse as the Jacobins in their day suffered in France. You know that historical analogies with the French revolution (the downfall of the Jacobins) were then and are today the chief argument advanced by all the various Mensheviks and Smena-Vekhists against the maintenance of the proletarian dictatorship and the possibility of building socialism in our country.

¹³³ Smena-Vekhists—the representatives of a bourgeois political trend which arose in 1921 among the Russian whiteguard intelligentsia living abroad. It was headed by a group consisting of N. Ustryalov, Y. Kluchnikov, and others, who published the magazine *Smena Vekh* (Change of Landmarks). The Smena-Vekhists expressed the views of the new bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia in Soviet Russia who believed that, owing to the introduction of the New Economic Policy, the Soviet system would gradually degenerate into bourgeois democracy. (On the Smena-Vekhists, see V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 33, pp. 256-57, and J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 350-51 and Vol. 9, pp. 73-74.)

What was Trotsky's attitude towards this three years ago? He was certainly opposed to the drawing of such analogies. Here is what he wrote at that time in his pamphlet *The New Course* (1924):

The historical analogies with the Great French Revolution (the downfall of the Jacobins!) which liberalism and Menshevism utilise and console themselves with *are superficial and unsound*.^{134, 135}

Clear and definite! It would be difficult, I think, to express oneself more emphatically and definitely. Was Trotsky right in what he then said about the historical analogies with the French revolution that were being zealously advanced by all sorts of Smenka-Vekhists and Mensheviks? Absolutely right.

But now? Does Trotsky still adopt that position? Unfortunately, he does not. On the contrary even. During these three years Trotsky has managed to evolve in the direction of "Menshevism" and "liberalism." Now he himself asserts that drawing historical analogies with the French revolution is a sign not of Menshevism, but of "real," "genuine," "Leninism." Have you read the verbatim report of the meeting of the Presidium of the Central Control Commission held in July this year? If you have, you will easily understand that in his struggle against the Party Trotsky is now basing himself on the Menshevik theories about the degeneration of our Party on the lines of the downfall of the Jacobins in the period of the French revolution. Today, Trotsky thinks that twaddle about "Thermidor" is a sign of good taste.

From Trotskyism to "Menshevism" and "liberalism" in the fundamental question of degeneration—such is the path that the Trotskyists have travelled during the past three years.

The Trotskyists have changed. The Party's policy towards the Trotskyists has also had to change.

Let us now take a no less important question, such as that of *organisation*, of Party discipline, of the submission of the minority to the majority, of the role played by iron Party discipline in strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. Everybody knows that iron discipline in our Party

¹³⁴ My italics. —J. St.

¹³⁵ *The New Course*, p. 33

is one of the fundamental conditions for maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat and for success in building socialism in our country. Everybody knows that the first thing the Mensheviks in all countries try to do is to undermine the iron discipline in our Party. There was a time when Trotsky understood and appreciated the importance of iron discipline in our Party. Properly speaking, the disagreements between our Party and Trotsky never ceased, but Trotsky and the Trotskyists were clever enough to submit to the decisions of our Party. Everybody is aware of Trotsky's repeated statement that, no matter what our Party might be, he was ready to "stand to attention" whenever the Party ordered. And it must be said that often the Trotskyists succeeded in remaining loyal to the Party and to its leading bodies.

But now? Can it be said that the Trotskyists, the present opposition, are ready to submit to the Party's decisions, to stand to attention, and so forth? No. That cannot be said any longer. After they have twice broken their promise to submit to the Party's decisions, after they have twice deceived the Party, after they have organised illegal printing presses in conjunction with bourgeois intellectuals, after the repeated statements of Zinoviev and Trotsky made from this very rostrum that they were violating the discipline of our Party and would continue to do so—after all that it is doubtful whether a single person will be found in our Party who would dare to believe that the leaders of the opposition are ready to stand to attention before the Party. The opposition has now shifted to a new line, the line of splitting the Party, the line of creating a new party. The most popular pamphlet among the oppositionists at the present time is not Lenin's Bolshevik pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*,¹³⁶ but Trotsky's old Menshevik pamphlet *Our Political Tasks* (published in 1904), written in opposition to the organisational principles of Leninism, in opposition to Lenin's pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

You know that the essence of that old pamphlet of Trotsky's is repudiation of the Leninist conception of the Party and of Party discipline. In that pamphlet Trotsky never calls Lenin anything but "Maximilien Lenin," hinting that Lenin was another Maximilien Robespierre, striving, like the latter, for personal dictatorship. In that pamphlet Trotsky plainly

¹³⁶ V. I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

says that Party discipline need be submitted to only to the degree that Party decisions do not contradict the wishes and views of those who are called upon to submit to the Party. That is a purely Menshevik principle of organisation. Incidentally, that pamphlet is interesting because Trotsky dedicates it to the Menshevik p. Axelrod. That is what he says: “To my dear teacher Pavel Borisovich Axelrod.” [*Laughter. Voices*: “An out-and-out Menshevik!”]

From loyalty to the Party to the policy of splitting the Party, from Lenin’s pamphlet *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* to Trotsky’s pamphlet *Our Political Tasks*, from Lenin to Axelrod—such is the organisational path that our opposition has travelled.

The Trotskyists have changed. The Party’s organisational policy towards the Trotskyist opposition has also had to change.

Well, a good riddance! Go to your “dear teacher Pavel Borisovich Axelrod”! A good riddance! Only make haste, most worthy Trotsky, for, in view of his senility, “Pavel Borisovich” may die soon, and you may not reach your “teacher” in time. [*Prolonged applause.*]

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MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

Contents

Marxism and the National Question	267
I. The Nation	272
II. The National Movement	280
III. Presentation of the Question	288
IV. Cultural-National Autonomy	296
V. The Bund, Its Nationalism, Its Separatism	306
VI. The Caucasians, the Conference of the Liquidators	318
VII. The National Question in Russia	330
Report on the National Question	337
The October Revolution and the National Question	343
I. The February Revolution and the National Question	346
II. The October Revolution and the National Question	348
III. The World-Wide Significance of the October Revolution	352
The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia	355
The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question	365
Concerning the Presentation of the National Question	379

The Union of the Soviet Republics	387
The National Factors in Party and State Affairs	397
Reply to the Discussion on the Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs	419
Speech Delivered at the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions	425
I. Rights and “lefts” in the national republics and regions	426
II. Concerning the methods of training and reinforcing Marxist cadres in the republics and regions from along local people	436
The National Question	441
Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia	453
The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East	461
I. The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Soviet Republics of the East	463
II. The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Colonial and Dependent Countries of the East	472
The National Question Once Again	479

Excerpts from a Letter to Comrade Kaganovich and the Other Members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, Ukraine CP(B)	489
About China	493
Concerning the Proletarian Method of Liberating the Oppressed Peoples	519
The National Question and Leninism	523
I. The Concept "Nation"	526
II. The Rise and Development of Nations	528
III. The Future of Nations and National Languages	534
IV. The Policy of the Party on the National Question	542
Concerning Deviations in the National Question	547
Concerning the Deviation Towards Nationalism	559
On the Draft Constitution of the USSR	563
On Soviet Patriotism	571
On the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Help between the Soviet Union and Finland	575

MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

January 1913

The period of counter-revolution in Russia brought not only “thunder and lightning” in its train, but also disillusionment in the movement and lack of faith in common forces. As long as people believed in “a bright future,” they fought side by side irrespective of nationality—common questions first and foremost! But when doubt crept into people’s hearts, they began to depart, each to his own national tent—let every man count only upon himself! The “national question” first and foremost!

At the same time a profound upheaval was taking place in the economic life of the country. The year 1905 had not been in vain: one more blow had been struck at the survivals of serfdom in the countryside. The series of good harvests which succeeded the famine years, and the industrial boom which followed, furthered the progress of capitalism. Class differentiation in the countryside, the growth of the towns, the development of trade and means of communication all took a big stride forward. This applied particularly to the border regions. And it could not but hasten the process of economic consolidation of the nationalities of Russia. They were bound to be stirred into movement...

The “constitutional regime” established at that time also acted in the same direction of awakening the nationalities. The spread of newspapers and of literature generally, a certain freedom of the press and cultural institutions, an increase in the number of national theaters, and so forth, all unquestionably helped to strengthen “national sentiments.” The Duma, with its election campaign and political groups, gave fresh opportunities for greater activity of the nations and provided a new and wide arena for their mobilization.

And the mounting wave of militant nationalism above and the series of repressive measures taken by the “powers that be” in vengeance on the border regions for their “love of freedom,” evoked an answering wave of nationalism below, which at times took the form of crude chauvinism. The spread of Zionism¹ among the Jews, the increase of chauvinism in

“Marxism and the National Question” was written at the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913 in Vienna. It first appeared in the magazine *Prosveshcheniye* (*Enlightenment*), Nos. 3-5, 1913, under the title “The National Question and Social-Democracy” and was signed K. Stalin. In 1914 it was published by the Priboy Publishers, St. Petersburg, as a separate pamphlet entitled *The National Question and Marxism*. By order of the Minister of the Interior the pamphlet was withdrawn from all public libraries and reading rooms. In 1920 the article was republished by the People’s Commissariat for Nationalities in a *Collection of Articles* by J. V. Stalin on the

Poland, Pan-Islamism among the Tatars, the spread of nationalism among the Armenians, Georgians and Ukrainians, the general swing of the philistine towards anti-Semitism—all these are generally known facts.

The wave of nationalism swept onwards with increasing force, threatening to engulf the mass of the workers. And the more the movement for emancipation declined, the more plentifully nationalism pushed forth its blossoms.

At this difficult time Social-Democracy had a high mission—to resist nationalism and to protect the masses from the general “epidemic.” For Social-Democracy, and Social-Democracy alone, could do this, by countering nationalism with the tried weapon of internationalism, with the unity and indivisibility of the class struggle. And the more powerfully the wave of nationalism advanced, the louder had to be the call of Social-Democracy for fraternity and unity among the proletarians of all the nationalities of Russia. And in this connection particular firmness was demanded of the Social-Democrats of the border regions, who came into direct contact with the nationalist movement.

national question (State Publishing House, Tula). In 1934 the article was included in the book: J. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*. A Collection of Articles and Speeches. Lenin, in his article “The National Program of the RSDLP,” referring to the reasons which were lending prominence to the national question at that period, wrote: “This state of affairs, and the principles of the national program of Social-Democracy, have already been dealt with recently in theoretical Marxist literature (prime place must here be given to Stalin’s article).” In February 1913, Lenin wrote to Maxim Gorky: “We have a wonderful Georgian here who has sat down to write a big article for *Prosveshcheniye* after collecting *all* the Austrian and other material.” Learning that it was proposed to print the article with the reservation that it was for discussion only, Lenin vigorously objected, and wrote: “Of course, we are absolutely against this. It is a *very good* article. The question is a burning issue, and we shall not yield one jot of principle to the Bundist scum.” (Archives of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.) Soon after J. V. Stalin’s arrest, in March 1913, Lenin wrote to the editors of *Sotsial-Demokrat*: “...Arrests among us are very heavy. Koba has been taken... Koba managed to write a long article (for three issues of *Prosveshcheniye*) on the national question. Good! We must fight for the truth and against separatists and opportunists of the Bund and among the Liquidators.” (Archives of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.)

¹ Zionism—a reactionary nationalist trend of the Jewish bourgeoisie, which had followers among the intellectuals and the more backward sections of the Jewish workers. The Zionists endeavored to isolate the Jewish working-class masses from the general struggle of the proletariat. Today the Zionist organizations are the agents of the American imperialists in their machinations directed against the USSR and the People’s Democracies and the revolutionary movement in capitalist and colonial countries.

But not all Social-Democrats proved equal to the task—and this applies particularly to the Social-Democrats of the border regions. The Bund, which had previously laid stress on the common tasks, now began to give prominence to its own specific, purely nationalist aims: it went to the length of declaring “observance of the Sabbath” and “recognition of Yiddish” a fighting issue in its election campaign.² The Bund was followed by the Caucasus; one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, which, like the rest of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, had formerly rejected “cultural-national autonomy,” are now making it an immediate demand.³ This is without mentioning the conference of the Liquidators, which in a diplomatic way gave its sanction to nationalist vacillations.⁴

But from this it follows that the views of Russian Social-Democracy on the national question are not yet clear to all Social-Democrats.

It is evident that a serious and comprehensive discussion of the national question is required. Consistent Social-Democrats must work solidly and indefatigably against the fog of nationalism, no matter from what quarter it proceeds.

² See “Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund.”

³ See “Announcement of the August Conference.”

⁴ Ibid.

I. The Nation

What is a nation?

A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people.

This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons, and so on. The same must be said of the British, the Germans and others, who were formed into nations from people of diverse races and tribes.

Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the great empires of Cyrus and Alexander could not be called nations, although they came to be constituted historically and were formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but casual and loosely-connected conglomerations of groups, which fell apart or joined together according to the victories or defeats of this or that conqueror.

Thus, a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a stable community of people.

But not every stable community constitutes a nation. Austria and Russia are also stable communities, but nobody calls them nations. What distinguishes a national community from a state community? The fact, among others, that a national community is inconceivable without a common language, while a state need not have a common language. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish in Russia would be impossible if each did not have a common language, whereas the integrity of Russia and Austria is not affected by the fact that there are a number of different languages within their borders. We are referring, of course, to the spoken languages of the people and not to the official governmental languages.

Thus, a *common language* is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere speak different languages, or that all who speak one language

necessarily constitute one nation. A *common* language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations! There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there cannot be two nations speaking the same language! Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegians and the Danes, the English and the Irish.

But why, for instance, do the English and the Americans not constitute one nation in spite of their common language?

Firstly, because they do not live together, but inhabit different territories. A nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation.

But people cannot live together for lengthy periods unless they have a common territory. Englishmen and Americans originally inhabited the same territory, England, and constituted one nation. Later, one section of the English emigrated from England to a new territory, America, and there, in the new territory, in the course of time, came to form the new American nation. Difference of territory led to the formation of different nations.

Thus, a *common territory* is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But this is not all. Common territory does not by itself create a nation. This requires, in addition, an internal economic bond to weld the various parts of the nation into a single whole. There is no such bond between England and America, and so they constitute two different nations. But the Americans themselves would not deserve to be called a nation were not the different parts of America bound together into an economic whole, as a result of division of labor between them, the development of means of communication, and so forth.

Take the Georgians, for instance. The Georgians before the Reform inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other, each inciting the Persians and Turks against the other. The ephemeral and casual union of the principalities which some success-

ful king sometimes managed to bring about embraced at best a superficial administrative sphere, and rapidly disintegrated owing to the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia... Georgia came on the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, introduced division of labor between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole.

The same must be said of the other nations which have passed through the stage of feudalism and have developed capitalism.

Thus, a *common economic life*, economic cohesion, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But even this is not all. Apart from the foregoing, one must take into consideration the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a nation. Nations differ not only in their conditions of life but also in spiritual complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland, which speak one language, nevertheless constitute three distinct nations, it is in no small measure due to the peculiar psychological make-up which they developed from generation to generation as a result of dissimilar conditions of existence.

Of course, by itself, psychological make-up or, as it is otherwise called, "national character," is something intangible for the observer, but in so far as it manifests itself in a distinctive culture common to the nation it is something tangible and cannot be ignored.

Needless to say, "national character" is not a thing that is fixed once and for all, but is modified by changes in the conditions of life; but since it exists at every given moment, it leaves its impress on the physiognomy of the nation.

Thus, a *common psychological make-up*, which manifests itself in a *common culture*, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

We have now exhausted the characteristic features of a nation.

A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.

It is possible to conceive of people possessing a common “national character” who, nevertheless, cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically disunited, inhabit different territories, speak different languages, and so forth. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian and Caucasian Highland *Jews*, who, in our opinion, do not constitute a single nation.

It is possible to conceive of people with a common territory and economic life who nevertheless would not constitute a single nation because they have no common language and no common “national character.” Such, for instance, are the Germans and Letts in the Baltic region.

Finally, the Norwegians and the Danes speak one language, but they do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.

It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation.

It might appear that “national character” is not one of the characteristics but the sole essential characteristic of a nation, and that all the other characteristics are, properly speaking, only conditions for the development of a nation, rather than its characteristics. Such, for instance, is the view held by R. Springer, and more particularly by O. Bauer, who are Social-Democratic theoreticians on the national question well known in Austria.

Let us examine their theory of the nation.

According to Springer:

A nation is a union of similarly thinking and similarly speaking persons. [It is] a cultural community of modern people *no longer tied to the “soil.”* [our italics]⁵

⁵ R. Springer, *The National Problem*, Obshchestvennaya Polza Publishing House, 1909, p.43.

Thus, a “union” of similarly thinking and similarly speaking people, no matter how disconnected they may be, no matter where they live, is a nation.

Bauer goes even further.

What is a nation? [he asks.] Is it a common language which makes people a nation? But the English and the Irish... speak the same language without, however, being one people; the Jews have no common language and yet are a nation.⁶

What, then, is a nation?

A nation is a relative community of character.⁷

But what is character, in this case national character? National character is:

The sum total of characteristics which distinguish the people of one nationality from the people of another nationality—the complex of physical and spiritual characteristics which distinguish one nation from another.⁸

Bauer knows, of course, that national character does not drop from the skies, and he therefore adds:

The character of people is determined by nothing so much as by their destiny... A nation is nothing but a community with a common destiny [which, in turn, is determined] by the conditions under which people produce their means of subsistence and distribute the products of their labor.⁹

We thus arrive at the most “complete,” as Bauer calls it, definition of a nation:

*A nation is an aggregate of people bound into a community of character by a common destiny.*¹⁰

⁶ O. Bauer, *The National Question and Social-Democracy*, Serp Publishing House, 1909, pp. 1-2.

⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 139.

We thus have common national character based on a common destiny, but not necessarily connected with a common territory, language or economic life.

But what in that case remains of the nation? What common nationality can there be among people who are economically disconnected, inhabit different territories and from generation to generation speak different languages.

Bauer speaks of the Jews as a nation, although they “have no common language”;¹¹ but what “common destiny” and national cohesion is there, for instance, between the Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian and American Jews, who are completely separated from one another, inhabit different territories and speak different languages?

The above-mentioned Jews undoubtedly lead their economic and political life in common with the Georgians, Daghestanians, Russians and Americans respectively, and they live in the same cultural atmosphere as these; this is bound to leave a definite impression on their national character; if there is anything common to them left, it is their religion, their common origin and certain relics of the national character. All this is beyond question. But how can it be seriously maintained that petrified religious rites and fading psychological relics affect the “destiny” of these Jews more powerfully than the living social, economic and cultural environment that surrounds them? And it is only on this assumption that it is possible to speak of the Jews as a single nation at all.

What, then, distinguishes Bauer’s nation from the mystical and self-sufficient “national spirit” of the spiritualists?

Bauer sets up an impassable barrier between the “distinctive feature” of nations (national character) and the “conditions” of their life, divorcing the one from the other. But what is national character if not a reflection of the conditions of life, a coagulation of impressions derived from environment? How can one limit the matter to national character alone, isolating and divorcing it from the soil that gave rise to it?

Further, what indeed distinguished the English nation from the American nation at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, when America was still known as New England?

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Not national character, of course; for the Americans had originated from England and had brought with them to America not only the English language but also the English national character, which, of course, they could not lose so soon; although, under the influence of the new conditions, they would naturally be developing their own specific character. Yet, despite their more or less common character, they at that time already constituted a nation distinct from England! Obviously, New England as a nation differed then from England as a nation not by its specific national character, or not so much by its national character, as by its environment and conditions of life, which were distinct from those of England.

It is therefore clear that there is in fact no *single* distinguishing characteristic of a nation. There is only a sum total of characteristics, of which, when nations are compared, sometimes one characteristic (national character), sometimes another (language), or sometimes a third (territory, economic conditions), stands out in sharper relief. A nation constitutes the combination of all these characteristics taken together.

Bauer's point of view, which identifies a nation with its national character, divorces the nation from its soil and converts it into an invisible, self-contained force. The result is not a living and active nation, but something mystical, intangible and supernatural. For, I repeat, what sort of nation, for instance, is a Jewish nation which consists of Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian, American and other Jews, the members of which do not understand each other (since they speak different languages), inhabit different parts of the globe, will never see each other, and will never act together, whether in time of peace or in time of war?!

No, it is not for such paper "nations" that Social-Democracy draws up its national program. It can reckon only with real nations, which act and move, and therefore insist on being reckoned with.

Bauer is obviously confusing *nation*, which is a historical category, with *tribe*, which is an ethnographical category.

However, Bauer himself apparently feels the weakness of his position. While in the beginning of his book he definitely declares the Jews to be a nation,¹² he corrects himself at the end of the book and states that "in general capitalist society makes it impossible for them (the Jews) to

¹² See Bauer's book, p. 2.

continue as a nation,”¹³ by causing them to assimilate with other nations. The reason, it appears, is that “the Jews have no closed territory of settlement,”¹⁴ whereas the Czechs, for instance, have such a territory and, according to Bauer, will survive as a nation. In short, the reason lies in the absence of a territory.

By arguing thus, Bauer wanted to prove that the Jewish workers cannot demand national autonomy,¹⁵ but he thereby inadvertently refuted his own theory, which denies that a common territory is one of the characteristics of a nation.

But Bauer goes further. In the beginning of his book he definitely declares that “the Jews have no common language, and yet are a nation.”¹⁶ But hardly has he reached page 130 than he effects a change of front and just as definitely declares that “*unquestionably, no nation is possible without a common language.*” [our italics]¹⁷

Bauer wanted to prove that “language is the most important instrument of human intercourse,”¹⁸ but at the same time he inadvertently proved something he did not mean to prove, namely, the unsoundness of his own theory of nations, which denies the significance of a common language.

Thus this theory, stitched together by idealistic threads, refutes itself.

¹³ Ibid., p. 389.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 388.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 396.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

¹⁸ Ibid.

II. The National Movement

A nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism is at the same time a process of the constitution of people into nations. Such, for instance, was the case in Western Europe. The British, French, Germans, Italians and others were formed into nations at the time of the victorious advance of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.

But the formation of nations in those instances at the same time signified their conversion into independent national states. The British, French and other nations are at the same time British, etc., states. Ireland, which did not participate in this process, does not alter the general picture.

Matters proceeded somewhat differently in Eastern Europe. Whereas in the West nations developed into states, in the East multi-national states were formed, states consisting of several nationalities. Such are Austria-Hungary and Russia. In Austria, the Germans proved to be politically the most developed, and they took it upon themselves to unite the Austrian nationalities into a state. In Hungary, the most adapted for state organization were the Magyars—the core of the Hungarian nationalities—and it was they who united Hungary. In Russia, the uniting of the nationalities was undertaken by the Great Russians, who were headed by a historically formed, powerful and well-organized aristocratic military bureaucracy.

That was how matters proceeded in the East.

This special method of formation of states could take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations.

But capitalism also began to develop in the Eastern states. Trade and means of communication were developing. Large towns were springing up. The nations were becoming economically consolidated. Capitalism, erupting into the tranquil life of the nationalities which had been pushed

into the background, was arousing them and stirring them into action. The development of the press and the theater, the activity of the Reichsrat (Austria) and of the Duma (Russia) were helping to strengthen "national sentiments." The *intelligentsia* that had arisen was being imbued with "the national idea" and was acting in the same direction...

But the nations which had been pushed into the background and had now awakened to independent life, could no longer form themselves into independent national states; they encountered on their path the very powerful resistance of the ruling strata of the dominant nations, which had long ago assumed the control of the state. They were too late!...

In this way the Czechs, Poles, etc., formed themselves into nations in Austria; the Croats, etc., in Hungary; the Letts, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, etc., in Russia. What had been an exception in Western Europe (Ireland) became the rule in the East.

In the West, Ireland responded to its exceptional position by a national movement. In the East, the awakened nations were bound to respond in the same fashion.

Thus arose the circumstances which impelled the young nations of Eastern Europe on to the path of struggle.

The struggle began and flared up, to be sure, not between nations as a whole, but between the ruling classes of the dominant nations and of those that had been pushed into the background. The struggle is usually conducted by the urban petit bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the big bourgeoisie of the dominant nation (Czechs and Germans), or by the rural bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the landlords of the dominant nation (Ukrainians in Poland), or by the whole "national" bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations against the ruling nobility of the dominant nation (Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine in Russia).

The bourgeoisie plays the leading role.

The chief problem for the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and to emerge victorious from competition with the bourgeoisie of a different nationality. Hence its desire to secure its "own," its "home" market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism.

But matters are usually not confined to the market. The semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois bureaucracy of the dominant nation intervenes in the

struggle with its own methods of “arresting and preventing.” The bourgeoisie—whether big or small—of the dominant nation is able to deal more “swiftly” and “decisively” with its competitor. “Forces” are united and a series of restrictive measures is put into operation against the “alien” bourgeoisie, measures passing into acts of repression. The struggle spreads from the economic sphere to the political sphere. Restriction of freedom of movement, repression of language, restriction of franchise, closing of schools, religious restrictions, and so on, are piled upon the head of the “competitor.” Of course, such measures are designed not only in the interest of the bourgeois classes of the dominant nation, but also in furtherance of the specifically caste aims, so to speak, of the ruling bureaucracy.

But from the point of view of the results achieved this is quite immaterial; the bourgeois classes and the bureaucracy in this matter go hand in hand—whether it be in Austria-Hungary or in Russia.

The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand, is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its “native folk” and begins to shout about the “fatherland,” claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from among its “countrymen” in the interests of... the “fatherland.” Nor do the “folk” always remain unresponsive to its appeals; they rally around its banner: the repression from above affects them too and provokes their discontent.

Thus the national movement begins.

The strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the nation, the proletariat and peasantry, participate in it.

Whether the proletariat rallies to the banner of bourgeois nationalism depends on the degree of development of class antagonisms, on the class consciousness and degree of organization of the proletariat. The class-conscious proletariat has its own tried banner and has no need to rally to the banner of the bourgeoisie.

As far as the peasants are concerned, their participation in the national movement depends primarily on the character of the repressions. If the repressions affect the “land,” as was the case in Ireland, then the mass of the peasants immediately rally to the banner of the national movement.

On the other hand, if, for example, there is no serious *anti-Russian* nationalism in Georgia, it is primarily because there are neither Russian landlords nor a Russian big bourgeoisie there to supply the fuel for such nationalism among the masses. In Georgia there is *anti-Armenian* nationalism; but this is because there is still an Armenian big bourgeoisie there which, by getting the better of the small and still unconsolidated Georgian bourgeoisie, drives the latter to anti-Armenian nationalism.

Depending on these factors, the national movement either assumes a mass character and steadily grows (as in Ireland and Galicia), or is converted into a series of petty collisions, degenerating into squabbles and “fights” over signboards (as in some of the small towns of Bohemia).

The content of the national movement, of course, cannot everywhere be the same: it is wholly determined by the diverse demands made by the movement. In Ireland the movement bears an agrarian character; in Bohemia it bears a “language” character; in one place the demand is for civil equality and religious freedom, in another for the nation’s “own” officials, or its own Diet. The diversity of demands not infrequently reveals the diverse features which characterize a nation in general (language, territory, etc.). It is worthy of note that we never meet with a demand based on Bauer’s all-embracing “national character.” And this is natural: “national character” *in itself* is something intangible, and, as was correctly remarked by J. Strasser, “a politician can’t do anything with it.”¹⁹

Such, in general, are the forms and character of the national movement.

From what has been said, it will be clear that the national struggle under the conditions of *rising* capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves. Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle *externally* assumes a “nation-wide” character. But this is so only externally. *In its essence* it is always a bourgeois struggle, one that is to the advantage and profit mainly of the bourgeoisie.

But it does not by any means follow that the proletariat should not put up a fight against the policy of national oppression.

¹⁹ See his *Der Arbeiter und die Nation*, Reichenberg, 1912, p. 33.

Restriction of freedom of movement, disfranchisement, repression of language, closing of schools, and other forms of persecution affect the workers no less, if not more, than the bourgeoisie. Such a state of affairs can only serve to retard the free development of the intellectual forces of the proletariat of subject nations. One cannot speak seriously of a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tatar or Jewish worker if he is not allowed to use his native language at meetings and lectures, and if his schools are closed down.

But the policy of nationalist persecution is dangerous to the cause of the proletariat also on another account. It diverts the attention of large strata from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions “common” to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favorable soil for lying propaganda about “harmony of interests,” for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers.

This creates a serious obstacle to the cause of uniting the workers of all nationalities. If a considerable proportion of the Polish workers are still in intellectual bondage to the bourgeois nationalists, if they still stand aloof from the international labor movement, it is chiefly because the age-old anti-Polish policy of the “powers that be” creates the soil for this bondage and hinders the emancipation of the workers from it.

But the policy of persecution does not stop there. It not infrequently passes from a “system” of *oppression* to a “system” of *inciting* nations against each other, to a “system” of massacres and pogroms. Of course, the latter system is not everywhere and always possible, but where it is possible—in the absence of elementary civil rights—it frequently assumes horrifying proportions and threatens to drown the cause of unity of the workers in blood and tears. The Caucasus and South Russia furnish numerous examples. “Divide and rule”—such is the purpose of the policy of incitement. And where such a policy succeeds, it is a tremendous evil for the proletariat and a serious obstacle to the cause of uniting the workers of all the nationalities in the state.

But the workers are interested in the complete amalgamation of all their fellow-workers into a single international army, in their speedy and final emancipation from intellectual bondage to the bourgeoisie, and in

the full and free development of the intellectual forces of their brothers, whatever nation they may belong to.

The workers therefore combat and will continue to combat the policy of national oppression in all its forms, from the most subtle to the most crude, as well as the policy of inciting nations against each other in all its forms.

Social-Democracy in all countries therefore proclaims the right of nations to self-determination.

The right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right *forcibly* to interfere in the life of the nation, to *destroy* its schools and other institutions, to *violate* its habits and customs, to *repress* its language, or *curtail* its rights.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democracy will support every custom and institution of a nation. While combating the coercion of any nation, it will uphold only the right of the *nation* itself to determine its own destiny, at the same time agitating against harmful customs and institutions of that nation in order to enable the toiling strata of the nation to emancipate themselves from them.

The right of self-determination means that a nation may arrange its life in the way it wishes. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign, and all nations have equal rights.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democracy will support every demand of a nation. A nation has the right even to return to the old order of things; but this does not mean that Social-Democracy will subscribe to such a decision if taken by some institution of a particular nation. The obligations of Social-Democracy, which defends the interests of the proletariat, and the rights of a nation, which consists of various classes, are two different things.

In fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, the aim of Social-Democracy is to put an end to the policy of national oppression, to render it impossible, and thereby to remove the grounds of strife between nations, to take the edge off that strife and reduce it to a minimum.

This is what essentially distinguishes the policy of the class-conscious proletariat from the policy of the bourgeoisie, which attempts to

aggravate and fan the national struggle and to prolong and sharpen the national movement.

And that is why the class-conscious proletariat cannot rally under the “national” flag of the bourgeoisie.

That is why the so-called “evolutionary national” policy advocated by Bauer cannot become the policy of the proletariat. Bauer’s attempt to identify his “evolutionary national” policy with the policy of the “modern working class”²⁰ is an attempt to adapt the class struggle of the workers to the struggle of the nations.

The fate of a national movement, which is essentially a bourgeois movement, is naturally bound up with the fate of the bourgeoisie. The final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established. But even within the framework of capitalism it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum, to undermine it at the root, to render it as harmless as possible to the proletariat. This is borne out, for example, by Switzerland and America. It requires that the country should be democratized and the nations be given the opportunity of free development.

²⁰ See Bauer’s book, p. 166.

III. Presentation of the Question

A nation has the right freely to determine its own destiny. It has the right to arrange its life as it sees fit, without, of course, trampling on the rights of other nations. That is beyond dispute.

But *how* exactly should it arrange its own life, *what forms* should its future constitution take, if the interests of the majority of the nation and, above all, of the proletariat are to be borne in mind?

A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy, or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation, i.e., for its majority, i.e., for the toiling strata. The Transcaucasian Tatars as a nation may assemble, let us say, in their Diet and, succumbing to the influence of their beys and mullahs, decide to restore the old order of things and to secede from the state. According to the meaning of the clause on self-determination they are fully entitled to do so. But will this be in the interest of the toiling strata of the Tatar nation? Can Social-Democracy look on differently when the beys and mullahs assume the leadership of the masses in the solution of the national question?

Should not Social-Democracy interfere in the matter and influence the will of the nation in a definite way? Should it not come forward with a definite plan for the solution of the question, a plan which would be most advantageous for the Tatar masses?

But what solution would be most compatible with the interests of the toiling masses? Autonomy, federation or separation?

All these are problems, the solution of which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself.

More than that; conditions, like everything else, change, and a decision that is correct at one particular time may prove to be entirely unsuitable at another.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Marx was in favor of the secession of Russian Poland, and he was right, for it was then a question of emancipating a higher culture from a lower culture that was destroying it.

And the question at that time was not only a theoretical one, an academic question, but a practical one, a question of actual reality...

At the end of the nineteenth century the Polish Marxists were already declaring against the secession of Poland; and they too were right, for during the fifty years that had elapsed profound changes had taken place, bringing Russia and Poland closer economically and culturally. Moreover, during that period the question of secession had been converted from a practical matter into a matter of academic dispute, which excited nobody except perhaps intellectuals abroad.

This, of course, by no means precludes the possibility that certain internal and external conditions may arise in which the question of the secession of Poland may again come on the order of the day.

The solution of the national question is possible only in connection with the historical conditions taken in their development.

The economic, political and cultural conditions of a given nation constitute the only key to the question *how* a particular nation ought to arrange its life and *what forms* its future constitution ought to take. It is possible that a specific solution of the question will be required for each nation. If the dialectical approach to a question is required anywhere it is required here, in the national question.

In view of this we must declare our decided opposition to a certain very widespread, but very summary manner of "solving" the national question, which owes its inception to the Bund. We have in mind the easy method of referring to Austrian and South-Slav²¹ Social-Democracy, which has supposedly already solved the national question and whose solution the Russian Social-Democrats should simply borrow. It is assumed that whatever, say, is right for Austria is also right for Russia. The most important and decisive factor is lost sight of here, namely, the concrete historical conditions in Russia as a whole and in the life of each of the nations inhabiting Russia in particular.

Listen, for example, to what the well-known Bundist, V. Kossovsky, says:

When at the Fourth Congress of the Bund the principles of the question [i.e., the national question—*J. St.*] were discussed,

²¹ South-Slav Social-Democracy operates in the southern part of Austria.

the proposal made by one of the members of the congress to settle the question in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party met with general approval.²²

And the result was that “the congress unanimously adopted”... national autonomy.

And that was all! No analysis of the actual conditions in Russia, no investigation of the condition of the Jews in Russia. They first borrowed the solution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party, then they “approved” it, and finally they “unanimously adopted” it! This is the way the Bundists present and “solve” the national question in Russia...

As a matter of fact, Austria and Russia represent entirely different conditions. This explains why the Social-Democrats in Austria, when they adopted their national program at Brunn (1899)²³ in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party (with certain insignificant amendments, it is true), approached the question in an entirely non-Russian way, so to speak, and, of course, solved it in a non-Russian way.

First, as to the presentation of the question. How is the question presented by the Austrian theoreticians of cultural-national autonomy, the interpreters of the Brunn national program and the resolution of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party, Springer and Bauer?

Whether a multi-national state is possible [says Springer,] and whether, in particular, the Austrian nationalities are obliged to form a single political entity, is a question we shall not answer here but shall assume to be settled. For anyone who will not concede this possibility and necessity, our investigation will, of course, be purposeless. Our theme is as follows: inasmuch as these nations are *obliged* to live together, what *legal forms* will enable them *to live together in the best possible way?* [Springer’s italics]²⁴

²² See V. Kossovsky, *Problems of Nationality*, 1907, pp. 16-17.

²³ The Brünn Parteitag, or Congress, of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held on September 24-29, 1899. The resolution on the national question adopted by this congress is quoted by J. V. Stalin in the next chapter of this work.

²⁴ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 14.

Thus, the starting point is the state integrity of Austria. Bauer says the same thing:

We therefore start from the assumption that the Austrian nations will remain in the same state union in which they exist at present and inquire how the nations within this union will arrange their relations among themselves and to the state.²⁵

Here again the first thing is the integrity of Austria.

Can Russian Social-Democracy present the question *in this way*? No, it cannot. And it cannot because from the very outset it holds the view of the right of nations to self-determination, by virtue of which a nation has the right of secession.

Even the Bundist Goldblatt admitted at the Second Congress of Russian Social-Democracy that the latter could not abandon the standpoint of self-determination. Here is what Goldblatt said on that occasion:

Nothing can be said against the right of self-determination. If any nation is striving for independence, we must not oppose it. If Poland does not wish to enter into "lawful wedlock" with Russia, it is not for us to interfere with her.

All this is true. But it follows that the starting points of the Austrian and Russian Social-Democrats, far from being identical, are diametrically opposite. After this, can there be any question of borrowing the national program of the Austrians?

Furthermore, the Austrians hope to achieve the "freedom of nationalities" by means of petty reforms, by slow steps. While they propose cultural-national autonomy as a practical measure, they do not count on any radical change, on a democratic movement for liberation, which they do not even contemplate. The Russian Marxists, on the other hand, associate the "freedom of nationalities" with a probable radical change, with a democratic movement for liberation, having no grounds for counting on reforms. And this essentially alters matters in regard to the probable fate of the nations of Russia.

²⁵ See Bauer, *The National Question and Social-Democracy*, p.399.

Of course [says Bauer,] there is little probability that national autonomy will be the result of a great decision, of a bold action. Austria will develop towards national autonomy step by step, by a slow process of development, in the course of a severe struggle, as a consequence of which legislation and administration will be in a state of chronic paralysis. The new constitution will not be created by a great legislative act, but by a multitude of separate enactments for individual provinces and individual communities.²⁶

Springer says the same thing.

I am very well aware [he writes,] that institutions of this kind [i.e., organs of national autonomy—*J. St.*] are not created in a single year or a single decade. The reorganization of the Prussian administration alone took considerable time... It took the Prussians two decades finally to establish their basic administrative institutions. Let nobody think that I harbor any illusions as to the time required and the difficulties to be overcome in Austria.²⁷

All this is very definite. But can the Russian Marxists avoid associating the national question with “bold actions?” Can they count on partial reforms, on “a multitude of separate enactments” as a means for achieving the “freedom of nationalities?” But if they cannot and must not do so, is it not clear that the methods of struggle of the Austrians and the Russians and their prospects must be entirely different? How in such a state of affairs can they confine themselves to the one-sided, milk-and-water cultural-national autonomy of the Austrians? One or the other: either those who are in favor of borrowing do not count on “bold actions” in Russia, or they do count on such actions but “know not what they do.”

Finally, the immediate tasks facing Russia and Austria are entirely different and consequently dictate different methods of solving the national question. In Austria parliamentarism prevails, and under present conditions no development in Austria is possible without parliament. But

²⁶ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 422.

²⁷ See Springer, *The National Problem*, pp. 281-282.

parliamentary life and legislation in Austria are frequently brought to a complete standstill by severe conflicts between the national parties. That explains the chronic political crisis from which Austria has for a long time been suffering. Hence, in Austria the national question is the very hub of political life; it is the vital question. It is therefore not surprising that the Austrian Social-Democratic politicians should first of all try in one way or another to find a solution for the national conflicts—of course on the basis of the existing parliamentary system, by parliamentary methods...

Not so with Russia. In the first place, in Russia “there is no parliament, thank God.”²⁸ In the second place—and this is the main point—the hub of the political life of Russia is not the national but the agrarian question. Consequently, the fate of the Russian problem, and, accordingly, the “liberation” of the nations too, is bound up in Russia with the solution of the agrarian question, i.e., with the destruction of the relics of feudalism, i.e., with the democratization of the country. That explains why in Russia the national question is not an independent and decisive one, but a part of the general and more important question of the emancipation of the country.

The barrenness of the Austrian parliament [writes Springer,] is due precisely to the fact that every reform gives rise to antagonisms within the national parties which may affect their unity. The leaders of the parties, therefore, avoid everything that smacks of reform. Progress in Austria is generally conceivable only if the nations are granted indefeasible legal rights which will relieve them of the necessity of constantly maintaining national militant groups in parliament and will enable them to turn their attention to the solution of economic and social problems.²⁹

Bauer says the same thing.

National peace is indispensable first of all for the state. The state cannot permit legislation to be brought to a standstill by the very stupid question of language or by every quarrel

²⁸ “Thank God we have no parliament here”—the words uttered by V. Kokovtsev, tsarist Minister of Finance (later Prime Minister), in the State Duma on April 24, 1908.

²⁹ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 36.

between excited people on a linguistic frontier, or over every new school.³⁰

All this is clear. But it is no less clear that the national question in Russia is on an entirely different plane. It is not the national, but the agrarian question that decides the fate of progress in Russia. The national question is a subordinate one.

And so we have different presentations of the question, different prospects and methods of struggle, different immediate tasks. Is it not clear that, such being the state of affairs, only pedants who “solve” the national question without reference to space and time can think of adopting examples from Austria and of borrowing a program?

To repeat: the concrete historical conditions as the starting point, and the dialectical presentation of the question as the only correct way of presenting it—such is the key to solving the national question.

³⁰ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 401.

IV. Cultural-National Autonomy

We spoke above of the formal aspect of the Austrian national program and of the methodological grounds which make it impossible for the Russian Marxists simply to adopt the example of Austrian Social-Democracy and make the latter's program their own.

Let us now examine the essence of the program itself.

What then is the national program of the Austrian Social-Democrats?

It is expressed in two words: cultural-national autonomy.

This means, firstly, that autonomy would be granted, let us say, not to Bohemia or Poland, which are inhabited mainly by Czechs and Poles, but to Czechs and Poles generally, irrespective of territory, no matter what part of Austria they inhabit.

That is why this autonomy is called *national* and not territorial.

It means, secondly, that the Czechs, Poles, Germans, and so on, scattered over the various parts of Austria, taken personally, as individuals, are to be organized into integral nations, and are as such to form part of the Austrian state. In this way Austria would represent not a union of autonomous regions, but a union of autonomous nationalities, constituted irrespective of territory.

It means, thirdly, that the national institutions which are to be created for this purpose for the Poles, Czechs, and so forth, are to have jurisdiction only over "cultural," not "political" questions. Specifically political questions would be reserved for the Austrian parliament (the Reichsrat).

That is why this autonomy is also called *cultural*, cultural-national autonomy.

And here is the text of the program adopted by the Austrian Social-Democratic Party at the Brünn Congress in 1899.³¹

Having referred to the fact that "national dissension in Austria is hindering political progress," that "the final solution of the national question... is primarily a cultural necessity," and that "the solution is possible

³¹ The representatives of the South-Slav Social-Democratic Party also voted for it. See *Discussion of the National Question at the Brünn Congress*, 1906, p. 72.

only in a genuinely democratic society, constructed on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage,” the program goes on to say:

*The preservation and development of the national peculiarities*³² of the peoples of Austria is possible only on the basis of equal rights and by avoiding all oppression. Hence, all bureaucratic state centralism and the feudal privileges of individual provinces must first of all be rejected.

Under these conditions, and only under these conditions, will it be possible to establish national order in Austria in place of national dissension, namely, on the following principles:

1. Austria must be transformed into a democratic state federation of nationalities.
2. The historical crown provinces must be replaced by nationally delimited self-governing corporations, in each of which legislation and administration shall be entrusted to national parliaments elected on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage.
3. All the self-governing regions of one and the same nation must jointly form a single national union, which shall manage its national affairs on an absolutely autonomous basis.
4. The rights of national minorities must be guaranteed by a special law passed by the Imperial Parliament.

The program ends with an appeal for the solidarity of all the nations of Austria.³³

It is not difficult to see that this program retains certain traces of “territorialism,” but that in general it gives a formulation of national autonomy. It is not without good reason that Springer, the first agitator on

³² In M. Panin’s Russian translation (see his translation of Bauer’s book), “national individualities” is given in place of “national peculiarities.” Panin translated this passage incorrectly. The word “individuality” is not in the German text, which speaks of *nationalen Eigenart*, i.e., peculiarities, which is far from being the same thing.

³³ *Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages* in Brünn, 1899.

behalf of cultural-national autonomy, greets it with enthusiasm;³⁴ Bauer also supports this program, calling it a “theoretical victory”³⁵ for national autonomy; only, in the interests of greater clarity, he proposes that Point 4 be replaced by a more definite formulation, which would declare the necessity of “constituting the national minority within each self-governing region into a public corporation” for the management of educational and other cultural affairs.³⁶

Such is the national program of Austrian Social Democracy.

Let us examine its scientific foundations.

Let us see how the Austrian Social-Democratic Party justifies the cultural-national autonomy it advocates.

Let us turn to the theoreticians of cultural-national autonomy, Springer and Bauer.

The starting point of national autonomy is the conception of a nation as a union of individuals without regard to a definite territory.

“Nationality,” according to Springer, “is not essentially connected with territory”; nations are “autonomous unions of persons.”³⁷

Bauer also speaks of a nation as a “community of persons” which does not enjoy “exclusive sovereignty in any particular region.”³⁸

But the persons constituting a nation do not always live in one compact mass; they are frequently divided into groups, and in that form are interspersed among alien national organisms. It is capitalism which drives them into various regions and cities in search of a livelihood. But when they enter foreign national territories and there form minorities, these groups are made to suffer by the local national majorities in the way of restrictions on their language, schools, etc. Hence national conflicts. Hence the “unsuitability” of territorial autonomy. The only solution to such a situation, according to Springer and Bauer, is to organize the minorities of the given nationality dispersed over various parts of the state into a single, general, inter-class national union. Such a union alone, in

³⁴ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 286.

³⁵ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 549.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

³⁷ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 19.

³⁸ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 286.

their opinion, can protect the cultural interests of national minorities, and it alone is capable of putting an end to national discord.

Hence the necessity [says Springer,] to organize the nationalities, to invest them with rights and responsibilities...³⁹ [Of course,] a law is easily drafted, but will it be effective?... If one wants to make a law for nations, one must first create the nations...⁴⁰ Unless the nationalities are constituted it is impossible to create national rights and eliminate national dissension.⁴¹

Bauer expressed himself in the same spirit when he proposed, as “a demand of the working class,” that “the minorities should be constituted into public corporations based on the personal principle.”⁴²

But how is a nation to be organized? How is one to determine to what nation any given individual belongs?

“Nationality,” says Springer, “will be determined by certificates; every individual domiciled in a given region must declare his affiliation to one of the nationalities of that region.”⁴³

“The personal principle,” says Bauer, “presumes that the population will be divided into nationalities... On the basis of the free declaration of the adult citizens national registers must be drawn up.”⁴⁴

Further.

“All the Germans in nationally homogeneous districts,” says Bauer, “and all the Germans entered in the national registers in the dual districts will constitute the German nation and elect a *National Council*.”⁴⁵ The same applies to the Czechs, Poles, and so on.

The *National Council*, [according to Springer,] is the cultural parliament of the nation, empowered to establish the principles and to grant funds, thereby assuming guardianship over

³⁹ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 74.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 88-89.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 89.

⁴² See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 552.

⁴³ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 226.

⁴⁴ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 368.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 375.

national education, national literature, art and science, the formation of academies, museums, galleries, theaters, [etc.]⁴⁶

Such will be the organization of a nation and its central institution. According to Bauer, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party is striving, by the creation of these inter-class institutions “to make national culture... the possession of the whole people and thereby *unite all the members of the nation into a national-cultural community*.”⁴⁷ (our italics)

One might think that all this concerns Austria alone. But Bauer does not agree. He emphatically declares that national autonomy is essential also for other states which, like Austria, consist of several nationalities.

“In the multi-national state,” according to Bauer, “the working class of all the nations opposes the national power policy of the propertied classes with the demand for national autonomy.”⁴⁸

Then, imperceptibly substituting national autonomy for the self-determination of nations, he continues:

“Thus, national autonomy, the self-determination of nations, will necessarily become the constitutional program of the proletariat of all the nations in a multi-national state.”⁴⁹

But he goes still further. He profoundly believes that the inter-class “national unions” “constituted” by him and Springer will serve as a sort of prototype of the future socialist society. For he knows that “the socialist system of society... will divide humanity into nationally delimited communities”;⁵⁰ that under socialism there will take place “a grouping of humanity into autonomous national communities,”⁵¹ that thus, “socialist society will undoubtedly present a checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations,”⁵² and that accordingly “the socialist principle of nationality is a higher synthesis of the national principle and national autonomy.”⁵³

⁴⁶ See Springer, *The National Problem*, p. 234.

⁴⁷ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 553.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁴⁹ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 333.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 543.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 542.

Enough, it would seem...

These are the arguments for cultural-national autonomy as given in the works of Bauer and Springer.

The first thing that strikes the eye is the entirely inexplicable and absolutely unjustifiable substitution of national autonomy for self-determination of nations. One or the other: either Bauer failed to understand the meaning of self-determination, or he did understand it but for some reason or other deliberately narrowed its meaning. For there is no doubt a) that cultural-national autonomy presupposes the integrity of the multi-national state, whereas self-determination goes outside the framework of this integrity, and b) that self-determination endows a nation with complete rights, whereas national autonomy endows it only with "cultural" rights. That in the first place.

In the second place, a combination of internal and external conditions is fully possible at some future time by virtue of which one or another of the nationalities may decide to secede from a multi-national state, say from Austria. Did not the Ruthenian Social-Democrats at the Brünn Party Congress announce their readiness to unite the "two parts" of their people into one whole?⁵⁴ What, in such a case, becomes of national autonomy, which is "*inevitable for the proletariat of all the nations?*"

That sort of "solution" of the problem is it that mechanically squeezes nations into the Procrustean bed of an integral state?

Further: National autonomy is contrary to the whole course of development of nations. It calls for the organization of nations; but can they be artificially welded together if life, if economic development tears whole groups from them and disperses these groups over various regions? There is no doubt that in the early stages of capitalism nations become welded together. But there is also no doubt that in the higher stages of capitalism a process of dispersion of nations sets in, a process whereby a whole number of groups separate off from the nations, going off in search of a livelihood and subsequently settling permanently in other regions of the state; in the course of this, these settlers lose their old connections and acquire new ones in their new domicile, and from generation to generation acquire new habits and new tastes, and possibly a new language. The question arises: is

⁵⁴ See *Proceedings of the Brünn Social-Democratic Party Congress*, p. 48.

it possible to unite into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct? Where are the magic links to unite what cannot be united? Is it conceivable that, for instance, the Germans of the Baltic Provinces and the Germans of Transcaucasia can be “united into a single nation?” But if it is not conceivable and not possible, wherein does national autonomy differ from the utopia of the old nationalists, who endeavored to turn back the wheel of history?

But the unity of a nation diminishes not only as a result of migration. It diminishes also from internal causes, owing to the growing acuteness of the class struggle. In the early stages of capitalism one can still speak of a “common culture” of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But as large-scale industry develops and the class struggle becomes more and more acute, this “common culture” begins to melt away. One cannot seriously speak of the “common culture” of a nation when employers and workers of one and the same nation cease to understand each other. What “common destiny” can there be when the bourgeoisie thirsts for war, and the proletariat declares “war on war?” Can a single inter-class national union be formed from such opposed elements? And, after this, can one speak of the “union of all the members of the nation into a national-cultural community?”⁵⁵ Is it not obvious that national autonomy is contrary to the whole course of the class struggle?

But let us assume for a moment that the slogan “organize the nation” is practicable. One might understand bourgeois-nationalist parliamentarians endeavoring to “organize” a nation for the purpose of securing additional votes. But since when have Social-Democrats begun to occupy themselves with “organizing” nations, “constituting” nations, “creating” nations?

What sort of Social-Democrats are they who in the epoch of extreme intensification of the class struggle organize inter-class national unions? Until now the Austrian, as well as every other, Social-Democratic Party, had one task before it: namely, to organize the proletariat. That task has apparently become “antiquated.” Springer and Bauer are now setting a “new” task, a more absorbing task, namely, to “create,” to “organize” a nation.

⁵⁵ Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 553.

However, logic has its obligations: he who adopts national autonomy must also adopt this “new” task; but to adopt the latter means to abandon the class position and to take the path of nationalism.

Springer’s and Bauer’s cultural-national autonomy is a subtle form of nationalism.

And it is by no means fortuitous that the national program of the Austrian Social-Democrats enjoins a concern for the “*preservation and development* of the national peculiarities of the peoples.” Just think: to “preserve” such “national peculiarities” of the Transcaucasian Tatars as self-flagellation at the festival of Shakhsei-Vakhsei; or to “develop” such “national peculiarities” of the Georgians as the vendetta!...

A demand of this character is in place in an outright bourgeois nationalist program; and if it appears in the program of the Austrian Social-Democrats it is because national autonomy tolerates such demands, it does not contradict them.

But if national autonomy is unsuitable now, it will be still more unsuitable in the future, socialist society.

Bauer’s prophecy regarding the “division of humanity into nationally delimited communities”⁵⁶ is refuted by the whole course of development of modern human society. National barriers are being demolished and are falling, rather than becoming firmer. As early as the ‘forties Marx declared that “national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing” and that “the supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster.”⁵⁷ The subsequent development of mankind, accompanied as it was by the colossal growth of capitalist production, the re-shuffling of nationalities and the union of people within ever larger territories, emphatically confirms Marx’s thought.

Bauer’s desire to represent socialist society as a “checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations” is a timid attempt to substitute for Marx’s conception of socialism a revised version of Bakunin’s conception. The history of socialism proves that every such attempt contains the elements of inevitable failure.

⁵⁶ See the beginning of this chapter.

⁵⁷ See K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Chapter II, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, pp. 47-56.

There is no need to mention the kind of “socialist principle of nationality” glorified by Bauer, which, in our opinion, substitutes for the socialist principle of the *class struggle* the bourgeois “principle of nationality.” If national autonomy is based on such a dubious principle, it must be admitted that it can only cause harm to the working-class movement.

True, such nationalism is not so transparent, for it is skillfully masked by socialist phrases, but it is all the more harmful to the proletariat for that reason. We can always cope with open nationalism, for it can easily be discerned. It is much more difficult to combat nationalism when it is masked and unrecognizable beneath its mask. Protected by the armor of socialism, it is less vulnerable and more tenacious. Implanted among the workers, it poisons the atmosphere and spreads harmful ideas of mutual distrust and segregation among the workers of the different nationalities.

But this does not exhaust the harm caused by national autonomy. It prepares the ground not only for the segregation of nations but also for breaking up the united labor movement. The idea of national autonomy creates the psychological conditions for the division of the united workers’ party into separate parties built on national lines. The break-up of the party is followed by the break-up of the trade unions, and complete segregation is the result. In this way the united class movement is broken up into separate national rivulets.

Austria, the home of “national autonomy,” provides the most deplorable examples of this. As early as 1897 the Wimberg Party Congress⁵⁸) the once united Austrian Social-Democratic Party began to break up into separate parties. The break-up became still more marked after the Brünn Party Congress (1899), which adopted national autonomy. Matters have finally come to such a pass that in place of a united international party there are now six national parties, of which the Czech Social-Democratic Party will not even have anything to do with the German Social-Democratic Party.

But with the parties are associated the trade unions. In Austria, both in the parties and in the trade unions, the main brunt of the work is borne by the same Social-Democratic workers. There was therefore reason to fear that separatism in the party would lead to separatism in the trade unions

⁵⁸ The Vienna Congress (or *Wimberg* Congress—after the name of the hotel in which it met) of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held June 6-12, 1897.

and that the trade unions would also break up. That, in fact, is what happened: the trade unions have also divided according to nationality. Now things frequently go so far that the Czech workers will even break a strike of German workers, or will unite at municipal elections with the Czech bourgeois against the German workers.

It will be seen from the foregoing that cultural-national autonomy is no solution of the national question. Not only that, it serves to aggravate and confuse the question by creating a situation which favors the destruction of the unity of the labor movement, fosters the segregation of the workers according to nationality and intensifies friction among them. Such is the harvest of national autonomy.

V. The Bund, Its Nationalism, Its Separatism

We said above that Bauer, while granting the necessity of national autonomy for the Czechs, Poles, and so on, nevertheless opposes similar autonomy for the Jews. In answer to the question, "Should the working class demand autonomy for the Jewish people?" Bauer says that "national autonomy cannot be demanded by the Jewish workers."⁵⁹ According to Bauer, the reason is that "capitalist society makes it impossible for them (the Jews—*J. St.*) to continue as a nation."⁶⁰

In brief, the Jewish nation is coming to an end, and hence there is nobody to demand national autonomy for. The Jews are being assimilated.

This view of the fate of the Jews as a nation is not a new one. It was expressed by Marx as early as the forties,^{61,62} in reference chiefly to the German Jews. It was repeated by Kautsky in 1903,⁶³ in reference to the Russian Jews. It is now being repeated by Bauer in reference to the Austrian Jews, with the difference, however, that he denies not the present but the future of the Jewish nation.

Bauer explains the impossibility of preserving the existence of the Jews as a nation by the fact that "the Jews have no closed territory of settlement."⁶⁴ This explanation, in the main a correct one, does not however express the whole truth. The fact of the matter is primarily that among the Jews there is no large and stable stratum connected with the land, which would naturally rivet the nation together, serving not only as its framework but also as a "national" market. Of the five or six million Russian Jews, only three to four percent are connected with agriculture in any way.

⁵⁹ See Bauer, *The National Question*, pp. 381, 396.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

⁶¹ See K. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. III, Lawrence & Wishart, 2010.

⁶² The reference is to an article by Karl Marx entitled "Zur Judenfrage" ("The Jewish Question"), published in 1844 in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. (See K. Marx, F. Engels, "Zur Judengrache," in *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Band I, Dietz Berlin, 1990).

⁶³ See K. Kautsky, *The Kishinev Pogrom and the Jewish Question*, 1903.

⁶⁴ See Bauer, *The National Question*, p. 388.

The remaining ninety-six percent are employed in trade, industry, in urban institutions, and in general are town dwellers; moreover, they are spread all over Russia and do not constitute a majority in a single gubernia.

Thus, interspersed as national minorities in areas inhabited by other nationalities, the Jews as a rule serve “foreign” nations as manufacturers and traders and as members of the liberal professions, naturally adapting themselves to the “foreign nations” in respect to language and so forth. All this, taken together with the increasing re-shuffling of nationalities characteristic of developed forms of capitalism, leads to the assimilation of the Jews. The abolition of the “Pale of Settlement” would only serve to hasten this process of assimilation.

The question of national autonomy for the Russian Jews consequently assumes a somewhat curious character: autonomy is being proposed for a nation whose future is denied and whose existence has still to be proved!

Nevertheless, this was the curious and shaky position taken up by the Bund when at its Sixth Congress (1905) it adopted a “national program” on the lines of national autonomy.

Two circumstances impelled the Bund to take this step.

The first circumstance is the existence of the Bund as an organization of Jewish, and only Jewish, Social-Democratic workers. Even before 1897 the Social-Democratic groups active among the Jewish workers set themselves the aim of creating “a special Jewish workers’ organization.”⁶⁵ They founded such an organization in 1897 by uniting to form the Bund. That was at a time when Russian Social-Democracy as an integral body virtually did not yet exist. The Bund steadily grew and spread, and stood out more and more vividly against the background of the bleak days of Russian Social Democracy... Then came the 1900s. A *mass* labor movement came into being. Polish Social-Democracy grew and drew the Jewish workers into the mass struggle. Russian Social-Democracy grew and attracted the “Bund” workers. Lacking a territorial basis, the national framework of the Bund became too restrictive. The Bund was faced with the problem of either merging with the general international tide, or of upholding its

⁶⁵ See *Forms of the National Movement*, etc., edited by Kastelyansky, p. 772.

independent existence as an extra-territorial organization. The Bund chose the latter course.

Thus grew up the "theory" that the Bund is "the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat."

But to justify this strange "theory" in any "simple" way became impossible. Some kind of foundation "on principle," some justification "on principle," was needed. Cultural-national autonomy provided such a foundation. The Bund seized upon it, borrowing it from the Austrian Social-Democrats. If the Austrians had not had such a program, the Bund would have invented it in order to justify its independent existence "on principle."

Thus, after a timid attempt in 1901 (the Fourth Congress), the Bund definitely adopted a "national program" in 1905 (the Sixth Congress).

The second circumstance is the peculiar position of the Jews as separate national minorities within compact majorities of other nationalities in integral regions. We have already said that this position is undermining the existence of the Jews as a nation and puts them on the road to assimilation. But this is an objective process. Subjectively, in the minds of the Jews, it provokes a reaction and gives rise to the demand for a guarantee of the rights of a national minority, for a guarantee against assimilation. Preaching as it does the vitality of the Jewish "nationality," the Bund could not avoid being in favor of a "guarantee." And, having taken up this position, it could not but accept national autonomy. For if the Bund could seize upon any autonomy at all, it could only be national autonomy, i.e., *cultural-national* autonomy; there could be no question of territorial-political autonomy for the Jews, since the Jews have no definite integral territory.

It is noteworthy that the Bund from the outset stressed the character of national autonomy as a guarantee of the rights of national minorities, as a guarantee of the "free development" of nations. Nor was it fortuitous that the representative of the Bund at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, Goldblatt, defined national autonomy as "institutions which guarantee them (i.e., nations—*J. St.*) complete freedom of cultural development."⁶⁶ A similar proposal was made by supporters

⁶⁶ See *Minutes of the Second Congress*, 1903, p. 176.

of the ideas of the Bund to the Social-Democratic group in the Fourth Duma...

In this way the Bund adopted the curious position of national autonomy for the Jews.

We have examined above national autonomy in general. The examination showed that national autonomy leads to nationalism. We shall see later that the Bund has arrived at the same endpoint. But the Bund also regards national autonomy from a special aspect, namely, from the aspect of *guarantees* of the rights of national minorities. Let us also examine the question from this special aspect. It is all the more necessary since the problem of national minorities—and not of the Jewish minorities alone—is one of serious moment for Social-Democracy.

And so, it is a question of “*institutions which guarantee*” nations “complete freedom of cultural development.” [our italics—*J. St.*]

But what are these “institutions which guarantee,” etc.?

They are primarily the “National Council” of Springer and Bauer, something in the nature of a Diet for cultural affairs.

But can these institutions guarantee a nation “complete freedom of cultural development?” Can a Diet for cultural affairs guarantee a nation against nationalist persecution?

The Bund believes it can.

But history proves the contrary.

At one time a Diet existed in Russian Poland. It was a political Diet and, of course, endeavored to guarantee freedom of “cultural development” for the Poles. But, far from succeeding in doing so, it itself succumbed in the unequal struggle against the political conditions generally prevailing in Russia.

A Diet has been in existence for a long time in Finland, and it too endeavors to protect the Finnish nationality from “encroachments,” but how far it succeeds in doing so everybody can see.

Of course, there are Diets and Diets, and it is not so easy to cope with the democratically organized Finnish Diet as it was with the aristocratic Polish Diet. But the decisive factor, nevertheless, is not the Diet, but the general regime in Russia. If such a grossly Asiatic social and political regime existed in Russia now as in the past, at the time the Polish Diet was abolished, things would go much harder with the Finnish Diet. Moreover,

the policy of “encroachments” upon Finland is growing, and it cannot be said that it has met with defeat...

If such is the case with old, historically evolved institutions—political Diets—still less will young Diets, young institutions, especially such feeble institutions as “cultural” Diets, be able to guarantee the free development of nations.

Obviously, it is not a question of “institutions,” but of the general regime prevailing in the country. If there is no democracy in the country, there can be no guarantees of “complete freedom for cultural development” of nationalities. One may say with certainty that the more democratic a country is the fewer are the “encroachments” made on the “freedom of nationalities,” and the greater are the guarantees against such “encroachments.”

Russia is a semi-Asiatic country, and therefore in Russia the policy of “encroachments” not infrequently assumes the grossest form, the form of pogroms. It need hardly be said that in Russia “guarantees” have been reduced to the very minimum.

Germany is, however, European, and she enjoys a measure of political freedom. It is not surprising that the policy of “encroachments” there never takes the form of pogroms.

In France, of course, there are still more “guarantees,” for France is more democratic than Germany.

There is no need to mention Switzerland, where, thanks to her highly developed, although bourgeois democracy, nationalities live in freedom, whether they are a minority or a majority.

Thus the Bund adopts a false position when it asserts that “institutions” by themselves are able to guarantee complete cultural development for nationalities.

It may be said that the Bund itself regards the establishment of democracy in Russia as a *preliminary* condition for the “creation of institutions” and guarantees of freedom. But this is not the case. From the *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*⁶⁷ it will be seen that the Bund thinks it can secure “institutions” *on the basis* of the present system in Russia, by “reforming” the *Jewish community*.

⁶⁷ The Eighth Conference of the Bund was held in September 1910 in Lviv.

The community [one of the leaders of the Bund said at this conference,] may become the nucleus of future cultural-national autonomy. Cultural-national autonomy is a form of self-service on the part of nations, a form of satisfying national needs. The community form conceals within itself a similar content. They are links in the same chain, stages in the same evolution.⁶⁸

On this basis, the conference decided that it was necessary to strive “for *reforming* the Jewish community and transforming it by *legislative means* into a secular institution,” democratically organized⁶⁹ (our italics—*J. St.*).

It is evident that the Bund considers as the condition and guarantee not the democratization of Russia, but some future “secular institution” of the Jews, obtained by “reforming the Jewish community,” so to speak, by “legislative” means, through the Duma.

But we have already seen that “institutions” in themselves cannot serve as “guarantees” if the regime in the state generally is not a democratic one.

But what, it may be asked, will be the position under a future democratic system? Will not special “cultural institutions which guarantee,” etc., be required even under democracy? What is the position in this respect in democratic Switzerland, for example? Are there special cultural institutions in Switzerland on the pattern of Springer’s “National Council?” *No*, there are *not*. But do not the cultural interests of, for instance, the Italians, who constitute a minority there, suffer for that reason? One does not seem to hear that they do. And that is quite natural: in Switzerland all special cultural “institutions,” which supposedly “guarantee,” etc., are rendered superfluous by democracy.

And so, impotent in the present and superfluous in the future—such are the *institutions* of cultural-national autonomy, and such is national autonomy.

But it becomes still more harmful when it is thrust upon a “nation” whose existence and future are open to doubt. In such cases the advocates

⁶⁸ *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, 1911, p. 62.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

of national autonomy are obliged to protect and preserve all the peculiar features of the “nation,” the bad as well as the good, just for the sake of “saving the nation” from assimilation, just for the sake of “preserving” it.

That the Bund should take this dangerous path was inevitable. And it did take it. We are referring to the resolutions of recent conferences of the Bund on the question of the “Sabbath,” “Yiddish,” etc.

Social-Democracy strives to secure *for all nations* the right to use their own language. But that does not satisfy the Bund; it demands that “the rights of the *Jewish* language” (our italics—*J. St.*) be championed with “exceptional persistence,”⁷⁰ and the Bund itself in the elections to the Fourth Duma declared that it would give “preference to those of them (i.e., electors) who undertake to defend the rights of the Jewish language.”⁷¹

Not the *general* right of all nations to use their own language, but the *particular* right of the Jewish language, Yiddish! Let the workers of the various nationalities fight *primarily* for their own language: the Jews for Jewish, the Georgians for Georgian, and so forth. The struggle for the general right of all nations is a secondary matter. You do not have to recognize the right of all oppressed nationalities to use their own language; but if you have recognized the right of Yiddish, know that the Bund will vote for you, the Bund will “prefer” you.

But in what way then does the Bund differ from the bourgeois nationalists?

Social-Democracy strives to secure the establishment of a compulsory weekly rest day. But that does not satisfy the Bund; it demands that “by legislative means” “the Jewish proletariat should be guaranteed the right to observe their Sabbath and be relieved of the obligation to observe another day.”⁷²

It is to be expected that the Bund will take another “step forward” and demand the right to observe all the ancient Hebrew holidays. And if, to the misfortune of the Bund, the Jewish workers have discarded religious prejudices and do not want to observe these holidays, the Bund with its agitation for “the right to the Sabbath,” will remind them of the Sabbath, it will, so to speak, cultivate among them “the Sabbatarian spirit.”...

⁷⁰ See *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 85.

⁷¹ See *Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund*, p. 42.

⁷² See *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 83

Quite comprehensible, therefore, are the “passionate speeches” delivered at the Eighth Conference of the Bund demanding “Jewish hospitals,” a demand that was based on the argument that “a patient feels more at home among his own people,” that “the Jewish worker will not feel at ease among Polish workers, but will feel at ease among Jewish shopkeepers.”⁷³

Preservation of everything Jewish, conservation of all the national peculiarities of the Jews, even those that are patently harmful to the proletariat, isolation of the Jews from everything non-Jewish, even the establishment of special hospitals—that is the level to which the Bund has sunk!

Comrade Plekhanov was right a thousand times over when he said that the Bund “is adapting socialism to nationalism.” Of course, V. Kossovsky and Bundists like him may denounce Plekhanov as a “demagogue”^{74, 75}—paper will put up with, anything that is written on it—but those who are familiar with the activities of the Bund will easily realize that these brave fellows are simply afraid to tell the truth about themselves and are hiding behind strong language about “demagogy.”...

But since it holds such a position on the national question, the Bund was naturally obliged, in the matter of organization also, to take the path of segregating the Jewish workers, the path of formation of national *curiae* within Social-Democracy. Such is the logic of national autonomy!

And, in fact, the Bund did pass from the theory of sole representation to the theory of “national demarcation” of workers. The Bund demands that Russian Social-Democracy should “in its organizational structure introduce demarcation according to nationalities.”⁷⁶ From “demarcation” it made a “step forward” to the theory of “segregation.” It is not for noth-

⁷³ Ibid., p. 68.

⁷⁴ See *Nasha Zarya*, No. 9-10, 1912, p. 120.

⁷⁵ In an article entitled “Another Splitters’ Conference,” published in the newspaper *Za Partiyu*, October 2 (15), 1912, G. V. Plekhanov condemned the “August” Conference of the Liquidators and described the stand of the Bundists and Caucasian Social-Democrats as an adaptation of socialism to nationalism. Kossovsky, leader of the Bundists, criticized Plekhanov in a letter to the Liquidators’ magazine *Nasha Zarya*.

⁷⁶ See *An Announcement on the Seventh Congress of the Bund*, p. 7. The Seventh Congress of the Bund was held in Lvov at the end of August and beginning of September 1906.

ing that speeches were made at the Eighth Conference of the Bund declaring that “national existence lies in segregation.”⁷⁷

Organizational federalism harbors the elements of disintegration and separatism. The Bund is heading for separatism.

And, indeed, there is nothing else it can head for. Its very existence as an extra-territorial organization drives it to separatism. The Bund does not possess a definite integral territory; it operates on “foreign” territories, whereas the neighboring Polish, Lettish and Russian Social-Democracies are international territorial collective bodies. But the result is that every extension of these collective bodies means a “loss” to the Bund and a restriction of its field of action. There are two alternatives: either Russian Social-Democracy as a whole must be reconstructed on the basis of national federalism—which will enable the Bund to “secure” the Jewish proletariat for itself; or the territorial-international principle of these collective bodies remains in force—in which case the Bund must be reconstructed on the basis of internationalism, as is the case with the Polish and Lettish Social-Democracies.

This explains why the Bund from the very beginning demanded “the reorganization of Russian Social-Democracy on a federal basis.”⁷⁸

In 1906, yielding to the pressure from below in favor of unity, the Bund chose a middle path and joined Russian Social-Democracy. But how did it join? Whereas the Polish and Lettish Social-Democracies joined for the purpose of peaceable joint action, the Bund joined for the purpose of waging war for a federation. That is exactly what Medem, the leader of the Bundists, said at the time:

“We are joining not for the sake of an idyll, but in order to fight. There is no idyll, and only Manilovs could hope for one in the near future. The Bund must join the Party armed from head to foot.”⁷⁹

It would be wrong to regard this as an expression of evil intent on Medem’s part. It is not a matter of evil intent, but of the peculiar position of the Bund, which compels it to fight Russian Social-Democracy, which is built on the basis of internationalism. And in fighting it the Bund nat-

⁷⁷ See *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 72.

⁷⁸ See *Concerning National Autonomy and the Reorganization of Russian Social-Democracy on a Federal Basis*, 1902, published by the Bund.

⁷⁹ *Nashe Slovo*, No. 3, Vilno, 1906, p. 24.

urally violated the interests of unity. Finally, matters went so far that the Bund formally broke with Russian Social-Democracy, violating its statutes, and in the elections to the Fourth Duma joining forces with the Polish nationalists against the Polish Social-Democrats.

The Bund has apparently found that a rupture is the best guarantee for independent activity.

And so the “principle” of organizational “demarcation” led to separatism and to a complete rupture.

In a controversy with the old *Iskra*⁸⁰ on the question of federalism, the Bund once wrote:

Iskra wants to assure us that federal relations between the Bund and Russian Social-Democracy are bound to weaken the ties between them. We cannot refute this opinion by referring to practice in Russia, for the simple reason that Russian Social-Democracy does not exist as a federal body. But we can refer to the extremely instructive experience of Social-Democracy in Austria, which assumed a federal character by virtue of the decision of the Party Congress of 1897.⁸¹

That was written in 1902.

But we are now in the year 1913. We now have both Russian “practice” and the “experience of Social-Democracy in Austria.”

What do they tell us?

Let us begin with “the extremely instructive experience of Social-Democracy in Austria.” Up to 1896 there was a united Social-Democratic Party in Austria. In that year the Czechs at the International Congress in London for the first time demanded separate representation, and were given it. In 1897, at the Vienna (Wimberg) Party Congress, the united party was formally liquidated and in its place a federal league of six national “Social-Democratic groups” was set up. Subsequently these “groups” were converted into independent parties, which gradually severed contact with one another. Following the parties, the parliamentary group broke up—

⁸⁰ *Iskra* (*The Spark*)—the first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper founded by V. I. Lenin in 1900 (see J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, p. 91, Note 26).

⁸¹ *National Autonomy*, etc., 1902, p. 17, published by the Bund.

national “clubs” were formed. Next came the trade unions, which also split according to nationalities. Even the co-operative societies were affected, the Czech separatists calling upon the workers to split them up.⁸² We will not dwell on the fact that separatist agitation weakens the workers’ sense of solidarity and frequently drives them to strike-breaking.

Thus “the extremely instructive experience of Social Democracy in Austria” speaks *against* the Bund and for the old *Iskra*. Federalism in the Austrian party has led to the most outrageous separatism, to the destruction of the unity of the labor movement.

We have seen above that “practical experience in Russia” also bears this out. Like the Czech separatists, the Bundist separatists have broken with the general Russian Social-Democratic Party. As for the trade unions, the Bundist trade unions, from the outset they were organized on national lines, that is to say, they were cut off from the workers of other nationalities.

Complete segregation and complete rupture—that is what is revealed by the “Russian practical experience” of federalism.

It is not surprising that the effect of this state of affairs upon the workers is to weaken their sense of solidarity and to demoralize them; and the latter process is also penetrating the Bund. We are referring to the increasing collisions between Jewish and Polish workers in connection with unemployment. Here is the kind of speech that was made on this subject at the Ninth Conference of the Bund:

We regard the Polish workers, who are ousting us, as pogromists, as scabs; we do not support their strikes, we break them. Secondly, we reply to being ousted by ousting in our turn: we reply to Jewish workers not being allowed into the factories by not allowing Polish workers near the benches... *If we do not take this matter into our own hands the workers will follow others.*⁸³ [our italics—J. St.]

That is the way they talk about solidarity at a Bundist conference.

⁸² See the words quoted from a brochure by Vaněk [*Karl Vaněk* was a Czech Social-Democrat who took an openly chauvinist and separatist stand] in *Dokumente des Separatismus*, p. 29.

⁸³ See *Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund*, p. 19.

You cannot go further than that in the way of “demarcation” and “segregation.” The Bund has achieved its aim: it is carrying its demarcation between the workers of different nationalities to the point of conflicts and strike-breaking. And there is no other course:

“If we do not take this matter into our own hands, *the workers will follow others...*”

Disorganization of the labor movement, demoralization of the Social-Democratic ranks—that is what the federalism of the Bund leads to.

Thus the idea of cultural-national autonomy, the atmosphere it creates, has proved to be even more harmful in Russia than in Austria.

VI. The Caucasians, the Conference of the Liquidators

We spoke above of the waverings of one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats who were unable to withstand the nationalist “epidemic.” These waverings were revealed in the fact that, strange as it may seem, the above-mentioned Social-Democrats followed in the footsteps of the Bund and proclaimed cultural-national autonomy.

Regional autonomy for the Caucasus as a whole and cultural-national autonomy for the nations forming the Caucasus—that is the way these Social-Democrats, who, incidentally, are linked with the Russian Liquidators, formulate their demand.

Listen to their acknowledged leader, the not unknown *N.*

Everybody knows that the Caucasus differs profoundly from the central gubernias, both as regards the racial composition of its population and as regards its territory and agricultural development. The exploitation and material development of such a region require local workers acquainted with local peculiarities and accustomed to the local climate and culture. All laws designed to further the exploitation of the local territory should be issued locally and put into effect by local forces. Consequently, the jurisdiction of the central organ of Caucasian self-government should extend to legislation on local questions... Hence, the functions of the Caucasian center should consist in the passing of laws designed to further the economic exploitation of the local territory and the material prosperity of the region.⁸⁴

Thus—regional autonomy for the Caucasus.

If we abstract ourselves from the rather confused and incoherent arguments of *N.*, it must be admitted that his conclusion is correct. Regional autonomy for the Caucasus, within the framework of a general

⁸⁴ See *Chveni Tskhovreba (Our Life)*, No. 12, 1912. *Chveni Tskhovreba* was a Georgian daily newspaper published by the Georgian Mensheviks in Kutais from July 1 to 22, 1912.

state constitution, which *N.* does not deny, is indeed essential because of the peculiarities of its composition and its conditions of life. This was also acknowledged by the Russian Social-Democratic Party, which at its Second Congress proclaimed “regional self-government for those border regions which in respect of their conditions of life and the composition of their population differ from the regions of Russia proper.”

When Martov submitted this point for discussion at the Second Congress, he justified it on the grounds that “the vast extent of Russia and the experience of our centralized administration point to the necessity and expediency of regional self-government for such large units as Finland, Poland, Lithuania and the Caucasus.”

But it follows that regional *self-government* is to be interpreted as regional *autonomy*.

But *N.* goes further. According to him, regional autonomy for the Caucasus covers “only one aspect of the question.”

So far we have spoken only of the material development of local life. But the economic development of a region is facilitated not only by economic activity but also by spiritual, cultural activity... A culturally strong nation is strong also in the economic sphere... But the cultural development of nations is possible only in the national languages... Consequently, all questions connected with the native language are questions of national culture. Such are the questions of education, the judicature, the church, literature, art, science, the theater, etc. If the material development of a region unites nations, matters of national culture disunite them and place each in a separate sphere. Activities of the former kind are associated with a definite territory... This is not the case with matters of national culture. These are associated not with a definite territory but with the existence of a definite nation. The fate of the Georgian language interests a Georgian, no matter where he lives. It would be a sign of profound ignorance to say that Georgian culture concerns only the Georgians who live in Georgia. Take, for instance, the Armenian church. Armenians of various localities and states take part in the administration of its

affairs. Territory plays no part here. Or, for instance, the creation of a Georgian museum interests not only the Georgians of Tiflis but also the Georgians of Baku, Kutais, St. Petersburg, etc. Hence, the administration and control of all affairs of national culture must be left to the nations concerned we proclaim in favor of cultural-national autonomy for the Caucasian nationalities.⁸⁵

In short, since culture is not territory, and territory is not culture, cultural-national autonomy is required. That is all *N.* can say in the latter's favor.

We shall not stop to discuss again national-cultural autonomy in general; we have already spoken of its objectionable character. We should like to point out only that, while being unsuitable in general, cultural-national autonomy is also meaningless and nonsensical in relation to Caucasian conditions.

And for the following reason:

Cultural-national autonomy presumes more or less developed nationalities, with a developed culture and literature. Failing these conditions, autonomy loses all sense and becomes an absurdity. But in the Caucasus there are a number of nationalities each possessing a primitive culture, a separate language, but without its own literature; nationalities, moreover, which are in a state of transition, partly becoming assimilated and partly continuing to develop. How is cultural-national autonomy to be applied to them? What is to be done with such nationalities? How are they to be "organized" into separate cultural-national unions, as is undoubtedly implied by cultural-national autonomy?

What is to be done with the Mingrelians, the Abkhazians, the Adjarians, the Svanetians, the Lesghians, and so on, who speak different languages but do not possess a literature of their own? To what nations are they to be attached? Can they be "organized" into national unions? Around what "cultural affairs" are they to be "organized?"

What is to be done with the Ossetians, of whom the Transcaucasian Ossetians are becoming assimilated (but are as yet by no means wholly assimilated) by the Georgians while the Cis-Caucasian Ossetians are partly

⁸⁵ Ibid.

being assimilated by the Russians and partly continuing to develop and are creating their own literature? How are they to be “organized” into a single national union?

To what national union should one attach the Adjarians, who speak the Georgian language, but whose culture is Turkish and who profess the religion of Islam? Shall they be “organized” separately from the Georgians *with regard to religious affairs* and together with the Georgians *with regard to other cultural affairs*? And what about the Kobuletiens, the Ingushes, the Inghilois?

What kind of autonomy is that which excludes a whole number of nationalities from the list?

No, that is not a solution of the national question, but the fruit of idle fancy.

But let us grant the impossible and assume that our *N.*’s national-cultural autonomy has been put into effect. Where would it lead to, what would be its results? Take, for instance, the Transcaucasian Tatars, with their minimum percentage of literates, their schools controlled by the omnipotent mullahs and their culture permeated by the religious spirit... It is not difficult to understand that to “organize” them into a cultural national union would mean to place them under the control of the mullahs, to deliver them over to the tender mercies of the reactionary mullahs, to create a new strong hold of spiritual enslavement of the Tatar masses to their worst enemy.

But since when have Social-Democrats made it a practice to bring grist to the mill of the reactionaries?

Could the Caucasian Liquidators really find nothing better to “proclaim” than the isolation of the Transcaucasian Tatars within a cultural-national union which would place the masses under the thrall of vicious reactionaries?

No, that is no solution of the national question.

The national question in the Caucasus can be solved only by drawing the belated nations and nationalities into the common stream of a higher culture. It is the only progressive solution and the only solution acceptable to Social-Democracy. Regional autonomy in the Caucasus is acceptable because it would draw the belated nations into the common cultural development; it would help them to cast off the shell of small-na-

tion insularity; it would impel them forward and facilitate access to the benefits of higher culture. Cultural-national autonomy, however, acts in a diametrically opposite direction, because it shuts up the nations within their old shells, binds them to the lower stages of cultural development and prevents them from rising to the higher stages of culture.

In this way national autonomy counteracts the beneficial aspects of regional autonomy and nullifies it.

That is why the mixed type of autonomy which combines national-cultural autonomy and regional autonomy as proposed by *N.* is also unsuitable. This unnatural combination does not improve matters but makes them worse, because in addition to retarding the development of the belated nations it transforms regional autonomy into an arena of conflict between the nations organized in the national unions.

Thus cultural-national autonomy, which is unsuitable generally, would be a senseless, reactionary undertaking in the Caucasus.

So much for the cultural-national autonomy of *N.* and his Caucasian fellow-thinkers.

Whether the Caucasian Liquidators will take "a step forward" and follow in the footsteps of the Bund on the question of organization also, the future will show. So far, in the history of Social-Democracy federalism in organization always preceded national autonomy in program. The Austrian Social-Democrats introduced organizational federalism as far back as 1897, and it was only two years later (1899) that they adopted national autonomy. The Bundists spoke distinctly of national autonomy for the first time in 1901, whereas organizational federalism had been practiced by them since 1897.

The Caucasian Liquidators have begun from the end, from national autonomy. If they continue to follow in the footsteps of the Bund they will first have to demolish the whole existing organizational edifice, which was erected at the end of the nineties on the basis of internationalism.

But, easy though it was to adopt national autonomy, which is still not understood by the workers, it will be difficult to demolish an edifice which it has taken years to build and which has been raised and cherished by the workers of all the nationalities of the Caucasus. This Herostratian undertaking has only to be begun and the eyes of the workers will be opened to the nationalist character of cultural-national autonomy.

While the Caucasians are settling the national question in the usual manner, by means of verbal and written discussion, the All-Russian Conference of the Liquidators has invented a most unusual method. It is a simple and easy method. Listen to this:

Having heard the communication of the Caucasian delegation to the effect that... it is necessary to demand national-cultural autonomy, this conference, while expressing no opinion on the merits of this demand, declares that such an interpretation of the clause of the program which recognizes the right of every nationality to self-determination does not contradict the precise meaning of the program.

Thus, first of all they "express no opinion on the merits" of the question, and then they "declare." An original method...

And what does this original conference "declare?"

That the "demand" for national-cultural autonomy "does not contradict the precise meaning" of the program, which recognizes the right of nations to self-determination.

Let us examine this proposition.

The clause on self-determination speaks of the rights of nations. According to this clause, nations have the right not only of autonomy but also of secession. It is a question of *political* self-determination. Whom did the Liquidators want to fool when they endeavored to misinterpret this right of nations to political self-determination, which has long been recognized by the whole of international Social-Democracy?

Or perhaps the Liquidators will try to wriggle out of the situation and defend themselves by the sophism that cultural-national autonomy "does not contradict" the rights of nations? That is to say, if all the nations in a given state agree to arrange their affairs on the basis of cultural-national autonomy, they, the given sum of nations, are fully entitled to do so and nobody may *forcibly impose* a different form of political life on them. This is both new and clever. Should it not be added that, speaking generally, a nation has the right to abolish its own constitution, replace it by a system of tyranny and revert to the old order on the grounds that the

nation, and the nation alone, has the right to determine its own destiny? We repeat: in this sense, neither cultural-national autonomy nor any other kind of nationalist reaction “contradicts” *the rights of nations*.

Is that what the esteemed conference wanted to say?

No, not that. It specifically says that cultural-national autonomy “does not contradict,” not the rights of nations, but “the precise meaning” of the program. The point here is the program and not the rights of nations.

And that is quite understandable. If it were some nation that addressed itself to the conference of Liquidators, the conference might have directly declared that the nation has a right to cultural-national autonomy. But it was not a nation that addressed itself to the conference, but a “delegation” of Caucasian Social-Democrats—bad Social-Democrats, it is true, but Social Democrats nevertheless. And they inquired not about the rights of nations, but whether cultural-national autonomy contradicted the *principles of Social-Democracy*, whether it did not “contradict” “*the precise meaning*” of the program of Social-Democracy.

Thus, *the rights of nations* and “*the precise meaning*” of the program of *Social-Democracy* are not one and the same thing.

Evidently, there are demands which, while they do not contradict the rights of nations, may yet contradict “the precise meaning” of the program.

For example. The program of the Social-Democrats contains a clause on freedom of religion. According to this clause any group of persons *have the right* to profess any religion they please: Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, etc. Social-Democrats will combat all forms of religious persecution, be it of members of the Orthodox Church, Catholics or Protestants. Does this mean that Catholicism, Protestantism, etc., “do not contradict the precise meaning” of the program? No, it does not. Social-Democrats will always protest against persecution of Catholicism or Protestantism; they will always defend the right of nations to profess any religion they please; but at the same time, on the basis of a correct understanding of the interests of the proletariat, they will carry on agitation against Catholicism, Protestantism and the religion of the Orthodox Church in order to achieve the triumph of the socialist world outlook.

And they will do so just because there is no doubt that Protestantism, Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, etc., “contradict the precise meaning” of the program, i.e., the correctly understood interests of the proletariat.

The same must be said of self-determination. Nations have a right to arrange their affairs as they please; they have a right to preserve any of their national institutions, whether beneficial or harmful—nobody can (nobody has a right to!) *forcibly* interfere in the life of a nation. But that does not mean that Social-Democracy will not combat and agitate against the harmful institutions of nations and against the inexpedient demands of nations. On the contrary, it is the duty of Social-Democracy to conduct such agitation and to endeavor to influence the will of nations so that the nations may arrange their affairs in the way that will best correspond to the interests of the proletariat. For this reason Social-Democracy, while fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, will at the same time agitate, for instance, against the secession of the Tatars, or against cultural-national autonomy for the Caucasian nations; for both, while not contradicting the *rights* of these nations, do contradict “*the precise meaning*” of the program, i.e., the interests of the Caucasian proletariat.

Obviously, “the rights of nations” and the “precise meaning” of the program are on two entirely different planes. Whereas the “precise meaning” of the program expresses the interests of the proletariat, as scientifically formulated in the program of the latter, the rights of nations may express the interests of any class—bourgeoisie, aristocracy, clergy, etc.—depending on the strength and influence of these classes. On the one hand are the *duties* of Marxists, on the other the *rights* of nations, which consist of various classes. The rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy may or may not “contradict” each other, just as, say, the pyramid of Cheops may or may not contradict the famous conference of the Liquidators. They are simply not comparable.

But it follows that the esteemed conference most unpardonably muddled two entirely different things. The result obtained was not a solution of the national question but an absurdity, according to which the rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy “do not contradict” each other, and, consequently, every demand of a nation may be made compatible with the interests of the proletariat; consequently, no

demand of a nation which is striving for self-determination will “contradict the precise meaning” of the program!

They pay no heed to logic...

It was this absurdity that gave rise to the now famous resolution of the conference of the Liquidators which declares that the demand for national-cultural autonomy “does not contradict the precise meaning” of the program.

But it was not only the laws of logic that were violated by the conference of the Liquidators.

By sanctioning cultural-national autonomy it also violated its duty to Russian Social-Democracy. It most definitely did violate “the precise meaning” of the program, for it is well known that the Second Congress, which adopted the program, emphatically repudiated cultural-national autonomy. Here is what was said at the congress in this connection:

Goldblatt (Bundist): I deem it necessary that special institutions be set up to protect the freedom of cultural development of nationalities, and I therefore propose that the following words be added to § 8: “*and the creation of institutions which will guarantee them complete freedom of cultural development.*” [This, as we know, is the Bund’s definition of cultural-national autonomy.—*J. St.*]

Martynov pointed out that general institutions must be so constituted as to protect particular interests also. It is impossible to create a *special* institution to guarantee freedom for cultural development of the nationalities.

Yegorov: On the question of nationality we can adopt only negative proposals, i.e., we are opposed to all restrictions upon nationality. But we, as Social-Democrats, are not concerned with whether any particular nationality will develop as such. That is a spontaneous process.

Koltsov: The delegates from the Bund are always offended when their nationalism is referred to. Yet the amendment proposed by the delegate from the Bund is of a purely nationalist

character. We are asked to take purely offensive measures in order to support even nationalities that are dying out.

[In the end] *Goldblatt's amendment was rejected by the majority, only three votes being cast for it.*

Thus it is clear that the conference of the Liquidators did “contradict the precise meaning” of the program. It violated the program.

The Liquidators are now trying to justify themselves by referring to the Stockholm Congress, which they allege sanctioned cultural-national autonomy. Thus, V. Kossovsky writes:

As we know, according to the agreement adopted by the Stockholm Congress, the Bund was allowed to preserve its national program (pending a decision on the national question by a general Party congress). This congress recorded that national-cultural autonomy at any rate does not contradict the general Party program.⁸⁶

But the efforts of the Liquidators are in vain. The Stockholm Congress never thought of sanctioning the program of the Bund—it merely agreed to leave the question open for the time being. The brave Kossovsky did not have enough courage to tell the whole truth. But the facts speak for themselves. Here they are:

An amendment was moved by Galin: “The question of the national program *is left open in view of the fact that it is not being examined* by the congress.” (*For*—50 votes, *against*—32.)

Voice: What does that mean—open?

Chairman: When we say that the national question is left open, it means that the Bund may maintain its decision on this question until the next congress.⁸⁷ (*our italics—J. St.*)

As you see, the congress even did “not examine” the question of the national program of the Bund—it simply left it “open,” leaving the Bund

⁸⁶ *Nasha Zarya*, No. 9-10, 1912, p. 120.

⁸⁷ See *Nashe Slovo*, No. 8, 1906, p. 53.

itself to decide the fate of its program until the next general congress met. In other words, the Stockholm Congress avoided the question, expressing no opinion on cultural-national autonomy one way or another. The conference of the Liquidators, however, most definitely undertakes to give an opinion on the matter, declares cultural-national autonomy to be acceptable, and endorses it in the name of the Party program.

The difference is only too evident.

Thus, in spite of all its artifices, the conference of the Liquidators did not advance the national question a single step.

All it could do was to squirm before the Bund and the Caucasian national-Liquidators.

VII. The National Question in Russia

It remains for us to suggest a positive solution of the national question.

We take as our starting point that the question can be solved only in intimate connection with the present situation in Russia.

Russia is in a transitional period, when "normal," "constitutional" life has not yet been established and when the political crisis has not yet been settled. Days of storm and "complications" are ahead. And this gives rise to the movement, the present and the future movement, the aim of which is to achieve complete democratization.

It is in connection with this movement that the national question must be examined.

Thus the complete democratization of the country is the basis and condition for the solution of the national question.

When seeking a solution of the question we must take into account not only the situation at home but also the situation abroad. Russia is situated between Europe and Asia, between Austria and China. The growth of democracy in Asia is inevitable. The growth of imperialism in Europe is not fortuitous. In Europe, capital is beginning to feel cramped, and it is reaching out towards foreign countries in search of new markets, cheap labor and new fields of investment. But this leads to external complications and to war. No one can assert that the Balkan War⁸⁸ is the end and not the beginning of the complications. It is quite possible, therefore, that a combination of internal and external conditions may arise in which one or another nationality in Russia may find it necessary to raise and settle the question of its independence. And, of course, it is not for Marxists to create obstacles in such cases.

But it follows that Russian Marxists cannot dispense with the right of nations to self-determination.

Thus, *the right of self-determination is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

⁸⁸ The reference is to the first Balkan War, which broke out in October 1912 between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro on the one hand, and Turkey on the other.

Further. What must be our attitude towards nations which for one reason or another will prefer to remain within the framework of the whole?

We have seen that cultural-national autonomy is unsuitable. Firstly, it is artificial and impracticable, for it proposes artificially to draw into a single nation people whom the march of events, real events, is disuniting and dispersing to every corner of the country. Secondly, it stimulates nationalism, because it leads to the viewpoint in favor of the “demarcation” of people according to national *curiae*, the “organization” of nations, the “preservation” and cultivation of “national peculiarities”—all of which are entirely incompatible with Social-Democracy. It is not fortuitous that the Moravian separatists in the Reichsrat, having severed themselves from the German Social-Democratic deputies, have united with the Moravian bourgeois deputies to form a single, so to speak, Moravian “kolo.” Nor is it fortuitous that the separatists of the Bund have got themselves involved in nationalism by acclaiming the “Sabbath” and “Yiddish.” There are no Bundist deputies yet in the Duma, but in the Bund area there is a clerical-reactionary Jewish community, in the “controlling institutions” of which the Bund is arranging, for a beginning, a “get-together” of the Jewish workers and bourgeois.⁸⁹ Such is the logic of cultural-national autonomy.

Thus, *national* autonomy does not solve the problem.

What, then, is the way out?

The only correct solution is *regional* autonomy, autonomy for such crystalized units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc.

The advantage of regional autonomy consists, first of all, in the fact that it does not deal with a fiction bereft of territory, but with a definite population inhabiting a definite territory. Next, it does not divide people according to nations, it does not strengthen national barriers; on the contrary, it breaks down these barriers and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of a different kind, division according to classes. Finally, it makes it possible to utilize the natural wealth of the region and to develop its productive forces in the best possible way

⁸⁹ See *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, the concluding part of the resolution on the community.

without awaiting the decisions of a common center—functions which are not inherent features of cultural-national autonomy.

Thus, *regional autonomy is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

Of course, not one of the regions constitutes a compact, homogeneous nation, for each is interspersed with national minorities. Such are the Jews in Poland, the Letts in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine, and so on. It may be feared, therefore, that the minorities will be oppressed by the national majorities. But there will be grounds for fear only if the old order continues to prevail in the country. Give the country complete democracy and all grounds for fear will vanish.

It is proposed to bind the dispersed minorities into a single national union. But what the minorities want is not an artificial union, but real rights in the localities they inhabit. What can such a union give them *without* complete democratization? On the other hand, what need is there for a national union *when there is* complete democratization?

What is it that particularly agitates a national minority?

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union but because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself.

A minority is discontented not because there is no artificial union but because it does not possess its own schools. Give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will disappear.

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience (religious liberty), liberty of movement, etc. Give it these liberties and it will cease to be discontented.

Thus, *equal rights of nations in all forms (language, schools, etc.) is an essential element* in the solution of the national question. Consequently, a state law based on complete democratization of the country is required, prohibiting all national privileges without exception and every kind of disability or restriction on the rights of national minorities.

That, and that alone, is the real, not a paper guarantee of the rights of a minority.

One may or may not dispute the existence of a logical connection between organizational federalism and cultural-national autonomy. But one cannot dispute the fact that the latter creates an atmosphere favoring unlimited federalism, developing into complete rupture, into separatism. If the Czechs in Austria and the Bundists in Russia began with autonomy, passed to federation and ended in separatism, there can be no doubt that an important part in this was played by the nationalist atmosphere that is naturally generated by cultural-national autonomy. It is not fortuitous that national autonomy and organizational federalism go hand in hand. It is quite understandable. Both demand demarcation according to nationalities. Both presume organization according to nationalities. The similarity is beyond question. The only difference is that in one case the population as a whole is divided, while in the other it is the Social-Democratic workers who are divided.

We know where the demarcation of workers according to nationalities leads to. The disintegration of a united workers' party, the splitting of trade unions according to nationalities, aggravation of national friction, national strike-breaking, complete demoralization within the ranks of Social-Democracy—such are the results of organizational federalism. This is eloquently borne out by the history of Social-Democracy in Austria and the activities of the Bund in Russia.

The only cure for this is organization on the basis of internationalism.

To unite locally the workers of all nationalities of Russia into *single, integral* collective bodies, to unite these collective bodies into a *single* party—such is the task.

It goes without saying that a party structure of this kind does not preclude, but on the contrary presumes wide autonomy for the *regions* within the single integral party.

The experience of the Caucasus proves the expediency of this type of organization. If the Caucasians have succeeded in overcoming the national friction between the Armenian and Tatar workers; if they have succeeded in safeguarding the population against the possibility of massacres and shooting affrays; if in Baku, that kaleidoscope of national groups, national conflicts are now no longer possible, and if it has been possible to draw the workers there into the single current of a powerful movement, then the

international structure of the Caucasian Social-Democracy was not the least factor in bringing this about.

The type of organization influences not only practical work. It stamps an indelible impression on the whole mental life of the worker. The worker lives the life of his organization, which stimulates his intellectual growth and educates him. And thus, acting within his organization and continually meeting their comrades from other nationalities, and side by side with them waging a common struggle under the leadership of a common collective body, he becomes deeply imbued with the idea that workers are *primarily* members of one class family, members of the united army of socialism. And this cannot but have a tremendous educational value for large sections of the working class.

Therefore, the international type of organization serves as a school of fraternal sentiments and is a tremendous agitational factor on behalf of internationalism.

But this is not the case with an organization on the basis of nationalities. When the workers are organized according to nationality, they isolate themselves within their national shells, fenced off from each other by organizational barriers. The stress is laid not on what is *common* to the workers but on what distinguishes them from each other. In this type of organization the worker is *primarily* a member of his nation: a Jew, a Pole, and so on. It is not surprising that *national* federalism in organization inculcates in the workers a spirit of national seclusion.

Therefore, the national type of organization is a school of national narrow-mindedness and stagnation.

Thus we are confronted by two *fundamentally* different types of organization: the type based on international solidarity and the type based on the organizational "demarcation" of the workers according to nationalities.

Attempts to reconcile these two types have so far been vain. The compromise rules of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party drawn up in Wimberg in 1897 were left hanging in the air. The Austrian party fell to pieces and dragged the trade unions with it. "Compromise" proved to be not only utopian, but harmful. Strasser is right when he says that "sepa-

ratism achieved its first triumph at the Wimberg Party Congress.”⁹⁰ The same is true in Russia. The “compromise” with the federalism of the Bund which took place at the Stockholm Congress ended in a complete fiasco. The Bund violated the Stockholm compromise. Ever since the Stockholm Congress the Bund has been an obstacle in the way of a union of the workers locally in a *single* organization, which would include workers of *all nationalities*. And the Bund has obstinately persisted in its separatist tactics in spite of the fact that in 1907 and in 1908 Russian Social-Democracy repeatedly demanded that unity should at last be established from below among the workers of all nationalities.⁹¹ The Bund, which began with organizational national autonomy, in fact passed to federalism, only to end in complete rupture, separatism. And by breaking with the Russian Social-Democratic Party it caused disharmony and disorganization in the ranks of the latter. Let us recall the Jagiello affair,⁹² for instance.

The path of “compromise” must therefore be discarded as utopian and harmful.

One thing or the other: *either* the federalism of the Bund, in which case the Russian Social-Democratic Party must re-form itself on a basis of “demarcation” of the workers according to nationalities; or an international type of organization, in which case the Bund must reform itself on a basis of territorial autonomy after the pattern of the Caucasian, Lettish and Polish Social-Democracies, and thus make possible the direct union of the Jewish workers with the workers of the other nationalities of Russia.

There is no middle course: principles triumph, they do not “compromise.”

⁹⁰ See his *Der Arbeiter und die Nation*, 1912.

⁹¹ See the resolutions of the Fourth (the “Third All-Russian”) Conference of the RSDLP held November 5-12, 1907, and of the Fifth (the “All-Russian 1908”) Conference of the RSDLP held December 21-27, 1908 (January 3-9, 1909) (See *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU(B) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Vol. I, 6th Russ. ed., 1940, pp. 118, 131.)

⁹² E. J. Jagiello—a member of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.), was elected to the Fourth State Duma for Warsaw as a result of a bloc formed by the Bund, the Polish Socialist Party and the bourgeois nationalists against the Polish Social-Democrats. By a vote of the seven Menshevik Liquidators against the six Bolsheviks, the Social-Democratic group in the Duma adopted a resolution that Jagiello be accepted as a member of the group.

Thus, *the principle of international solidarity of the workers is an essential element* in the solution of the national question.

Vienna, January 1913

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⁹³ *Prosveshcheniye* (*Enlightenment*)—a Bolshevik monthly published legally in St. Petersburg, the first issue appearing in December 1911. It was directed by Lenin through regular correspondence with the members of the editorial board in Russia (M. A. Savelyev, M. S. Olminsky, A. I. Elizarova). When J. V. Stalin was in St. Petersburg he took an active part in the work of the journal. *Prosveshcheniye* was closely connected with *Pravda*. In June 1914, on the eve of the First World War, it was suppressed by the government. One double number appeared in the autumn of 1917.

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

April 29, 1917

*Report Delivered at the Seventh Conference
of the RSDLP (Bolsheviks)*

The national question should be the subject of an extensive report, but since time is short I must make my report brief.

Before discussing the draft resolution certain premises must be established.

What is national oppression? National oppression is the system of exploitation and robbery of oppressed peoples, the measures of forcible restriction of the rights of oppressed nationalities, resorted to by imperialist circles. These, taken together, represent the policy generally known as a policy of national oppression.

The first question is, on what classes does any particular government rely in carrying out its policy of national oppression? Before an answer to this question can be given, it must first be understood why different forms of national oppression exist in different states, why national oppression is severer and cruder in one state than in another. For instance, in Britain and Austria-Hungary national oppression has never taken the form of pogroms, but has existed in the form of restrictions on the national rights of the oppressed nationalities. In Russia, on the other hand, it not infrequently assumes the form of pogroms and massacres. In certain states, moreover, there are no specific measures against national minorities at all. For instance, there is no national oppression in Switzerland, where French, Italians and Germans all live freely.

How are we to explain the difference in attitude towards nationalities in different states?

By the difference in the degree of democracy prevailing in these states. When in former years the old landed aristocracy controlled the state power in Russia, national oppression could assume, and actually did assume, the monstrous form of massacres and pogroms. In Britain, where there is a certain degree of democracy and political freedom, national oppression is of a less brutal character. Switzerland approximates to a democratic society, and in that country the nations have more or less complete freedom. In short, the more democratic a country, the less the national oppression, and vice versa. And since by democracy we mean that definite classes are in control of the state power, it may be said from this point of view that the

closer the old landed aristocracy is to power, as was the case in old tsarist Russia, the more severe is the oppression and the more monstrous are its forms.

However, national oppression is maintained not only by the landed aristocracy. There is, in addition, another force—the imperialist groups, who introduce in their own country the methods of enslaving nationalities learned in the colonies and thus become the natural allies of the landed aristocracy. They are followed by the petit bourgeoisie, a section of the intelligentsia and a section of the upper stratum of the workers, who also share the spoils of robbery. Thus, there is a whole gamut of social forces, headed by the landed and financial aristocracy, which support national oppression. In order to create a real democratic system, it is first of all necessary to clear the ground and remove these forces from the political stage. [*Reads the text of the resolution.*]

The first question is, how is the political life of the oppressed nations to be arranged? In answer to this question it must be said that the oppressed peoples forming part of Russia must be allowed the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to remain part of the Russian state or to secede and form independent states. We are at present witnessing a definite conflict between the Finnish people and the Provisional Government. The representatives of the Finnish people, the representatives of Social-Democracy, are demanding that the Provisional Government should restore to the people the rights they enjoyed before they were annexed to Russia. The Provisional Government refuses, because it will not recognize the sovereignty of the Finnish people. On whose side must we range ourselves? Obviously, on the side of the Finnish people, for it is inconceivable for us to accept the forcible retention of any people whatsoever within the bounds of a unitary state. When we put forward the principle that peoples have the right to self-determination we thereby raise the struggle against national oppression to the level of a struggle against imperialism, our common enemy. If we fail to do this, we may find ourselves in the position of bringing grist to the mill of the imperialists. If we, Social-Democrats, were to deny the Finnish people the right to declare their will on the subject of secession and the right to give effect to their will, we would be putting ourselves in the position of continuing the policy of tsarism.

It would be impermissible to confuse the question of the *right* of nations freely to secede with the question of whether a nation must *necessarily* secede at any given moment. This latter question must be settled quite separately by the party of the proletariat in each particular case, according to the circumstances. When we recognize the right of oppressed peoples to secede, the *right* to decide their political destiny, we do not thereby settle the question whether particular nations *should* secede from the Russian state at the given moment. I may recognize the right of a nation to secede, but that does not mean that I oblige it to do so. A people has the right to secede, but it may or may not exercise that right, according to the circumstances. Thus we are at liberty to agitate for or against secession in accordance with the interests of the proletariat, of the proletarian revolution. Hence, the question of secession must be determined in each particular case independently, in accordance with the existing situation, and, for this reason, recognizing the right of secession must not be confused with the expediency of secession in any given circumstances. For instance, I personally would be opposed to the secession of Transcaucasia, bearing in mind the common development in Transcaucasia and Russia, certain conditions of the struggle of the proletariat, and so forth. But if, nevertheless, the peoples of Transcaucasia were to demand secession, they would, of course, secede without encountering opposition from us. [*Reads further the text of the resolution.*]

Further, what is to be done with the peoples which may desire to remain within the Russian state? Whatever mistrust of Russia existed among the peoples was fostered chiefly by the tsarist policy. But now that tsarism no longer exists, and its policy of oppression no longer exists, this mistrust is bound to diminish and attraction towards Russia to increase. I believe that now, after the overthrow of tsarism, nine-tenths of the nationalities will not desire to secede. The Party therefore proposes to institute regional autonomy for regions which do not desire to secede and which are distinguished by peculiarities of customs and language, as, for instance, Transcaucasia, Turkestan and the Ukraine. The geographical boundaries of these autonomous regions must be determined by the populations themselves with due regard for economic conditions, customs, etc.

In contradistinction to regional autonomy there exists another plan, one which has long been recommended by the Bund,⁹⁴ and particularly by Springer and Bauer, who advocate the principle of cultural-national autonomy. I consider that plan unacceptable for Social-Democrats. Its essence is that Russia should be transformed into a union of nations, and nations into unions of persons, drawn into a common society no matter what part of the state they may be living in. All Russians, all Armenians, and so on, are to be organized into separate national unions, irrespective of territory, and only then are they to enter the union of nations of all Russia. That plan is extremely inconvenient and inexpedient. The fact is that the development of capitalism has dispersed whole groups of people, severed them from their nations and scattered them through various parts of Russia. In view of the dispersion of nations resulting from economic conditions, to draw together the various individuals of a given nation would be to organize and build a nation artificially. And to draw people together into nations artificially would be to adopt the standpoint of nationalism. That plan, advanced by the Bund, cannot be endorsed by Social-Democrats. It was rejected at the 1912 conference of our Party, and generally enjoys no popularity in Social-Democratic circles with the exception of the Bund. That plan is also known as cultural autonomy, because from among the numerous and varied questions which interest a nation it would single out the group of cultural questions and put them in the charge of national unions. The reason for singling out these questions is the assumption that what unites a nation into an integral whole is its culture. It is assumed that within a nation there are, on the one hand, interests which tend to disintegrate the nation, economic, for instance, and on the other, interests which tend to weld it into an integral whole, and that the latter interests are cultural interests.

Lastly, there is the question of the national minorities. Their rights must be specially protected. The Party therefore demands full equality of status in educational, religious and other matters and the abolition of all restrictions on national minorities.

⁹⁴ Bund—the General Jewish Workers' Union of Poland, Lithuania and Russia, founded in October 1897 (see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, p. 39, Note 7).

There is Section 9, which proclaims the equality of nations. The conditions required for its realization can arise only when the whole of society has been fully democratized.

We have still to settle the question of how to organize the proletariat of the various nations into a single, common party. One plan is that the workers should be organized on national lines—so many nations, so many parties. That plan was rejected by the Social-Democrats. Experience has shown that the organization of the proletariat of a given state on national lines tends only to destroy the idea of class solidarity. All the proletarians of all the nations in a given state must be organized in a single, indivisible proletarian collective.

Thus, our views on the national question can be reduced to the following propositions:

- a) Recognition of the right of nations to secession;
- b) Regional autonomy for nations remaining within the given state;
- c) Special legislation guaranteeing freedom of development for national minorities;
- d) A single, indivisible proletarian collective, a single party, for the proletarians of all nationalities of the given state.

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

November 6-19, 1918

The national question must not be regarded as something self-contained and fixed for all time. Being only part of the general question of the transformation of the existing order, the national question is wholly determined by the conditions of the social environment, by the kind of power in the country and by the whole course of social development in general. This is being strikingly borne out in the period of revolution in Russia, when the national question and the national movement in the border regions of Russia are rapidly and obviously changing their character in accordance with the course and outcome of the revolution.

I. The February Revolution and the National Question

In the period of the bourgeois revolution in Russia (February 1917) the national movement in the border regions bore the character of a bourgeois liberation movement. The nationalities of Russia, which for ages had been oppressed and exploited by the "old regime," for the first time felt their strength and rushed into the fight with their oppressors. "Abolish national oppression"—such was the slogan of the movement. "All-national" institutions sprang up overnight throughout the border regions of Russia. The movement was headed by the national, bourgeois-democratic intelligentsia. "National Councils" in Latvia, the Estonian region, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the North Caucasus, Kirghizia and the Middle Volga region; the "Rada" in the Ukraine and in Byelorussia [Belarus]; the "Sfatul Tsării" in Bessarabia; the "Kurultai" in the Crimea and in Bashkiria; the "Autonomous Government" in Turkestan such were the "all-national" institutions around which the national bourgeoisie rallied its forces. It was a question of emancipation from tsarism—the "fundamental cause" of national oppression—and of the formation of national bourgeois states. The right of nations to self-determination was interpreted as the right of the national bourgeoisies in the border regions to take power into their own hands and to take advantage of the February Revolution for forming "their own" national states. The further development of the revolution did not, and could not, come within the calculations of the above-mentioned bourgeois institutions. And the fact was overlooked that tsarism was being replaced by naked and barefaced imperialism, and that this imperialism was a stronger and more dangerous foe of the nationalities and the basis of a new national oppression.

The abolition of tsarism and the accession to power of the bourgeoisie did not, however, lead to the abolition of national oppression. The old, crude form of national oppression was replaced by a new, refined, but all the more dangerous, form of oppression. Far from abandoning the policy of national oppression, the Lvov Milyukov-Kerensky Government organized a new campaign against Finland (dispersal of the Diet in the summer of 1917) and the Ukraine (suppression of Ukrainian cultural institutions).

What is more, that Government, which was imperialist by its very nature, called upon the population to continue the war in order to subjugate new lands, new colonies and nationalities. It was compelled to this not only because of the intrinsic nature of imperialism but also because of the existence of the old imperialist states in the West, which were irresistibly striving to subjugate new lands and nationalities and threatening to narrow its sphere of influence. A struggle of the imperialist states for the subjugation of small nationalities as a condition for the existence of these states—such was the picture which was revealed in the course of the imperialist war. This unsightly picture was in no way improved by the abolition of tsarism and the appearance of the Milyukov-Kerensky Government on the scene. Since the “all-national” institutions in the border regions displayed a tendency to political independence, naturally they encountered the insuperable hostility of the imperialist government of Russia. Since, on the other hand, while establishing the power of the national bourgeoisie, they remained deaf to the vital interests of “their own” workers and peasants, they evoked grumbling and discontent among those. What were known as the “national regiments” only added fuel to the flames: they were impotent against the danger from above and only intensified and aggravated the danger from below. The “all-national” institutions were left defenseless against blows from without and explosions from within. The incipient bourgeois national states began to fade before they could blossom.

Thus, the old bourgeois-democratic interpretation of the principle of self-determination became a fiction and lost its revolutionary significance. It was clear that under such circumstances there could be no question of the abolition of national oppression and establishing the independence of the small national states. It became obvious that the emancipation of the laboring masses of the oppressed nationalities and the abolition of national oppression were inconceivable without a break with imperialism, without the laboring masses overthrowing “their own” national bourgeoisie and taking power themselves.

That was strikingly borne out after the October Revolution.

II. The October Revolution and the National Question

The February Revolution harbored irreconcilable inner contradictions. The revolution was accomplished by the efforts of the workers and the peasants (soldiers), but as a result of the revolution power passed not to the workers and peasants, but to the bourgeoisie. In making the revolution the workers and peasants wanted to put an end to the war and to secure peace. But the bourgeoisie, on coming to power, strove to use the revolutionary ardor of the masses for a continuation of the war and against peace. The economic disruption of the country and the food crisis demanded the expropriation of capital and industrial establishments for the benefit of the workers, and the confiscation of the landlords' land for the benefit of the peasants, but the bourgeois Milyukov-Kerensky Government stood guard over the interests of the landlords and capitalists, resolutely protecting them against all encroachments on the part of the workers and peasants. It was a bourgeois revolution, accomplished by the agency of the workers and peasants for the benefit of the exploiters.

Meanwhile, the country continued to groan under the burden of the imperialist war, economic disintegration and the breakdown of the food supply. The front was falling to pieces and melting away. Factories and mills were coming to a standstill. Famine was spreading throughout the country. The February Revolution, with its inner contradictions, was obviously not enough for "the salvation of the country." The Milyukov-Kerensky Government was obviously incapable of solving the basic problems of the revolution.

A new, *socialist* revolution was required to lead the country out of the blind alley of imperialist war and economic disintegration.

That revolution came as a result of the October uprising.

By overthrowing the power of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and replacing it by a government of workers and peasants, the October Revolution resolved the contradictions of the February Revolution at one stroke. The abolition of the omnipotence of the landlords and kulaks and the handing over of the land for the use of the laboring masses of the countryside; the expropriation of the mills and factories and their transfer

to control by the workers; the break with imperialism and the ending of the predatory war; the publication of the secret treaties and the exposure of the policy of annexations; lastly, the proclamation of self-determination for the laboring masses of the oppressed peoples and the recognition of the independence of Finland—such were the basic measures carried into effect by the Soviet power in the early period of the Soviet revolution.

That was a genuinely *socialist* revolution.

The revolution, which started in the center, could not long be confined to that narrow territory. Once having triumphed in the center, it was bound to spread to the border regions. And, indeed, from the very first days of the revolution, the revolutionary tide spread from the North all over Russia, sweeping one border region after another. But here it encountered a dam in the shape of the “National Councils” and regional “governments” (Don, Kuban, Siberia) which had been formed prior to the October Revolution. The point is that these “national governments” would not hear of a socialist revolution. Bourgeois by nature, they had not the slightest wish to destroy the old, bourgeois order; on the contrary, they considered it their duty to preserve and consolidate it by every means in their power. Essentially imperialist, they had not the slightest wish to break with imperialism; on the contrary, they had never been averse to seizing and subjugating bits and morsels of the territory of “foreign” nationalities whenever opportunity offered. No wonder that the “national governments” in the border regions declared war on the socialist government in the center. And, once they had declared war, they naturally became hotbeds of reaction, which attracted all that was counter revolutionary in Russia. Everyone knows that all the counter-revolutionaries thrown out of Russia rushed to these hotbeds, and there, around them, formed themselves into whiteguard “national” regiments.

But, in addition to “national governments,” there are in the border regions national workers and peasants. Organized even before the October Revolution in their revolutionary Soviets patterned on the Soviets in the center of Russia, they had never severed connections with their brothers in the North. They too were striving to defeat the bourgeoisie; they too were fighting for the triumph of socialism. No wonder that their conflict with “their own” national governments grew daily more acute. The October Revolution only strengthened the alliance between the workers and

peasants of the border regions and the workers and peasants of Russia, and inspired them with faith in the triumph of socialism. And the war of the “national governments” against the Soviet power brought the conflict of the national masses with these “governments” to the point of a complete rupture, to open rebellion against them.

Thus was formed a socialist alliance of the workers and peasants of all Russia against the counter-revolutionary alliance of the bourgeois national “governments” of the border regions of Russia.

The fight of the border “governments” is depicted by some as a fight for national emancipation against the “soulless centralism” of the Soviet regime. But that is quite untrue. No regime in the world has permitted such extensive decentralization, no government in the world has ever granted to the peoples such complete national freedom as the Soviet power in Russia. The fight of the border “governments” was, and is, a fight of bourgeois counter-revolution against socialism. The national flag is tacked on to the cause only to deceive the masses, as a popular flag which conveniently conceals the counter-revolutionary designs of the national bourgeoisie.

But the fight of the “national” and regional “governments” proved an unequal one. Attacked from two sides—from without by the Soviet power of Russia, and from within by “their own” workers and peasants—the “national governments” were obliged to retreat after the very first engagements. The uprising of the Finnish workers and *torppari*⁹⁵ and the flight of the bourgeois “Senate”; the uprising of the Ukrainian workers and peasants and the flight of the bourgeois “Rada”; the uprising of the workers and peasants in the Don, Kuban, and Siberia and the collapse of Kaledin, Kornilov and the Siberian “government”; the uprising of the poor peasants of Turkestan and the flight of the “autonomous government”; the agrarian revolution in the Caucasus and the utter impotence of the “National Councils” of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan—all these are generally known facts which demonstrated the complete isolation of the border “governments” from “their own” laboring masses. Utterly defeated, the “national governments” were “obliged” to appeal for aid against “their own” workers and peasants to the imperialists of the West, to the age-long oppressors and exploiters of the nationalities of the world.

⁹⁵ *Torppari*—landless peasants in Finland, who were forced to rent land from the big proprietors on extortionate terms.

Thus began the period of foreign intervention and occupation of the border regions—a period which once more revealed the counter-revolutionary character of the “national” and regional “governments.”

Only now did it become obvious to all that the national bourgeoisie was striving not for the liberation of “its own people” from national oppression, but for liberty to squeeze profits out of them, for liberty to retain its privileges and capital.

Only now did it become clear that the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities was inconceivable without a rupture with imperialism, without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nationalities, without the transfer of power to the laboring masses of these nationalities.

Thus, the old bourgeois conception of the principle of self-determination, with its slogan “All power to the national bourgeoisie,” was exposed and cast aside by the very course of the revolution. The socialist conception of the principle of self-determination, with its slogan “All power to the laboring masses of the oppressed nationalities,” entered into its own and it became possible to apply it.

Thus, the October Revolution, having put an end to the old, bourgeois movement for national emancipation, inaugurated the era of a new, socialist movement of the workers and peasants of the oppressed nationalities, directed against all oppression—including, therefore, national oppression—against the power of the bourgeoisie, “their own” and foreign, and against imperialism in general.

III. The World-Wide Significance of the October Revolution

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

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

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

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

Foreign intervention and the occupation policy of the "external" imperialists merely sharpen the revolutionary crisis, by drawing new peo-

ples into the struggle and extending the area of the revolutionary battles with imperialism.

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

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

The mortal sin of the Second International and its leader, Kautsky, consists, incidentally, in the fact that they have always gone over to the bourgeois conception of national self-determination, that they have never understood the revolutionary meaning of the latter, that they were unable or unwilling to put the national question on the revolutionary footing of an open fight against imperialism, that they were unable or unwilling to link the national question with the question of the emancipation of the colonies.

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

It is asserted that the principles of self-determination and "defense of the fatherland" have been abrogated by the very course of events under the conditions of a rising socialist revolution. Actually, it is not the principles of self-determination and "defense of the fatherland" that have been abrogated, but the bourgeois interpretation of these principles. One has only to glance at the occupied regions, which are languishing under the yoke of imperialism and are yearning for liberation; one has only to glance at Russia, which is waging a revolutionary war for the defense of the socialist fatherland from the imperialist robbers; one has only to reflect on the present events in Austria-Hungary; one has only to glance at the enslaved colonies and semi-colonies, which have already organized their own Soviets (India, Persia, China)—one has only to glance at all this to realize the whole revolutionary significance of the principle of self-determination in its socialist interpretation.

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

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

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

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

THE POLICY OF THE
SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON
THE NATIONAL QUESTION
IN RUSSIA

October 10, 1920

Three years of revolution and civil war in Russia have shown that unless central Russia and her border regions support each other, the victory of the revolution and the liberation of Russia from the clutches of imperialism will be impossible. Central Russia, that hearth of world revolution, cannot hold out long without the assistance of the border regions, which abound in raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs. The border regions of Russia in their turn would be inevitably doomed to imperialist bondage without the political, military and organizational support of more developed central Russia. If it is true to say that the more developed proletarian West cannot finish off the world bourgeoisie without the support of the peasant East, which is less developed but which abounds in raw materials and fuel, it is equally true to say that more developed central Russia cannot carry the revolution through to the end without the support of the border regions of Russia, which are less developed but which abound in essential resources.

The Entente undoubtedly took this circumstance into account from the very first days of the existence of the Soviet Government, when it (the Entente) pursued the plan of the economic encirclement of central Russia by cutting off the most important of her border regions. And the plan of the economic encirclement of Russia has remained the unchanging basis of all the Entente's campaigns against Russia, from 1918 to 1920, not excluding its present machinations in the Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Turkestan.

All the more important is it, therefore, to achieve a firm union between the center and the border regions of Russia.

Hence the need to establish definite relations, definite ties between the center and the border regions of Russia ensuring an intimate and indestructible union between them.

What must these relations be, what forms must they assume?

In other words, what is the policy of the Soviet Government on the national question in Russia?

The demand for the secession of the border regions from Russia as the form of the relations between the center and the border regions must be rejected not only because it runs counter to the very formulation of the question of establishing a union between the center and the border regions, but primarily because it runs fundamentally counter to the interests of the mass of the people in both the center and the border regions. Apart from

the fact that the secession of the border regions would undermine the revolutionary might of central Russia, which is stimulating the movement for emancipation in the West and the East, the seceded border regions themselves would inevitably fall into the bondage of international imperialism. One has only to glance at Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., which have seceded from Russia but which have retained only the semblance of independence, having in reality been converted into unconditional vassals of the Entente; one has only, lastly, to recall the recent case of the Ukraine and Azerbaijan, of which the former was plundered by German capital and the latter by the Entente, to realize the utterly counter-revolutionary nature of the demand for the secession of the border regions under present international conditions. When a life-and-death struggle is developing between proletarian Russia and the imperialist Entente, there are only two possible outcomes for the border regions:

Either they go along with Russia, and then the toiling masses of the border regions will be freed from imperialist oppression;

Or they go along with the Entente, and then the yoke of imperialism will be inevitable.

There is no third course.

The so-called independence of so-called independent Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., is only an illusion, and conceals the utter dependence of these apologies for states on one or another group of imperialists.

Of course, the border regions of Russia, the nations and races which inhabit these regions, possess, as all other nations do, the inalienable right to secede from Russia; and if any of these nations decided by a majority to secede from Russia, as was the case with Finland in 1917, Russia, presumably, would be obliged to take note of the fact and sanction the secession. But the question here is not about the rights of nations, which are unquestionable, but about the interests of the mass of the people both in the center and in the border regions; it is a question of the character—which is determined by these interests—of the agitation which our Party must carry on if it does not wish to renounce its own principles and if it wishes to influence the will of the laboring masses of the nationalities in a definite direction. And the interests of the masses render the demand for

the secession of the border regions at the present stage of the revolution a profoundly counter-revolutionary one.

Similarly, what is known as cultural-national autonomy must also be rejected as a form of union between the center and the border regions of Russia. The experience of Austria-Hungary (the birthplace of cultural-national autonomy) during the last ten years has revealed the absolutely ephemeral and non-viable character of cultural-national autonomy as a form of alliance between the laboring masses of the nationalities of a multi-national state. Springer and Bauer, the authors of cultural-national autonomy, who are now confronted by the failure of their cunningly contrived national program, are living corroborations of this. Finally, the champion of cultural-national autonomy in Russia, the once famous Bund, was itself recently obliged officially to acknowledge the superfluity of cultural-national autonomy, publicly declaring that: "The demand for cultural-national autonomy, which was put forward under the capitalist system, loses its meaning in the conditions of a socialist revolution"⁹⁶

There remains regional autonomy for border regions that are distinguished by a specific manner of life and national composition, as the only expedient form of union between the center and the border regions, an autonomy which is designed to connect the border regions of Russia with the center by a federal tie. This is the Soviet form of autonomy which was proclaimed by the Soviet Government from the very first days of its existence and which is now being put into effect in the border regions in the form of administrative communes and autonomous Soviet republics.

Soviet autonomy is not a rigid thing fixed once and for all time; it permits of the most varied forms and degrees of development. It passes from narrow, administrative autonomy (the Volga Germans, the Chuvashes, the Karelians) to a wider, political autonomy (the Bashkirs, the Volga Tatars, the Kirghiz); from wide political autonomy to a still wider form of it (the Ukraine, Turkestan); and, lastly, from the Ukrainian type of autonomy to the highest form of autonomy—to contractual relations (Azerbaijan). This flexibility of Soviet autonomy is one of its prime merits; for this flexibility enables it to embrace all the various types of border regions of Russia, which vary greatly in their levels of cultural and eco-

⁹⁶ See *The Twelfth Conference of the Bund*, 1920, p. 21.

conomic development. The three years of Soviet policy on the national question in Russia have shown that in applying Soviet autonomy in its diverse forms the Soviet Government is on the right path, for this policy alone has made it possible for it to open the road to the remotest corners of the border regions of Russia, to arouse to political activity the most backward and nationally diverse masses and to connect these masses with the center by the most varied ties—a problem which no other government in the world has solved, or has even set itself (being afraid to do so!). The administrative redivision of Russia on the basis of Soviet autonomy has not yet been completed; the North Caucasians, the Kalmyks, the Cheremiss, the Votyaks, the Buryats and others are still awaiting a settlement of the question. But no matter what aspect the administrative map of the future Russia may assume, and no matter what shortcomings there may have been in this field—and some shortcomings there certainly were—it must be acknowledged that by undertaking an administrative redivision on the basis of regional autonomy Russia has made a very big stride towards rallying the border regions around the proletarian center and bringing the government into closer contact with the broad masses of the border regions.

But the proclamation of this or that form of Soviet autonomy, the issuing of corresponding decrees and ordinances, and even the creation of governments in the border regions, in the shape of regional Councils of People's Commissars of the autonomous republics, are still far from enough to consolidate the union between the border regions and the center. To consolidate this union it is necessary, first of all, to put an end to the estrangement and isolation of the border regions, to their patriarchal and uncultured manner of life, and to their distrust of the center, which still persist in the border regions as a heritage of the brutal policy of tsarism. Tsarism deliberately cultivated patriarchal and feudal oppression in the border regions in order to keep the masses in slavery and ignorance. Tsarism deliberately settled the best areas in the border regions with colonizing elements in order to force the masses of the native nationalities into the worst areas and to intensify national strife. Tsarism restricted, and at times simply suppressed, the native schools, theaters and educational institutions in order to keep the masses in ignorance. Tsarism frustrated all initiative of the best members of the native population. Lastly, tsarism suppressed all activity of the masses in the border regions. By all these means

tsarism implanted among the mass of the native nationalities a profound distrust, at times passing into direct hostility, towards everything Russian. If the union between central Russia and the border regions is to be consolidated, this distrust must be removed and an atmosphere of mutual understanding and fraternal confidence created. But in order to remove this distrust we must first help the masses of the border regions to emancipate themselves from the survivals of feudal-patriarchal oppression; we must abolish—actually, and not only nominally—all the privileges of the colonizing elements; we must allow the masses to experience the material benefits of the revolution.

In brief, we must prove to the masses that central, proletarian Russia is defending their interests, and their interests alone; and this must be proved not only by repressive measures against the colonizers and bourgeois nationalists, measures that are often quite incomprehensible to the masses, but primarily by a consistent and carefully considered economic policy.

Everybody is acquainted with the liberals' demand for universal compulsory education. The Communists in the border regions cannot be more Right wing than the liberals; they must put universal education into effect there if they want to end the ignorance of the people and if they want to create closer spiritual ties between the center of Russia and the border regions. But to do so, it is necessary to develop local national schools, national theaters and national educational institutions and to raise the cultural level of the masses of the border regions, for it need hardly be shown that ignorance is the most dangerous enemy of the Soviet regime. We do not know what success is attending our work in this field generally, but we are informed that in one of the most important border regions the local People's Commissariat of Education is spending on the native schools only ten percent of its credits. If that is true, it must be admitted that in this field we have, unfortunately, not gone much further than the "old regime."

Soviet power is not power divorced from the people; on the contrary, it is the only power of its kind having sprung from the Russian masses and being near and dear to them. This in fact explains the unparalleled strength and resilience which the Soviet regime usually displays at critical moments.

Soviet power must become just as near and dear to the masses of the border regions of Russia. But this requires that it should first of all become comprehensible to them. It is therefore necessary that all Soviet organs in the border regions—the courts, the administration, the economic bodies, the organs of direct authority (and the organs of the Party as well)—should as far as possible be recruited from the local people acquainted with the manner of life, habits, customs and language of the native population; that all the best people from the local masses should be drawn into these institutions; that the local laboring masses should participate in every sphere of administration of the country, including the formation of military units, in order that the masses should see that the Soviet power and its organs are the products of their own efforts, the embodiment of their aspirations. Only in this way can firm spiritual ties be established between the masses and the Soviet power, and only in this way can the Soviet power become comprehensible and dear to the laboring masses of the border regions.

Some comrades regard the autonomous republics in Russia and Soviet autonomy generally as a temporary, if necessary, evil which owing to certain circumstances had to be tolerated, but which must be combated with a view to its eventual abolishment. It need hardly be shown that this view is fundamentally false and that at any rate it is entirely foreign to the policy of the Soviet Government on the national question. Soviet autonomy must not be regarded as an abstraction or an artificial thing; still less should it be considered an empty and declaratory promise. Soviet autonomy is the most real and concrete form of the union of the border regions with central Russia. Nobody will deny that the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkestan, Kirghizia, Bashkiria, Tataria and the other border regions, if they desire the cultural and material prosperity of their masses, must have native schools, courts, administration and organs of authority, recruited principally from the local people. Furthermore, the real sovietization of these regions, their conversion into Soviet countries closely bound with central Russia in one integral state, is *inconceivable* without the wide-spread organization of local schools, without the creation of courts, administrative bodies, organs of authority, etc., staffed with people acquainted with the life and language of the population. But establishing schools, courts, administration and organs of authority functioning in the native language—this is precisely putting Soviet autonomy into practice;

for Soviet autonomy is nothing but the sum total of all these institutions clothed in Ukrainian, Turkestan, Kirghiz, etc., forms.

How, after this, can one seriously say that Soviet autonomy is ephemeral, that it must be combated, and so on?

One thing or the other:

Either the Ukrainian, Azerbaijan, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Bashkir and other languages are an actual reality, and it is therefore absolutely essential to develop in these regions native schools, courts, administrative bodies and organs of authority recruited from the local people—in which case Soviet autonomy must be put into effect in these regions in its entirety, without reservations;

Or the Ukrainian, Azerbaijan and other languages are a pure fiction, and therefore schools and other institutions functioning in the native languages are unnecessary—in which case Soviet autonomy must be discarded as useless lumber.

The search for a third way is due either to ignorance of the subject or to deplorable folly.

One serious obstacle to the realization of Soviet autonomy is the acute shortage in the border regions of intellectual forces of local origin, the shortage of instructors in every branch of Soviet and Party work without exception. This shortage cannot but hamper both educational and revolutionary constructive work in the border regions. But for that very reason it would be unwise and harmful to alienate the all too few groups of native intellectuals, who perhaps would like to serve the masses but are unable to do so, perhaps because, not being Communists, they believe themselves to be surrounded by an atmosphere of mistrust and are afraid of possible repressive measures. The policy of drawing such groups into Soviet work, the policy of recruiting them for industrial, agrarian, food-supply and other posts, with a view to their gradual sovietization, may be applied with success. For it can hardly be maintained that these intellectual groups are less reliable than, let us say, the counter-revolutionary military experts who, their counter-revolutionary spirit notwithstanding, were drawn into the work and subsequently became sovietized, occupying very important posts.

But the employment of the national groups of intellectuals will still be far from sufficient to satisfy the demand for instructors. We must simul-

taneously develop in the border regions a ramified system of courses of study and schools in every branch of administration in order to create cadres of instructors from the local people. For it is clear that without such cadres the organization of native schools, courts, administrative and other institutions functioning in the native languages will be rendered extremely difficult.

A no less serious obstacle to the realization of Soviet autonomy is the haste, often becoming gross tactlessness displayed by certain comrades in the matter of sovietizing the border regions. When such comrades venture to take upon themselves the “heroic task” of introducing “pure communism” in regions which are a whole historical period behind central Russia, regions where the medieval order has not yet been wholly abolished, one may safely say that no good will come of such cavalry raids, of “communism” of this kind. We should like to remind these comrades of the point in our program which says:

The RCP upholds the historical and class standpoint, giving consideration to the stage of historical development in which the given nation finds itself—whether it is on the way from medievalism to bourgeois democracy, or from bourgeois democracy to Soviet, or proletarian, democracy, etc.

And further:

In any case, the proletariat of those nations which were oppressor nations must exercise particular caution and be particularly heedful of the survivals of national sentiment among the laboring masses of the oppressed or unequal nations.⁹⁷

That means that if in Azerbaijan, for instance, the direct method of requisitioning superfluous dwelling space alienates from us the Azerbaijanian masses, who regard the home, the domestic hearth, as sacred and inviolable, it is obvious that the direct way of requisitioning superfluous dwelling space must be replaced by an indirect, roundabout way of achieving the same end. Or if, for instance, the Daghestan masses, who are profoundly imbued with religious prejudices, follow the Communists “on the basis of the Sharia,” it is obvious that the direct way of combating religious

⁹⁷ See *Program of the RCP*, 1919.

prejudices in this country must be replaced by indirect and more cautious ways. And so on, and so forth.

In brief, cavalry raids with the object of “immediately communizing” the backward masses must be discarded in favor of a circumspect and carefully considered policy of gradually drawing these masses into the general stream of Soviet development.

Such in general are the practical conditions necessary for realizing Soviet autonomy, the introduction of which ensures closer spiritual ties and a firm revolutionary union between the center and the border regions of Russia.

Soviet Russia is performing an experiment without parallel hitherto in the world in organizing the co-operation of a number of nations and races within a single proletarian state on a basis of mutual confidence, of voluntary and fraternal agreement. The three years of the revolution have shown that this experiment has every chance of succeeding. But this experiment can be certain of complete success only if our practical policy on the national question in the localities does not run counter to the demands of already proclaimed Soviet autonomy, in its varied forms and degrees, and if every practical measure we adopt in the localities helps to introduce the masses of the border regions to a higher, proletarian spiritual and material culture in forms conforming with the manner of life and national features of these masses.

In that lies the guarantee of the consolidation of the revolutionary union between central Russia and the border regions of Russia, against which all the machinations of the Entente will be shattered.

THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN THE NATIONAL QUESTION

March 10, 1921

*Report Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the
RCP(B)*⁹⁸

Before proceeding to deal with the Party's concrete immediate tasks in the national question, it is necessary to lay down certain premises, without which the national question cannot be solved. These premises concern the emergence of nations, the origin of national oppression, the forms assumed by national oppression in the course of historical development, and then the methods of solving the national question in the different periods of development.

There have been three such periods.

The first period was that of the elimination of feudalism in the West and of the triumph of capitalism. That was the period in which people were constituted into nations I have in mind countries like Britain (excluding Ireland), France and Italy. In the West—in Britain, France, Italy and, partly, Germany—the period of the liquidation of feudalism and the constitution of people into nations coincided, on the whole, with the period in which centralized states appeared; as a consequence of this, in the course of their development, the nations there assumed state forms. And since there were no other national groups of any considerable size within these states, there was no national oppression there.

In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the process of formation of nations and of the liquidation of feudal disunity did not coincide in time with the process of formation of centralized states. I have in mind Hungary, Austria and Russia. In those countries capitalism had not yet developed; it was, perhaps, only just beginning to develop; but the needs of

⁹⁸ The Tenth Congress of the RCP(B) was held on March 8-16, 1921. It discussed the reports of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission, and also reports on the trade unions and their role in the economic life of the country, on the tax in kind, on Party affairs, on the immediate tasks of the Party in the national question, on Party unity and the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, etc. The political report of the Central Committee, and the reports on the tax in kind, on Party unity, and on the anarcho-syndicalist deviation, were made by V. I. Lenin. The congress summed up the discussion that had taken place on the trade-union question and by an overwhelming majority endorsed Lenin's platform. In its resolution on "Party Unity," drafted by V. I. Lenin, the congress condemned all the factional groups, ordered their immediate dissolution, and pointed out that Party unity was the fundamental condition for the success of the proletarian dictatorship. The congress adopted V. I. Lenin's resolution on "The Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party," which condemned the so-called "Workers' Opposition" and declared that propaganda of the ideas of the

defense against the invasion of the Turks, Mongols and other Oriental peoples called for the immediate formation of centralized states capable of checking the onslaught of the invaders. Since the process of formation of centralized states in Eastern Europe was more rapid than the process of the constitution of people into nations, mixed states were formed there, consisting of several peoples who had not yet formed themselves into nations, but who were already united in a common state.

Thus, the first period is characterized by nations making their appearance at the dawn of capitalism; in Western Europe purely national states arose in which there was no national oppression, whereas in Eastern Europe multi-national states arose headed by one, more developed, nation as the dominant nation, to which the other, less developed, nations were politically and later economically subjected. These multi-national states in the East became the home of that national oppression, which gave rise to national conflicts, to national movements, to the national question, and to various methods of solving this question.

The second period in the development of national oppression and of methods of combating it coincided with the period of the appearance of imperialism in the West, when, in its quest for markets, raw materials, fuel and cheap labor power, and in its fight for the export of capital and for securing important railway and sea routes, capitalism burst out of the framework of the national state and enlarged its territory at the expense of its neighbors, near and distant. In this second period the old national states in the West—Britain, Italy and France—ceased to be national states,

anarcho-syndicalist deviation was incompatible with membership of the Communist Party. The Tenth Congress adopted a decision to pass from the produce surplus appropriation system to the tax in kind, to pass to the New Economic Policy. J. V. Stalin's report on "The Immediate Tasks of the Party in the National Question" was heard on March 10. The congress unanimously adopted J. V. Stalin's theses on this question as a basis and appointed a commission to elaborate them further. J. V. Stalin reported on the results of the commission's work at the evening session on March 15. The resolution that he proposed on behalf of the commission was unanimously adopted by the congress, which condemned the anti-Party deviations on the national question, i.e., dominant-nation (Great-Russian) chauvinism and local nationalism, as being harmful and dangerous to communism and proletarian internationalism. The congress particularly condemned dominant-nation chauvinism as being the chief danger. (Concerning the Tenth Congress of the RCP(B) see *History of the CPSU(B), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 391-397. Concerning the resolutions adopted by the congress, see "Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU(B) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 356-95.)

i.e., owing to having seized new territories, they were transformed into multi-national, colonial states and thereby became arenas of the same kind of national and colonial oppression as already existed in Eastern Europe. Characteristic of this period in Eastern Europe was the awakening and strengthening of the subject nations (Czechs, Poles and Ukrainians) which, as a result of the imperialist war, led to the break-up of the old, bourgeois multi-national states and to the formation of new national states which are held in bondage by the so-called great powers.

The third period is the Soviet period, the period of the abolition of capitalism and of the elimination of national oppression, when the question of dominant and subject nations, of colonies and metropolises, is relegated to the archives of history, when before us, in the territory of the RSFSR, nations are arising having equal rights to development, but which have retained a certain historically inherited inequality owing to their economic, political and cultural backwardness. The essence of this national inequality consists in the fact that, as a result of historical development, we have inherited from the past a situation in which one nation, namely, the Great-Russian, is politically and industrially more developed than the other nations. Hence the actual inequality, which cannot be abolished in one year, but which must be abolished by giving the backward nations and nationalities economic, political and cultural assistance.

Such are the three periods of development of the national question that have historically passed before us.

The first two periods have one feature in common, namely: in both periods nations suffer oppression and bondage, as a consequence of which the national struggle continues and the national question remains unsolved. But there is also a difference between them, namely: in the first period the national question remains within the framework of each multi-national state and affects only a few, chiefly European, nations; in the second period, however, the national question is transformed from an intra-state question into an inter-state question—into a question of war between imperialist states to keep the unequal nationalities under their domination, to subject to their influence new nationalities and races outside Europe.

Thus, in this period, the national question, which formerly had been of significance only in cultured countries, loses its isolated character and merges with the general question of the colonies.

The development of the national question into the general colonial question was not a historical accident. It was due, firstly, to the fact that during the imperialist war the imperialist groups of belligerent powers themselves were obliged to appeal to the colonies from which they obtained man-power for their armies. Undoubtedly, this process, this inevitable appeal of the imperialists to the backward nationalities of the colonies, could not fail to rouse these races and nationalities for the struggle for liberation. The second factor that caused the widening of the national question, its development into the general colonial question embracing the whole world, first in the sparks and later in the flames of the liberation movement, was the attempt of the imperialist groups to dismember Turkey and to put an end to her existence as a state. Being more developed as a state than the other Moslem peoples, Turkey could not resign herself to such a prospect; she raised the banner of struggle and rallied the peoples of the East around herself against imperialism. The third factor was the appearance of Soviet Russia, which achieved a number of successes in the struggle against imperialism and thereby naturally inspired the oppressed peoples of the East, awakened them, roused them for the struggle, and thus made it possible to create a common front of oppressed nations stretching from Ireland to India.

Such are all those factors which in the second stage of the development of national oppression not only prevented bourgeois society from solving the national question, not only prevented the establishment of peace among the nations, but, on the contrary, fanned the spark of national struggle into the flames of the struggle of the oppressed peoples, the colonies and the semi-colonies against world imperialism.

Obviously, the only regime that is capable of solving the national question, i.e., the regime that is capable of creating the conditions for ensuring the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of different nations and races, is the Soviet regime, the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It scarcely needs proof that under the rule of capital, with private ownership of the means of production and the existence of classes, equal

rights for nations cannot be guaranteed; that as long as the power of capital exists, as long as the struggle for the possession of the means of production goes on, there can be no equal rights for nations, just as there can be no co-operation between the laboring masses of the different nations. History tells us that the only way to abolish national inequality, the only way to establish a regime of fraternal co-operation between the laboring masses of the oppressed and non-oppressed nations, is to abolish capitalism and establish the Soviet system.

Further, history shows that although individual peoples succeed in liberating themselves from their own national bourgeoisie and also from the "foreign" bourgeoisie, i.e., although they succeed in establishing the Soviet system in their respective countries, they cannot, as long as imperialism exists, maintain and successfully defend their separate existence unless they receive the economic and military support of neighboring Soviet republics. The example of Hungary provides eloquent proof that unless the Soviet republics form a state union, unless they unite and form a single military and economic force, they cannot withstand the combined forces of world imperialism either on the military or on the economic front.

A federation of Soviet republics is the needed form of state union, and the living embodiment of this form is the RSFSR.

Such, comrades, are the premises that I wanted to speak of here first of all, before proceeding to prove that our Party must take certain steps in the matter of solving the national question within the RSFSR.

Although, under the Soviet regime in Russia and in the republics associated with her, there are no longer either dominant or nations without rights, no metropolises or colonies, no exploited or exploiters, nevertheless, the national question still exists in Russia. The essence of the national question in the RSFSR lies in abolishing the actual backwardness (economic, political and cultural) that some of the nations have inherited from the past, to make it possible for the backward peoples to catch up with central Russia in political, cultural and economic respects.

Under the old regime, the tsarist government did not, and could not, make any effort to develop the statehood of the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Turkestan and other border regions; it opposed the development of the statehood, as well as of the culture, of the border regions, endeavoring forcibly to assimilate their native populations.

Further, the old state, the landlords and capitalists, left us a heritage of such downtrodden nationalities as the Kirghiz, Chechens and Ossetians, whose lands were colonized by Cossack and kulak elements from Russia. Those nationalities were doomed to incredible suffering and to extinction.

Further, the position of the Great-Russian nation, which was the dominant nation, has left traces of its influence even upon Russian Communists who are unable, or unwilling to draw closer to the laboring masses of the local population, to understand their needs and to help them to extricate themselves from backwardness and lack of culture. I am speaking of those few groups of Russian Communists who, ignoring in their work the specific features of the manner of life and culture of the border regions, sometimes deviate towards Russian dominant-nation chauvinism.

Further, the position of the non-Russian nationalities which have experienced national oppression has not failed to influence the Communists among the local population who are sometimes unable to distinguish between the class interests of the laboring masses of their respective nations and so-called “national” interests. I am speaking of the deviation towards local nationalism that is sometimes observed in the ranks of the non-Russian Communists, and which finds expression in the East in, for example, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism.

Lastly, we must save the Kirghiz, the Bashkirs and certain mountain races from extinction, we must provide them with the necessary land at the expense of the kulak colonizers.

Such are the problems and tasks which together constitute the essence of the national question in our country.

Having described these immediate tasks of the Party in the national question, I would like to pass to the general task, the task of adapting our communist policy in the border regions to the specific conditions of economic life that obtain mainly in the East.

The point is that a number of nationalities, chiefly Tyurk—comprising about 25,000,000 people—have not been through, did not manage to go through, the period of industrial capitalism, and, therefore, have no industrial proletariat, or scarcely any; consequently, they will have to skip the stage of industrial capitalism and pass from the primitive forms of economy to the stage of Soviet economy. To be able to perform this

very difficult but by no means impossible operation, it is necessary to take into account all the specific features of the economic condition, and even of the historical past, manner of life and culture of these nationalities. It would be unthinkable and dangerous to transplant to the territories of these nationalities the measures that had force and significance here, in central Russia. Clearly, in applying the economic policy of the RSFSR, it is absolutely necessary to take into account all the specific features of the economic condition, the class structure and the historical past confronting us in these border regions. There is no need for me to dwell on the necessity of putting an end to such incongruities as, for example, the order issued by the People's Commissariat of Food that pigs be included in the food quotas to be obtained from Kirghizia, the Moslem population of which has never raised pigs. This example shows how obstinately some people refuse to take into account peculiarities of the manner of life which strike the eye of every traveler.

I have just been handed a note requesting me to answer Comrade Chicherin's articles. Comrades, I think that Chicherin's articles, which I have read carefully, are nothing more than literary exercises. They contain four mistakes, or misunderstandings.

First, Comrade Chicherin is inclined to deny the contradictions among the imperialist states; he overestimates the international unity of the imperialists and loses sight of, underestimates, the internal contradictions among the imperialist groups and states (France, America, Britain, Japan, etc.), which exist and contain the seeds of war. He has overestimated the unity of the imperialist upper circles and underestimated the contradictions existing within that "trust." But these contradictions do exist, and the activities of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs are based on them.

Next, Comrade Chicherin makes a second mistake. He underestimates the contradictions that exist between the dominant great powers and the recently formed national states (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, etc.), which are in financial and military subjection to those great powers. Comrade Chicherin has completely lost sight of the fact that, although those national states are in subjection to the great powers, or to be more exact, because of this, there are contradictions between the great powers and those states, which made themselves felt, for example, in the nego-

tiations with Poland, Estonia, etc. It is precisely the function of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to take all these contradictions into account, to base itself on them, to maneuver within the framework of these contradictions. Most surprisingly, Comrade Chicherin has underestimated this factor.

The third mistake of Comrade Chicherin is that he talks too much about national self-determination, which has indeed become an empty slogan conveniently used by the imperialists. Strangely enough, Comrade Chicherin has forgotten that we parted with that slogan two years ago. That slogan no longer figures in our program. Our program does not speak of national self-determination, which is a very vague slogan, but of the right of nations to secede, a slogan which is more precise and definite. These are two different things. Strangely enough, Comrade Chicherin fails to take this factor into account in his articles and, as a result, all his objections to the slogan which has become vague are like firing blank shot, for neither in my theses nor in the Party's program is there a single word about "self-determination." The only thing that is mentioned is the right of nations to secede. At the present time, however, when the liberation movement is flaring up in the colonies, that is for us a revolutionary slogan. Since the Soviet states are united voluntarily in a federation, the nations constituting the RSFSR voluntarily refrain from exercising the right to secede. But as regards the colonies that are in the clutches of Britain, France, America and Japan, as regards such subject countries as Arabia, Mesopotamia, Turkey and Hindustan, i.e., countries which are colonies or semi-colonies, the right of nations to secede is a revolutionary slogan, and to abandon it would mean playing into the hands of the imperialists.

The fourth misunderstanding is the absence of practical advice in Comrade Chicherin's articles. It is easy, of course, to write articles, but to justify their title: "In Opposition to Comrade Stalin's Theses" he should have proposed something serious, he should at least have made some practical counter-proposals. But I failed to find in his articles a single practical proposal that was worth considering.

I am finishing, comrades. We have arrived at the following conclusions. Far from being able to solve the national question, bourgeois society, on the contrary, in its attempts to "solve" it, has fanned it into becoming the colonial question, and has created against itself a new front that stretches

from Ireland to Hindustan. The only state that is capable of formulating and solving the national question is the state that is based on the collective ownership of the means and instruments of production—the Soviet state. In the Soviet federative state there are no longer either oppressed or dominant nations, national oppression has been abolished; but owing to the actual inequality (cultural, economic and political) inherited from the old bourgeois order, inequality between the more cultured and less cultured nations, the national question assumes a form which calls for the working out of measures that will help the laboring masses of the backward nations and nationalities to make economic, political and cultural progress, that will enable them to catch up with central—proletarian—Russia, which has forged ahead. From this follow the practical proposals which constitute the third section of the theses on the national question which I have submitted. [*Applause.*]

Reply to the Discussion

Comrades, the most characteristic feature of this congress as regards the discussion on the national question is that we have passed from declarations on the national question, through the administrative redivision of Russia, to the practical presentation of the question. At the beginning of the October Revolution we confined ourselves to declaring the right of peoples to secede. In 1918 and in 1920 we were engaged in the administrative redivision of Russia on national lines with the object of bringing the laboring masses of the backward peoples closer to the proletariat of Russia. Today, at this congress, we are presenting, on a purely practical basis, the question of what policy the Party should adopt towards the laboring masses and petit-bourgeois elements in the autonomous regions and independent republics associated with Russia. Therefore, Zatonsky's statement that the theses submitted to you are of an abstract character astonished me. I have before me his own theses which, for some reason, he did not submit to the congress, and in them I have not been able to find a single practical proposal, literally, not one, except, perhaps, the proposal that the word "East European" be substituted for "RSFSR," and that the word "Russian" or "Great-Russian" be substituted for "All-Russian." I have not found any other practical proposals in these theses.

I pass on to the next question.

I must say that I expected more from the delegates who have spoken. Russia has twenty-two border regions. Some of them have undergone considerable industrial development and differ little from central Russia in industrial respects; others have not been through the stage of capitalism and differ radically from central Russia; others again are very backward. It is impossible in a set of theses to deal with all this diversity of the border regions in all its concrete details. One cannot demand that theses of importance to the Party as a whole should bear only a Turkestan, an Azerbaijanian, or a Ukrainian character. Theses must seize on and include the common characteristic features of all the border regions, abstracted from the details. There is no other method of drawing up theses.

The non-Great-Russian nations must be divided into several groups, and this has been done in the theses. The non-Russian nations comprise a total of about 65,000,000 people. The common characteristic feature of all these non-Russian nations is that they lag behind central Russia as regards the development of their statehood. Our task is to exert all efforts to help these nations, to help their proletarians and toilers generally to develop their Soviet statehood in their native languages. This common feature is mentioned in the theses, in the part dealing with practical measures.

Next, proceeding further in concretizing the specific features of the border regions, we must single out from the total of nearly 65,000,000 people of non-Russian nationalities some 25,000,000 Tyurks who have not been through the capitalist stage. Comrade Mikoyan was wrong when he said that in some respects Azerbaijan stands higher than the Russian provincial districts. He is obviously confusing Baku with Azerbaijan. Baku did not spring from the womb of Azerbaijan; it is a superstructure erected by the efforts of Nobel, Rothschild, Whishaw, and others. As regards Azerbaijan itself, it is a country with the most backward patriarchal-feudal relations. That is why I place Azerbaijan as a whole in the group of border regions which have not been through the capitalist stage, and in relation to which it is necessary to employ specific methods of drawing them into the channel of Soviet economy. That is stated in the theses.

Then there is a third group which embraces not more than 6,000,000 people; these are mainly pastoral races, which still lead a tribal life and have not yet adopted agriculture. These are chiefly the Kirghiz, the northern part of Turkestan, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossetians and Ingushes. The first thing

to be done in relation to this group of nationalities is to provide them with land. The Kirghiz and Bashkirs here were not given the floor; the debate was closed. They would have told us more about the sufferings of the Bashkir highlanders, the Kirghiz and the Highlanders, who are dying out for want of land. But what Safarov said about this applies only to a group consisting of 6,000,000 people. Therefore, it is wrong to apply Safarov's practical proposals to all the border regions, for his amendments have no significance whatever for the rest of the non-Russian nationalities, which comprise about 60,000,000 people. Therefore, while raising no objection to the concretization, supplementation and improvement of individual points moved by Safarov relating to certain groups of nationalities, I must say that these amendments should not be universalized. I must next make a comment on one of Safarov's amendments. In one of his amendments there has crept in the phrase "national-cultural self-determination":

Before the October Revolution [it says there,] the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the eastern border regions of Russia, as a result of imperialist policy, had no opportunity whatever of sharing the cultural benefits of capitalist civilization by means of their own national-cultural self-determination, education in their native languages, [etc.]

I must say that I cannot accept this amendment because it smacks of Bundism. National-cultural self-determination is a Bundist formula. We parted with nebulous slogans of self-determination long ago and there is no need to revive them. Moreover, the entire phrase is a most unnatural combination of words.

Further, I have received a note alleging that we Communists are artificially cultivating a Byelorussian nationality. That is not true, for there exists a Byelorussian nation, which has its own language, different from Russian. Consequently, the culture of the Byelorussian people can be raised only in its native language. We heard similar talk five years ago about the Ukraine, about the Ukrainian nation. And only recently it was said that the Ukrainian Republic and the Ukrainian nation were inventions of the Germans. It is obvious, however, that there is a Ukrainian nation, and it is the duty of the Communists to develop its culture. You cannot go against history. It is obvious that although Russian elements still predominate in

the Ukrainian towns, in the course of time these towns will inevitably be Ukrainianized. About forty years ago, Riga had the appearance of a German city; but since towns grow at the expense of the countryside, and since the countryside is the guardian of nationality, Riga is now a purely Lettish city. About fifty years ago all Hungarian towns bore a German character; now they have become Magyarized. The same will happen in Byelorussia, where non-Byelorussians still predominate in the towns.

In conclusion, I propose that the congress elect a commission containing representatives of the regions, for the purpose of further concretizing those practical proposals in the theses that interest all our border regions. [*Applause.*]

CONCERNING THE
PRESENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL QUESTION

May 8, 1921

The presentation of the national question as given by the Communists differs essentially from the presentation adopted by the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals⁹⁹ and by all the various “Socialist,” “Social-Democratic,” Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and other parties.

It is particularly important to note four principal points that are the most characteristic and distinguishing features of the new presentation of the national question, features which draw a line between the old and the new conceptions of the national question.

The *first point* is the merging of the national question, as a part, with the general question of the liberation of the colonies, as a whole. In the epoch of the Second International it was usual to confine the national question to a narrow circle of questions relating exclusively to the “civilized” nations. The Irish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, the Armenians, the Jews and some other European nationalities—such was the circle of unequal nations in whose fate the Second International took an interest. The tens and hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Africa who are suffering from national oppression in its crudest and most brutal form did not, as a rule, come within the field of vision of the “socialists.” They did not venture to place whites and blacks, “uncultured” Negroes and “civilized” Irish, “backward” Indians and “enlightened” Poles on the same footing. It was tacitly assumed that although it might be necessary to strive for the liberation of the European unequal nations, it was entirely unbecoming for “respectable socialists” to speak seriously of the liberation of the colonies, which were “necessary” for the “preservation” of “civilization.” These socialists, save the mark, did not even suspect that the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the liberation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from imperialist oppression,

⁹⁹ The Two-and-a-Half International—the “International Association of Labor and Socialist Parties”—was formed in Vienna in February 1921 at an inaugural conference of Centrist parties and groups which, owing to the pressure of the revolutionary-minded workers, had temporarily seceded from the Second International. While criticizing the Second International in words, the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International (F. Adler, O. Bauer, L. Martov, and others) in fact pursued an opportunist policy on all the major questions of the proletarian movement, and strove to use the association to counteract the growing influence of the Communists among the masses of the workers. In 1923, the Two-and-a-Half International rejoined the Second International.

that the former is organically bound up with the latter. It was the Communists who first revealed the connection between the national question and the question of the colonies, who proved it theoretically and made it the basis of their practical revolutionary activities. That broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between the “cultured” and the “uncultured” slaves of imperialism. This circumstance greatly facilitated the co-ordination of the struggle of the backward colonies with the struggle of the advanced proletariat against the common enemy, imperialism.

The *second point* is that the vague slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has been replaced by the clear revolutionary slogan of the right of nations and colonies to secede, to form independent states. When speaking of the right to self-determination, the leaders of the Second International did not as a rule even hint at the right to secede—the right to self-determination was at best interpreted to mean the right to autonomy in general. Springer and Bauer, the “experts” on the national question, even went so far as to convert the right to self-determination into the right of the oppressed nations of Europe to cultural autonomy, that is, the right to have their own cultural institutions, while all *political* (and economic) power was to *remain* in the hands of the dominant nation. In other words, the right of the unequal nations to self-determination was converted into the privilege of the dominant nations to wield political power, and the question of secession was excluded. Kautsky, the ideological leader of the Second International, associated himself in the main with this essentially imperialist interpretation of self-determination as given by Springer and Bauer. It is not surprising that the imperialists, realizing how convenient this feature of the slogan of self-determination was for them, proclaimed the slogan their own. As we know, the imperialist war, the aim of which was to enslave peoples, was fought under the flag of self-determination. Thus the vague slogan of self-determination was converted from an instrument for the liberation of nations, for achieving equal rights for nations, into an instrument for taming nations, an instrument for keeping nations in subjection to imperialism. The course of events in recent years all over the world, the logic of revolution in Europe, and, lastly, the growth of the liberation movement in the colonies demanded that this, now reactionary slogan should be cast aside and replaced by another slogan, a revolutionary slogan, capable of dispelling the atmosphere of distrust of the

laboring masses of the unequal nations towards the proletarians of the dominant nations and of clearing the way towards equal rights for nations and towards the unity of the toilers of these nations. Such a slogan is the one issued by the Communists proclaiming the right of nations and colonies to secede.

The merits of this slogan are that it:

- 1) removes all grounds for suspicion that the toilers of one nation entertain predatory designs against the toilers of another nation, and therefore creates a basis for mutual confidence and voluntary union;
- 2) tears the mask from the imperialists, who hypocritically prate about self-determination but who are striving to keep the unequal peoples and colonies in subjection, to retain them within the framework of their imperialist state, and thereby intensifies the struggle for liberation that these nations and colonies are waging against imperialism.

It scarcely needs proof that the Russian workers would not have gained the sympathy of their comrades of other nationalities in the West and the East if, having assumed power, they had not proclaimed the right of nations to secede, if they had not demonstrated in practice their readiness to give effect to this inalienable right of nations, if they had not renounced their "rights," let us say, to Finland (1917), if they had not withdrawn their troops from North Persia (1917), if they had not renounced all claims to certain parts of Mongolia, China, etc., etc.

It is equally beyond doubt that if the policy of the imperialists, skillfully concealed under the flag of self-determination, has nevertheless lately been meeting with defeat after defeat in the East, it is because, among other things, it has encountered there a growing liberation movement, which has developed on the basis of the agitation conducted in the spirit of the slogan of the right of nations to secede. This is not understood by the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, who roundly abuse the Baku "Council of Action and Propaganda"¹⁰⁰ for some slight

¹⁰⁰ The "Council of Action and Propaganda of the Peoples of the East" was formed by decision of the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in Baku in September 1920. The object of the council was to support and unite the liberation movement of the East. It existed for about a year.

mistakes it has committed; but it will be understood by everyone who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the activities of that "Council" during the year it has been in existence, and with the liberation movement in the Asiatic and African colonies during the past two or three years.

The *third point* is the disclosure of the organic connection between the national and colonial question and the question of the rule of capital, of overthrowing capitalism, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the epoch of the Second International, the national question, narrowed down to the extreme, was usually regarded as an isolated question, unrelated to the coming proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the national question would be settled "naturally," before the proletarian revolution, by means of a series of reforms within the framework of capitalism; that the proletarian revolution could be accomplished without a radical settlement of the national question, and that, on the contrary, the national question could be settled without overthrowing the rule of capital, without, and before, the victory of the proletarian revolution. That essentially imperialist view runs like a red thread through the well-known works of Springer and Bauer on the national question. But the past decade has exposed the utter falsity and rottenness of this conception of the national question. The imperialist war has shown, and the revolutionary experience of recent years has again confirmed that:

- 1) the national and colonial questions are inseparable from the question of emancipation from the rule of capital;
- 2) imperialism (the highest form of capitalism) cannot exist without the political and economic enslavement of the unequal nations and colonies;
- 3) the unequal nations and colonies cannot be liberated without overthrowing the rule of capital;
- 4) the victory of the proletariat cannot be lasting without the liberation of the unequal nations and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

If Europe and America may be called the front or the arena of the major battles between socialism and imperialism, the unequal nations and the colonies, with their raw materials, fuel, food and vast store of man-

power, must be regarded as the rear, the reserve of imperialism. To win a war it is necessary not only to triumph at the front but also to revolutionize the enemy's rear, his reserves. Hence, the victory of the world proletarian revolution may be regarded as assured only if the proletariat is able to combine its own revolutionary struggle with the liberation movement of the laboring masses of the unequal nations and the colonies against the rule of the imperialists and for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This "trifle" was overlooked by the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, who divorced the national and colonial question from the question of power in the epoch of growing proletarian revolution in the West.

The *fourth point* is that a new element has been introduced into the national question—the element of the actual (and not merely juridical) equalization of nations (help and co-operation for the backward nations in raising themselves to the cultural and economic level of the more advanced nations), as one of the conditions necessary for securing fraternal co-operation between the laboring masses of the various nations. In the epoch of the Second International the matter was usually confined to proclaiming "national equality of rights"; at best, things went no further than the demand that such equality of rights should be put into effect. But national equality of rights, although a very important political gain in itself, runs the risk of remaining a mere phrase in the absence of adequate resources and opportunities for exercising this very important right. It is beyond doubt that the laboring masses of the backward peoples are not in a position to exercise the rights that are accorded them under "national equality of rights" to the same degree to which they can be exercised by the laboring masses of advanced nations. The backwardness (cultural and economic), which some nations have inherited from the past, and which cannot be abolished in one or two years, makes itself felt. This circumstance is also perceptible in Russia, where a number of peoples have not gone through, and some have not even entered, the phase of capitalism and have no proletariat, or hardly any, of their own; where, although complete national equality of rights has already been established, the laboring masses of these nationalities are not in a position to make adequate use of the rights they have won, owing to their cultural and economic backwardness. This circumstance will make itself felt still more "on the morrow" of the victory of the proletariat in the West, when numerous backward colonies and

semi-colonies, standing at most diverse levels of development, will inevitably appear on the scene. For that very reason the victorious proletariat of the advanced nations must assist, must render assistance, real and prolonged assistance, to the laboring masses of the backward nations in their cultural and economic development, so as to help them to rise to a higher stage of development and to catch up with the more advanced nations. Unless such aid is forthcoming it will be impossible to bring about the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of the toilers of the various nations and nationalities within a single world economic system that are so essential for the final triumph of socialism.

But from this it follows that we cannot confine ourselves merely to “national equality of rights,” that we must pass from “national equality of rights” to measures that will bring about real equality of nations, that we must proceed to work out and put into effect practical measures in relation to:

- 1) the study of the economic conditions, manner of life and culture of the backward nations and nationalities;
- 2) the development of their culture;
- 3) their political education;
- 4) their gradual and painless introduction to the higher forms of economy;
- 5) the organization of economic co-operation between the toilers of the backward and of the advanced nations.

Such are the four principal points which distinguish the new presentation of the national question given by the Russian Communists.

Pravda, No. 98, May 8, 1921

THE UNION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

December 26, 1922

*Report Delivered at the Tenth All-Russian
Congress of Soviets*¹⁰¹

Comrades, a few days ago, before this congress began, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee received a number of resolutions from Congresses of Soviets of the Transcaucasian republics, the Ukraine and Byelorussia on the desirability and necessity of uniting these republics into a single union state. The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has had this question under consideration and has declared that such a union is opportune. As a result of its resolution, the question of uniting the republics is included in the agenda of this congress.

The campaign for the union of the Soviet Socialist Republics began some three or four months ago. The initiative was taken by the Azerbaijanian, Armenian and Georgian Republics, which were later joined by the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Republics. The idea of the campaign is that the old treaty relations—the relations established by the conventions between the RSFSR and the other Soviet republics—have served their purpose and are no longer adequate. The idea of the campaign is that we must inevitably pass from the old treaty relations to relations based on a closer union—relations which imply the creation of a single union state with corresponding Union executive and legislative organs, with a Central Executive Committee and a Council of People's Commissars of the Union. To put it briefly, it is now, in the course of the campaign, proposed that

¹⁰¹ The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets took place in Moscow on December 23-27, 1922. There were present 2,215 delegates, of whom 488 were delegates from the treaty republics—the Transcaucasian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR and the Byelorussian SSR—who had come to Moscow to attend the First Congress of Soviets of the USSR and had been invited to attend the Tenth All-Russian Congress as guests of honor. The Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets discussed the following: report of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars on the republic's home and foreign policy; report on the state of industry; report of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture (summary of work done to improve peasant farming); report of the People's Commissariat of Education; report of the People's Commissariat of Finance; proposal of the treaty Soviet republics on the creation of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. On December 26, J. V. Stalin delivered a report on uniting the Soviet republics. The resolution moved by him was adopted unanimously. After J. V. Stalin had delivered his report, the representatives of the Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Byelorussia addressed the congress and on behalf of their respective peoples welcomed the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state: the USSR.

what was formerly decided from time to time, within the framework of convention relations, should be put on a permanent basis.

What are the reasons that impel the republics to take the path of union? What are the circumstances that have determined the necessity for union?

Three groups of circumstances have made the union of the Soviet republics into a single union state inevitable.

The first group of circumstances consists of facts relating to our internal economic situation.

First, the meagerness of the economic resources left at the disposal of the republics after seven years of war. This compels us to combine these meager resources so as to employ them more rationally and to develop the main branches of our economy which form the backbone of Soviet power in all the republics.

Secondly, the historically evolved natural division of labor, the economic division of labor, between the various regions and republics of our federation. For instance, the North supplies the South and East with textiles, the South and East supply the North with cotton, fuel, and so forth. And this division of labor established between the regions cannot be eliminated by a mere stroke of the pen: it has been created historically by the whole course of economic development of the federation. And this division of labor, which makes the full development of the individual regions impossible as long as each republic leads a separate existence, is compelling the republics to unite in a single economic whole.

Thirdly, the unity of the principal means of communication in the entire federation, constituting the nerves and foundation of any possible union. It goes without saying that the means of communication cannot be allowed to have a divided existence, at the disposal of the individual republics and subordinated to their interests for that would convert the main nerve of economic life—transport—into a conglomeration of separate parts utilized without a plan. This circumstance also inclines the republics towards union into a single state.

Lastly, the meagerness of our financial resources Comrades, it must be bluntly stated that our financial position now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet regime, has far fewer opportunities for large-scale development than, for instance, under the old regime which had vodka, which

we will not have, yielding 500,000,000 rubles per annum, and which possessed foreign credits to the amount of several hundred million rubles, which we also do not have. All this goes to show that with such meager opportunities for our financial development we shall not succeed in solving the fundamental and current problems of the financial systems of our republics unless we join forces and combine the financial strength of the individual republics into a single whole.

Such is the first group of circumstances that are impelling our republics to take the path of union.

The second group of circumstances that have determined the union of the republics are facts relating to our international situation. I have in mind our military situation. I have in mind our relations with foreign capital through the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. Lastly, I have in mind our diplomatic relations with the bourgeois states. It must be remembered, comrades, that in spite of the fact that our republics have happily emerged from the condition of civil war, the danger of attack from without is by no means excluded. This danger demands that our military front should be absolutely united, that our army should be an absolutely united army, particularly now that we have taken the path, not of moral disarmament, of course, but of a real, material reduction of armaments. Now that we have reduced our army to 600,000 men, it is particularly essential to have a single and continuous military front capable of safeguarding the republic against external danger.

Furthermore, apart from the military danger, there is the danger of the economic isolation of our federation. You know that although the economic boycott of our Republic failed after Genoa and The Hague, and after Urquhart,¹⁰² no great influx of capital for the needs of our economy is to be observed. There is a danger of our republics being economically isolated. This new form of intervention, which is no less dangerous than military intervention, can be eliminated only by the creation of a united

¹⁰² This refers to the negotiations of the Soviet Government with the British industrialist Urquhart for the conclusion of a concession agreement for the exploitation of mineral deposits in the Urals and in Kazakhstan. The draft agreement was rejected by the Council of People's Commissars on October 6, 1922, owing to the extortionate terms demanded by Urquhart, and also to the British Conservative Government's hostile policy towards Soviet Russia. The Soviet Government's refusal to conclude an agreement with Urquhart served the bourgeois press as a pretext for intensifying its anti-Soviet campaign.

economic front of our Soviet republics in face of the capitalist encirclement.

Lastly, there is our diplomatic situation. You have all seen how, recently, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference,¹⁰³ the Entente states made every effort to isolate our federation. Diplomatically, they did not succeed. The organized diplomatic boycott of our federation was broken. The Entente was forced to reckon with our federation and to withdraw, to retreat to some extent. But there are no grounds for assuming that these and similar facts about the diplomatic isolation of our federation will not be repeated. Hence the necessity for a united front also in the diplomatic field.

Such is the second group of circumstances that are impelling the Soviet Socialist Republics to take the path of union.

Both the first and the second groups of circumstances have operated up to the present day, being in force during the whole period of the existence of the Soviet regime. Our economic needs, of which I have just spoken, as well as our military and diplomatic needs in the sphere of foreign policy were, undoubtedly, also felt before the present day. But those circumstances have acquired special force only now, after the termination of the Civil War, when the republics have for the first time obtained the opportunity to start economic construction, and for the first time realize how very meager their economic resources are, and how very necessary union is as regards both internal economy and foreign relations. That is why now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet regime, the question of uniting the independent Soviet Socialist Republics has become an immediate one.

¹⁰³ The Lausanne Conference (November 20, 1922 to July 24, 1923) was called on the initiative of France, Great Britain and Italy to discuss the Near Eastern question (conclusion of a peace treaty between Greece and Turkey, delimitation of Turkey's frontiers, adoption of a convention governing the Straits, etc.). In addition to the above-mentioned countries, the following were represented: Japan, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey (representatives of the United States were present as observers). Soviet Russia was invited to the conference only for the discussion of the question of the Straits (the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles). At the conference, in the Commission on the Straits, the Soviet delegation opposed the proposal that the Straits be open for warships both during peace and war, and submitted its own proposal that the Straits be completely closed to the warships of all powers except Turkey. This proposal was rejected by the commission.

Finally, there is a third group of facts, which also call for union and which are associated with the structure of the Soviet regime, with the class nature of the Soviet regime. The Soviet regime is so constructed that, being international in its intrinsic nature, it in every way fosters the idea of union among the masses and itself impels them to take the path of union. Whereas capital, private property and exploitation disunite people, split them into mutually hostile camps, examples of which are provided by Great Britain, France and even small multi-national states like Poland and Yugoslavia with their irreconcilable internal national contradictions which corrode the very foundations of these states—whereas, I say, over there, in the West, where capitalist democracy reigns and where the states are based on private property, the very basis of the state fosters national bickering, conflicts and struggle, here, in the world of Soviets, where the regime is based not on capital but on labor, where the regime is based not on private property, but on collective property, where the regime is based not on the exploitation of man by man, but on the struggle against such exploitation, here, on the contrary, the very nature of the regime fosters among the laboring masses a natural striving towards union in a single socialist family.

Is it not significant that whereas over there, in the West, in the world of bourgeois democracy, we are witnessing the gradual decline and disintegration of the multi-national states into their component parts (as in the case of Great Britain, which has to settle matters with India, Egypt and Ireland, how, I do not know, or as in the case of Poland, which has to settle matters with its Byelorussians and Ukrainians, how, I do not know either), here, in our federation, which unites no fewer than thirty nationalities, we, on the contrary, are witnessing a process by which the state ties between the independent republics are becoming stronger, a process which is leading to an ever closer union of the independent nationalities in a single independent state! Thus you have two types of state union, of which the first, the capitalist type, leads to the disintegration of the state, while the second, the Soviet type, on the contrary, leads to a gradual but enduring union of formerly independent nationalities into a single independent state. Such is the third group of facts that are impelling the individual republics to take the path of union.

What should be the form of the union of the republics? The principles of the union are outlined in the resolutions which the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has received from the Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Transcaucasia.

Four Republics are to unite: the RSFSR as an integral federal unit, the Transcaucasian Republic, also as an integral federal unit, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia. Two independent Soviet Republics, Khorezm and Bukhara, which are not Socialist Republics, but People's Soviet Republics, remain for the time being outside this union solely and exclusively because these republics are not yet socialist. I have no doubt, comrades, and I hope that you too have no doubt, that, as they develop internally towards socialism, these republics will also join the union state which is now being formed.

It might seem to be more expedient for the RSFSR not to join the Union of Republics as an integral federal unit, but that the republics comprising it should join individually, for which purpose it would evidently be necessary to dissolve the RSFSR into its component parts. I think that this way would be irrational and inexpedient, and that it is precluded by the very course of the campaign. First, the effect would be that, parallel with the process that is leading to the union of the republics, we would have a process of disuniting the already existing federal units, a process that would upset the truly revolutionary process of union of the republics which has already begun. Secondly, if we took this wrong road, we would arrive at a situation in which we would have to separate out of the RSFSR, in addition to the eight autonomous republics, a specifically Russian Central Executive Committee and a Russian Council of People's Commissars, and this would lead to considerable organizational perturbations, which are entirely unnecessary and harmful at the present time, and which are not in the least demanded by either the internal or external situation. That is why I think that the parties to the formation of the union should be the four Republics: the RSFSR, the Transcaucasian Federation, the Ukraine, and Byelorussia.

The treaty of union must be based on the following principles: Commissariats of Foreign Trade, Military and Naval Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Transport, and Posts and Telegraphs shall be set up only within the Council of People's Commissars of the Union. The People's Commissariats of Finance, National Economy, Food, Labor, and State Inspection shall

continue to function within each of the contracting republics, with the proviso that they operate in accordance with the instructions of the corresponding central Commissariats of the Union. This is necessary in order that the forces of the laboring masses of the republics may be united under the direction of the Union center as regards food supply, the Supreme Council of National Economy, the People's Commissariat of Finance, and the People's Commissariat of Labor. Lastly, the remaining Commissariats, i.e., the Commissariats of Internal Affairs, Justice, Education, Agriculture, and so on—there are six in all—which are directly connected with the manner of life, customs, special forms of land settlement, special forms of legal procedure, and with the language and culture of the peoples forming the republics, must be left as independent Commissariats under the control of the Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the contracting republics. This is necessary in order to provide a real guarantee of freedom of national development for the peoples of the Soviet republics.

Such, in my opinion, are the principles that must be made the basis of the treaty that is shortly to be signed between our republics.

Accordingly, I move the following draft resolution, which has been approved by the Presidium of the All Russian Central Executive Committee:

1. The union of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the Byelorussian Socialist Soviet Republic into a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is to be regarded as opportune.
2. The union is to be based on the principle of voluntary consent and equal rights of the republics, each of which shall retain the right freely to secede from the Union of Republics.
3. The delegation from the RSFSR, in collaboration with the delegations from the Ukraine, the Transcaucasian Republic and Byelorussia, is to be instructed to draft a declaration on the formation of the Union of Republics, setting forth the

considerations which dictate the union of the republics into a single union state.

4. The delegation is to be instructed to draw up the terms on which the RSFSR is to enter the Union of Republics and when examining the treaty of union, is to adhere to the following principles:

- a) the formation of the appropriate Union legislative and executive organs;
- b) the merging of the Commissariats of Military and Naval Affairs, Transport, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Posts and Telegraphs;
- c) the subordination of the Commissariats of Finance, Food, National Economy, Labor, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the contracting republics to the instructions of the corresponding Commissariats of the Union of Republics;
- d) complete guarantee of national development for the peoples belonging to the contracting republics.

5. The draft treaty is to be submitted for the approval of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee represented by its Presidium before it is submitted to the First Congress of the Union of Republics.

6. On the basis of the approval of the terms of union by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, the delegation is to be empowered to conclude a treaty between the RSFSR and the Socialist Soviet Republics of the Ukraine, Transcaucasia and Byelorussia for the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

7. The treaty is to be submitted for ratification to the First Congress of the Union of Republics.

Such is the draft resolution I submit for your consideration.

Comrades, since the Soviet republics were formed, the states of the world have split into two camps: the camp of socialism and the camp of capitalism. In the camp of capitalism there are imperialist wars, national strife, oppression, colonial slavery and chauvinism. In the camp of the Soviets, the camp of socialism, there are, on the contrary, mutual confidence, national equality of rights and the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of peoples. Capitalist democracy has been striving for decades to eliminate national contradictions by combining the free development of nationalities with the system of exploitation. So far it has not succeeded, and it will not succeed. On the contrary, the skein of national contradictions is becoming more and more entangled, threatening capitalism with death. Here alone, in the world of the Soviets, in the camp of socialism, has it been possible to eradicate national oppression and to establish mutual confidence and fraternal co-operation between peoples. And only after the Soviets succeeded in doing this did it become possible for us to build up our federation and to defend it against the attack of the enemies, both internal and external.

Five years ago the Soviet power succeeded in laying the foundation for the peaceful co-existence and fraternal co-operation of peoples. Now, when we here are deciding the question of the desirability and necessity of union, the task before us is to erect on this foundation a new edifice by forming a new and mighty union state of the working people. The will of the peoples of our republics, who recently assembled at their congresses and unanimously resolved to form a Union of Republics, is incontestable proof that the cause of union is on the right road, that it is based on the great principle of voluntary consent and equal rights for nations. Let us hope, comrades, that by forming our Union Republic we shall create a reliable bulwark against international capitalism, and that the new Union State will be another decisive step towards the union of the working people of the whole world into a World Soviet Socialist Republic. [*Prolonged applause. The "Internationale" is sung.*]

**THE NATIONAL FACTORS
IN PARTY AND STATE
AFFAIRS**

April 23, 1923

*Report Delivered at the XIIth Congress
of the RCP(B)*¹⁰⁴

Comrades, this is the third time since the October Revolution that we are discussing the national question: the first time was at the Eighth Congress, the second was at the Tenth, and the third at the Twelfth. Does this indicate that some fundamental change has taken place in our views on the national question? No, our fundamental outlook on the national question has remained what it was before and after the October Revolution. But since the Tenth Congress the international situation has changed in that the heavy reserves of the revolution which the countries of the East now constitute have acquired greater importance. That is the first point. The second point is that since the Tenth Congress our Party has also witnessed certain changes in the internal situation in connection with the New Economic Policy. All these new factors must be taken into account and the conclusions must be drawn from them. It is in this sense that it

¹⁰⁴ The Twelfth Congress of the RCP(B) was held on April 17-25, 1923. This was the first congress since the October Socialist Revolution that V. I. Lenin was unable to attend. The congress discussed the reports of the Central Committee, of the Central Control Commission and of the Russian delegation in the Executive Committee of the Comintern, and also reports on: industry, national factors in Party and state affairs taxation policy in the countryside, delimitation of administrative areas, etc. In its decisions the congress took into account all the directives given by V. I. Lenin in his last articles and letters. The congress summed up the results of the two years of the New Economic Policy and gave a determined rebuff to Trotsky, Bukharin and their adherents, who interpreted the NEP as a retreat from the socialist position. The congress devoted great attention to the organizational and national questions. At the evening sitting on April 17, J. V. Stalin delivered the Central Committee's organizational report. In the resolution it adopted on this report, the congress endorsed Lenin's plan for the reorganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and the Central Control Commission, and noted an improvement in the organizational apparatus of the Central Committee and in all organizational activities. J. V. Stalin's report on "National Factors in Party and State Affairs" was heard on April 23. The debate on this report continued during April 23 and 24, and further discussion was referred to the committee on the national question that was set up by the congress, and which conducted its proceedings under the direct guidance of J. V. Stalin. On April 25, the congress passed the resolution submitted by the committee. This resolution was based on J. V. Stalin's theses. The congress exposed the nationalist deviators and called on the Party resolutely to combat the deviations on the national question—Great-Russian chauvinism and local bourgeois nationalism. (Concerning the Twelfth Congress of the RCP(B), see *History of the CPSU(B), Short Course*, Moscow 1952, pp. 403-06. For the resolutions of the congress see "Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU(B) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part I, 1941, pp. 472-524.)

can be said that the national question is being presented at the Twelfth Congress in a new way.

The international significance of the national question. You know, comrades, that by the will of history we, the Soviet federation, now represent the advanced detachment of the world revolution. You know that we were the first to breach the general capitalist front, that it has been our destiny to be ahead of all others. You know that in our advance we got as far as Warsaw, that we then retreated and entrenched ourselves in the positions we considered strongest. From that moment we passed to the New Economic Policy, from that moment we took into account the slowing down of the international revolutionary movement, and from that moment our policy changed from the offensive to the defensive. We could not advance after we had suffered a reverse at Warsaw (let us not hide the truth); we could not advance, for we would have run the risk of being cut off from the rear, which in our case is a peasant rear; and, lastly, we would have run the risk of advancing too far ahead of the reserves of the revolution with which destiny has provided us, the reserves in the West and the East. That is why we made a turn towards the New Economic Policy within the country, and towards a slower advance outside; for we decided that it was necessary to have a respite, to heal our wounds, the wounds of the advanced detachment, the proletariat, to establish contact with the peasant rear and to conduct further work among the reserves, which were lagging behind us—the reserves in the West and the heavy reserves in the East which are the main rear of world capitalism. It is these reserves—heavy reserves, which at the same time are the rear of world imperialism—that we have in mind when discussing the national question.

One thing or the other: either we succeed in stirring up, in revolutionizing, the remote rear of imperialism—the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East—and thereby hasten the fall of imperialism; or we fail to do so, and thereby strengthen imperialism and weaken the force of our movement. That is how the question stands.

The fact of the matter is that the whole East regards our Union of Republics as an experimental field. Either we find a correct practical solution of the national question within the framework of this Union, either we here, within the framework of this Union, establish truly fraternal relations and true co-operation among the peoples—in which case

the whole East will see that our federation is the banner of its liberation, is its advanced detachment, in whose footsteps it must follow—and that will be the beginning of the collapse of world imperialism. Or we commit a blunder here, undermine the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the proletariat of Russia, and deprive the Union of Republics of the power of attraction which it possesses in the eyes of the East—in which case imperialism will win and we shall lose.

Therein lies the international significance of the national question.

The national question is also of importance for us from the standpoint of the internal situation, not only because the former dominant nation numbers about 75,000,000 and the other nations 65,000,000 (not a small figure, anyway), and not only because the formerly oppressed nationalities inhabit areas that are the most essential for our economic development and the most important from the standpoint of military strategy, but above all because during the past two years we have introduced what is known as the NEP, as a result of which Great-Russian nationalism has begun to grow and become more pronounced, the *Smena-Vekhist* idea has come into being, and one can discern the desire to accomplish by peaceful means what Denikin failed to accomplish, i.e., to create the so-called “one and indivisible.”

Thus, as a result of the NEP, a new force is arising in the internal life of our country, namely, Great-Russian chauvinism, which entrenches itself in our institutions, which penetrates not only the Soviet institutions, but also the Party institutions, and which is to be found in all parts of our federation. Consequently, if we do not resolutely combat this new force, if we do not cut it off at the root—and the NEP conditions foster it—we run the risk of being confronted by a rupture between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasants of the formerly oppressed nations—which will mean undermining the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the NEP fosters not only Great-Russian chauvinism—it also fosters local chauvinism, especially in those republics where there are several nationalities. I have in mind Georgia, Azerbaijan, Bukhara and partly Turkestan; in each of these there are several nationalities, the advanced elements of which may soon begin to compete among themselves for suprem-

acy. Of course, this local chauvinism as regards its strength is not such a danger as Great-Russian chauvinism. But it is a danger nevertheless, for it threatens to convert some of the republics into arenas of national squabbling and to weaken the bonds of internationalism there.

Such are the international and internal circumstances that make the national question one of great, of first rate, importance in general, and at the present moment in particular.

What is the class essence of the national question? Under the present conditions of Soviet development, the class essence of the national question lies in the establishment of correct mutual relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities. The question of the bond has been more than sufficiently discussed here, but when this question was discussed in connection with the report of Kamenev, Kalinin, Sokolnikov, Rykov and Trotsky, what was mainly in mind was the relations between the Russian proletariat and the Russian peasantry. Here, in the national sphere, we have a more complex mechanism. Here we are concerned with establishing correct mutual relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation, which is the most cultured section of the proletariat in our entire federation, and the peasantry, mainly of the formerly oppressed nationalities. This is the class essence of the national question. If the proletariat succeeds in establishing with the peasantry of the other nationalities relations that can eradicate all remnants of mistrust towards everything Russian, a mistrust implanted and fostered for decades by the policy of tsarism—if, moreover, the Russian proletariat succeeds in establishing complete mutual understanding and confidence, in effecting a genuine alliance not only between the proletariat and the Russian peasantry but also between the proletariat and peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities, the problem will be solved. To achieve this, proletarian power must become as dear to the peasantry of the other nationalities as it is to the Russian peasantry. And in order that Soviet power may become dear also to the peasants of these nationalities, it must be understood by these peasants, it must function in their native languages, the schools and governmental bodies must be staffed with local people who know the language, habits, customs and manner of life of the non-Russian nationalities. Soviet power, which until very recently was Russian power, will become a power which

is not merely Russian but *inter-national*, a power dear to the peasants of the formerly oppressed nationalities, only when and to the degree that the institutions and governmental bodies in the republics of these countries begin to speak and function in the native languages.

That is one of the fundamentals of the national question in general, and under Soviet conditions in particular.

What is the characteristic feature of the solution of the national question at the present moment, in 1923? What form have the problems requiring solution in the national sphere assumed in 1923? The form of establishing co-operation between the peoples of our federation in the economic, military and political spheres. I have in mind inter-national relations. The national question, at the basis of which lie the tasks of establishing correct relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasantry of the other nationalities, assumes at the present time the special form of establishing the co-operation and fraternal co-existence of those nations which were formerly disunited and which are now uniting in a single state.

Such is the essence of the national question in the form it has assumed in 1923.

The concrete form of this state union is the Union of Republics, which we already discussed at the Congress of Soviets at the end of last year, and which we then established.

The basis of this Union is the voluntary consent and the juridical equality of the members of the Union. Voluntary consent and equality—because our national program starts out from the clause on the right of nations to exist as independent states, what was formerly called the right to self-determination. Proceeding from this, we must definitely say that no union of peoples into a single state can be durable unless it is based on absolutely voluntary consent, unless the peoples themselves wish to unite. The second basis is the juridical equality of the peoples which form the Union. That is natural. I am not speaking of actual equality—I shall come to that later—for the establishment of actual equality between nations which have forged ahead and backward nations is a very complicated, very difficult, matter that must take a number of years. I am speaking now about juridical equality. This equality finds expression in the fact that all the republics, in this case the four republics: Transcaucasia, Byelorussia,

the Ukraine and the RSFSR, forming the Union, enjoy the benefits of the Union to an equal degree and at the same time to an equal degree forgo certain of their independent rights in favor of the Union. If the RSFSR, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Transcaucasian Republic are not each to have its own People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, it is obvious that the abolition of these Commissariats and the establishment of a common Commissariat of Foreign Affairs for the Union of Republics will entail a certain restriction of the independence which these republics formerly enjoyed, and this restriction will be equal for all the republics forming the Union. Obviously, if these republics formerly had their own People's Commissariats of Foreign Trade, and these Commissariats are now abolished both in the RSFSR and in the other republics in order to make way for a common Commissariat of Foreign Trade for the Union of Republics, this too will involve a certain restriction of the independence formerly enjoyed in full measure, but now curtailed in favor of the common Union, and so on, and so forth. Some people ask a purely scholastic question, namely: do the republics remain independent after uniting? That is a scholastic question. Their independence is restricted, for every union involves a certain restriction of the former rights of the parties to the union. But the basic elements of independence of each of these republics certainly remain, if only because every republic retains the right to secede from the Union at its own discretion.

Thus, the concrete form the national question has assumed under the conditions at present prevailing in our country is how to achieve the co-operation of the peoples in economic, foreign and military affairs. We must unite the republics along these lines into a single union called the USSR. Such are the concrete forms the national question has assumed at the present time.

But that is easier said than done. The fact of the matter is that under the conditions prevailing in our country, there are, in addition to the factors conducive to the union of the peoples into one state, a number of factors which hinder this union.

You know what the conducive factors are: first of all, the economic coming together of the peoples that was established prior to Soviet power and which was consolidated by Soviet power; a certain division of labor between the peoples, established before our time, but consolidated by us,

by the Soviet power. That is the basic factor conducive to the union of the republics into a Union. The nature of Soviet power must be regarded as the second factor conducive to union. That is natural. Soviet power is the power of the workers, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which by its very nature disposes the laboring elements of the republics and peoples which form the Union to live in friendly relations with one another. That is natural. And the third factor conducive to union is the imperialist encirclement, forming an environment in which the Union of Republics is obliged to operate.

But there are also factors which hinder, which impede, this union. The principal force impeding the union of the republics into a single union is that force which, as I have said, is growing in our country under the conditions of the NEP: Great-Russian chauvinism. It is by no means accidental, comrades, that the Smena-Vekhites have recruited a large number of supporters among Soviet officials. That is by no means accidental. Nor is it accidental that Messieurs the Smena-Vekhites are singing the praises of the Bolshevik Communists, as much as to say: You may talk about Bolshevism as much as you like, you may prate as much as you like about your internationalist tendencies, but we know that you will achieve what Denikin failed to achieve, that you Bolsheviks have resurrected, or at all events will resurrect, the idea of a Great Russia. All that is not accidental. Nor is it accidental that this idea has even penetrated some of our Party institutions. At the February Plenum, where the question of a second chamber was first raised, I witnessed how certain members of the Central Committee made speeches which were inconsistent with communism—speeches which had nothing in common with internationalism. All this is a sign of the times, an epidemic. The chief danger that arises from this is that, owing to the NEP, dominant-nation chauvinism is growing in our country by leaps and bounds, striving to obliterate all that is not Russian, to gather all the threads of government into the hands of Russians and to stifle everything that is not Russian. The chief danger is that with such a policy we run the risk that the Russian proletarians will lose the confidence of the formerly oppressed nations which they won in the October days, when they overthrew the landlords and the Russian capitalists, when they smashed the chains of national oppression within Russia, withdrew the troops from Persia and Mongolia, proclaimed the independence of Finland

and Armenia and, in general, put the national question on an entirely new basis. Unless we all arm ourselves against this new, I repeat, Great-Russian chauvinism, which is advancing, creeping, insinuating itself drop by drop into the eyes and ears of our officials and step by step corrupting them, we may lose down to the last shreds the confidence we earned at that time. It is this danger, comrades, that we must defeat at all costs. Otherwise we are threatened with the prospect of losing the confidence of the workers and peasants of the formerly oppressed peoples, we are threatened with the prospect of a rupture of the ties between these peoples and the Russian proletariat, and this threatens us with the danger of a crack being formed in the system of our dictatorship.

Do not forget, comrades, that if we were able to march against Kerensky with flying colors and overthrow the Provisional Government it was because, among other things, we were backed by the confidence of the oppressed peoples that were expecting liberation at the hands of the Russian proletarians. Do not forget such reserves as the oppressed peoples, who are silent, but who by their silence exert pressure and decide a great deal. This is often not felt, but these peoples are living, they exist, and they must not be forgotten. Do not forget that if we had not had in the rear of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel and Yudenich the so-called “aliens,” if we had not had the formerly oppressed peoples, who disorganized the rear of those generals by their tacit sympathy for the Russian-proletarians—comrades, this is a special factor in our development, this tacit sympathy, which nobody hears or sees, but which decides everything—if it had not been for this sympathy, we would not have knocked out a single one of these generals. While we were marching against them, disintegration began in their rear. Why? Because those generals depended on the Cossack colonizing elements, they held out to the oppressed peoples the prospect of further oppression, and the oppressed peoples were therefore pushed into our arms, while we unfurled the banner of the liberation of these oppressed peoples. That is what decided the fate of those generals; such is the sum-total of the factors which, although overshadowed by our armies’ victories, in the long run decided everything. That must not be forgotten. That is why we must make a sharp turn towards combating the new chauvinist sentiments and pillory those bureaucrats in our institutions and those Party comrades who are forgetting what we gained in October,

namely, the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples, a confidence that we must cherish.

It must be understood that if a force like Great-Russian chauvinism blossoms and spreads, there will be no confidence on the part of the formerly oppressed peoples, we shall have no co-operation within a single union, and we shall have no Union of Republics.

Such is the first and most dangerous factor that is impeding the union of the peoples and republics into a single union.

The second factor, comrades, which is also hindering the union of the formerly oppressed peoples around the Russian proletariat, is the actual inequality of nations that we have inherited from the period of tsarism.

We have proclaimed juridical equality and are practicing it; but juridical equality, although in itself of very great importance in the history of the development of the Soviet republics, is still far from being actual equality. Formally, all the backward nationalities and all the peoples enjoy just as many rights as are enjoyed by the other, more advanced, nations which constitute our federation. But the trouble is that some nationalities have no proletarians of their own, have not undergone industrial development, have not even started on this road, are terribly backward culturally and are entirely unable to take advantage of the rights granted them by the revolution. This, comrades, is a far more important question than that of the schools. Some of our comrades here think that the knot can be cut by putting the question of schools and language in the forefront. That is not so, comrades. Schools will not carry you very far. These schools are developing, so are the languages, but actual inequality remains the basis of all the discontent and friction. Schools and language will not settle the matter; what is needed is real, systematic, sincere and genuine proletarian assistance on our part to the laboring masses of the culturally and economically backward nationalities. In addition to schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take all measures to create in the border regions, in the culturally backward republics—and they are not backward because of any fault of their own, but because they were formerly regarded as sources of raw materials—must take all measures to ensure the building of centers of industry in these republics. Certain attempts have been made in this direction. Georgia has taken a factory from Moscow and it should start operating soon. Bukhara has taken one factory, but could have taken four.

Turkestan is taking one large factory. Thus, all the facts show that these economically backward republics, which possess no proletariat, must with the aid of the Russian proletariat establish their own centers of industry, even though small ones, in order to create in these centers groups of local proletarians to serve as a bridge between the Russian proletarians and peasants and the laboring masses of these republics. In this sphere we have a lot of work to do, and schools alone will not settle the matter.

But there is still a third factor that is impeding the union of the republics into a single union: the existence of nationalism in the individual republics. The NEP affects not only the Russian but also the non-Russian population. The New Economic Policy is developing private trade and industry not only in the center of Russia but also in the individual republics. And it is this same NEP, and the private capital associated with it, which nourishes and fosters Georgian, Azerbaijanian, Uzbek and other nationalism. Of course, if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism—which is aggressive because it is strong, because it was also strong previously and has retained the habit of oppressing and humiliating—if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism, then, perhaps, local chauvinism also, as a retaliation to Great-Russian chauvinism, would exist only in a much reduced form, in miniature, so to speak; because, in the final analysis, anti-Russian nationalism is a form of defense, an ugly form of defense against Great-Russian nationalism, against Great-Russian chauvinism. If this nationalism were only defensive, it might not be worth making a fuss about. We could concentrate the entire force of our activities, the entire force of our struggle, against Great-Russian chauvinism, in the hope that as soon as this powerful enemy is overcome, anti-Russian nationalism will be overcome with it; for, I repeat, in the last analysis, this nationalism is a reaction to Great-Russian nationalism, a retaliation to it, a certain form of defense. Yes, that would be so if anti-Russian nationalism in the localities were nothing more than a reaction to Great-Russian nationalism. But the trouble is that in some republics this defensive nationalism is turning into aggressive nationalism.

Take Georgia. Over 30 percent of her population are non-Georgians. They include Armenians, Abkhazians, Ajarians, Ossetians and Tatars. The Georgians are at the head. Among some of the Georgian Communists the idea has sprung up and is gaining ground that there is no particular

need to reckon with these small nationalities; they are less cultured, less developed, they say, and there is therefore no need to reckon with them. That is chauvinism—harmful and dangerous chauvinism; for it may turn the small republic of Georgia into an arena of strife. In fact, it has already turned it into an arena of strife.

Azerbaijan. The basic nationality here is the Azerbaijanian, but there are also Armenians. Among a section of the Azerbaijanians there is also a tendency, sometimes quite unconcealed, to think that the Azerbaijanians are the indigenous population and the Armenians intruders, and therefore, it is possible to push the Armenians somewhat into the background, to disregard their interests. That is chauvinism too. It undermines the equality of nationalities on which the Soviet system is based.

Bukhara. In Bukhara there are three nationalities—Uzbeks, the basic nationality; Turkmenians, a “less important” nationality from the point of view of Bukharan chauvinism; and Kirghiz, who are few in number here and, apparently, “less important.”

In Khorezm you have the same thing: Turkmenians and Uzbeks. The Uzbeks are the basic nationality and the Turkmenians “less important.”

All this leads to conflict and weakens the Soviet regime. This tendency towards local chauvinism must also be cut off at the root. Of course, compared with Great-Russian chauvinism, which in the general scheme of the national question comprises three-quarters of the whole, local chauvinism is not so important; but for local work, for the local people, for the peaceful development of the national republics themselves, this chauvinism is a matter of first-rate importance.

Sometimes this chauvinism begins to undergo a very interesting evolution. I have in mind Transcaucasia. You know that Transcaucasia consists of three republics embracing ten nationalities. From very early times Transcaucasia has been an arena of massacre and strife and, under the Mensheviks and Dashnaks, it was an arena of war. You know of the Georgian-Armenian war. You also know of the massacres in Azerbaijan at the beginning and at the end of 1905. I could mention a whole list of districts where the Armenian majority massacred all the rest of the population, consisting of Tatars. Zangezur, for instance. I could mention another province—Nakhchivan. There the Tatars predominated, and they massacred all the Armenians. That was just before the liberation of Armenia

and Georgia from the yoke of imperialism. [*Voice*: "That was their way of solving the national question."] That, of course, is also a way of solving the national question. But it is not the Soviet way. Of course, the Russian workers are not to blame for this state of mutual national enmity, for it is the Tatars and Armenians who are fighting without the Russians. That is why a special organ is required in Transcaucasia to regulate the relations between the nationalities.

It may be confidently stated that the relations between the proletariat of the formerly dominant nation and the toilers of all the other nationalities constitute three quarters of the whole national question. But one-quarter of this question must be attributed to the relations between the formerly oppressed nationalities themselves.

And if in this atmosphere of mutual distrust the Soviet Government had failed to establish in Transcaucasia an organ of national peace capable of settling all friction and conflict, we would have reverted to the era of tsarism, or to the era of the Dashnaks, the Mussavatists, the Mensheviks, when people maimed and slaughtered one another. That is why the Central Committee has on three occasions affirmed the necessity of preserving the Transcaucasian Federation as an organ of national peace.

There has been and still is a group of Georgian Communists who do not object to Georgia uniting with the Union of Republics, but who do object to this union being effected through the Transcaucasian Federation. They, you see, would like to get closer to the Union, they say that there is no need for this partition wall in the shape of the Transcaucasian Federation between themselves—the Georgians—and the Union of Republics, the federation, they say, is superfluous. This, they think, sounds very revolutionary.

But there is another motive behind this. In the first place, these statements indicate that on the national question the attitude towards the Russians is of secondary importance in Georgia, for these comrades, the deviators (that is what they are called), have no objection to Georgia joining the Union directly; that is, they do not fear Great-Russian chauvinism, believing that its roots have been cut in one way or another, or, at any rate, that it is not of decisive importance. Evidently, what they fear most is the federation of Transcaucasia. Why? Why should the three principal nations which inhabit Transcaucasia, which fought among themselves so

long, massacred each other and warred against each other, why should these nations, now that Soviet power has at last united them by bonds of fraternal union in the form of a federation, now that this federation has produced positive results, why should they now break these federal ties? What is the point, comrades?

The point is that the bonds of the Transcaucasian Federation deprive Georgia of that somewhat privileged position which she could assume by virtue of her geographical position. Judge for yourselves. Georgia has her own port—Batum—through which goods flow from the West; Georgia has a railway junction like Tiflis, which the Armenians cannot avoid, nor can Azerbaijan avoid it, for she receives her goods through Batum. If Georgia were a separate republic, if she were not part of the Transcaucasian Federation, she could present something in the nature of a little ultimatum both to Armenia, which cannot do without Tiflis, and to Azerbaijan, which cannot do without Batum. There would be some advantages for Georgia in this. It was no accident that the notorious savage decree establishing frontier cordons was drafted in Georgia. Serebryakov is now being blamed for this. Let us allow that he is to blame, but the decree originated in Georgia, not in Azerbaijan or Armenia.

Then there is yet another reason. Tiflis is the capital of Georgia, but the Georgians there are not more than 30 percent of the population, the Armenians not less than 35 percent, and then come all the other nationalities. That is what the capital of Georgia is like. If Georgia were a separate republic the population could be reshifted somewhat—for instance, the Armenian population could be shifted from Tiflis. Was not a well-known decree adopted in Georgia to “regulate” the population of Tiflis, about which Comrade Makharadze said that it was not directed against the Armenians? The intention was to reshift the population so as to reduce the number of Armenians in Tiflis from year to year, making them fewer than the Georgians, and thus convert Tiflis into a real Georgian capital. I grant that they have rescinded the eviction decree, but they have a vast number of possibilities, a vast number of flexible forms—such as “decongestion”—by which it would be possible, while maintaining a semblance of internationalism, to arrange matters in such a way that Armenians in Tiflis would be in the minority.

It is these geographical advantages that the Georgian deviators do not want to lose, and the unfavorable position of the Georgians in Tiflis itself, where there are fewer Georgians than Armenians, that are causing our deviators to oppose federation. The Mensheviks simply evicted Armenians and Tatars from Tiflis. Now, however, under the Soviet regime, eviction is impossible; therefore, they want to leave the federation, and this will create legal opportunities for independently performing certain operations which will result in the advantageous position enjoyed by the Georgians being fully utilized against Azerbaijan and Armenia. And all this would create a privileged position for the Georgians in Transcaucasia. Therein lies the whole danger.

Can we ignore the interests of national peace in Transcaucasia and allow conditions to be created under which the Georgians would be in a privileged position in relation to the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Republics? No. We cannot allow that.

There is an old, special system of governing nations, under which a bourgeois authority favors certain nationalities, grants them privileges and humbles the other nations, not wishing to be bothered with them. Thus by favoring one nationality, it uses it to keep down the others. Such, for instance, was the method of government employed in Austria. Everyone remembers the statement of the Austrian Minister Beust, who summoned the Hungarian Minister and said: "You govern your hordes and I will cope with mine." In other words: you curb and keep down your nationalities in Hungary and I will keep down mine in Austria. You and I represent privileged nations, let's keep down the rest.

The same was the case with the Poles in Austria itself. The Austrians favored the Poles, granted them privileges, in order that the Poles should help the Austrians strengthen their position in Poland; and in return they allowed the Poles to strangle Galicia.

This system of singling out some nationalities and granting them privileges in order to cope with the rest is purely and specifically Austrian. From the point of view of the bureaucracy, it is an "economical" method of governing, because it has to bother only with one nationality; but from the political point of view it means certain death to the state, for to violate the principle of equality of nationalities and to grant privileges to any one nationality means dooming one's national policy to certain failure.

Britain is now ruling India in exactly the same way. To make it easier, from the point of view of the bureaucracy, to deal with the nationalities and races of India, Britain divided India into British India (240,000,000 population) and Native India (72,000,000 population). Why? Because Britain wanted to single out one group of nations and grant it privileges in order the more easily to govern the remaining nationalities. In India there are several hundred nationalities, and Britain decided that, rather than bother with these nationalities, it was better to single out a few nations, grant them certain privileges and through them govern the rest; for, firstly, the discontent of the other nations would be directed against these favored ones and not against Britain, and secondly, it would be cheaper to have to “bother” with only two or three nations.

That is also a system of governing, the British system. What does it lead to? To the “cheapening” of the apparatus—that is true. But, comrades, leaving aside bureaucratic conveniences, it means certain death to British rule in India; this system harbors inevitable death, as surely as twice two make four, the death of British rule and British domination.

It is on to this dangerous path that our comrades, the Georgian deviators, are pushing us by opposing federation in violation of all the laws of the Party, by wanting to withdraw from the federation in order to retain an advantageous position. They are pushing us on to the path of granting them certain privileges at the expense of the Armenian and Azerbaijanian Republics. But this is a path we cannot take, for it means certain death to our entire policy and to Soviet power in the Caucasus.

It was no accident that our comrades in Georgia sensed this danger. This Georgian chauvinism, which had passed to the offensive against the Armenians and Azerbaijanians, alarmed the Communist Party of Georgia.

Quite naturally, the Communist Party of Georgia, which has held two congresses since it came into legal existence, on both occasions unanimously rejected the stand of the deviator comrades, for under present conditions it is impossible to maintain peace in the Caucasus, impossible to establish equality, without the Transcaucasian Federation. One nation must not be allowed more privileges than another. This our comrades have sensed. That is why, after two years of contention, the Mdivani group is a small handful, repeatedly ejected by the Party in Georgia itself.

It was also no accident that Comrade Lenin was in such a hurry and was so insistent that the federation should be established immediately. Nor was it an accident that our Central Committee on three occasions affirmed the need for a federation in Transcaucasia, having its own Central Executive Committee and its own executive authority, whose decisions would be binding on the republics. It was no accident that both commissions—Comrade Dzerzhinsky's and that of Kamenev and Kuybyshev—on their arrival in Moscow stated that federation was indispensable.

Lastly, it is no accident either that the Mensheviks of *Sotsialisticheskyy Vestnik*¹⁰⁵ praise our deviator comrades and laud them to the skies for opposing federation: birds of a feather flock together.

I pass to an examination of the ways and means by which we must eliminate these three main factors that are hindering union: Great-Russian chauvinism, actual inequality of nations and local nationalism, particularly when it is growing into chauvinism. Of the means that may help us painlessly to rid ourselves of all this heritage of the past which is hindering the peoples from coming together I shall mention three.

The first means is to adopt all measures to make the Soviet regime understood and loved in the republics, to make the Soviet regime not only Russian but inter-national. For this it is necessary that not only the schools, but all institutions and all bodies, both Party and Soviet, should step by step be made national in character, that they should be conducted in the language that is understood by the masses, that they should function in conditions that correspond to the manner of life of the given nation. Only on this condition will we be able to convert the Soviet regime from a Russian into an inter-national one, understood by and near and dear to the laboring masses of all the republics, particularly those which are economically and culturally backward.

The second means that can help us in painlessly getting rid of the heritage from tsarism and the bourgeoisie is to construct the Commissariats of the Union of Republics in such a way as to enable at least the principal nationalities to have their people on the collegiums, and to create a

¹⁰⁵ *Sotsialisticheskyy Vestnik* (*Socialist Courier*)—organ of the Menshevik whiteguard émigrés, founded by Martov in February 1921. Until March 1933 it was published in Berlin, from May 1933 to June 1940 in Paris, and later in America. It is the mouthpiece of the most reactionary imperialist circles.

situation in which the needs and requirements of the individual republics will be met without fail.

The third means: it is necessary to have among our supreme central organs one that will serve to express the needs and requirements of all the republics and nationalities without exception.

I want especially to draw your attention to this last means.

If within the Central Executive Committee of the Union we could create two chambers having equal powers, one of which would be elected at the Union Congress of Soviets, irrespective of nationality, and the other by the republics and national regions (the republics being equally represented, and the national regions also being equally represented) and endorsed by the same Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics, I think that then our supreme institutions would express not only the class interests of all the working people without exception but also purely national needs. We would have an organ which would express the special interests of the nationalities, peoples and races inhabiting the Union of Republics. Under the conditions prevailing in our Union, which as a whole unites not less than 140,000,000 people, of whom about 65,000,000 are non-Russians, in such a country it is impossible to govern unless we have with us, here in Moscow, in the supreme organ, emissaries of these nationalities, to express not only the interests common to the proletariat as a whole but also special, specific, national interests. Without this it will be impossible to govern, comrades. Unless we have this barometer, and people capable of formulating these special needs of the individual nationalities, it will be impossible to govern.

There are two ways of governing a country. One way is to have a "simplified" apparatus, headed, say, by a group of people, or by one man, having hands and eyes in the localities in the shape of governors. This is a very simple form of government, under which the ruler, in governing the country, receives the kind of information that can be received from governors and comforts himself with the hope that he is governing honestly and well. Presently, friction arises, friction grows into conflicts, and conflicts into revolts. Later, the revolts are crushed. Such a system of government is not our system, and in addition, although a simple one, it is too costly. But there is another system of government, the Soviet system. In our Soviet country we are operating this other system of government, the system

which enables us to foresee with accuracy all changes, all the circumstances among the peasants, among the nationals, among the so-called “aliens” and among the Russians; this system of supreme organs possesses a number of barometers which forecast every change, which register and warn against a Basmachi movement,¹⁰⁶ a bandit movement, Kronstadt, and all possible storms and disasters. That is the Soviet system of government. It is called Soviet power, people’s power, because, relying on the common people, it is the first to register any change, it takes the appropriate measures and rectifies the line in time, if it has become distorted, criticizes itself and rectifies the line. This system of government is the Soviet system, and it requires that the system of our higher agencies should include agencies expressing absolutely all national needs and requirements.

The objection is made that this system will complicate the work of administration, that it means setting up more and more bodies. That is true. Hitherto we had the Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR, then we created the Central Executive Committee of the Union, and now we shall have to split the Central Executive Committee of the Union into two. But it can’t be helped. I have already said that the simplest form of government is to have one man and to give him governors. But now, after the October Revolution, we cannot engage in such experiments. The system has become more complex, but it makes government easier and lends the whole governmental system a profoundly Soviet character. That is why I think that the congress must agree to the establishment of a special body, a second chamber within the Central Executive Committee of the Union, since it is absolutely essential.

I do not say that this is a perfect way of arranging co-operation between the peoples of the Union; I do not say that it is the last word in science. We shall put forward the national question again and again, for national and international conditions are changing, and may change again. I do not deny the possibility that perhaps some of the Commissariats that we are merging in the Union of Republics will have to be separated again

¹⁰⁶ The Basmachi movement—a counter-revolutionary nationalist movement in Central Asia (Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm) in 1918-24. Headed by beys and mullahs, it took the form of open political banditry. Its aim was to sever the Central Asian republics from Soviet Russia and to restore the rule of the exploiting classes. It was actively supported by the British imperialists, who were endeavoring to transform Central Asia into their colony.

if, after being merged, experience shows that they are unsatisfactory. But one thing is clear, namely, that under present conditions, and in the present circumstances, no better method and no more suitable organ is available. As yet we have no better way or means of creating an organ capable of registering all the oscillations and all the changes that take place within the individual republics than that of establishing a second chamber.

It goes without saying that the second chamber must contain representatives not only of the four republics that have united, but of all the peoples; for the question concerns not only the republics which have formally united (there are four of them), but all the peoples and nationalities in the Union of Republics. We therefore require a form that will express the needs of all the nationalities and republics without exception, I shall sum up, comrades.

Thus, the importance of the national question is determined by the new situation in international affairs, by the fact that here, in Russia, in our federation we must solve the national question in a correct, a model way, in order to set an example to the East, which constitutes the heavy reserves of the revolution, and there by increase their confidence in our federation and its attraction for them.

From the standpoint of the internal situation, the conditions created by the NEP and the growing Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism also oblige us to emphasize the special importance of the national question.

I said, further, that the essence of the national question lies in establishing correct relations between the proletariat of the formerly dominant nation and the peasantry of the formerly subject nations, and that from this point of view the concrete form of the national question at the present moment is expressed by having to find ways and means of arranging the co-operation of the peoples within a Union of Republics, within a single state.

I spoke, further, of the factors which are conducive to such a coming together of the peoples. I spoke of the factors impeding such a union. I dwelt especially on Great-Russian chauvinism, as a force that is gaining in strength. That force is a basic danger, capable of undermining the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the Russian proletariat. It is a most dangerous enemy, which we must overcome; for once we overcome

it, we shall have overcome nine-tenths of the nationalism which has survived, and which is growing in certain republics.

Further. We are faced with the danger that certain groups of comrades may push us on to the path of granting privileges to some nationalities at the expense of others. I have said that we cannot take this path, because it may undermine national peace and kill the confidence of the masses of the other nations in Soviet power.

I said, further, that the chief means that will enable us most painlessly to eliminate the factors that hinder union lies in the creation of a second chamber of the Central Executive Committee, of which I spoke more openly at the February Plenum of the Central Committee, and which is dealt with in the theses in a more veiled form in order to enable the comrades themselves, perhaps, to indicate some other more flexible form, some other more suitable organ, capable of expressing the interests of the nationalities.

Such are the conclusions.

I think that it is only in this way that we shall be able to achieve a correct solution of the national question, that we shall be able to unfurl widely the banner of the proletarian revolution and win for it the sympathy and confidence of the countries of the East, which are the heavy reserves of the revolution, and which can play a decisive role in the future battles of the proletariat against imperialism. [*Applause.*]

REPLY TO THE
DISCUSSION ON THE
REPORT ON NATIONAL
FACTORS IN PARTY AND
STATE AFFAIRS

April 25, 1923

Comrades, before proceeding to report on the work of the committee on the national question, permit me to deal with two main points in answer to the speakers in the discussion on my report. It will take about twenty minutes, not more.

The first point is that a group of comrades headed by Bukharin and Rakovsky has over-emphasized the significance of the national question, has exaggerated it, and has allowed it to overshadow the social question, the question of working-class power.

It is clear to us, as Communists, that the basis of all our work lies in strengthening the power of the workers, and that only after that are we confronted by the other question, a very important one but subordinate to the first, namely, the national question. We are told that we must not offend the non-Russian nationalities. That is perfectly true; I agree that we must not offend them. But to evolve out of this a new theory to the effect that the Great-Russian proletariat must be placed in a position of inequality in relation to the formerly oppressed nations is absurd. What was merely a figure of speech in Comrade Lenin's well-known article, Bukharin has converted into a regular slogan. Nevertheless, it is clear that the political basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat is primarily and chiefly the central, industrial regions, and not the border regions, which are peasant countries. If we exaggerate the importance of the peasant border regions, to the detriment of the proletarian districts, it may result in a crack in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is dangerous, comrades. We must not exaggerate things in politics, just as we must not underrate them.

It should be borne in mind that in addition to the right of nations to self-determination, there is also the right of the working class to consolidate its power, and the right of self-determination is subordinate to this latter right. There are cases when the right of self-determination conflicts with another, a higher right—the right of the working class that has come to power to consolidate its power. In such cases—this must be said bluntly—the right of self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the working class in exercising its right to dictatorship. The former must yield to the latter. That was the case in 1920, for instance, when in order to defend working-class power we were obliged to march on Warsaw.

It must therefore not be forgotten when handing out all sorts of promises to the non-Russian nationalities, when bowing and scraping before the representatives of these nationalities, as certain comrades have done at the present congress, it must be borne in mind that, in our external and internal situation, the sphere of action of the national question and the limits of its jurisdiction, so to speak, are restricted by the sphere of action and jurisdiction of the “labor question,” as the most fundamental question.

Many speakers referred to notes and articles by Vladimir Ilyich. I do not want to quote my teacher, Comrade Lenin, since he is not here, and I am afraid that I might, perhaps, quote him wrongly and inappropriately. Nevertheless, I am obliged to quote one passage, which is axiomatic and can give rise to no misunderstanding, in order that no doubt should be left in the minds of comrades with regard to the relative importance of the national question. Analyzing Marx’s letter on the national question in an article on self-determination, Comrade Lenin draws the following conclusion: “Marx had no doubt about the subordinate significance of the national question as compared with the ‘labor question.’”¹⁰⁷

Here are only two lines, but they are decisive. And that is what some of our comrades who are more zealous than wise should drill into their heads.

The second point is about Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism. Rakovsky and especially Bukharin spoke here, and the latter proposed that the clause dealing with the harmfulness of local chauvinism should be deleted. Their argument was that there is no need to bother with a little worm like local chauvinism when we are faced by a “Goliath” like Great-Russian chauvinism. In general, Bukharin was in a repentant mood. That is natural: he has been sinning against the nationalities for years, denying the right to self-determination. It was high time for him to repent. But in repenting, he went to the other extreme. It is curious that Bukharin calls upon the Party to follow his example and also repent, although the whole world knows that the Party is in no way involved, for from its very inception (1898) it recognized the right to self-determination and therefore has nothing to repent of. The fact of the matter is that

¹⁰⁷ See V. I. Lenin, “The Right of Nations to Self-Determination,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 393-454.

Bukharin has failed to understand the essence of the national question. When it is said that the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism must be made the corner-stone of the national question, the intention is to indicate the duties of the Russian Communist; it implies that it is the duty of the Russian Communist himself to combat Russian chauvinism. If the struggle against Russian chauvinism was undertaken not by the Russian but by the Turkestanian or Georgian Communists, it would be interpreted as anti-Russian chauvinism. That would confuse the whole issue and strengthen Great-Russian chauvinism. Only the Russian Communists can undertake the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism and carry it through to the end.

And what is intended when a struggle against local chauvinism is proposed? The intention is to point to the duty of the local Communists, the duty of the non-Russian Communists, to combat their own chauvinists. Can the existence of deviations towards anti-Russian chauvinism be denied? Why, the whole congress has seen for itself that local chauvinism exists, Georgian, Bashkir and other chauvinism, and that it must be combated. Russian Communists cannot combat Tatar, Georgian or Bashkir chauvinism; if a Russian Communist were to undertake the difficult task of combating Tatar or Georgian chauvinism, it would be regarded as a fight waged by a Great-Russian chauvinist against the Tatars or the Georgians. That would confuse the whole issue. Only the Tatar, Georgian and other Communists can fight Tatar, Georgian and other chauvinism; only the Georgian Communists can successfully combat Georgian nationalism or chauvinism. That is the duty of the non-Russian Communists. That is why it is necessary to refer in the theses to the double task, that of the Russian Communists (I refer to the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism) and that of the non-Russian Communists (I refer to their fight against anti-Armenian, anti-Tatar, anti-Russian chauvinism). Otherwise, the theses will be one-sided, there will be no internationalism, whether in state or Party affairs.

If we combat only Great-Russian chauvinism, it will obscure the fight that is being waged by the Tatar and other chauvinists, a fight which is developing in the localities and which is especially dangerous now, under the conditions of the NEP. We cannot avoid fighting on two fronts, for we can achieve success only by fighting on two fronts—on the one hand,

against Great-Russian chauvinism, which is the chief danger in our work of construction, and, on the other hand, against local chauvinism; unless we wage this double fight there will be no solidarity between the Russian workers and peasants and the workers and peasants of the other nationalities. Failure to wage this fight may result in encouraging local chauvinism, a policy of pandering to local chauvinism, which we cannot allow.

Permit me here too to quote Comrade Lenin. I would not have done so, but since there are many comrades at our congress who quote Comrade Lenin right and left and distort what he says, permit me to read a few words from a well-known article of his:

The proletariat must demand freedom of political secession for the colonies and nations that are oppressed by “its” nation. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; neither mutual confidence nor class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and the oppressed nations will be possible.¹⁰⁸

These are, so to say, the duties of proletarians of the dominant or formerly dominant nation. Then he goes on to speak of the duties of proletarians or Communists of the formerly oppressed nations:

On the other hand, the Socialists of the oppressed nations must particularly fight for and put into effect complete and absolute unity, including organizational unity, between the workers of the oppressed nation and the workers of the oppressing nation. Otherwise, it is impossible to uphold the independent policy of the proletariat and its class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries against all the subterfuges, treachery and trickery of the bourgeoisie. For the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations constantly converts the slogans of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers.

As you see, if we are to follow in Comrade Lenin’s footsteps—and some comrades here have sworn by him—both theses must be retained in the resolution—both the thesis on combating Great-Russian chauvinism

¹⁰⁸ V. I. Lenin, “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination” (see *Collected Works*, Vol. XII, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 143-156).

Reply to the Discussion on the Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs
and that on combating local chauvinism—as two aspects of one phenomenon, as theses on combating chauvinism in general.

With this I conclude my answers to those who have spoken here.

**SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE
FOURTH CONFERENCE OF
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
OF THE RCP(B) WITH
RESPONSIBLE WORKERS OF
THE NATIONAL REPUBLICS
AND REGIONS**

June 10, 1923

*Speech on the First Item of the Conference
Agenda: "The Sultan-Galiyev Case",*

I. Rights and "lefts" in the national republics and regions

I have taken the floor in order to make a few comments on the speeches of the comrades who have spoken here. As regards the principles involved in the Sultan Galiyev case, I shall endeavor to deal with them in my report on the second item of the agenda. First of all, with regard to the conference itself. Someone (I have forgotten who exactly it was) said here that this conference is an unusual event. That is not so. Such conferences are not a novelty for our Party. The present conference is the fourth of its kind to be held since the establishment of Soviet power. Up to the beginning of 1919 three such conferences were held. Conditions at that time permitted us to call such conferences. But later, after 1919, in 1920 and 1921, when we were entirely taken up with the civil war, we had no time for conferences of this kind. And only now that we have finished with the civil war, now that we have gone deeply into the work of economic construction, now that Party work itself has become more concrete, especially in the national regions and republics, has it again become possible for us to call a conference of this kind. I think the Central Committee will repeatedly resort to this method in order to establish full mutual understanding between those who are carrying out the policy in the localities and those

The Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) With Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions was convened on J. V. Stalin's initiative and took place in Moscow on June 9-12, 1923. In addition to the members and candidate members of the Central Committee of the RCP(B), there were present 58 representatives of the national republics and regions. The chief item on the agenda was J. V. Stalin's report on "Practical Measures for Implementing the Resolution on the National Question Adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress." Representatives of twenty Party organizations of the national republics and regions reported on the situation in the localities. The conference also examined the Central Control Commission's report on the anti-Party and anti-Soviet activities of Sultan-Galiyev. (For the resolutions passed by this conference see "Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU(B) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums," Part 1, 1941, pp. 525-30.)

who are making that policy. I think that such conferences should be called, not only from all the republics and regions but also from individual regions and republics for the purpose of drawing up more concrete decisions. This alone can satisfy both the Central Committee and the responsible workers in the localities.

I heard certain comrades say that I warned Sultan Galiyev when I had the opportunity of acquainting myself with his first secret letter, addressed, I think, to Adigamov, who for some reason is silent and has not uttered a word here, although he should have been the first to speak and the one to have said most. I have been reproached by these comrades with having defended Sultan-Galiyev excessively. It is true that I defended him as long as it was possible, and I considered, and still consider, that it was my duty to do so. But I defended him only up to a certain point. And when Sultan Galiyev went beyond that point, I turned away from him. His first secret letter shows that he was already breaking with the Party, for the tone of his letter is almost whiteguard; he writes about members of the Central Committee as one can write only about enemies. I met him by chance in the Political Bureau, where he was defending the demands of the Tatar Republic in connection with the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. I warned him then, in a note I sent him, in which I called his secret letter an anti-Party one, and in which I accused him of creating an organization of the Validov type; I told him that unless he desisted from illegal, anti-Party work he would come to a bad end, and any support from me would be out of the question. He replied, in great embarrassment, that I had been misled; that he had indeed written to Adigamov, not, however, what was alleged, but something else; that he had always been a Party man and was so still, and he gave his word of honor that he would continue to be a Party man in the future. Nevertheless, a week later he sent Adigamov a second secret letter, instructing him to establish contact with the Basmachi and with their leader Validov, and to "burn" the letter. The whole thing, therefore, was vile, it was sheer deception, and it compelled me to break off all connection with Sultan-Galiyev. From that moment Sultan-Galiyev became for me a man beyond the pale of the Party, of the Soviets, and I considered it impossible to speak to him, although he tried several times to come to me and "have a talk" with me. As far back as the beginning of 1919, the "Left" comrades reproached me with supporting Sultan-Galiyev,

with trying to save him for the Party, with wanting to spare him, in the hope that he would cease to be a nationalist and become a Marxist. I did, indeed, consider it my duty to support him for a time. There are so few intellectuals, so few thinking people, even so few literate people generally in the Eastern republics and regions, that one can count them on one's fingers. How can one help cherishing them? It would be criminal not to take all measures to save from corruption people of the East whom we need and to preserve them for the Party. But there is a limit to everything. And the limit in this case was reached when Sultan-Galiyev crossed over from the communist camp to the camp of the Basmachi. From that time on, he ceased to exist for the Party. That is why he found the Turkish ambassador more congenial than the Central Committee of our Party.

I heard a similar reproach from Shamigulov, to the effect that, in spite of his insistence that we should finish with Validov at one stroke, I defended Validov and tried to preserve him for the Party. I did indeed defend Validov in the hope that he would reform. Worse people have reformed, as we know from the history of political parties. I decided that Shamigulov's solution of the problem was too simple. I did not follow his advice. It is true that a year later Shamigulov's forecast proved correct: Validov did not reform, he went over to the Basmachi. Nevertheless, the Party gained by the fact that we delayed Validov's desertion from the Party for a year. Had we settled with Validov in 1918, I am certain that comrades like Murtazin, Adigamov, Khalikov and others would not have remained in our ranks. [*Voice*: "Khalikov would have remained."] Perhaps Khalikov would not have left us, but a whole group of comrades working in our ranks would have left with Validov. That is what we gained through our patience and foresight.

I listened to Ryskulov, and I must say that his speech was not altogether sincere, it was semi-diplomatic [*Voice*: "Quite true!"], and in general his speech made a bad impression. I expected more clarity and sincerity from him. Whatever Ryskulov may say, it is obvious that he has at home two secret letters from Sultan-Galiyev, which he has not shown to anyone, it is obvious that he was associated with Sultan-Galiyev ideologically. The fact that Ryskulov dissociates himself from the criminal aspect of the Sultan-Galiyev case, asserting that he is not involved with Sultan-Galiyev in the course leading to Basmachism, is of no importance. That is not what

we are concerned with at this conference. We are concerned with the intellectual, ideological ties with Sultan-Galiyevism. That such ties did exist between Ryskulov and Sultan-Galiyev is obvious, comrades; Ryskulov himself cannot deny it. Is it not high time for him here, from this rostrum, at long last to dissociate himself from Sultan-Galiyevism emphatically and unreservedly? In this respect Ryskulov's speech was semi-diplomatic and unsatisfactory.

Enbayev also made a diplomatic and insincere speech. Is it not a fact that, after Sultan-Galiyev's arrest, Enbayev and a group of Tatar responsible workers, whom I consider splendid practical men in spite of their ideological instability, sent a demand to the Central Committee for his immediate release, fully vouching for him and hinting that the documents taken from Sultan-Galiyev were not genuine? Is that not a fact? But what did the investigation reveal? It revealed that all the documents were genuine. Their genuineness was admitted by Sultan-Galiyev himself, who, in fact, gave more information about his sins than is contained in the documents, who fully confessed his guilt, and, after confessing, repented. Is it not obvious that, after all this, Enbayev ought to have emphatically and unreservedly admitted his mistakes and to have dissociated himself from Sultan-Galiyev? But Enbayev did not do this. He found occasion to jeer at the "Lefts," but he would not emphatically, as a Communist should, dissociate himself from Sultan-Galiyevism, from the abyss into which Sultan-Galiyev had landed. Evidently he thought that diplomacy would save him.

Firdevs's speech was sheer diplomacy from beginning to end. Who the ideological leader was, whether Sultan Galiyev led Firdevs, or whether Firdevs led Sultan-Galiyev, is a question I leave open, although I think that ideologically Firdevs led Sultan-Galiyev rather than the other way round. I see nothing particularly reprehensible in Sultan-Galiyev's exercises in theory. If Sultan-Galiyev had confined himself to the ideology of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism it would not have been so bad and I would say that this ideology, in spite of the ban pronounced by the resolution on the national question passed by the Tenth Party Congress, could be regarded as tolerable, and that we could confine ourselves to criticizing it within the ranks of our Party. But when exercises in ideology end in establishing contacts with Basmachi leaders, with Validov and others, it is utterly impossible to justify Basmachi practices here on the ground that the ideology is innocent,

as Firdevs tries to do. You can deceive nobody by such a justification of Sultan-Galiyev's activities. In that way it would be possible to find a justification for both imperialism and tsarism, for they too have their ideologies, which sometimes look innocent enough. One cannot reason in that way. You are not facing a tribunal, but a conference of responsible workers, who demand of you straightforwardness and sincerity, not diplomacy.

Khojanov spoke well, in my opinion. And Ikramov did not speak badly either. But I must mention a passage in the speeches of these comrades which gives food for thought. Both said that there was no difference between present-day Turkestan and tsarist Turkestan, that only the signboard had been changed, that Turkestan had remained what it was under the tsar. Comrades, if that was not a slip of the tongue, if it was a considered and deliberate statement, then it must be said that in that case the Basmachi are right and we are wrong. If Turkestan is in fact a colony, as it was under tsarism, then the Basmachi are right, and it is not we who should be trying Sultan-Galiyev, but Sultan-Galiyev who should be trying us for tolerating the existence of a colony in the framework of the Soviet regime. If that is true, I fail to understand why you yourselves have not gone over to Basmachism. Evidently, Khojanov and Ikramov uttered that passage in their speeches without thinking, for they cannot help knowing that present-day Soviet Turkestan is radically different from tsarist Turkestan. I wanted to point to that obscure passage in the speeches of these comrades in order that they should try to think this over and rectify their mistake.

I take upon myself some of the charges Ikramov made against the work of the Central Committee, to the effect that we have not always been attentive and have not always succeeded in raising in time the practical questions dictated by conditions in the Eastern republics and regions. Of course, the Central Committee is overburdened with work and is unable to keep pace with events everywhere. It would be ridiculous to think that the Central Committee can keep pace with everything. Of course, there are few schools in Turkestan. The local languages have not yet become current in the state institutions, the institutions have not been made national in character. Culture in general is at a low level. All that is true. But can anybody seriously think that the Central Committee, or the Party as a whole, can raise the cultural level of Turkestan in two or three years?

We are all shouting and complaining that Russian culture, the culture of the Russian people, which is more cultured than the other peoples in the Union of Republics, is at a low level. Ilyich has repeatedly stated that we have little culture, that it is impossible to raise Russian culture appreciably in two or three, or even ten years. And if it is impossible to raise Russian culture appreciably in two or three, or even ten years, how can we demand a rapid rise of culture in the non-Russian backward regions with a low level of literacy? Is it not obvious that nine-tenths of the "blame" falls on the conditions, on the backwardness, and that you cannot but take this into account?

About the "Lefts" and the Rights.

Do they exist in the communist organizations in the regions and republics? Of course they do. That cannot be denied.

Wherein lie the sins of the Rights? In the fact that the Rights are not and cannot be an antidote to, a reliable bulwark against, the nationalist tendencies which are developing and gaining strength in connection with the NEP. The fact that Sultan-Galiyevism did exist, that it created a certain circle of supporters in the Eastern republics, especially in Bashkiria and Tataria, leaves no doubt that the Right-wing elements, who in these republics comprise the overwhelming majority, are not a sufficiently strong bulwark against nationalism.

It should be borne in mind that our communist organizations in the border regions, in the republics and regions, can develop and stand firmly on their feet, can become genuine internationalist, Marxist cadres, only if they overcome nationalism. Nationalism is the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres, of a Marxist vanguard, in the border regions and republics. The history of our Party shows that the Bolshevik Party, its Russian section, grew and gained strength in the fight against Menshevism; for Menshevism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, Menshevism is a channel through which bourgeois ideology penetrates into our Party, and had the Party not overcome Menshevism it could not have stood firmly on its feet. Ilyich wrote about this a number of times. Only to the degree that it overcame Menshevism in its organizational and ideological forms did Bolshevism grow and gain strength as a real leading party. The same must be said of nationalism in relation to our communist organizations in the border regions and republics. Nationalism is playing the same role in rela-

tion to these organizations as Menshevism in the past played in relation to the Bolshevik Party. Only under cover of nationalism can various kinds of bourgeois, including Menshevik, influences penetrate our organizations in the border regions. Our organizations in the republics can become Marxist only if they are able to resist the nationalist ideas which are forcing their way into our Party in the border regions, and are forcing their way because the bourgeoisie is reviving, the NEP is spreading, nationalism is growing, there are survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, which also give an impetus to local nationalism, and there is the influence of foreign states, which support nationalism in every way. If our communist organizations in the national republics want to gain strength as genuinely Marxist organizations they must pass through the stage of fighting this enemy in the republics and regions. There is no other way. And in this fight the Rights are weak. Weak because they are infected with skepticism with regard to the Party and easily yield to the influence of nationalism. Herein lies the sin of the Right wing of the communist organizations in the republics and regions.

But no less, if not more, sinful are the "Lefts" in the border regions. If the communist organizations in the border regions cannot grow strong and develop into genuinely Marxist cadres unless they overcome nationalism, these cadres themselves will be able to become mass organizations, to rally the majority of the working people around themselves, only if they learn to be flexible enough to draw into our state institutions all the national elements that are at all loyal, by making concessions to them, and if they learn to maneuver between a resolute fight against nationalism in the Party and an equally resolute fight to draw into Soviet work all the more or less loyal elements among the local people, the intelligentsia, and so on. The "Lefts" in the border regions are more or less free from the skeptical attitude towards the Party, from the tendency to yield to the influence of nationalism. But the sins of the "Lefts" lie in the fact that they are incapable of flexibility in relation to the bourgeois-democratic and the simply loyal elements of the population, they are unable and unwilling to maneuver in order to attract these elements, they distort the Party's line of winning over the majority of the toiling population of the country. But this flexibility and ability to maneuver between the fight against nationalism and the drawing of all the elements that are at all loyal into our state

institutions must be created and developed at all costs. It can be created and developed only *if* we take into account the entire complexity and the specific nature of the situation encountered in our regions and republics; *if* we do not simply engage in transplanting the models that are being created in the central industrial districts, which cannot be transplanted mechanically to the border regions; *if* we do not brush aside the nationalist-minded elements of the population, the nationalist-minded petit bourgeois; and *if* we learn to draw these elements into the general work of state administration. The sin of the “Lefts” is that they are infected with sectarianism and fail to understand the paramount importance of the Party’s complex tasks in the national republics and regions.

While the Rights create the danger that by their tendency to yield to nationalism they may hinder the growth of our communist cadres in the border regions, the “Lefts” create the danger for the Party that by their infatuation with an over-simplified and hasty “communism” they may isolate our Party from the peasantry and from broad strata of the local population.

Which of these dangers is the more formidable? If the comrades who are deviating towards the “Left” in tend to continue practicing in the localities their policy of artificially splitting the population and this policy has been practiced not only in Chechnya and in the Yakut Region, and not only in Turkestan... [*Ibrahimov*: “They are tactics of differentiation.”] Ibrahimov has now thought of substituting the tactics of differentiation for the tactics of splitting, but that changes nothing. If, I say, they intend to continue practicing their policy of splitting the population from above; if they think that Russian models can be mechanically transplanted to a specifically national milieu regardless of the manner of life of the inhabitants and of the concrete conditions; if they think that in fighting nationalism everything that is national must be thrown overboard; in short, if the “Left” Communists in the border regions intend to remain incorrigible, I must say that of the two, the “Left” danger may prove to be the more formidable.

This is all I wanted to say about the “Lefts” and the Rights. I have run ahead somewhat, but that is because the whole conference has run ahead and has anticipated the discussion of the second item.

Speech Delivered at the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the RCP(B)

We must chastise the Rights in order to make them fight nationalism, to teach them to do so in order to forge real communist cadres from among local people. But we must also chastise the “Lefts” in order to teach them to be flexible and to maneuver skillfully, so as to win over the broad masses of the population. All this must be done because, as Khojanov rightly remarked, the truth lies “in between” the Rights and the “Lefts.”

II. Concerning the methods of training and reinforcing Marxist cadres in the republics and regions from among local people

Extract from the report on the second item of the agenda: "Practical measures for implementing the resolution on the national question adopted by the twelfth party congress," June 10, 1923.

...I pass to the first group of questions—those concerning the methods of training and reinforcing Marxist cadres from among local people, who will be capable of serving as the most important and, in the long run, as the decisive bulwark of Soviet power in the border regions. If we examine the development of our Party (I refer to its Russian section, as the main section) and trace the principal stages in its development, and then, by analogy, draw a picture of the development of our communist organizations in the regions and republics in the immediate future, I think we shall find the key to the understanding of the specific features in these countries which distinguish the development of our Party in the border regions.

The principal task in the first period of our Party's development, the development of its Russian section, was to create cadres, Marxist cadres. These Marxist cadres were made, forged, in our fight with Menshevism. The task of these cadres then, at that period—I am referring to the period from the foundation of the Bolshevik Party to the expulsion from the Party of the Liquidators, as the most pronounced representatives of Menshevism—the main task was to win over to the Bolsheviks the most active, honest and outstanding members of the working class, to create cadres, to form a vanguard. The struggle here was waged primarily against tendencies of a bourgeois character—especially against Menshevism—which prevented the cadres from being combined into a single unit, as the main core of the Party. At that time it was not yet the task of the Party, as an immediate and vital need, to establish wide connections with the vast masses of the working class and the toiling peasantry, to win over those masses, to win a majority in the country. The Party had not yet got so far.

Only in the next stage of our Party's development, only in its second stage, when these cadres had grown, when they had taken shape as the basic core of our Party, when the sympathies of the best elements among the working class had already been won, or almost won—only then was the Party confronted with the task, as an immediate and urgent need, of winning over the vast masses, of transforming the Party cadres into a real mass workers' party. During this period the core of our Party had to wage a struggle not so much against Menshevism as against the "Left" elements within our Party, the "Otzovists" of all kinds, who were attempting to substitute revolutionary phraseology for a serious study of the specific features of the new situation which arose after 1905, who by their over-simplified "revolutionary" tactics were hindering the conversion of our Party cadres into a genuine mass party, and who by their activities were creating the danger of the Party becoming divorced from the broad masses of the workers. It scarcely needs proof that without a resolute struggle against this "Left" danger, without defeating it, the Party could not have won over the vast laboring masses.

Such, approximately, is the picture of the fight on two fronts, against the Rights, i.e., the Mensheviks, and against the "Lefts"; the picture of the development of the principal section of our Party, the Russian section.

Comrade Lenin quite convincingly depicted this essential, inevitable development of the Communist Parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. There he showed that the Communist Parties in the West must pass, and are already passing, through approximately the same stages of development. We, on our part, shall add that the same must be said of the development of our communist organizations and Communist Parties in the border regions.

It should, however, be noted that, despite the analogy between what the Party experienced in the past and what our Party organizations in the border regions are experiencing now, there are, after all, certain important specific features in our Party's development in the national republics and regions, features which we must without fail take into account, for if we do not take them carefully into account we shall run the risk of committing a number of very gross errors in determining the tasks of training Marxist cadres from among local people in the border regions.

Let us pass to an examination of these specific features.

The fight against the Right and “Left” elements in our organizations in the border regions is necessary and obligatory, for otherwise we shall not be able to train Marxist cadres closely connected with the masses. That is clear. But the specific feature of the situation in the border regions, the feature that distinguishes it from our Party’s development in the past, is that in the border regions the forging of cadres and their conversion into a mass party are taking place not under a bourgeois system, as was the case in the history of our Party, but under the Soviet system, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. At that time, under the bourgeois system, it was possible and necessary, because of the conditions of those times, to beat *first of all* the Mensheviks (in order to forge Marxist cadres) and *then* the Otzovists (in order to transform those cadres into a mass party); the fight against those two deviations filled two entire periods of our Party’s history. Now, under present conditions, we cannot possibly do that, for the Party is now in power, and being in power, the Party needs in the border regions reliable Marxist cadres from among local people who are connected with the broad masses of the population. Now we cannot *first of all* defeat the Right danger with the help of the “Lefts,” as was the case in the history of our Party, and *then* the “Left” danger with the help of the Rights. *Now we have to wage a fight on both fronts* simultaneously, striving to defeat both dangers so as to obtain as a result in the border regions trained Marxist cadres of local people connected with the masses. At that time we could speak of cadres who were not yet connected with the broad masses, but who were to become connected with them in the next period of development. Now it is ridiculous even to speak of that, because under the Soviet regime it is impossible to conceive of Marxist cadres not being connected with the broad masses in one way or another. They would be cadres who would have nothing in common either with Marxism or with a mass party. All this considerably complicates matters and dictates to our Party organizations in the border regions the need for waging a simultaneous struggle against the Rights and the “Lefts.” Hence the stand our Party takes that it is necessary to wage a fight on two fronts, against both deviations simultaneously.

Further, it should be noted that the development of our communist organizations in the border regions is not proceeding in isolation, as was the case in our Party’s history in relation to its Russian section, but under

the direct influence of the main core of our Party, which is experienced not only in forming Marxist cadres but also in linking those cadres with the broad masses of the population and in revolutionary maneuvering in the fight for Soviet power. The specific feature of the situation in the border regions in this respect is that our Party organizations in these countries, owing to the conditions under which Soviet power is developing there, can and must maneuver their forces for the purpose of strengthening their connections with the broad masses of the population, utilizing for this purpose the rich experience of our Party during the preceding period. Until recently, the Central Committee of the RCP usually carried out maneuvering in the border regions directly, over the heads of the communist organizations there, sometimes even by-passing those organizations, drawing all the more or less loyal national elements into the general work of Soviet construction. Now this work must be done by the organizations in the border regions themselves. They can do it, and must do it, bearing in mind that that is the best way of converting the Marxist cadres from among local people into a genuine mass party capable of leading the majority of the population of the country. Such are the two specific features which must be taken strictly into account when determining our Party's line in the border regions in the matter of training Marxist cadres, and of these cadres winning over the broad masses of the population.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

April & May 1924

Extracts From "The Foundations of Leninism"

From this theme I take two main questions:

- a) the presentation of the question;
- b) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1) *The presentation of the question.* During the last two decades the national question has undergone a number of very important changes. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question 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 question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "civilized" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders 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 question 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 question with the question of the colonies. The national question 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 Interna-

tional even went so far as to turn the right to self-determination into 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 being 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*, interpreting 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 to self-determination as 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 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 about “national equality of rights,” innumerable declarations about the “equality of nations”—that was the stock-in-trade 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 question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground, and declared that pronouncements about the “equality of nations” 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 one of supporting the oppressed nations, of rendering real and continuous assistance to them in their struggle against imperialism for real equality of nations, for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national question was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent question having no connection with the general

question of the power 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 question could be solved on the quiet, “of its own accord,” off the highway 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 question 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 question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted*, or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis, for utilizing these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the dependent and colonial countries 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 existence of revolutionary capacities in the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and the possibility of using these for overthrowing the common enemy, for 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 of the “dominant” nations 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 individual 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 peoples," "Russian outposts" in Europe, outposts of absolutism; whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were "revolutionary peoples," 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.¹¹⁰

This is the position in regard to the question of particular 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 vast 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 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 that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for

¹¹⁰ V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 320-360.

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 such “desperate” democrats and “Socialists,” “revolutionaries” and republicans 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 embellishment, the strengthening, the victory, of imperialism. For the same reasons, the struggle that 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 struggle that the British “Labor” Government is waging to preserve 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. There is no need to mention 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, as shown by the general balance sheet of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, “not in isolation, but on a world scale.”¹¹¹

2) *The liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.* In solving the national question 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, which constitute that majority;

¹¹¹ Ibid.

- b) the colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a vast 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 union 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 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" (*Engels*);
- h) this support implies the upholding, defense and implementation of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states;
- i) unless this slogan is implemented, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of world socialism, cannot be brought about;

j) this union can only be voluntary, arising on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among peoples.

Hence the two sides, the two tendencies in the national question: 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 closer economic relations among nations, which arose as a result of the formation of a world market and a world economic system.

Developing capitalism [says Lenin,] knows two historical tendencies in the national question. First: the awakening of national life and national movements, struggle against all national oppression, creation of national states. Second: development and acceleration of all kinds of intercourse between nations, breakdown of national barriers, creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.

Both tendencies are a world-wide law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterizes mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society.¹¹²

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 imperialism 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 peoples in a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement, and that the road to the

¹¹² V. I. Lenin, “Critical Remarks on the National Question,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 17-51.

formation of a voluntary union of peoples lies through the separation of the colonies from the “integral” imperialist “whole,” through the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity for a stubborn, continuous and determined struggle against the dominant-nation chauvinism of the “Socialists” of the ruling nations (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 secession.

Without such a struggle the education of the working class of the ruling nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of closer relations 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 Soviet power, to implant real internationalism and to create that remarkable organization for the collaboration of peoples which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which is the living prototype of the future union of peoples in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting against the national isolationism, narrowness and aloofness of the Socialists in the oppressed countries, who do not want to rise above their national parochialism and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement in their own 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.

Such is the way in which the toiling masses of the dominant and of the oppressed nations must 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 relations 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 Social-Democrat belonging to a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were to forget even for one 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 “amalgamation” with Galicia, Wilhelm II for “amalgamation” with Belgium, etc.—such a Social-Democrat 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 their advocating and upholding freedom of secession for oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat 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 be only one in a thousand...

On the other hand, a Social-Democrat 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 favor of *either* the political independence of his nation or its inclusion in a neighboring state X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, isolationism 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 Social-Democrats of oppressing nations insisting on “freedom of *secession*,” while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on “freedom of *union*.” However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road leading from the *given* situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road to this goal.¹¹³

¹¹³ “The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,” *op. cit.*

CONCERNING THE
NATIONAL QUESTION IN
YUGOSLAVIA

March 30, 1925

*Speech Delivered in the Yugoslav Commission
of the EECI*

Comrades, I think that Semich has not fully understood the main essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question. The Bolsheviks never separated the national question from the general question of revolution, either before October or after October. The main essence of the Bolshevik approach to the national question is that the Bolsheviks always examined the national question in inseparable connection with the revolutionary perspective.

Semich quoted Lenin, saying that Lenin was in favor of embodying the solution of the national question in the constitution. By this he, Semich, evidently wanted to say that Lenin regarded the national question as a constitutional one, that is, not as a question of revolution but as a question of reform. That is quite wrong. Lenin never had, nor could he have had, constitutional illusions. It is enough to consult his works to be convinced of that. If Lenin spoke of a constitution, he had in mind not the constitutional, but the revolutionary way of settling the national question, that is to say, he regarded a constitution as something that would result from the victory of the revolution. We in the USSR also have a Constitution, and it reflects a definite solution of the national question. This Constitution, however, came into being not as the result of a deal with the bourgeoisie, but as the result of a victorious revolution.

Semich further referred to Stalin's pamphlet on the national question written in 1912¹¹⁴ and tried to find in it at least indirect corroboration of his point of view. But this reference was fruitless, because he did not and could not find even a remote hint, let alone a quotation, that would in the least justify his "constitutional" approach to the national question. In confirmation of this, I might remind Semich of the passage in Stalin's pamphlet where a contrast is drawn between the Austrian (constitutional) method of settling the national question and the Russian Marxists' (revolutionary) method.

Here it is:

¹¹⁴ See J. V. Stalin, "Marxism and the National Question," in *Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, pp. 300-381.

The Austrians hope to achieve the “freedom of nationalities” by means of petty reforms, by slow steps. While they propose cultural-national autonomy as a practical measure, they do not count on any radical change, on a democratic movement for liberation, which they do not even contemplate. The Russian Marxists, on the other hand, associate the ‘freedom of nationalities’ with a probable radical change, with a democratic movement for liberation, having no grounds for counting on reforms. And this essentially alters matters in regard to the probable fate of the nations of Russia.

Clear, one would think.

And this is not Stalin’s personal view, but the general view of the Russian Marxists, who examined, and continue to examine, the national question in inseparable connection with the general question of revolution.

It can be said without stretching a point that in the history of Russian Marxism there were two stages in the presentation of the national question: the first, or pre-October stage; and the second, or October stage. In the first stage, the national question was regarded as part of the general question of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that is to say, as part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. In the second stage, when the national question assumed wider scope and became a question of the colonies, when it became transformed from an intra-state question into a world question, it came to be regarded as part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, as part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In both stages, as you see, the approach was strictly revolutionary.

I think that Semich has not yet fully grasped all this. Hence his attempts to reduce the national question to a constitutional issue, i.e., to regard it as a question of reform.

That mistake leads him to another, namely, his refusal to regard the national question as being, in essence, a peasant question. Not an agrarian but a peasant question, for these are two different things. It is quite true that the national question must not be identified with the peasant question, for, in addition to peasant questions, the national question includes

such questions as national culture, national statehood, etc. But it is also beyond doubt that, after all, the peasant question is the basis, the quintessence, of the national question. That explains the fact that the peasantry constitutes the main army of the national movement, that there is no powerful national movement without the peasant army, nor can there be. That is what is meant when it is said that, *in essence*, the national question is a peasant question. I think that Semich's reluctance to accept this formula is due to an underestimation of the inherent strength of the national movement and a failure to understand the profoundly popular and profoundly revolutionary character of the national movement. This lack of understanding and this underestimation constitute a grave danger, for, in practice, they imply an underestimation of the potential might latent, for instance, in the movement of the Croats for national emancipation. This underestimation is fraught with serious complications for the entire Yugoslav Communist Party.

That is Semich's second mistake.

Undoubtedly, Semich's attempt to treat the national question in Yugoslavia in isolation from the international situation and the probable prospects in Europe must also be regarded as a mistake. Proceeding from the fact that there is no serious popular movement for independence among the Croats and the Slovenes at the present moment, Semich arrives at the conclusion that the question of the right of nations to secede is an academic question, at any rate, not an urgent one. That is wrong, of course. Even if we admit that this question is not urgent at the present moment, it might definitely become very urgent *if war begins, or when war begins*, if a revolution breaks out in Europe, or when it breaks out. That war will inevitably begin, and that they, over there, are bound to come to blows there can be no doubt, bearing in mind the nature and development of imperialism.

In 1912, when we Russian Marxists were outlining the first draft of the national program, no serious movement for independence yet existed in any of the border regions of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, we deemed it necessary to include in our program the point on the right of nations to self-determination, i.e., the right of every nationality to secede and exist as an independent state. Why? Because we based ourselves not only on what existed then but also on what was developing and impend-

ing in the general system of international relations; that is, we took into account not only the present but also the future. We knew that if any nationality were to demand secession, the Russian Marxists would fight to ensure the right to secede for every such nationality. In the course of his speech Semich repeatedly referred to Stalin's pamphlet on the national question. But here is what Stalin's pamphlet says about self-determination and independence:

The growth of imperialism in Europe is not fortuitous. In Europe, capital is beginning to feel cramped, and it is reaching out towards foreign countries in search of new markets, cheap labor and new fields of investment. But this leads to external complications and to war... It is quite possible that a combination of internal and external conditions may arise in which one or another nationality in Russia may find it necessary to raise and settle the question of its independence. And, of course, it is not for Marxists to create obstacles in such cases.

That was written as far back as 1912. You know that subsequently this view was fully confirmed both during the war and afterwards, and especially after the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia.

All the more reason, therefore, why we must reckon with such possibilities in Europe in general, and in Yugoslavia in particular, especially now, when the national revolutionary movement in the oppressed countries has become more profound, and after the victory of the revolution in Russia. It must also be borne in mind that Yugoslavia is not a fully independent country, that she is tied up with certain imperialist groups, and that, consequently, she cannot escape the great play of forces that is going on outside Yugoslavia. If you are drawing up a national program for the Yugoslav Party—and that is precisely what we are dealing with now—you must remember that this program must proceed not only from what exists at present but also from what is developing and what will inevitably occur by virtue of international relations. That is why I think that the question of the right of nations to self-determination must be regarded as an immediate and vital question.

Now about the national program. The starting point of the national program must be the thesis of a Soviet revolution in Yugoslavia, the thesis that the national question cannot be solved at all satisfactorily unless the bourgeoisie is overthrown and the revolution is victorious. Of course, there may be exceptions; *there was such an exception*, for instance, before the war, when Norway separated from Sweden—of which Lenin treats in detail in one of his articles.¹¹⁵ But that was before the war, and under an exceptional combination of favorable circumstances. Since the war, and especially since the victory of the Soviet revolution in Russia, such cases are hardly possible. At any rate, the chances of their being possible are now so slight that they can be put as nil. But if that is so, it is obvious that we cannot construct our program from elements whose significance is nil. That is why the thesis of a revolution must be the starting point of the national program.

Further, it is imperatively necessary to include in the national program a special point on the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secede. I have already said why such a point cannot be omitted under present internal and international conditions.

Finally, the program must also include a special point providing for national territorial autonomy for those nationalities in Yugoslavia which may not deem it necessary to secede from that country. Those who think that such a contingency must be excluded are incorrect. That is wrong. Under certain circumstances, as a result of the victory of a Soviet revolution in Yugoslavia, it may well be that some nationalities will not wish to secede, just as happened here in Russia. It is clear that to meet such a contingency it is necessary to have in the program a point on autonomy, envisaging the transformation of the state of Yugoslavia into a federation of autonomous national states based on the Soviet system.

Thus, the right to secede must be provided for those nationalities that may wish to secede, and the right to autonomy must be provided for those nationalities that may prefer to remain within the framework of the Yugoslav state.

To avoid misunderstanding, I must say that the *right* to secede must not be understood as an *obligation*, as a duty to secede. A nation may take

¹¹⁵ See V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 393-454.

advantage of this right and secede, but it may also forgo the right, and if it does not wish to exercise it, that is its business and we cannot but reckon with the fact. Some comrades turn this right to secede into an obligation and demand from the Croats, for instance, that they secede *whatever happens*. That position is wrong and must be rejected. We must not confuse a right with an obligation.

THE POLITICAL TASKS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST

May 18, 1925

*Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Students
of the Communist University of the Toilers
of the East*

Comrades, permit me, first of all, to greet you on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the existence of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Needless to say, I wish your University every success on the difficult road of training communist cadres for the East.

And now let us pass to the matter in hand.

Analyzing the composition of the student body of the University of the Toilers of the East, one cannot help noting a certain duality in it. This University unites representatives of not less than fifty nations and national groups of the East. All the students at this University are sons of the East. But that definition does not give any clear or complete picture. The fact is that there are two main groups among the students at the University, representing two sets of totally different conditions of development. The first group consists of people who have come here from the *Soviet East*, from countries where the rule of the bourgeoisie no longer exists, where imperialist oppression has been overthrown, and where the workers are in power. The second group of students consists of people who have come here from *colonial and dependent countries*, from countries where capitalism still reigns, where imperialist oppression is still in full force, and where independence has still to be won by driving out the imperialists.

Thus, we have two Easts, living different lives, and developing under different conditions.

Needless to say, this duality in the composition of the student body cannot but leave its impress upon the work of the University of the Toilers of the East. That explains the fact that this University stands with one foot on Soviet soil and the other on the soil of the colonies and dependent countries.

Hence the two lines of the University's activity: one line having the aim of creating cadres capable of serving the needs of the Soviet republics of the East, and the other line having the aim of creating cadres capable of serving the revolutionary requirements of the toiling masses in the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

Hence, also, the two kinds of tasks that face the University of the Toilers of the East.

Let us examine these tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East separately.

I. The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Soviet Republics of the East

What are the characteristic features of the life and development of these countries, of these republics, which distinguish them from the colonial and dependent countries?

Firstly, these republics are free from imperialist oppression.

Secondly, they are developing and becoming consolidated as nations not under the aegis of the bourgeois order, but under the aegis of Soviet power. That is a fact unprecedented in history, but it is a fact for all that.

Thirdly, inasmuch as they are industrially underdeveloped, they can in their development rely wholly and entirely on the support of the industrial proletariat of the Soviet Union.

Fourthly, being free from colonial oppression, enjoying the protection of the proletarian dictatorship, and being members of the Soviet Union, these republics can and must be drawn into the work of building socialism in our country.

The main task is to make it easier to draw the workers and peasants of these republics into the work of building socialism in our country, to create and develop the prerequisites, applicable in the specific conditions of life in these republics, that can promote and hasten this process.

Hence, the immediate tasks that face the leading cadres in the Soviet East are:

- 1) To create industrial centers in the Soviet republics of the East to serve as bases for rallying the peasants around the working class. You know that this work has already begun, and it will advance together with the economic growth of the Soviet Union. The fact that these republics possess all kinds of raw materials is a guarantee that in time this work will be completed.

2) To raise the level of agriculture, above all irrigation. You know that this work has also been pushed forward, at any rate in Transcaucasia and in Turkestan.

3) To start and further promote the organization of co-operatives for the broad masses of the peasants and handicraftsmen as the surest way of drawing the Soviet republics in the East into the general system of Soviet economic construction.

4) To bring the Soviets closer to the masses, to make them national in composition, and in this way implant national-Soviet statehood, close to and comprehensible to the toiling masses.

5) To develop national culture, to set up a wide network of courses and schools for both general education and vocational-technical training, to be conducted in the native languages for the purpose of training Soviet, Party, technical and business cadres from the local people.

It is precisely the fulfillment of these tasks that will facilitate the work of building socialism in the Soviet republics of the East.

There is talk about model republics in the Soviet East. But what is a model republic? A model republic is one which carries out all these tasks honestly and conscientiously, thereby attracting the workers and peasants of the neighboring colonial and dependent countries to the liberation movement.

I have spoken above about bringing the Soviets closer to the toiling masses of the different nationalities—about making the Soviets national in character. But what does that mean, and how does it manifest itself in practice? I think that the national delimitation recently completed in Turkestan¹¹⁶ can serve as a model of the way the Soviets should be brought

¹¹⁶ This refers to the national-state delimitation of the Soviet republics in Central Asia (the Turkestan, Bukhara and Khoresm [Khwarazm] republics) carried through in 1924. As a result of this national delimitation there were formed: the Turkmenian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic as part of the Uzbek SSR, the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Region of the RSFSR (subsequently it became the Kirghiz Soviet Socialist Republic), and the Karakalpak Autonomous Region of the Kirghiz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (later of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic). The Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR held in May 1925 accepted the Uzbek and Turkmenian

closer to the masses. The bourgeois press regards this delimitation as “Bolshevik cunning.” It is obvious, however, that this was a manifestation not of “cunning,” but of the deep-rooted aspiration of the masses of the people of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to have their own organs of power, close to and comprehensible to them. In the pre-revolutionary epoch, both these countries were torn to pieces and distributed among various khanates and states, thus providing a convenient field for the exploiting machinations of “the powers that be.” The time has now come when it has become possible for these scattered pieces to be *reunited* in independent states, so that the toiling masses of Uzbekistan and of Turkmenistan may be brought closer to the organs of power and linked solidly with them. The delimitation of Turkestan is, above all, the *reunion* of the scattered parts of these countries in independent states. That these states later expressed the wish to join the Soviet Union as equal members of it merely shows that the Bolsheviks have found the key to the deep-rooted aspirations of the masses of the people of the East, and that the Soviet Union is a voluntary union of the toiling masses of different nationalities, the only one in the world. To reunite Poland, the bourgeoisie needed a whole series of wars. To reunite Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, however, the Communists needed only a few months of explanatory propaganda.

That is the way to bring the organs of government, in this case the Soviets, closer to the broad masses of the toilers of different nationalities.

That is the proof that the Bolshevik national policy is the only correct policy.

I spoke further about raising the level of national culture in the Soviet republics of the East. But what is national culture? How is it to be reconciled with proletarian culture? Did not Lenin say, already before the war, that there are two cultures—bourgeois and socialist; that the slogan of national culture is a reactionary slogan of the bourgeoisie, who try to poison the minds of the working people with the venom of nationalism?¹¹⁷

Soviet Socialist Republics into the USSR and amended the Constitution of the USSR accordingly. The national-state delimitation of the Soviet republics in Central Asia was carried through under the immediate direction of J. V. Stalin.

¹¹⁷ See V. I. Lenin, “Critical Remarks on the National Question,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 17-51.

How is the building of national culture, the development of schools and courses in the native languages, and the training of cadres from the local people, to be reconciled with the building of socialism, with the building of proletarian culture? Is there not an irreconcilable contradiction here? Of course not! We are building proletarian culture. That is absolutely true. But it is also true that proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and modes of expression among the different peoples who are drawn into the building of socialism, depending upon differences in language, manner of life, and so forth. Proletarian in content, national in form—such is the universal culture towards which socialism is proceeding. Proletarian culture does not abolish national culture, it gives it content. On the other hand, national culture does not abolish proletarian culture, it gives it form. The slogan of national culture was a bourgeois slogan as long as the bourgeoisie was in power and the consolidation of nations proceeded under the aegis of the bourgeois order. The slogan of national culture became a proletarian slogan when the proletariat came to power, and when the consolidation of nations began to proceed under the aegis of Soviet power. Whoever fails to understand the fundamental difference between these two situations will never understand either Leninism or the essence of the national question.

Some people (Kautsky, for instance) talk of the creation of a single universal language and the dying away of all other languages in the period of socialism. I have little faith in this theory of a single, all-embracing language. Experience, at any rate, speaks against rather than for such a theory. Until now what has happened has been that the socialist revolution has not diminished but rather increased the number of languages; for, by stirring up the lowest sections of humanity and pushing them on to the political arena, it awakens to new life a number of hitherto unknown or little-known nationalities. Who could have imagined that the old, tsarist Russia consisted of not less than fifty nations and national groups? The October Revolution, however, by breaking the old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on to the scene, gave them new life and a new development. Today, India is spoken of as a single whole. But there can scarcely be any doubt that, in the event of a revolutionary upheaval in India, scores of hitherto unknown nationalities, having their own separate languages and separate cultures, will appear on the scene. And as regards

implanting proletarian culture among the various nationalities, there can scarcely be any doubt that this will proceed in forms corresponding to the languages and manner of life of these nationalities.

Not long ago I received a letter from some Buryat comrades asking me to explain serious and difficult questions concerning the relations between universal culture and national culture. Here it is:

We earnestly request you to explain the following, for us, very serious and difficult questions. The ultimate aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a single universal culture. How is one to conceive the transition to a single universal culture through the national cultures which are developing within the limits of our individual autonomous republics? How is the assimilation of the specific features of the individual national cultures (language, etc.) to take place?

I think that what has just been said might serve as an answer to the anxious question put by these Buryat comrades.

The Buryat comrades raise the question of the assimilation of the individual nationalities in the course of building a universal proletarian culture. Undoubtedly, some nationalities may, and perhaps certainly will, undergo a process of assimilation. Such processes have taken place before. The point is, however, that the process of assimilation of some nationalities does not exclude, but presupposes the opposite process of the strengthening and further development of quite a number of existing and developing nations; for the partial process of assimilation of individual nationalities is the result of the general process of development of nations. It is precisely for this reason that the possible assimilation of some individual nationalities does not weaken, but confirms the entirely correct thesis that proletarian universal culture does not exclude, but presupposes and fosters the national culture of the peoples, just as the national culture of the peoples does not annul, but supplements and enriches universal proletarian culture.

Such, in general, are the immediate tasks that face the leading cadres of the Soviet republics of the East.

Such are the character and content of these tasks.

Advantage must be taken of the period that has begun of intense economic construction and of new concessions to the peasantry to promote the fulfillment of these tasks, and thereby to make it easier to draw the Soviet republics in the East, which are mainly peasant countries, into the work of building socialism in the Soviet Union.

It is said that the Party's new policy towards the peasantry, in making a number of new concessions (land on short lease, permission to employ hired labor), contains certain elements of retreat. Is that true? Yes, it is. But those are elements of retreat that we permit *alongside* the retention of an overwhelming superiority of forces on the side of the Party and the Soviet power. Stable currency, developing industry, developing transport, a credit system which is growing stronger, and by means of which it is possible, through preferential credits, to ruin or to raise to a higher level any stratum of the population without causing the slightest upheaval—all these are reserves at the command of the proletarian dictatorship by means of which certain elements of retreat on one sector of the front can only facilitate the preparation of an offensive along the whole front. Precisely for this reason, the few new concessions that the Party has made to the peasantry should, at the present time, make it easier rather than more difficult to draw the peasantry into the work of building socialism.

What can this circumstance mean for the Soviet republics in the East? It can only mean that it places in the hands of the leading cadres in these republics a new weapon enabling these countries to be more easily and quickly linked with the general system of Soviet economic development.

Such is the connection between the Party's policy in the countryside and the immediate national tasks confronting the leading cadres in the Soviet East.

In this connection, the task of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East is to train cadres for these republics along lines that will ensure the fulfillment of the immediate tasks I have enumerated above.

The University of the Peoples of the East must not isolate itself from life. It is not, nor can it be, an institution standing above life. It must be connected with actual life through every fiber of its being. Consequently, it cannot ignore the immediate tasks confronting the Soviet republics in the

East. That is why the task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to take the immediate tasks that face these republics into account in training the appropriate cadres for them.

In this connection, it is necessary to bear in mind the existence of two deviations in the practice of the leading cadres in the Soviet East, deviations which must be combated within the precincts of this University if it is to train real cadres and real revolutionaries for the Soviet East.

The first deviation lies in simplification, a simplification of the tasks of which I have spoken above, an attempt mechanically to transplant models of economic construction which are quite comprehensible and applicable in the center of the Soviet Union, but which are totally unsuited to the conditions of development in the so-called border regions. The comrades who are guilty of this deviation fail to understand two things. They fail to understand that conditions in the center and in the "border regions" are not alike and are far from being identical. Furthermore, they fail to understand that the Soviet republics themselves in the East are not alike, that some of them, Georgia and Armenia, for example, are at a higher stage of national formation, whereas others, Chechnya and Kabarda, for example, are at a lower stage of national formation, and others again, Kirghizia, for example, occupy a middle position between these two extremes. These comrades fail to understand that if the work is not adapted to local conditions, if all the various specific features of each country are not carefully taken into account, nothing of importance can be built. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from the masses and degenerate into Left phrasemongers. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in the spirit of uncompromising struggle against this simplification.

The second deviation, on the other hand, lies in the exaggeration of local specific features, forgetfulness of the common and main thing that links the Soviet republics of the East with the industrial areas of the Soviet Union, the hushing up of socialist tasks, adaptation to the tasks of a narrow and restricted nationalism. The comrades who are guilty of this deviation care little about the internal development of their countries and prefer to leave that development to the natural course of things. For them, the main thing is not internal development, but "external" policy, the expansion of the frontiers of their republics, litigation with surrounding republics, the

desire to snatch an extra piece of territory from their neighbors and thus to get into the good graces of the bourgeois nationalists in their respective countries. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from socialism and degenerate into ordinary bourgeois nationalists. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in the spirit of uncompromising struggle against this concealed nationalism.

Such are the tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East.

II. The Tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Relation to the Colonial and Dependent Countries of the East

Let us pass to the second question, the question of the tasks of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in relation to the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

What are the characteristic features of the life and development of these countries, which distinguish them from the Soviet republics of the East?

Firstly, these countries are living and developing under the oppression of imperialism.

Secondly, the existence of a double oppression, internal oppression (by the native bourgeoisie) and external oppression (by the foreign imperialist bourgeoisie), is intensifying and deepening the revolutionary crisis in these countries.

Thirdly, in some of these countries, India for example, capitalism is growing at a rapid rate, giving rise to and molding a more or less numerous class of local proletarians.

Fourthly, with the growth of the revolutionary movement, the national bourgeoisie in such countries is splitting up into two parts, a revolutionary part (the petit bourgeoisie) and a compromising part (the big bourgeoisie), of which the first is continuing the revolutionary struggle, whereas the second is entering into a bloc with imperialism.

Fifthly, parallel with the imperialist bloc, another bloc is taking shape in such countries, a bloc between the workers and the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie, an anti-imperialist bloc, the aim of which is complete liberation from imperialism.

Sixthly, the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in such countries, and of freeing the masses of the people from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie, is becoming more and more urgent.

Seventhly, this circumstance makes it much easier to link the national-liberation movement in such countries with the proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the West.

From this at least three conclusions follow:

- 1) The liberation of the colonial and dependent countries from imperialism cannot be achieved without a victorious revolution: you will not get independence gratis.
- 2) The revolution cannot be advanced and the complete independence of the capitalistically developed colonies and dependent countries cannot be won unless the compromising national bourgeoisie is isolated, unless the petit-bourgeois revolutionary masses are freed from the influence of that bourgeoisie, unless the policy of the hegemony of the proletariat is put into effect, unless the advanced elements of the working class are organized in an independent Communist Party.
- 3) Lasting victory cannot be achieved in the colonial and dependent countries. without a real link between the liberation movement in those countries and the proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the West.

The main task of the Communists in the colonial and dependent countries is to base their revolutionary activities upon these conclusions.

What are the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries in view of these circumstances?

The distinctive feature of the colonies and dependent countries at the present time is that there no longer exists a single and all-embracing colonial East. Formerly the colonial East was pictured as a homogeneous whole. Today, that picture no longer corresponds to the truth. We have now at least three categories of colonial and dependent countries. Firstly, countries like Morocco, which have little or no proletariat, and are industrially quite undeveloped. Secondly, countries like China and Egypt, which are under-developed industrially, and have a relatively small proletariat. Thirdly, countries like India, which are capitalistically more or less developed and have a more or less numerous national proletariat.

Clearly, all these countries cannot possibly be put on a par with one another.

In countries like Morocco, where the national bourgeoisie has, as yet, no grounds for splitting up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, the task of the communist elements is to take all measures to create a united national front against imperialism. In such countries, the communist elements can be grouped in a single party only in the course of the struggle against imperialism, particularly after a victorious revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

In countries like Egypt and China, where the national bourgeoisie has already split up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but where the compromising section of the bourgeoisie is not yet able to join up with imperialism, the Communists can no longer set themselves the aim of forming a united national front against imperialism. In such countries the Communists must pass from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of the workers and the petit bourgeoisie. In such countries that bloc can assume the form of a single party, a workers' and peasants' party, provided, however, that this distinctive party *actually* represents a bloc of two forces—the Communist Party and the party of the revolutionary petit bourgeoisie. The tasks of this bloc are to expose the half-heartedness and inconsistency of the national bourgeoisie and to wage a determined struggle against imperialism. Such a dual party is necessary and expedient, provided it does not bind the Communist Party hand and foot, provided it does not restrict the freedom of the Communist Party to conduct agitation and propaganda work, provided it does not hinder the rallying of the proletarians around the Communist Party, and provided it facilitates the actual leadership of the revolutionary movement by the Communist Party. Such a dual party is unnecessary and inexpedient if it does not conform to all these conditions, for it can only lead to the communist elements becoming dissolved in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, to the Communist Party losing the proletarian army.

The situation is somewhat different in countries like India. The fundamental and new feature of the conditions of life of colonies like India is not only that the national bourgeoisie has split up into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but primarily that the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed, in the main, to strike a deal with imperialism. Fearing revolution more than it fears imperialism, and concerned more about its money-bags than about the interests of its own

country, this section of the bourgeoisie, the richest and most influential section, is going over entirely to the camp of the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution, it is forming a bloc with imperialism against the workers and peasants of its own country. The victory of the revolution cannot be achieved unless this bloc is smashed. But in order to smash this bloc, fire must be concentrated on the compromising national bourgeoisie, its treachery exposed, the toiling masses freed from its influence, and the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat systematically prepared. In other words, in colonies like India it is a matter of preparing the proletariat for the role of leader of the liberation movement, step by step dislodging the bourgeoisie and its mouthpieces from this honorable post. The task is to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc and to ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc. This bloc can assume, although it need not always necessarily do so, the form of a single workers' and peasants' party, formally bound by a single platform. In such countries, the independence of the Communist Party must be the chief slogan of the advanced communist elements, for the hegemony of the proletariat can be prepared and brought about only by the Communist Party. But the Communist Party can and must enter into an open bloc with the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie in order, after isolating the compromising national bourgeoisie, to lead the vast masses of the urban and rural petit bourgeoisie in the struggle against imperialism.

Hence, the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the capitalistically developed colonies and dependent countries are:

- 1) To win the best elements of the working class to the side of communism and to create independent Communist Parties.
- 2) To form a national-revolutionary bloc of the workers, peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia against the bloc of the compromising national bourgeoisie and imperialism.
- 3) To ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in that bloc.
- 4) To fight to free the urban and rural petit bourgeoisie from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie.

- 5) To ensure that the liberation movement is linked with the proletarian movement in the advanced countries.

Such are the three groups of immediate tasks confronting the leading cadres in the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

These tasks assume a particularly important character and particularly great significance when examined in the light of the present international situation. The characteristic feature of the present international situation is that the revolutionary movement has entered a period of temporary lull. But what is a lull, what does it mean at the present time? It can only mean an intensification of the pressure on the workers of the West, on the colonies of the East, and primarily on the Soviet Union as the standard-bearer of the revolutionary movement in all countries. There can scarcely be any doubt that preparation for this pressure on the Soviet Union has already begun in the ranks of the imperialists. The campaign of slander launched in connection with the insurrection in Estonia,¹¹⁸ the infamous incitement against the Soviet Union in connection with the explosion in Sofia, and the general crusade that the bourgeois press is conducting against our country, all mark the preparatory stage of an offensive. It is the artillery preparation of public opinion intended to accustom the general public to attacks against the Soviet Union and to create the moral prerequisites for intervention. What will be the outcome of this campaign of lies and slander, whether the imperialists will risk undertaking a serious offensive, remains to be seen; but there can scarcely be any doubt that those attacks bode no good for the colonies. Therefore, the question of preparing a counter-blow by the united forces of the revolution to the blow likely to be delivered by imperialism is an inevitable question of the day.

That is why the unswerving fulfillment of the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries acquires particular importance at the present time.

¹¹⁸ This refers to the armed uprising of the workers in Revel (Tallinn) on December 1, 1924, provoked by the sentence passed by an Estonian court at the end of November 1924 on 149 political offenders accused of conducting communist propaganda. The majority of the accused were sentenced to long terms of penal servitude, thirty-nine were sentenced to penal servitude for life, and Tomp, the leader of the Estonian workers, was shot. The uprising was cruelly suppressed by the reactionary Estonian government.

What is the mission of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the colonial and dependent countries in view of all these circumstances? Its mission is to take into account all the specific features of the revolutionary development of these countries and to train the cadres coming from them in a way that will ensure the fulfillment of the various immediate tasks I have enumerated.

In the University of the Peoples of the East there are about ten different groups of students who have come here from colonial and dependent countries. We all know that these comrades are thirsting for light and knowledge. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to make them into real revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism, equipped with practical experience of Leninism, and capable of carrying out the immediate tasks of the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries with all their heart and soul.

In this connection it is necessary to bear in mind two deviations in the practice of the leading cadres in the colonial East, two deviations which must be combated if real revolutionary cadres are to be trained.

The first deviation lies in an underestimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an overestimation of the idea of a united, all-embracing national front in the colonies and dependent countries, irrespective of the state and degree of development of those countries. That is a deviation to the Right, and it is fraught with the danger of the revolutionary movement being debased and of the voices of the communist elements becoming drowned in the general chorus of the bourgeois nationalists. It is the direct duty of the University of the Peoples of the East to wage a determined struggle against that deviation.

The second deviation lies in an overestimation of the revolutionary potentialities of the liberation movement and in an underestimation of the role of an alliance between the working class and the revolutionary bourgeoisie against imperialism. It seems to me that the Communists in Java, who not long ago mistakenly put forward the slogan of Soviet power for their country, are suffering from this deviation. That is a deviation to the Left, and it is fraught with the danger of the Communist Party becoming divorced from the masses and converted into a sect. A determined struggle against that deviation is an essential condition for the training of real revolutionary cadres for the colonies and dependent countries of the East.

Such, in general, are the political tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the peoples of the Soviet East and of the colonial East.

Let us hope that the University of the Peoples of the East will succeed in carrying out these tasks with honor.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION ONCE AGAIN

June 30, 1925

Concerning the Article by Semich

One can only welcome the fact that now, after the discussion that took place in the Yugoslav Commission, Semich, in his article, wholly and entirely associates himself with the stand taken by the RCP(B) delegation in the Comintern. It would be wrong, however, to think on these grounds that there were no disagreements between the RCP(B) delegation and Semich before or during the discussion in the Yugoslav Commission. Evidently, that is exactly what Semich is inclined to think about the disagreements on the national question, in trying to reduce them just to misunderstandings. Unfortunately, he is profoundly mistaken. He asserts in his article that the dispute with him is based on a "series of misunderstandings" caused by "one, not fully translated," speech he delivered in the Yugoslav Commission. In other words, it follows that we must make a scapegoat of the person who, for some reason, did not translate Semich's speech in full. In the interests of the truth I must declare that this assertion of Semich's is quite contrary to the facts. It would have been better, of course, had Semich supported his assertion with passages from the speech he delivered in the Yugoslav Commission, the report of which is kept in the Comintern files. But for some reason he did not do this. Consequently, I am compelled to go through this not very pleasant, but very necessary, procedure for him.

This is all the more necessary since even now, after Semich has wholly associated himself with the stand taken by the RCP(B) delegation, there is still much that is unclear in his present position.

In my speech in the Yugoslav Commission (see *Bolshevik*,¹¹⁹ No. 7)¹²⁰ I spoke of disagreements on three questions: 1) the question of the ways of solving the national question, 2) the question of the internal social content of the national movement in the present historical epoch, and 3) the question of the role of the international factor in the national question.

On the first question I said that Semich had "not fully understood the main essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question," that he separated the national question from the general question of the

¹¹⁹ *Bolshevik*, a fortnightly theoretical and political magazine, organ of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B); began publication in April 1924.

¹²⁰ See Stalin's "Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia," in V. I. Lenin, J. V. Stalin, *On the National Colonial Question*, Calcutta Book House, 1970, pp. 170-173

revolution, and that, consequently, he was inclined to reduce the national question to a constitutional issue.

Is all that true?

Read the following passage from Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission (March 30, 1925) and judge for yourselves:

Can the national question be reduced to a constitutional issue? First of all, let us make a theoretical supposition. Let us suppose that in state X there are three nations A, B, and C. These three nations express the wish to live in one state. What is the issue in this case? It is, of course, the regulation of the internal relationships within this state. Hence, it is a constitutional issue. In this theoretical case the national question amounts to a constitutional issue... If, in this theoretical case, we reduce the national question to a constitutional issue, it must be said—as I have always emphasized—that the self-determination of nations, including secession, is a condition for the solution of the constitutional issue. And it is solely on this plane that I put the constitutional issue.

I think that this passage from Semich's speech needs no further comment. Clearly, whoever regards the national question as a component part of the general question of the proletarian revolution cannot reduce it to a constitutional issue. And vice versa, only one who separates the national question from the general question of the proletarian revolution can reduce it to a constitutional issue.

Semich's speech contains a statement to the effect that the right to national self-determination cannot be won without a revolutionary struggle. Semich says: "Of course, such rights can be won only by means of a revolutionary struggle. They cannot be won by parliamentary means; they can result only from mass revolutionary actions."

But what do "revolutionary struggle" and "revolutionary actions" mean? Can "revolutionary struggle" and "revolutionary actions" be identified with the overthrow of the ruling class, with the seizure of power, with the victory of the revolution as a condition for the solution of the national question? Of course not. To speak of the victory of the revolution as the fundamental condition for the solution of the national question is

one thing; but it is quite another thing to put “revolutionary actions” and “revolutionary struggle” as the condition for the solution of the national question. It must be observed that the path of reforms, the constitutional path, by no means excludes “revolutionary actions” and “revolutionary struggle.” Decisive in determining whether a given party is revolutionary or reformist are not “revolutionary actions” in themselves, but the political aims and objects for the sake of which the party undertakes and employs these actions. As is known, in 1906, after the first Duma was dispersed, the Russian Mensheviks proposed the organization of a “general strike” and even of an “armed uprising.” But that did not in the least prevent them from remaining Mensheviks, for why did they propose all this at that time? Not, of course, to smash tsarism and to organize the complete victory of the revolution, but in order to “exert pressure” on the tsarist government with the object of winning reforms, with the object of widening the “constitution,” with the object of securing the convocation of an “improved” Duma. “Revolutionary actions” *for the purpose of* reforming the old order, *while* power remains in the hands of the ruling class is one thing—that is the constitutional path. “Revolutionary actions” for the purpose of breaking up the old order, for overthrowing the ruling class, is another thing—that is the revolutionary path, the path of the complete victory of the revolution. There is a fundamental difference here.

That is why I think that Semich’s reference to “revolutionary struggle” while reducing the national question to a constitutional issue does not refute, but, on the contrary, only confirms my statement that Semich had “not fully understood the main essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question,” for he failed to understand that the national question must be regarded not in isolation from, but in inseparable connection with, the question of the victory of the revolution, as part of the general question of the revolution.

While insisting on this, I do not in the least mean to imply that I have said anything new about Semich’s mistake on this question. Not at all. This mistake of Semich’s was already mentioned by Comrade Manuisky at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern¹²¹ when he said:

¹²¹ The Fifth Congress of the Comintern was held in Moscow, June 17-July 8, 1924. On June 30, D. Z. Manuisky delivered a report on the national question.

In his pamphlet *The National Question in the Light of Marxism*, and in a number of articles published in *Radnik*, the organ of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Semich advocates a struggle for the revision of the Constitution as a practical slogan for the Communist Party, that is, he in fact reduces the whole question of self-determination of nations exclusively to a constitutional issue (see *Stenographic Report of the Fifth Congress*, pp. 596-97).

Zinoviev, too, spoke about this same mistake in the Yugoslav Commission, when he said: "In the prospect drawn by Semich it appears that only one little thing is lacking, namely, revolution," that the national question is a "revolutionary and not a constitutional" problem (see *Pravda*, No. 83).

These remarks by representatives of the RCP(B) in the Comintern concerning Semich's mistake could not have been accidental, groundless. There is no smoke without fire.

That is how matters stand with Semich's first and fundamental mistake.

His other mistakes arise directly from this fundamental mistake.

Concerning the second question, I said in my speech (see *Bolshevik*, No. 7) that Semich "refuses to regard the national question as being, in essence, a peasant question."¹²²

Is that true?

Read the following passage from Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission and judge for yourselves:

What is the social significance of the national movement in Yugoslavia? [asks Semich, and he answers there:] Its social content is the competitive struggle between Serb capital on the one hand and Croat and Slovene capital on the other (see Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission).

There can be no doubt, of course, that the competitive struggle between the Slovene and Croat bourgeoisie and the Serb bourgeoisie is bound to play a certain role here. But it is equally beyond doubt that a

¹²² See this volume, p. 71.—*Ed.*

man who thinks that the social significance of the national movement lies in the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of the different nationalities cannot regard the national question as being, in essence, a peasant question. What is the essence of the national question today, when this question has been transformed from a local, intrastate question into a world question, a question of the struggle waged by the colonies and dependent nationalities against imperialism? The essence of the national question today lies in the struggle that the masses of the people of the colonies and dependent nationalities are waging against financial exploitation, against the political enslavement and cultural effacement of those colonies and nationalities by the imperialist bourgeoisie of the ruling nationality. What significance can the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of different nationalities have when the national question is presented in that way? Certainly not decisive significance, and, in certain cases, not even important significance. It is quite evident that the main point here is not that the bourgeoisie of one nationality is beating, or may beat, the bourgeoisie of another nationality in the competitive struggle, but that the imperialist group of the ruling nationality is exploiting and oppressing the bulk of the masses, above all the peasant masses, of the colonies and dependent nationalities and that, by oppressing and exploiting them, it is drawing them into the struggle against imperialism, converting them into allies of the proletarian revolution. The national question cannot be regarded as being, in essence, a peasant question if the social significance of the national movement is reduced to the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of different nationalities. And vice versa, the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of different nationalities cannot be regarded as constituting the social significance of the national movement if the national question is regarded as being, in essence, a peasant question. These two formulas cannot possibly be taken as equivalent.

Semich refers to a passage in Stalin's pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question*, written at the end of 1912. There it says that "the national struggle under the conditions of rising capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves."

Evidently, by this Semich is trying to suggest that his formula defining the social significance of the national movement under the present historical conditions is correct. But Stalin's pamphlet was written before

the imperialist war, when the national question was not yet regarded by Marxists as a question of world significance, when the Marxists' fundamental demand for the right to self-determination was regarded not as part of the proletarian revolution, but as part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It would be ridiculous not to see that since then the international situation has radically changed, that the war, on the one hand, and the October Revolution in Russia, on the other, *transformed the national question from a part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a part of the proletarian-socialist revolution*. As far back as October 1916, in his article, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up,"¹²³ Lenin said that the main point of the national question, the right to self-determination, had ceased to be a part of the general democratic movement, that it had already become a component part of the general proletarian, socialist revolution. I do not even mention subsequent works on the national question by Lenin and by other representatives of Russian communism. After all this, what significance can Semich's reference to the passage in Stalin's pamphlet, written in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, have at the present time, when, as a consequence of the new historical situation, we have entered a new epoch, the epoch of proletarian revolution?

It can only signify that Semich quotes outside of space and time, without reference to the living historical situation, and thereby violates the most elementary requirements of dialectics, and ignores the fact that what is right for one historical situation may prove to be wrong in another historical situation. In my speech in the Yugoslav Commission I said that two stages must be distinguished in the presentation of the national question by the Russian Bolsheviks: the pre-October stage, when the bourgeois-democratic revolution was the issue and the national question was regarded as a part of the general democratic movement; and the October stage, when the proletarian revolution was already the issue and the national question had become a component part of the proletarian revolution. It scarcely needs proof that this distinction is of decisive significance. I am afraid that Semich still fails to understand the meaning and significance of

¹²³ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 320-360.

this difference between the two stages in the presentation of the national question.

That is why I think Semich's attempt to regard the national movement as not being, in essence, a peasant question, but as a question of the competition between the bourgeoisies of different nationalities "is due to an underestimation of the inherent strength of the national movement and a failure to understand the profoundly popular and profoundly revolutionary character of the national movement" (see *Bolshevik*, No. 7).¹²⁴

That is how the matter stands with Semich's second mistake.

It is characteristic that the same thing about this mistake of Semich's was said by Zinoviev in his speech in the Yugoslav Commission: "Semich is wrong when he says that the peasant movement in Yugoslavia is headed by the bourgeoisie and is therefore not revolutionary" (see *Pravda*, No. 83).

Is this coincidence accidental? Of course not!

Once again: there is no smoke without fire.

Finally, on the third question I stated that Semich makes an "attempt to treat the national question in Yugoslavia in isolation from the international situation and the probable prospects in Europe."¹²⁵

Is that true?

Yes, it is, for in his speech Semich did not even remotely hint at the fact that the international situation under present conditions, especially in relation to Yugoslavia, is a major factor in the solution of the national question. The fact that the Yugoslav state itself was formed as a result of the clash between the two major imperialist coalitions, that Yugoslavia cannot escape from the big play of forces that is now going on in the surrounding imperialist states—all this remained outside of Semich's field of vision. Semich's statement that he can fully conceive of certain changes taking place in the international situation which may cause the question of self-determination to become an urgent and practical one, must now, in the present international situation, be regarded as inadequate. Now it is by no means a matter of admitting that the question of the right of nations to self-determination may become urgent, given certain changes in the international situation, in a possible and distant future; this could, if need be,

¹²⁴ See this volume, p. 72.—*Ed.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*—*Ed.*

now be admitted as a prospect even by bourgeois democrats. That is not the point now. The point now is to avoid making the present frontiers of the Yugoslav state, which came into being as a result of war and violence, the starting point and legal basis for the solution of the national question. One thing or the other: either the question of national self-determination, i.e., the question of radically altering the frontiers of Yugoslavia, is an *appendage* to the national program, dimly looming in the distant future, or it is the *basis* of the national program. At all events it is clear that the point about the right to self-determination cannot be at one and the same time *both* an appendage to *and* the basis of the national program of the Yugoslav Communist Party. I am afraid that Semich still continues to regard the right to self-determination as an appendage concerning prospects added to the national program.

That is why I think that Semich divorces the national question from the question of the general international situation and, as a consequence, for him the question of self-determination, i.e., the question of altering the frontiers of Yugoslavia, is, in essence, not an urgent question, but an academic one.

That is how the matter stands with Semich's third mistake.

It is characteristic that the same thing about this mistake of Semich's was said by Comrade Manuilsky in his report to the Fifth Congress of the Comintern:

The fundamental premise of Semich's whole presentation of the national question is the idea that the proletariat must accept the bourgeois state *within those frontiers which have been set up by a series of wars and acts of violence*¹²⁶ (see *Stenographic Report of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern*, p. 597).

Can this coincidence be regarded as accidental? Of course not! Once again: there is no smoke without fire.

¹²⁶ My italics—J. St.

**EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER TO
COMRADE KAGANOVICH AND
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF
THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF
THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE,
UKRAINE CP(B)**

April 26, 1926

There is some truth in what Shumsky says. It is true that a broad movement in favor of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian public life has begun and is spreading in the Ukraine. It is true that we must under no circumstances allow that movement to fall into the hands of elements hostile to us. It is true that a number of Communists in the Ukraine do not realize the meaning and importance of that movement and are therefore taking no steps to gain control of it. It is true that a change of sentiment must be brought about among our Party and Soviet cadres, who are still imbued with an ironical and skeptical attitude towards Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian public life. It is true that we must painstakingly select and build up cadres capable of gaining control of the new movement in the Ukraine. All that is true. Nevertheless, Shumsky commits at least two serious errors.

Firstly. He confuses Ukrainization of the apparatus of our Party and other bodies with Ukrainization of the proletariat. The apparatus of our Party, state and other bodies serving the population can and should be Ukrainized, a due tempo in this matter being observed. But it is impossible to Ukrainize the proletariat from above. It is impossible to *compel* the mass of the Russian workers to give up the Russian language and Russian culture and accept the Ukrainian culture and language as their own. That would be contrary to the principle of the free development of nationalities. It would not be national freedom, but a peculiar form of national oppression. There can be no doubt that with the industrial development of the Ukraine and the influx into industry of Ukrainian workers from the surrounding countryside, the composition of the Ukrainian proletariat will change. There can be no doubt that the composition of the Ukrainian proletariat will become Ukrainized, just as the composition of the proletariat in Latvia or Hungary, say, which was at one time German in character, subsequently became Latvianized or Magyarized. But this is a lengthy, spontaneous and natural process. To attempt to replace this spontaneous process by the forcible Ukrainization of the proletariat from above would be a utopian and harmful policy, one capable of stirring up anti-Ukrainian chauvinism among the non-Ukrainian sections of the proletariat in the Ukraine. It seems to me that Shumsky has a wrong idea of Ukrainization and does not take this latter danger into account.

Secondly. While quite rightly stressing the positive character of the new movement in the Ukraine in favor of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian public life, Shumsky fails to see its seamy side. Shumsky fails to see that, in view of the weakness of the indigenous communist cadres in the Ukraine, this movement, which is very frequently led by non-communist intellectuals, may here and there assume the character of a struggle to alienate Ukrainian culture and public life from general Soviet culture and public life, the character of a struggle against "Moscow" in general, against the Russians in general, against Russian culture and its highest achievement—Leninism. I shall not stop to prove that this is becoming an increasingly real danger in the Ukraine. I only want to say that even certain Ukrainian Communists are not free from such defects. I have in mind such a generally known fact as the article of the Communist Khvilevoy in the Ukrainian press. Khvilevoy's demand for the "*immediate* de-Russification of the proletariat" in the Ukraine, his opinion that "Ukrainian poetry must get away from Russian literature and its style as fast as possible," his statement that "the ideas of the proletariat are known to us without Moscow art," his infatuation with the idea that the "young" Ukrainian intelligentsia has some kind of Messianic role to play, his ludicrous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this and much else like it sounds (cannot but sound!) more than strange nowadays coming from the mouth of a Ukrainian Communist. At a time when the proletarians of Western Europe and their Communist Parties are in sympathy with "Moscow," this citadel of the international revolutionary movement and of Leninism, at a time when the proletarians of Western Europe look with admiration at the flag that flies over Moscow, the Ukrainian Communist Khvilevoy has nothing better to say in favor of "Moscow" than to call on the Ukrainian leaders to get away from "Moscow" "as fast as possible." And that is called internationalism! What is to be said of other Ukrainian intellectuals, those of the non-communist camp, if Communists begin to talk, and not only to talk but even to write in our Soviet press, in the language of Khvilevoy? Shumsky does not realize that we can gain control of the new movement in the Ukraine in favor of Ukrainian culture only by combating extremes like Khvilevoy's in the communist ranks. Shumsky does not realize that only by combating such extremes can the rising Ukrainian culture and public life be converted into a Soviet culture and public life.

ABOUT CHINA

August 1, 1927

*Excerpts from a Speech Delivered at the Joint
Plenum of the Central Committee and the
Central Control Commission of the CPSU(B)
at the session "The International Situation and
the Defense of the USSR"*

Let us pass to the question of China.

I shall not dwell on the mistakes of the opposition on the question of the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution. I shall not do so because enough has been said, and said quite convincingly, on this subject, and it is not worthwhile repeating it here. Nor shall I dwell on the assertion that in its present phase the Chinese revolution is a revolution for customs autonomy (Trotsky). Nor is it worthwhile dwelling on the assertion that no feudal survivals exist in China, or that, if they do exist, they are of no great importance (Trotsky and Radek), in which case the agrarian revolution in China would be absolutely incomprehensible. You no doubt already know from our Party press about these and similar mistakes of the opposition on the Chinese question.

Let us pass to the question of the basic premises of Leninism in deciding the questions of revolution in colonial and dependent countries.

What is the basic premise of the Comintern and the Communist Parties generally in their approach to the questions of the revolutionary movement in colonial and dependent countries?

It consists in a strict *distinction* between revolution in imperialist countries, in countries that oppress other nations, and revolution in colonial and dependent countries, in countries that suffer from imperialist oppression by other states. Revolution in imperialist countries is one thing: there the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other nations; there it is counter-revolutionary at all stages of the revolution; there the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is absent. Revolution in colonial and dependent countries is another thing: there the imperialist oppression by other states is one of the factors of the revolution; there this oppression cannot but affect the national bourgeoisie also; there the national bourgeoisie, at a certain stage and for a certain period, may support the revolutionary movement of its country against imperialism; there

the national factor, as a factor in the struggle for emancipation, is a revolutionary factor.

To fail to draw this distinction, to fail to understand this difference and to identify revolution in imperialist countries with revolution in colonial countries, is to depart from the path of Marxism, from the path of Leninism, to take the path of the supporters of the Second International.

Here is what Lenin said about this in his report on the national and colonial questions at the Second Congress of the Comintern:

What is the *most important*, the *fundamental* idea of our theses? The *distinction* between *oppressed* nations and *oppressing* nations. We emphasize this distinction—in contrast to the Second International and bourgeois democracy¹²⁷ (see Vol. XXV, p. 351).¹²⁸

The principal error of the opposition is that it fails to understand and does not admit this difference between the two types of revolution.

The principal error of the opposition is that it *identifies* the 1905 Revolution in Russia, an imperialist country which oppressed other nations, with the revolution in China, an oppressed, semi-colonial country, which is compelled to fight imperialist oppression on the part of other states.

Here in Russia, in 1905, the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an *imperialist* country is bound to be counter revolutionary. For that very reason among the Bolsheviks at that time there was not, and could not be, any question of temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds, the opposition asserts that the same attitude should be adopted in China at all stages of the revolutionary movement, that temporary agreements and blocs with the national bourgeoisie are never permissible in China under any conditions. But the opposition forgets that only people who do not understand and do not admit that there is a difference between revolution in oppressed countries and revolution in

¹²⁷ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹²⁸ Lenin, "Second Congress of the Communist International," July 19 August 7, 1920 (see *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 213-256).

oppressing countries can talk like that, that only people who are breaking with Leninism and are sinking to the level of supporters of the Second International can talk like that.

Here is what Lenin said about the permissibility of entering into temporary agreements and blocs with the *bourgeois-liberation movement in colonial countries*:

The Communist International must enter into a *temporary alliance*¹²⁹ with bourgeois democracy in the colonies and backward countries, but must not merge with it, and must unfailingly preserve the independence of the proletarian movement, even if in its most rudimentary form. (see Vol. XXV, p. 290)¹³⁰

We, as Communists, should, and will, *support bourgeois-liberation*¹³¹ movements in colonial countries only when those movements are really revolutionary, when the representatives of those movements do not hinder us in training and organizing the peasantry and the broad masses of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit. (see Vol. XXV, p. 353)¹³²

How could it “happen” that Lenin, who fulminated against agreements with the bourgeoisie *in Russia*, admitted that such agreements and blocs were permissible *in China*? Perhaps Lenin was mistaken? Perhaps he had turned from revolutionary tactics to opportunist tactics? Of course not! It “happened” because Lenin understood the difference between revolution in an oppressed country and revolution in an oppressing country. It “happened” because Lenin understood that, at a certain stage of its development, the national bourgeoisie in the colonial and dependent countries may support the revolutionary movement of its own country against the oppression of imperialism. That the opposition refuses to understand, but

¹²⁹ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹³⁰ Lenin, “Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions,” 1920 (in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 144-151).

¹³¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹³² Lenin, “Second Congress of the Communist International,” July 19 August 7, 1920 (see *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 213-256).

it refuses to do so because it is breaking with Lenin's revolutionary tactics, breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Leninism.

Have you noticed how carefully in their speeches the leaders of the opposition evaded these directives of Lenin's, being afraid to mention them? Why do they evade these universally known tactical directives of Lenin's for the colonial and dependent countries? Why are they afraid of these directives? Because they are afraid of the truth. Because Lenin's tactical directives refute the entire ideological and political line of Trotskyism on the questions of the Chinese revolution.

About the stages of the Chinese revolution. The opposition has got so confused that it is now denying that there are any stages at all in the development of the Chinese revolution. But is there such a thing as a revolution that does not go through definite *stages of development*? Did not our revolution have its stages of development? Take Lenin's *April Theses*¹³³ and you will see that Lenin recognized two stages in our revolution: the first stage was the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the agrarian movement as its main axis; the second stage was the October Revolution, with the seizure of power by the proletariat as its main axis.

What are the stages in the Chinese revolution?

In my opinion there should be three:

The *first* stage is the revolution of an all-national *united* front, the Guangdong period, when the revolution was striking chiefly at foreign imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie supported the revolutionary movement;

The *second* stage is the bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national troops reached the Yangtze River, when the national bourgeoisie deserted the revolution and the agrarian movement grew into a mighty revolution of tens of millions of the peasantry (the Chinese revolution is now at the second stage of its development);

The *third* stage is the Soviet revolution, which has not yet come, but will come.

¹³³ See V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," in *Collected Works*, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 19-26

Whoever fails to understand that there is no such thing as a revolution without definite stages of development, whoever fails to understand that there are three stages in the development of the Chinese revolution, understands nothing about Marxism or about the Chinese question.

What is the characteristic feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution?

The characteristic feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution is, firstly, that it was the revolution of an all-national united front, and secondly, that it was directed mainly against foreign imperialist oppression (the Hong Kong strike, etc.). Was Guangdong then the center, the *place d'armes*, of the revolutionary movement in China? Of course it was. Only those who are blind can deny that now.

Is it true that the first stage of a colonial revolution must have just such a character? I think it is true. In the "Supplementary Theses" of the Second Congress of the Comintern, which deal with the revolution in China and India, it is explicitly stated that in those countries "foreign domination is all the time hindering the free development of social life," that "therefore, *the first step*¹³⁴ of a revolution in the colonies must be to overthrow foreign capitalism" (see *Verbatim Report of the Second Congress of the Comintern*, p. 605).

The characteristic feature of the Chinese revolution is that it has taken this "first step," has passed through the first stage of its development, has passed through the period of the revolution of an all-national united front and has entered the second stage of its development, the period of the agrarian revolution.

The characteristic feature, for instance, of the Turkish revolution (the Kemalists), on the contrary, is that it got stuck at the "first step," at the first stage of its development, at the stage of the bourgeois-liberation movement, without even attempting to pass to the second stage of its development, the stage of the agrarian revolution.

What were the Kuomintang and its government at the first stage of the revolution, the Guangdong period? They were a bloc of workers, peasants, bourgeois intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie. Was Guangdong at that time the center of the revolutionary movement, the *place*

¹³⁴ My italics.—*J. St.*

d'armes of the revolution? Was it correct policy at that time to support the Guangdong Kuomintang, as the government of the struggle for liberation from imperialism? Were we right in giving assistance to Guangdong in China and, say, Ankara in Turkey, when Guangdong and Ankara were fighting imperialism? Yes, we were right. We were right, and we were then following in the footsteps of Lenin, for the struggle waged by Guangdong and Ankara was dissipating the forces of imperialism, was weakening and discrediting imperialism, and was thus facilitating the development of the center of the world revolution, the development of the USSR. Is it true that at that time the present leaders of our opposition joined with us in supporting both Guangdong and Ankara, giving them certain assistance? Yes, it is true. Let anybody try to refute that.

But what does a united front with the national bourgeoisie at the first stage of a colonial revolution mean? Does it mean that Communists must not intensify the struggle of the workers and peasants against the landlords and the national bourgeoisie, that the proletariat ought to sacrifice its independence, if only to a very slight extent, if only for a very short time? No, it does not mean that. A united front can be of revolutionary significance only where, and only on condition that, it does not prevent the Communist Party from conducting its independent political and organizational work, from organizing the proletariat into an independent political force, from rousing the peasantry against the landlords, from openly organizing a workers' and peasants' revolution and from preparing in this way the conditions for the hegemony of the proletariat. I think that the reporter fully proved on the basis of universally known documents that it was precisely this conception of the united front that the Comintern impressed upon the Chinese Communist Party.

Kamenev and Zinoviev referred here to a single telegram sent to Shanghai in October 1926, stating that for the time being, until Shanghai was captured, the agrarian movement should not be intensified. I am far from admitting that that telegram was right. I have never regarded and do not now regard the Comintern as being infallible. Mistakes are sometimes made, and that telegram was unquestionably a mistake. But, firstly, the *Comintern itself* cancelled that telegram a few weeks later (in November 1926), without any promptings or signals from the opposition. Secondly, why has the opposition kept silent about this until now? Why has it recalled

that telegram only *after nine months*? And why does it conceal from the Party the fact that the Comintern cancelled that telegram *nine months ago*? Hence, it would be malicious slander to assert that that telegram defined the line of our leadership. As a matter of fact, it was an isolated, episodic telegram, totally uncharacteristic of the line of the Comintern, of the line of our leadership. That is obvious, I repeat, if only from the fact that it was cancelled within a few weeks by a number of documents which laid down the line, and which were indeed characteristic of our leadership.

Permit me to refer to these documents.

Here, for instance, is an excerpt from the resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern, *in November 1926, i.e., a month after the above-mentioned telegram*:

The peculiar feature of the present situation is its transitional character, the fact that the proletariat must choose between the prospect of a bloc with considerable sections of the bourgeoisie and the prospect of further consolidating its alliance with the peasantry. *If the proletariat fails to put forward a radical agrarian program*, it will be unable to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle and will forfeit its hegemony in the national-liberation movement.¹³⁵

And further:

The Guangdong People's Government will not be able to retain power in the revolution, will not be able to achieve complete victory over foreign imperialism and native reaction until the cause of national liberation is *identified with the agrarian revolution* (see *Resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the EECI*).

There you have a document which really does define the line of the Comintern leadership.

It is very strange that the leaders of the opposition avoid mention of this universally known Comintern document.

Perhaps it will not be taken as boastful if I refer to the speech I delivered *in November of that same year, 1926*, in the Chinese Commission of

¹³⁵ My italics.—J. St.

the Comintern, which, not without my participation of course, drafted the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum on the Chinese question. That speech was subsequently published in pamphlet form under the title *The Prospects of the Revolution in China*. Here are some passages from that speech:

I know that there are Kuomintangists and even Chinese Communists who do not consider it possible to unleash revolution in the countryside, since they fear that if the peasantry were drawn into the revolution, it would disrupt the united anti-imperialist front. *That is a profound error, comrades.* The more quickly and thoroughly the Chinese peasantry is drawn into the revolution, the stronger and more powerful the anti-imperialist front in China will be.

And further:

I know that among the Chinese Communists there are comrades who do not approve of workers going on strike for an improvement of their material conditions and legal status, and who try to dissuade the workers from striking. [*A voice*: "That happened in Guangdong and Shanghai."] That is a great mistake, comrades. It is a very serious underestimation of the role and importance of the Chinese proletariat. This fact should be noted in the theses as something decidedly objectionable. It would be a great mistake if the Chinese Communists failed to take advantage of the present favorable situation to assist the workers to improve their material conditions and legal status, even through strikes. Otherwise, what purpose does the revolution in China serve? (See Stalin, *The Prospects of the Revolution in China*.)¹³⁶

And here is a third document, of *December 1926*, issued at a time when every city in China was bombarding the Comintern with assertions that an extension of the struggle of the workers would lead to a crisis, to unemployment, to the closing down of mills and factories:

¹³⁶ See *Collected Works*, Vol. X, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.

A general policy of retreat in the towns and of curtailing the workers' struggle to improve their conditions would be *wrong*. The struggle in the countryside must be extended, but at the same time advantage must be taken of the favorable situation to improve the material conditions and legal status of the workers, while striving in every way to lend the workers' struggle an organized character, which precludes excesses or running too far ahead. Special efforts must be exerted to direct the struggle in the towns against the big bourgeoisie and, above all, against the imperialists, so as to keep the Chinese petit bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie as far as possible within the framework of the united front against the common enemy. We regard the system of conciliation boards, arbitration courts, etc., as expedient, provided a correct working-class policy is ensured in these institutions. At the same time we think it necessary to utter the warning that decrees directed against the right to strike, against workers' freedom of assembly, etc., are absolutely impermissible.

Here is a fourth document, issued six weeks before Chiang Kai-shek's coup:

The work of the Kuomintang and Communist units in the army must be intensified; they must be organized wherever they do not now exist and it is possible to organize them; where it is not possible to organize Communist units, intensified work must be conducted with the help of concealed Communists.

It is necessary to adopt the course of *arming the workers and peasants and converting the peasant committees in the localities into actual organs of governmental authority equipped with armed self-defense*, etc.

The Communist Party must everywhere come forward as such; a policy of voluntary semi-legality is impermissible; the Communist Party must not come forward as a brake on the

mass movement; *the Communist Party should not cover up the treacherous and reactionary policy of the Kuomintang Rights*, and should mobilize the masses around the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party on the basis of exposing the Rights.

The attention of all political workers who are loyal to the revolution must be drawn to the fact that at the present time, in connection with the regrouping of class forces and concentration of the imperialist armies, the Chinese revolution is passing through a critical period, and that it can achieve further victories only by resolutely adopting the course of developing the mass movement. Otherwise a tremendous danger threatens the revolution. The fulfillment of directives is therefore more necessary than ever before.

And even earlier, already *in April 1926*, a year before the coup of the Kuomintang Rights and Chiang Kai-shek, the Comintern warned the Chinese Communist Party, pointing out that it was “necessary to work for the resignation or expulsion of the Rights from the Kuomintang.”

That is how the Comintern understood, and still understands, the tactics of a united front against imperialism at the first stage of a colonial revolution.

Does the opposition know about these guiding documents? Of course it does. Why then does it say nothing about them? Because its aim is to raise a squabble, not to bring out the truth.

And yet there was a time when the present leaders of the opposition, especially Zinoviev and Kamenev, did understand something about Leninism and, in the main, advocated the same policy for the Chinese revolutionary movement *as was pursued by the Comintern*, and which Comrade Lenin outlined for us in his theses.¹³⁷ I have in mind the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International, held in *February-March 1926*, when Zinoviev was Chairman of the Comintern, when he was still a Leninist and had not yet migrated to Trotsky's camp. I mention the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International because there is a resolution of that plenum

¹³⁷ See V. I. Lenin, “Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National and Colonial Questions,” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 144-151.

on the Chinese revolution,¹³⁸ which was adopted unanimously in February-March 1926, and which gives approximately the same estimate of the first stage of the Chinese revolution, of the Guangdong Kuomintang and of the Guangdong government, as is given by the Comintern and by the CPSU(B), but which the opposition is now repudiating. I mention this resolution because Zinoviev voted for it at that time, and not a single member of the Central Committee, not even Trotsky, Kamenev, or the other leaders of the present opposition, objected to it.

Permit me to quote a few passages from that resolution. Here is what is said in the resolution *about the Kuomintang*:

The Shanghai and Hong Kong political strikes of the Chinese workers (June-September 1925) marked a turning point in the struggle of the Chinese people for liberation from the foreign imperialists... The political action of the proletariat gave a powerful impetus to the further development and consolidation of all the revolutionary-democratic organizations in the country, especially of the people's revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, and the revolutionary government in Guangdong. The Kuomintang party, the main body of which acted in alliance with the Chinese Communists, is *a revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the urban democracy*,¹³⁹ based on the common class interests of these strata in the struggle against the foreign imperialists and against the whole military-feudal way of life, for the independence of the country and for a single revolutionary-democratic government (see *Resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the EECI*).

¹³⁸ The resolution on the Chinese question drafted by the Eastern Commission of the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern was adopted at a plenary meeting on March 13, 1926 (see *The Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Theses and Resolutions*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, pp. 131-36).

¹³⁹ My italics—J. St.

Thus, the Guangdong Kuomintang is an alliance of four “classes.” As you see, this is almost “Martynovism”¹⁴⁰ sanctified by none other than the then Chairman of the Comintern Zinoviev.

About the Guangdong Kuomintang government:

*The revolutionary government created by the Kuomintang party in Guangdong has already succeeded in establishing contact with the widest masses of the workers, peasants, and urban democracy, and, basing itself on them, has smashed the counter-revolutionary bands supported by the imperialists (and is working for the radical democratization of the whole political life of the Kwangtung Province). Thus, being the vanguard in the struggle of the Chinese people for independence, the Guangdong government serves as a model for the future revolutionary-democratic development of the country*¹⁴¹ (ibid.).

It turns out that the Guangdong Kuomintang government, being a bloc of four “classes,” was a *revolutionary* government, and not only revolutionary, but even a *model* for the future revolutionary-democratic government in China.

About the united front of workers, peasants and the bourgeoisie:

In face of the new dangers, the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang must develop the most wide-spread political activity, organizing mass action in support of the struggle of the people’s armies, taking advantage of the contradictions within the camp of the imperialists and opposing to them a *united national revolutionary front of the broadest strata of the population* (workers, peasants, and *the bourgeoisie*) under the leadership of the revolutionary-democratic organizations (ibid.).

¹⁴⁰ In an article on the development of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, A. Martynov (a former Menshevik who was admitted to membership of the RCP(B) by the Twelfth Party Congress) advanced the thesis that the revolution in China could peacefully evolve from a bourgeois-democratic revolution into a proletarian revolution. The Trotsky-Zinoviev anti-Soviet bloc tried to thrust responsibility for Martynov’s mistaken thesis upon the leadership of the Comintern and of the CPSU(B).

¹⁴¹ My italics—*J. St.*

It follows that temporary blocs and agreements with *the bourgeoisie* in colonial countries at a certain stage of the colonial revolution are not only permissible, but positively essential.

Is it not true that this is very similar to what Lenin tells us in his well-known directives for the tactics of Communists in colonial and dependent countries? It is a pity, however, that Zinoviev has already managed to forget that.

The question of withdrawal from the Kuomintang:

Certain sections of the Chinese big bourgeoisie, which had temporarily grouped themselves around the Kuomintang party, withdrew from it during the past year, which resulted in the formation on the Right wing of the Kuomintang of a small group that openly opposed a close alliance between the Kuomintang and the masses of the working people, demanded the expulsion of the Communists from the Kuomintang and opposed the revolutionary policy of the Guangdong government. *The condemnation of this Right wing at the Second Congress of the Kuomintang (January 1926) and the endorsement of the necessity for a militant alliance between the Kuomintang and the Communists confirm the revolutionary trend of the activities of the Kuomintang and the Guangdong government and ensure for the Kuomintang the revolutionary support of the proletariat*¹⁴² (ibid.).

It is seen that withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang at the first stage of the Chinese revolution would have been a serious mistake. It is a pity, however, that Zinoviev, who voted for this resolution, had already managed to forget it in about a month; for it was not later than April 1926 (within a month) that Zinoviev demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang.

About the deviations within the Chinese Communist Party and the impermissibility of skipping over the Kuomintang phase of the revolution:

¹⁴² My italics.—J. St.

The political self-determination of the Chinese Communists will develop in the struggle against two equally harmful deviations: against Right Liquidationism, which ignores the independent class tasks of the Chinese proletariat and leads to a formless merging with the general democratic national movement; and against the extreme Left sentiments in favor of *skipping over the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement* to come immediately to the tasks of proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power, *forgetting about the peasantry*, that basic and decisive factor in the Chinese movement for national emancipation¹⁴³ (ibid.).

As you see, here are all the grounds for convicting the opposition now of wanting to skip over the Kuomintang phase of development in China, of underestimating the peasant movement, and of dashing post-haste towards Soviets. It hits the nail right on the head.

Do Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky know about this resolution?

We must assume that they do. At any rate Zinoviev must know about it, for it was under his chairmanship that this resolution was adopted at the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern and he himself voted for it. Why are the leaders of the opposition now avoiding this resolution of the highest body of the world communist movement? Why are they keeping silent about it? Because it turns against them on all questions concerning the Chinese revolution. Because it refutes the whole of the present Trotskyist standpoint of the opposition. Because they have deserted the Comintern, deserted Leninism, and now, fearing their past, fearing their own shadows, are obliged cravenly to avoid the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Comintern.

That is how matters stand as regards the first stage of the Chinese revolution.

Let us pass now to the second stage of the Chinese revolution.

While the distinguishing feature of the first stage was that the spearhead of the revolution was turned mainly against foreign imperialism, the characteristic feature of the second stage is that the spearhead of the revo-

¹⁴³ My italics.—J. St.

lution is now turned mainly against internal enemies, primarily against the feudal landlords, against the feudal regime.

Did the first stage accomplish its task of overthrowing foreign imperialism? No, it did not. It bequeathed the accomplishment of this task to the second stage of the Chinese revolution. It merely gave the revolutionary masses the first shaking up that roused them against imperialism, only to run its course and hand on the task to the future.

It must be presumed that the second stage of the revolution also will not succeed in fully accomplishing the task of expelling the imperialists. It will give the broad masses of the Chinese workers and peasants a further shaking up to rouse them against imperialism, but it will do so in order to hand on the completion of this task to the next stage of the Chinese revolution, to the Soviet stage.

There is nothing surprising in that. Do we not know that analogous facts occurred in the history of our revolution, although in a different situation and under different circumstances? Do we not know that the first stage of our revolution did not fully accomplish its task of completing the agrarian revolution, and that it handed on that task to the next stage of the revolution, to the October Revolution, which wholly and completely accomplished the task of eradicating the survivals of feudalism? It will therefore not be surprising if the second stage of the Chinese revolution does not succeed in fully completing the agrarian revolution, and if the second stage of the revolution, after giving the vast masses of the peasantry a shaking up and rousing them against the survivals of feudalism, hands on the completion of this task to the next stage of the revolution, to the Soviet stage. That will only be a merit of the future Soviet revolution in China.

What was the task of the Communists at the second stage of the revolution in China, when the center of the revolutionary movement had obviously shifted from Guangdong to Wuhan, and when, parallel with the revolutionary center in Wuhan, a counter-revolutionary center was set up in Nanjing?

The task was to utilize to the full the possibility of openly organizing the Party, the proletariat (trade unions), the peasantry (peasant associations), and the revolution generally.

The task was to push the Wuhan Kuomintangists to the Left, towards the agrarian revolution.

The task was to make the Wuhan Kuomintang the center of the fight against counter-revolution and the core of a future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Was that policy correct?

The facts have shown that it was the only correct policy, the only policy capable of training the masses of workers and peasants for the further development of the revolution.

The opposition at that time demanded the immediate formation of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. But that was sheer adventurism, an adventurist leap ahead, for the immediate formation of Soviets at that time would have meant skipping over the Left Kuomintang phase of development.

Why?

Because the Kuomintang in Wuhan, which supported the alliance with the Communists, had not yet discredited and exposed itself in the eyes of the masses of workers and peasants, and had not yet exhausted itself as a bourgeois revolutionary organization.

Because to have issued the slogan of Soviets and of the overthrow of the Wuhan government at a time when the masses had not yet been convinced through their own experience of the worthlessness of that government and of the necessity of overthrowing it, would have meant leaping ahead, breaking away from the masses, losing the support of the masses and thus causing the failure of the movement that had already started.

The opposition thinks that, if it understands that the Wuhan Kuomintang was unreliable, unstable and insufficiently revolutionary (and it is not difficult for any qualified political worker to understand that), that is quite enough for the masses also to understand all this, that is enough for replacing the Kuomintang by Soviets and for securing the following of the masses. But that is the usual "ultra-Left" mistake made by the opposition, which takes its own political consciousness and understanding for the political consciousness and understanding of the vast masses of workers and peasants.

The opposition is right when it says that the Party must go forward. That is an ordinary Marxist precept, and there cannot be any real Communist Party if it is not adhered to. But that is only part of the truth. The whole truth is that the Party must not only go forward, but must also

secure the following of the vast masses. To go forward without securing the following of the vast masses means in fact to break away from the movement. To go forward, breaking away from the rear-guard, without being able to secure the following of the rear-guard, means to make a leap ahead that can prevent the advance of the masses for some time. The essence of Leninist leadership is precisely that the vanguard should be able to *secure the following* of the rear-guard, that the vanguard should go forward *without breaking away* from the masses.

But in order that the vanguard should not break away from the masses, in order that the vanguard should really secure the following of the vast masses, a decisive condition is needed, namely, that *the masses themselves should be convinced through their own experience that the instructions, directives and slogans issued by the vanguard are correct.*

The misfortune of the opposition is that it does not accept this simple Leninist rule for leading the vast masses, that it does not understand that the Party alone, an advanced group alone, without the support of the vast masses, cannot make a revolution, that, in the final analysis, a revolution “is made” by the vast masses of the working people.

Why did we Bolsheviks, in April 1917, refrain from putting forward the practical slogan for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power in Russia, although we were convinced that in the very near future we should be faced with the necessity of overthrowing the Provisional Government and of establishing Soviet power?

Because the broad masses of the working people, both in the rear and at the front, and, lastly, the Soviets themselves, were not yet ready to accept such a slogan, they still believed that the Provisional Government was revolutionary.

Because the Provisional Government had not yet disgraced and discredited itself by supporting counter-revolution in the rear and at the front.

Why did Lenin, in April 1917, denounce the Bagdatyev group in Petrograd which put forward the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of Soviet power?

Because Bagdatyev’s attempt was a dangerous leap ahead, which created the danger of the Bolshevik Party breaking away from the vast masses of the workers and peasants.

Adventurism in politics, Bagdatyevism in matters concerning the Chinese revolution—that is what is now killing our Trotskyist opposition.

Zinoviev asserts that in speaking of Bagdatyevism, I identify the present Chinese revolution with the October Revolution. That, of course, is nonsense. In the first place, I myself made the reservation in my article “Notes on Contemporary Themes” that “the analogy is a qualified one” and that “I make it with all the necessary reservations, bearing in mind the difference between the situation of China in our day and that of Russia in 1917.”¹⁴⁴ In the second place, it would be foolish to assert that one must never draw analogies with revolutions in other countries when characterizing certain tendencies and certain mistakes committed in the revolution of a given country. Does not a revolution in one country learn from revolutions in other countries, even if those revolutions are not all of the same type? If not, what does the science of revolution amount to?

In essence, Zinoviev denies that there can be a science of revolution. Is it not a fact that in the period just before the October Revolution Lenin accused Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and others of the “Louis Blancism” of the French Revolution of 1848? Look at Lenin’s article “Louis Blancism”¹⁴⁵ and you will realize that Lenin made wide use of analogies from the French Revolution of 1848 in characterising the mistakes made by various leaders before October, although Lenin knew very well that the French Revolution of 1848 was not of the same type as our October Revolution. And if we can speak of the “Louis Blancism” of Chkheidze and Tsereteli in the period before the October Revolution, why cannot we speak of the “Bagdatyevism” of Zinoviev and Trotsky in the period of the agrarian revolution in China?

The opposition asserts that Wuhan was not the center of the revolutionary movement. Why then did Zinoviev say that “all round assistance should be rendered” the Wuhan Kuomintang, so as to make it the center of the struggle against the Chinese Cavaignacs? Why did the Wuhan territory, and no other, become the center of the maximum development of the agrarian movement? Is it not a fact that it was precisely the Wuhan terri-

¹⁴⁴ See *Collected Works*, Vol. IX, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.

¹⁴⁵ See V. I. Lenin, “Louis Blancism,” April 1917 (in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIV, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 34-37).

tory (Hunan, Hupeh) that was the center of the maximum development of the agrarian movement at the beginning of this year? Why could Guangdong, where there was no mass agrarian movement, be called “the place d’armes of the revolution” (Trotsky), whereas Wuhan, in the territory of which the agrarian revolution began and developed, must not be regarded as the center, as the “place d’armes” of the revolutionary movement? How in that case are we to explain the fact that the opposition demanded that the Communist Party should *remain* in the Wuhan Kuomintang and the Wuhan government? Was the opposition, in April 1927, really in favor of a bloc with the “counter-revolutionary” Wuhan Kuomintang? Why this “forgetfulness” and confusion on the part of the opposition?

The opposition is gloating over the fact that the bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang proved to be short-lived, and, moreover, it asserts that the Comintern failed to warn the Chinese Communists of the possibility of the collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang. It scarcely needs proof that the malicious glee displayed by the opposition only testifies to its political bankruptcy. The opposition evidently thinks that blocs with the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries ought to be of long duration; but only people who have lost the last remnants of Leninism can think that. Only those who are infected with defeatism can gloat over the fact that at the present stage the feudal landlords and imperialists in China have proved to be stronger than the revolution, that the pressure exercised by these hostile forces has induced the Wuhan Kuomintang to swing to the Right and has led to the temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution. As for the opposition’s assertion that the Comintern failed to warn the Communist Party of China of the possible collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang, that is one of the usual slanders now so abundant in the opposition’s arsenal.

Permit me to quote some documents to refute the slanders of the opposition.

First document of May 1927:

The most important thing now in the internal policy of the Kuomintang is to develop the agrarian revolution systematically in all provinces, particularly in Kwangtung, under the slogan “All power to the peasant associations and committees in the countryside.” *This is the basis for the success of the revo-*

lution and of the Kuomintang. This is the basis for creating in China a big and powerful political and military army against imperialism and its agents. Practically, the slogan of confiscating the land is quite timely for the provinces in which there is a strong agrarian movement, such as Hunan, Guangdong, etc. *Without this the extension of the agrarian revolution is impossible...*¹⁴⁶

It is necessary to start at once to organize eight or ten divisions of revolutionary peasants and workers with absolutely reliable officers. This will be a Wuhan guards force both at the front and in the rear for disarming unreliable units. This must not be delayed.

Disintegrating activities must be intensified in the rear and in Chiang Kai-shek's units, and assistance must be given to the insurgent peasants in Guangdong, where the rule of the landlords is particularly unbearable.

The second document, of May 1927:

Without an agrarian revolution, *victory is impossible.* Without it the Central Committee of the Kuomintang will be converted into a wretched plaything of unreliable generals. *Excesses must be combated not, however, by means of troops, but through the peasant associations.* We are decidedly in favor of the actual seizure of the land by the masses. Apprehensions concerning Tan Pingshan's mission are not devoid of foundation. You must not sever yourselves from the working-class and peasant movement, but must assist it in every way. *Otherwise you will ruin the work.*

Some of the old leaders of the Central Committee of the Kuomintang are frightened by events, *they are vacillating and compromising.* An increased number of new peasant and working-class leaders must be drawn from the masses into the Cen-

¹⁴⁶ My italics.—J. St.

tral Committee of the Kuomintang. *Their bold voices will either stiffen the hacks of the old leaders or result in their removal.* The present structure of the Kuomintang must be changed. The top leadership of the Kuomintang must certainly be refreshed and reinforced with new leaders who have come to the fore in the agrarian revolution, while the local organizations must be broadened from the millions of members in workers' and peasants' associations. *If this is not done the Kuomintang will run the risk of becoming divorced from life and of losing all prestige.*

Dependence upon unreliable generals must be eliminated. Mobilize about 20,000 Communists, add about 20,000 revolutionary workers and peasants from Hunan and Hubei, form several new army corps, use the students at the officers' school as commanders and *organize your own reliable army before it is too late. If this is not done there is no guarantee against failure.* It is a difficult matter, but there is no alternative.

Organize a Revolutionary Military Tribunal headed by prominent non-Communist Kuomintangists. *Punish officers who maintain contact with Chiang Kai-shek or who incite the soldiers against the people, the workers and peasants.* Persuasion is not enough. It is time to act. *Scoundrels must be punished. If the Kuomintangists do not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins they will perish so far as the people and the revolution are concerned.*¹⁴⁷

As you see, the Comintern foresaw events, it gave timely warning of the dangers and told the Chinese Communists that the Wuhan Kuomintang would perish if the Kuomintangists failed to become revolutionary Jacobins.

Kamenev said that the defeat of the Chinese revolution was due to the policy of the Comintern, and that we "bred Cavaignacs in China." Comrades, only one who is ready to commit a crime against the Party can

¹⁴⁷ My italics.—J. St.

say that sort of thing about our Party. That is what the Mensheviks said about the Bolshevik during the July defeat of 1917, when the Russian Cavaignacs appeared on the scene. In his article "On Slogans,"¹⁴⁸ Lenin wrote that the July defeat was "a victory for the Cavaignacs." The Mensheviks at that time gloatingly asserted that the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs was due to Lenin's policy. Does Kamenev think that the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs during the July defeat of 1917 was due to Lenin's policy, to the policy of our Party, and not to some other cause? Is it becoming for Kamenev in this case to imitate the Menshevik gentry? [*Laughter.*] I did not think that the comrades of the opposition could sink so low...

We know that the Revolution of 1905 suffered defeat, moreover, that defeat was more profound than the present defeat of the Chinese revolution. The Mensheviks at that time said that the defeat of the 1905 Revolution was due to the extreme revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks. Does Kamenev here, too, want to take the Menshevik interpretation of the history of our revolution as his model and to cast a stone at the Bolsheviks?

And how are we to explain the defeat of the Bavarian Soviet Republic?

By Lenin's policy, perhaps, and not by the correlation of class forces?

How are we to explain the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic? By the policy of the Comintern, perhaps, and not by the correlation of class forces?

How can it be asserted that the tactics of this or that party can abolish or reverse the correlation of class forces? Was our policy in 1905 correct, or not? Why did we suffer defeat at that time? Do not the facts show that if the policy of the opposition had been followed, the revolution in China would have reached defeat more rapidly than was actually the case? What are we to say of people who forget about the correlation of class forces in time of revolution and who try to explain everything solely by the tactics of this or that party? Only one thing can be said of such people—that they have broken with Marxism.

¹⁴⁸ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 183-190.

Conclusions. The chief mistakes of the opposition are:

- 1) The opposition does not understand the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution.
- 2) The opposition sees no difference between the revolution in China and the revolution in Russia, between revolution in colonial countries and revolution in imperialist countries.
- 3) The opposition is departing from Leninist tactics on the question of the attitude to the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries at the first stage of the revolution.
- 4) The opposition does not understand the question of the Communists' participation in the Kuomintang.
- 5) The opposition is violating the principles of Leninist tactics on the question of the relations between the vanguard (the Party) and the rear-guard (the vast masses of the working people).
- 6) The opposition is departing from the resolutions of the Sixth and Seventh Plenums of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

The opposition noisily brags about its policy on the Chinese question and asserts that if that policy had been adopted the situation in China today would be better than it is. It scarcely needs proof that, considering the gross mistakes committed by the opposition, the Chinese Communist Party would have landed in a complete impasse had it adopted the anti-Leninist and adventurist policy of the opposition.

The fact that the Communist Party in China has in a short period grown from a small group of five or six thousand into a mass party of 60,000 members; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in organizing nearly 3,000,000 proletarians in trade unions during this period; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in rousing the many millions of the peasantry from their torpor and in drawing tens of millions of peasants into the revolutionary peasant associations; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during this period in winning over whole regiments and divisions of national

troops; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during this period in converting the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat from an aspiration into a reality—the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in a short period in achieving all these gains is due, among other things, to its having followed the path outlined by Lenin, the path indicated by the Comintern.

Needless to say, if the policy of the opposition, with its mistakes and its anti-Leninist line on questions of colonial revolution, had been followed, these gains of the Chinese revolution would either not have been achieved at all, or would have been extremely insignificant.

Only “ultra-Left” renegades and adventurers can doubt this.

**CONCERNING THE
PROLETARIAN METHOD
OF LIBERATING THE
OPPRESSED PEOPLES**

November 5-7, 1927

*Excerpts from "The International Character of
the October Revolution"*

The October Revolution has shaken imperialism not only in the centers of its domination, not only in the "metropolises." It has also struck at the rear of imperialism, its periphery, having undermined the rule of imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries.

Having overthrown the landlords and the capitalists, the October Revolution broke the chains of national and colonial oppression and freed from it, without exception, all the oppressed peoples of a vast state. The proletariat cannot emancipate itself unless it emancipates the oppressed peoples. It is a characteristic feature of the October Revolution that it accomplished these national-colonial revolutions in the USSR not under the flag of national enmity and conflicts among nations, but under the flag of mutual confidence and fraternal rapprochement of the workers and peasants of the various peoples in the USSR, not in the name of *nationalism*, but in the name of *internationalism*.

It is precisely because the national-colonial revolutions took place in our country under the leadership of the proletariat and under the banner of internationalism that pariah peoples, slave peoples, have *for the first time* in the history of mankind risen to the position of peoples that are *really* free and *really* equal, thereby setting a contagious example to the oppressed nations of the whole world.

This means that the October Revolution *has ushered in* a new era, the era of *colonial* revolutions which are being carried out *in the oppressed countries* of the world in alliance with the proletariat and *under the leadership* of the proletariat.

It was formerly the "accepted" idea that the world has been divided from time immemorial into inferior and superior races, into blacks and whites, of whom the former are unfit for civilization and are doomed to be objects of exploitation, while the latter are the only bearers of civilization, whose mission it is to exploit the former.

That legend must now be regarded as shattered and discarded. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt that legend a mortal blow, by demonstrating in practice that the liberated non-European peoples, drawn into the channel of Soviet development, are

not one whit less capable of promoting a *really* progressive culture and a *really* progressive civilization than are the European peoples.

It was formerly the "accepted" idea that the only method of liberating the oppressed peoples is the method of *bourgeois nationalism*, the method of nations drawing apart from one another, the method of disuniting nations, the method of intensifying national enmity among the laboring masses of the various nations.

That legend must now be regarded as refuted. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt that legend a mortal blow, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of the *proletarian, internationalist* method of liberating the oppressed peoples, as the only correct method; by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of a *fraternal union* of the workers and peasants of the most diverse nations based on the principles of *voluntariness and internationalism*. The existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the prototype of the future integration of the working people of all countries into a single world economic system, cannot but serve as direct proof of this.

It need hardly be said that these and similar results of the October Revolution could not and cannot fail to exert an important influence on the revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries. Such facts as the growth of the revolutionary movement of the oppressed peoples in China, Indonesia, India, etc., and the growing sympathy of these peoples for the USSR, unquestionably bear this out.

The era of tranquil exploitation and oppression of the colonies and dependent countries *has passed away*.

The era of liberating revolutions in the colonies and dependent countries, the era of the awakening of the *proletariat* in those countries, the era of its *hegemony* in the revolution, *has begun*.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND LENINISM

March 18, 1929

*Reply to Comrades Meshkov, Kovalchuk, and
Others*

I have received your letters. They are similar to a number of letters on the same subject I have received from other comrades during the past few months. I have decided, however, to answer you particularly, because you put things more bluntly and thereby help the achievement of clarity. True, the answers you give in your letters to the questions raised are wrong, but that is another matter—of that we shall speak below.

Let us get down to business.

I. The Concept “Nation”

The Russian Marxists have long had their theory of the nation. According to this theory, a nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of the common possession of four principal characteristics, namely: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life, and a common psychological make-up manifested in common specific features of national culture. This theory, as we know, has received general recognition in our Party.

It is evident from your letters that you consider this theory inadequate. You therefore propose that the four characteristics of a nation be supplemented by a fifth, namely, that a nation possesses its own, separate national state. You consider that there is not and cannot be a nation unless this fifth characteristic is present.

I think that the scheme you propose, with its new, fifth characteristic of the concept “nation,” is profoundly mistaken and cannot be justified either theoretically or in practice, politically.

According to your scheme, only such nations are to be recognized as nations as have their own state, separate from others, whereas all oppressed nations which have no independent statehood would have to be deleted from the category of nations; moreover, the struggle of oppressed nations against national oppression and the struggle of colonial peoples against imperialism would have to be excluded from the concept “national movement” and “national-liberation movement.”

More than that. According to your scheme we would have to assert:

- a) that the Irish became a nation only after the formation of the “Irish Free State,” and that before that they did not constitute a nation;
- b) that the Norwegians were not a nation before Norway’s secession from Sweden and became a nation only after that secession;
- c) that the Ukrainians were not a nation when the Ukraine formed part of tsarist Russia; that they became a nation only

after they seceded from Soviet Russia under the Central Rada and Hetman Skoropadsky, but again ceased to be a nation after they united their Ukrainian Soviet Republic with the other Soviet Republics to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

A great many such examples could be cited.

Obviously, a scheme which leads to such absurd conclusions cannot be regarded as a scientific scheme.

In practice, politically, your scheme inevitably leads to the justification of national, imperialist oppression, whose exponents emphatically refuse to recognize as real nations oppressed and unequal nations which have no separate national state of their own, and consider that this circumstance gives them the right to oppress these nations.

That is apart from the fact that your scheme provides a justification for the bourgeois nationalists in our Soviet Republics who argue that the Soviet nations ceased to be nations when they agreed to unite their national Soviet Republics into a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

That is how matters stand with regard to “supplementing” and “amending” the Russian Marxist theory of the nation.

Only one thing remains, and that is to admit that the Russian Marxist theory of the nation is the only correct theory.

II. The Rise and Development of Nations

One of the grave mistakes you make is that you lump together all existing nations and fail to see any fundamental difference between them.

There are different kinds of nations. There are nations which developed in the epoch of rising capitalism, when the bourgeoisie, destroying feudalism and feudal disunity, gathered the parts of nations together and cemented them. These are the so-called “modern” nations.

You assert that nations arose and existed before capitalism. But how could nations have arisen and existed before capitalism, in the period of feudalism, when countries were split up into separate, independent principalities, which, far from being bound together by national ties, emphatically denied the necessity for such ties? Your erroneous assertions notwithstanding, there were no nations in the pre-capitalist period, nor could there be, because there were as yet no national markets and no economic or cultural national centers, and, consequently, there were none of the factors which put an end to the economic disunity of a given people and draw its hitherto disunited parts together into one national whole.

Of course, the elements of nationhood—language, territory, common culture, etc.—did not fall from the skies, but were being formed gradually, even in the pre-capitalist period. But these elements were in a rudimentary state and, at best, were only a potentiality, that is, they constituted the possibility of the formation of a nation in the future, given certain favorable conditions. The potentiality became a reality only in the period of rising capitalism, with its national market and its economic and cultural centers.

In this connection it would be well to recall the remarkable words of Lenin on the subject of the rise of nations, contained in his pamphlet *What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*. Controverting the Narodnik Mikhailovsky, who derived the rise of nationalities and national unity from the development of gentile ties, Lenin says:

And so, national ties are a continuation and generalization of gentile ties! Mr. Mikhailovsky, evidently, borrows his ideas of

the history of society from the fairy-tale that is taught to school boys. The history of society—this copybook doctrine runs—is that first there was the family, that nucleus of all society... then the family grew into the tribe, and the tribe grew into the state. If Mr. Mikhailovsky solemnly repeats this childish nonsense, it only goes to show—apart from everything else—that he has not the slightest notion of the course even of Russian history. While one might speak of gentile life in ancient Rus, there can be no doubt that by the Middle Ages, the era of the Muscovite tsars, these gentile ties no longer existed, that is to say, the state was based not at all on gentile unions but on territorial unions: the landlords and the monasteries took their peasants from various localities, and the village communities thus formed were purely territorial unions. But one could hardly speak of national ties in the true sense of the word at that time: the state was divided into separate lands, sometimes even principalities, which preserved strong traces of former autonomy, peculiarities of administration, at times their own troops (the local boyars went to war at the head of their own companies), their own customs borders, and so forth. Only the modern period of Russian history (beginning approximately with the seventeenth century) is characterized by an actual merging of all such regions, lands and principalities into a single whole. This merging, most esteemed Mr. Mikhailovsky, was not brought about by gentile ties, nor even by their continuation and generalization: it was brought about by the growth of exchange between regions, the gradual growth of commodity circulation and the concentration of the small local markets into a single, all-Russian market. Since the leaders and masters of this process were the merchant capitalists, the creation of these national ties was nothing but the creation of bourgeois ties. (see Vol. 1, pp. 72-73)¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House Moscow, 1963, pp. 154-155.

That is how matters stand with regard to the rise of the so-called “modern” nations.

The bourgeoisie and its nationalist parties were throughout this period the chief leading force of such nations. Class peace within the nation for the sake of “national unity”; expansion of the territory of one’s own nation by seizure of the national territories of others; distrust and hatred of other nations, suppression of national minorities; a united front with imperialism—such is the ideological, social and political stock-in-trade of these nations.

Such nations must be qualified as bourgeois nations. Examples are the French, British, Italian, North American and other similar nations. The Russian, Ukrainian, Tatar, Armenian, Georgian and other nations in Russia were likewise bourgeois nations before the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet system in our country.

Naturally, the fate of such nations is linked with the fate of capitalism; with the fall of capitalism, such nations must depart from the scene.

It is precisely such bourgeois nations that Stalin’s pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question* has in mind when it says that “a nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism,” that “the fate of a national movement, which is essentially a bourgeois movement, is naturally bound up with the fate of the bourgeoisie,” that “the final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie,” and that “only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established.”¹⁵⁰

That is how matters stand with regard to the bourgeois nations.

But there are other nations. These are the new Soviet nations, which developed and took shape on the basis of the old bourgeois nations after the overthrow of capitalism in Russia, after the elimination of the bourgeoisie and its nationalist parties, after the establishment of the Soviet system.

The working class and its internationalist party are the force that cements these new nations and leads them. An alliance between the working class and the working peasantry within the nation for the elimination

¹⁵⁰ See J. V. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, Vol. II, pp. 313, 322.

of the survivals of capitalism in order that socialism may be built triumphantly; abolition of the survivals of national oppression in order that the nations and national minorities may be equal and may develop freely; elimination of the survivals of nationalism in order that friendship may be knit between the peoples and internationalism firmly established; a united front with all oppressed and unequal nations in the struggle against the policy of annexation and wars of annexation, in the struggle against imperialism—such is the spiritual, and social and political complexion of these nations.

Such nations must be qualified as socialist nations.

These new nations arose and developed on the basis of old, bourgeois nations, as a result of the elimination of capitalism—by their radical transformation on socialist lines. Nobody can deny that the present socialist nations of the Soviet Union—the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Tatar, Bashkir, Uzbek, Kazakh, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Armenian and other nations—differ radically from the corresponding old, bourgeois nations of the old Russia both in class composition and spiritual complexion and in social and political interests and aspirations.

Such are the two types of nations known to history.

You do not agree with linking the fate of nations, in this case the old, bourgeois nations, with the fate of capitalism. You do not agree with the thesis that, with the elimination of capitalism, the old, bourgeois nations will be eliminated. But with what indeed could the fate of these nations be linked if not with the fate of capitalism? Is it so difficult to understand that when capitalism disappears, the bourgeois nations it gave rise to must also disappear? Surely, you do not think that the old, bourgeois nations can exist and develop under the Soviet system, under the dictatorship of the proletariat? That would be the last straw...

You are afraid that the elimination of the nations existing under capitalism is tantamount to the elimination of nations in general, to the elimination of all nations. Why, on what grounds? Are you really unaware of the fact that, besides bourgeois nations, there are other nations, socialist nations, which are much more solidly united and capable of surviving than any bourgeois nation?

Your mistake lies precisely in the fact that you see no other nations except bourgeois nations, and, consequently, you have overlooked the

whole epoch of formation of socialist nations in the Soviet Union, nations which arose on the ruins of the old, bourgeois nations.

The fact of the matter is that the elimination of the bourgeois nations signifies the elimination not of nations in general, but only of the bourgeois nations. On the ruins of the old, bourgeois nations new, socialist nations are arising and developing, and they are far more solidly united than any bourgeois nation, because they are exempt from the irreconcilable class contradictions that corrode the bourgeois nations, and are far more representative of the whole people than any bourgeois nation.

III. The Future of Nations and of National Languages

You commit a grave error in putting a sign of equality between the period of the victory of socialism in one country and the period of the victory of socialism on a world scale, in asserting that the disappearance of national differences and national languages, the merging of nations and the formation of one common language, are possible and necessary not only with the victory of socialism on a world scale but also with the victory of socialism in one country. Moreover, you confuse entirely different things: “the abolition of national oppression” with “the elimination of national differences,” “the abolition of national state barriers” with “the dying away of nations,” with “the merging of nations.”

It must be pointed out that for Marxists to confuse these diverse concepts is absolutely impermissible. National oppression in our country was abolished long ago, but it by no means follows from this that national differences have disappeared and that nations in our country have been eliminated. National state barriers, together with frontier guards and customs, were abolished in our country long ago, but it by no means follows from this that the nations have already become merged and that the national languages have disappeared, that these languages have been supplanted by some language common to all our nations.

You are displeased with the speech I delivered at the Communist University of the Peoples of the East (1925),¹⁵¹ in which I repudiated the thesis that with the victory of socialism *in one country*, in our country, for example, national languages will die away, that the nations will be merged, and in place of the national languages one common language will appear.

You consider that this statement of mine contradicts Lenin’s well-known thesis that it is the aim of socialism not only to abolish the division of mankind into small states and every form of isolation of nations, not only to bring the nations closer together but also to merge them.

¹⁵¹ J. V. Stalin, “The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East” (see *On the National Colonial Question*, Calcutta Book House, 1970, pp. 173-182).

You consider, further, that it also contradicts another of Lenin's theses, namely, that with the victory of socialism on a *world scale*, national differences and national languages will begin to die away, that after this victory national languages will begin to be supplanted by one common language.

That is quite wrong, comrades. It is a profound illusion.

I have already said that it is impermissible for Marxists to confuse and lump together such diverse phenomena as "the victory of socialism in one country" and "the victory of socialism on a world scale." It should not be forgotten that these diverse phenomena reflect two entirely different epochs, distinct from one another not only in time (which is very important), but in their very nature.

National distrust, national isolation, national enmity and national conflicts are, of course, stimulated and fostered not by some "innate" sentiment of national animosity, but by the striving of imperialism to subjugate other nations and by the fear inspired in these nations by the menace of national enslavement. Undoubtedly, so long as world imperialism exists this striving and this fear will exist—and, consequently, national distrust, national isolation, national enmity and national conflicts will exist in the vast majority of countries. Can it be asserted that the victory of socialism and the abolition of imperialism in one country signify the abolition of imperialism and national oppression in the majority of countries? Obviously not. But it follows from this that the victory of socialism in one country, notwithstanding the fact that it seriously weakens world imperialism, does not and cannot create the conditions necessary for the merging of the nations and the national languages of the world into one integral whole.

The period of the victory of socialism on a world scale differs from the period of the victory of socialism in one country primarily in the fact that it will abolish imperialism *in all countries*, will abolish both the striving to subjugate other nations and the fear inspired by the menace of national enslavement, will radically undermine national distrust and national enmity, will unite the nations into one world socialist economic system, and will thus create the real conditions necessary for the gradual merging of all nations into one.

Such is the fundamental difference between these two periods.

But it follows from this that to confuse these two different periods and to lump them together is to commit an unpardonable mistake. Take the speech I delivered at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. There I said:

Some people (Kautsky, for instance) talk of the creation of a single universal language and the dying away of all other languages in the period of socialism. I have little faith in this theory of a single, all-embracing language. Experience, at any rate, speaks against rather than for such a theory. Until now what has happened has been that the socialist revolution has not diminished but rather increased the number of languages; for, by stirring up the lowest sections of humanity and pushing them on to the political arena, it awakens to new life a number of hitherto unknown or little known nationalities. Who could have imagined that the old, tsarist Russia consisted of not less than fifty nations and national groups? The October Revolution, however, by breaking the old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on to the scene, gave them new life and a new development.¹⁵²

From this passage it is evident that I was opposing people of the type of Kautsky, who always was and has remained a dilettante on the national question, who does not understand the mechanics of the development of nations and has no inkling of the colossal power of stability possessed by nations, who believes that the merging of nations is possible long before the victory of socialism, already under the bourgeois-democratic order, and who, servilely praising the assimilating “work” of the Germans in Bohemia, light-mindedly asserts that the Czechs are almost Germanized, that, as a nation, the Czechs have no future.

From this passage it is evident, further, that what I had in mind in my speech was not the period of the victory of socialism on a *world scale*, but exclusively the period of the victory of socialism in *one country*. And I affirmed (and continue to affirm) that the period of the victory of socialism in one country does not create the necessary conditions for

¹⁵² See J. V. Stalin *On the National Colonial Question*, Calcutta Book House, 1970, p. 176.

the merging of nations and national languages, that, on the contrary, this period creates favorable conditions for the renaissance and flourishing of the nations that were formerly oppressed by tsarist imperialism and have now been liberated from national oppression by the Soviet revolution.

From this passage it is apparent, lastly, that you have overlooked the colossal difference between the two different historical periods, that, because of this, you have failed to understand the meaning of Stalin's speech and, as a result, have got lost in the wilderness of your own errors.

Let us pass to Lenin's theses on the dying away and merging of nations after the victory of socialism on a world scale.

Here is one of Lenin's theses, taken from his article, "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," published in 1916, which, for some reason, is not quoted in full in your letters:

The aim of socialism is not only to abolish the division of mankind into small states and all isolation of nations, not only to draw the nations together, but to merge them... Just as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only by passing through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can arrive at the inevitable merging of nations only by passing through a transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, i.e., of their freedom of secession.¹⁵³

And here is another thesis of Lenin's, which you likewise do not quote in full:

As long as national and state differences exist among peoples and countries—and these differences will continue to exist for a very, very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale—the unity of international tactics of the communist working-class movement of all countries demands, not the elimination of variety, not the abolition of national differences (that is a foolish dream at the present moment), but such an application of the fundamental principles of communism (Soviet power and

¹⁵³ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, Progress Publishers Moscow, pp. 146-147.

the dictatorship of the proletariat) as would correctly modify these principles in certain particulars, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state differences.

It should be noted that this passage is from Lenin's pamphlet "*Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, published in 1920, that is, *after* the victory of the socialist revolution in one country, *after* the victory of socialism in our country.

From these passages it is evident that Lenin does not assign the process of the dying away of national differences and the merging of nations to the period of the victory of socialism in one country, but exclusively to the period *after* the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale, that is, to the period of the victory of socialism in all countries, when the foundations of a world socialist economy have already been laid.

From these passages it is evident, further, that the attempt to assign the process of the dying away of national differences to the period of the victory of socialism in one country, in our country, is qualified by Lenin as a "foolish dream."

From these passages it is evident, moreover, that Stalin was absolutely right when, in the speech he delivered at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, he denied that it was possible for national differences and national languages to die away in the period of the victory of socialism in one country, in our country, and that you were absolutely wrong in upholding something that is the direct opposite of Stalin's thesis.

From these passages it is evident, lastly, that, in confusing the two different periods of the victory of socialism, you failed to understand Lenin, distorted Lenin's line on the national question and, as a consequence, involuntarily headed for a rupture with Leninism.

It would be incorrect to think that after the defeat of world imperialism national differences will be abolished and national languages will die away immediately, at one stroke, by decree from above, so to speak. Nothing is more erroneous than this view. To attempt to bring about the merging of nations by decree from above, by compulsion, would be playing into the hands of the imperialists, it would spell disaster to the cause of the liberation of nations, and be fatal to the cause of organizing co-opera-

tion and fraternity among nations. Such a policy would be tantamount to a policy of assimilation.

You know, of course, that the policy of assimilation is absolutely excluded from the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism, as being an anti-popular and counter-revolutionary policy, a fatal policy.

Furthermore, we know that nations and national languages possess an extraordinary stability and tremendous power of resistance to the policy of assimilation. The Turkish assimilators—the most brutal of all assimilators—mangled and mutilated the Balkan nations for hundreds of years, yet not only did they fail to destroy them, but in the end were forced to capitulate. The tsarist-Russian Russifiers and the German-Prussian Germanizers, who yielded little in brutality to the Turkish assimilators, rent and mangled the Polish nation for over a hundred years, just as the Persian and Turkish assimilators for hundreds of years rent and mangled and massacred the Armenian and Georgian nations, yet, far from destroying these nations, in the end they were also forced to capitulate.

All these circumstances must be taken into account in order correctly to forecast the probable course of events as regards the development of nations directly after the defeat of world imperialism.

It would be a mistake to think that the first stage of the period of the world dictatorship of the proletariat will mark the beginning of the dying away of nations and national languages, the beginning of the formation of one common language. On the contrary, the first stage, during which national oppression will be completely abolished, will be a stage marked by the growth and flourishing of the formerly oppressed nations and national languages, the consolidation of equality among nations, the elimination of mutual national distrust, and the establishment and strengthening of international ties among nations.

Only in the second stage of the period of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, to the extent that a single world socialist economy is built up in place of the world capitalist economy—only in that stage will something in the nature of a common language begin to take shape; for only in that stage will the nations feel the need to have, in addition to their own national languages, a common international language—for convenience of intercourse and of economic, cultural and political co-operation. Consequently, in this stage, national languages and a common international

language will exist side by side. It is possible that, at first, not one world economic center will be formed, common to all nations and with one common language, but several zonal economic centers for separate groups of nations, with a separate common language for each group of nations, and that only later will these centers combine into one common world socialist economic center, with one language common to all the nations.

In the next stage of the period of world dictatorship of the proletariat—when the world socialist system of economy becomes sufficiently consolidated and socialism becomes part and parcel of the life of the peoples, and when practice convinces the nations of the advantages of a common language over national languages—national differences and languages will begin to die away and make room for a world language, common to all nations.

Such, in my opinion, is the approximate picture of the future of nations, a picture of the development of the nations along the path to their merging in the future.

IV. The Policy of the Party on the National Question

One of your mistakes is that you regard the national question not as a part of the general question of the social and political development of society, subordinated to this general question, but as something self-contained and constant, whose direction and character remain basically unchanged throughout the course of history. Hence you fail to see what every Marxist sees, namely, that the national question does not always have one and the same character, that the character and tasks of the national movement vary with the different periods in the development of the revolution.

Logically, it is this that explains the deplorable fact that you so lightly confuse and lump together diverse periods of development of the revolution, and fail to understand that the changes in the character and tasks of the revolution in the various stages of its development give rise to corresponding changes in the character and aims of the national question, that in conformity with this the Party's policy on the national question also changes, and that, consequently, the Party's policy on the national question in one period of development of the revolution cannot be violently severed from that period and arbitrarily transferred to another period.

The Russian Marxists have always started out from the proposition that the national question is a part of the general question of the development of the revolution, that at different stages of the revolution the national question has different aims, corresponding to the character of the revolution at each given historical moment, and that the Party's policy on the national question changes in conformity with this.

In the period preceding the First World War, when history made a *bourgeois-democratic* revolution the task of the moment in Russia, the Russian Marxists linked the solution of the national question with the fate of the democratic revolution in Russia. Our Party held that the overthrow of tsarism, the elimination of the survivals of feudalism, and the complete democratization of the country provided the best solution of the national question that was possible within the framework of capitalism.

Such was the policy of the Party in that period.

It is to this period that Lenin's well-known articles on the national question belong, including the article "Critical Remarks on the National Question" where Lenin says:

I assert that there is only one solution of the national question, in so far as one is possible at all in the capitalist world—and that solution is consistent democratism. In proof, I could cite, among others, Switzerland.¹⁵⁴

To this same period belongs Stalin's pamphlet, *Marxism and the National Question*, which among other things says:

The final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established. But even within the framework of capitalism it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum to undermine it at the root, to render it as harmless as possible to the proletariat. This is borne out, for example, by Switzerland and America. It requires that the country should be democratized and the nations be given the opportunity of free development.¹⁵⁵

In the next period, the period of the First World War, when the prolonged war between the two imperialist coalitions undermined the might of world imperialism, when the crisis of the world capitalist system reached an extreme degree, when, alongside the working class of the "metropolitan countries," the colonial and dependent countries also joined the movement for emancipation, when the national question grew into the national and colonial question, when the united front of the working class of the advanced capitalist countries and of the oppressed peoples of the colonies and dependent countries began to be a real force, when, consequently, the socialist revolution became the question of the moment, the Russian Marxists could no longer content themselves with the policy of the preceding period, and they found it necessary to link the solution of the national and colonial question with the fate of the socialist revolution.

¹⁵⁴ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XX, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 40.

¹⁵⁵ See J. V. Stalin, *On the National Colonial Question*, Calcutta Book House, 1970, p. 76.

The Party held that the overthrow of the power of capital and the organization of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the expulsion of the imperialist troops from the colonial and dependent countries and the securing of the right of these countries to secede and to form their own national states, the elimination of national enmity and nationalism and the strengthening of international ties between peoples, the organization of a single socialist national economy and the establishment on this basis of fraternal co-operation among peoples, constituted the best solution of the national and colonial question under the given conditions.

Such was the policy of the Party in that period.

That period is still far from having entered into full force, for it has only just begun; but there is no doubt that it will yet have its decisive word to say...

A question apart is the present period of development of the revolution in our country and the present policy of the Party.

It should be noted that so far our country has proved to be the *only* one ready to overthrow capitalism. And it really has overthrown capitalism and organized the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Consequently, we still have a long way to go to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat *on a world scale*, and still more to the victory of socialism *in all countries*.

It should be noted, further, that in putting an end to the rule of the bourgeoisie, which has long since abandoned its old democratic traditions, we, in passing, solved the problem of the "complete democratization of the country," abolished the system of national oppression and established equality of nations in our country.

As we know, these measures proved to be the best way of eliminating nationalism and national enmity, and of establishing mutual confidence among the peoples.

It should be noted, lastly, that the abolition of national oppression led to the national revival of the formerly oppressed nations of our country, to the development of their national cultures, to the strengthening of friendly, international ties among the peoples of our country and to their mutual co-operation in the work of building socialism.

It should be borne in mind that these regenerated nations are not the old, bourgeois nations, led by the bourgeoisie, but new, socialist nations,

which have arisen on the ruins of the old nations and are led by the internationalist party of the laboring masses.

In view of this, the Party considered it necessary to help the regenerated nations of our country to rise to their feet and attain their full stature, to revive and develop their national cultures, widely to develop schools, the arts and other cultural institutions functioning in the native languages, to nationalize—that is, to staff with members of the given nation—the Party, trade-union, co-operative, state and economic apparatuses, to train their own, national, Party and Soviet cadres, and to curb all elements—who are, indeed, few in number—that try to hinder this policy of the Party.

This means that the Party supports, and will continue to support, the development and flourishing of the national cultures of the peoples of our country, that it will encourage the strengthening of our new, socialist nations, that it takes this matter under its protection and guardianship against anti-Leninist elements of any kind.

It is apparent from your letters that you do not approve this policy of our Party. That is because, firstly, you confuse the new, socialist nations with the old, bourgeois nations and do not understand that the national cultures of our new, Soviet nations are in *content* socialist cultures. Secondly, it is because—you will excuse my bluntness—you have a very poor grasp of Leninism and are badly at sea on the national question.

Consider, by way of example, the following elementary matter. We all say that a cultural revolution is needed in our country. If we mean this seriously and are not merely indulging in idle chatter, then we must take at least the first step in this direction: namely, we must make primary education, and later secondary education, compulsory for all citizens of the country, irrespective of their nationality. It is obvious that without this no cultural development whatever, let alone the so-called cultural revolution, will be possible in our country. More, without this there will be neither any real progress of our industry and agriculture, nor any reliable defense of our country.

But how is this to be done, bearing in mind that the percentage of illiteracy in our country is still very high, that in a number of nations of our country there are 80-90 percent of illiterates?

What is needed is to cover the country with an extensive network of schools functioning in the native languages, and to supply them with staffs of teachers who know the native languages.

What is needed is to nationalize—that is, to staff with members of the given nation—all the administrative apparatus, from Party and trade-union to state and economic.

What is needed is widely to develop the press, the theater, the cinema and other cultural institutions functioning in the native languages.

Why in the native languages?—it may be asked. Because only in their native, national languages can the vast masses of the people be successful in cultural, political and economic development.

In view of all that has been said, I think it should not be so difficult to understand that Leninists cannot pursue any other policy on the national question than the one which is now being pursued in our country—provided, of course, they want to remain Leninists.

Is not that so?

Well, then let us leave it at that.

I think I have answered all your questions and doubts.

With communist greetings,

J. Stalin

CONCERNING DEVIATIONS
IN THE NATIONAL
QUESTION

June 27, 1930

*Excerpts From the Political Report of the
Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress
of the CPSU(B)*

The picture of the struggle against deviations in the Party will not be complete if we do not touch upon the deviations that exist in the Party on the *national question*. I have in mind, firstly, the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism, and secondly, the deviation towards local nationalism. These deviations are not so conspicuous and assertive as the “Left” or the Right deviation. They could be called creeping deviations. But this does not mean that they do not exist. They do exist, and what is most important—they are growing. There can be no doubt whatever about that. There can be no doubt about it, because the general atmosphere of more acute class struggle cannot fail to cause some intensification of national friction, which finds reflection in the Party. Therefore, the features of these deviations should be exposed and dragged into the light of day.

What is the essence of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism under our present conditions?

The essence of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism lies in the striving to ignore national differences in language, culture and way of life; in the striving to prepare for the liquidation of the national republics and regions; in the striving to undermine the principle of national equality and to discredit the Party’s policy of nationalizing the administrative apparatus, the press, the schools and other state and public organizations.

In this connection, the deviators of this type proceed from the view that since, with the victory of socialism, the nations must merge into one and their national languages must be transformed into a single common language, the time has come to abolish national differences and to abandon the policy of promoting the development of the national cultures of the formerly oppressed peoples.

In this connection, they refer to Lenin, misquoting him and sometimes deliberately distorting and slandering him.

Lenin said that under socialism the interests of the nationalities will merge into a single whole—does it not follow from this that it is time to put an end to the national republics and regions in the interests of... internationalism? Lenin said in 1913, in his controversy with the Bundists,

that the slogan of national culture is a bourgeois slogan—does it not follow from this that it is time to put an end to the national cultures of the peoples of the USSR in the interests of... internationalism?

Lenin said that national oppression and national barriers are destroyed under socialism—does it not follow from this that it is time to put a stop to the policy of taking into account the specific national features of the peoples of the USSR and to go over to the policy of assimilation in the interests of... internationalism?

And so on and so forth.

There can be no doubt that this deviation on the national question, disguised, moreover, by a mask of internationalism and by the name of Lenin, is the most subtle and therefore the most dangerous species of Great-Russian nationalism.

Firstly, Lenin never said that national differences must disappear and that national languages must merge into one common language within the borders of *a single state before the victory of socialism on a world scale*. On the contrary, Lenin said something that was the very opposite of this, namely, that “national and state *differences* among peoples and countries... will continue to exist *for a very, very long time* even *after* the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a *world scale*.”¹⁵⁶

How can anyone refer to Lenin and forget about this fundamental statement of his?

True, Mr. Kautsky, an ex-Marxist and now a renegade and reformist, asserts something that is the very opposite of what Lenin teaches us. Despite Lenin, he asserts that the victory of the proletarian revolution in the Austro-German federal state in the middle of the last century would have led to the formation of a *single, common* German language and to the *Germanization* of the Czechs, because

The mere force of unshackled intercourse, the mere force of modern culture of which the Germans were the vehicles, without any forcible Germanisation, *would have converted into Germans the backward Czech petit bourgeois, peasants and pro-*

¹⁵⁶ V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, pp. 95-96. My italics.—J. St.

*letarians who had nothing to gain from their decayed nationality.*¹⁵⁷

It goes without saying that such a “conception” is in full accord with Kautsky’s social-chauvinism. It was these views of Kautsky’s that I combated in 1925 in my speech at the University of the Peoples of the East.¹⁵⁸ But can this anti-Marxist chatter of an arrogant German social-chauvinist have any positive significance for us Marxists, who want to remain consistent internationalists?

Who is right, Kautsky or Lenin?

If Kautsky is right, then how are we to explain the fact that relatively backward nationalities like the Byelorussians and Ukrainians, who are closer to the Great-Russians than the Czechs are to the Germans, have not become Russified as a result of the victory of the proletarian revolution in the USSR, but, on the contrary, have been regenerated and have developed as independent nations? How are we to explain the fact that nations like the Turkmenians, Kirghizians, Uzbeks, Tajiks (not to speak of the Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and others), in spite of their backwardness, far from becoming Russified as a result of the victory of socialism in the USSR, have, on the contrary, been regenerated and have developed into independent nations? Is it not evident that our worthy deviators, in their hunt after a sham internationalism, have fallen into the clutches of Kautskyan social-chauvinism? Is it not evident that in advocating a single, common language within the borders of *a single* state, within the borders of the USSR, they are, in essence, striving to restore the *privileges* of the formerly predominant language, namely, the *Great-Russian* language?

What has this to do with internationalism?

Secondly, Lenin never said that the abolition of national oppression and the merging of the interests of nationalities into one whole is tantamount to the abolition of national differences. We have abolished national oppression. We have abolished national privileges and have established national equality of rights. We have abolished state frontiers in the old

¹⁵⁷ K. Kautsky, “*Preface to Revolution and Counter-Revolution.*”

¹⁵⁸ This refers to the address delivered at a meeting of students of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East, May 18, 1925 (see J. V. Stalin, “The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East,” in *On the National Colonial Question*, Calcutta Book House, 1970, pp. 173-183).

sense of the term, frontier posts and customs barriers between the nationalities of the USSR. We have established the unity of the economic and political interests of the peoples of the USSR. But does this mean that we have thereby abolished national differences, national languages, culture, manner of life, etc.? Obviously it does not mean this. But if national differences, languages, culture, manner of life, etc., have remained, is it not evident that the demand for the abolition of the national republics and regions in the present historical period is a reactionary demand directed against the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Do our deviators understand that to abolish the national republics and regions at the present time means depriving the vast masses of the peoples of the USSR of the possibility of receiving education in their *native* languages, depriving them of the possibility of having schools, courts, administration, public and other organizations and institutions in their *native* languages, depriving them of the possibility of being drawn into the work of socialist construction? Is it not evident that in their hunt after a sham internationalism our deviators have fallen into the clutches of the reactionary Great-Russian chauvinists and have forgotten, completely forgotten, the slogan of the cultural revolution in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which applies equally to *all* the peoples of the USSR, both Great-Russian and non-Great-Russian?

Thirdly, Lenin never said that the slogan of developing national culture *under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat* is a reactionary slogan. On the contrary, Lenin always stood for *helping* the peoples of the USSR to develop their national cultures. It was under the guidance of none other than Lenin that at the Tenth Congress of the Party, the resolution on the national question was drafted and adopted, in which it is plainly stated that:

The Party's task is to *help* the laboring masses of the non-Great-Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which has gone in front, to *help* them: a) to develop and strengthen Soviet statehood among them in forms corresponding to the national conditions and manner of life of these peoples; b) to develop and strengthen among them courts, administrations, economic and government bodies functioning in their native

languages and staffed with local people familiar with the manner of life and mentality of the local inhabitants; c) to develop among them press, schools, theaters, clubs, and cultural and educational institutions in general, functioning in the native languages; d) to set up and develop a wide network of general-educational and trade and technical courses and schools, functioning in the native languages.¹⁵⁹

Is it not obvious that Lenin stood wholly and entirely for the slogan of developing national culture *under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat*?

Is it not obvious that to deny the slogan of national culture under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat means denying the necessity of raising the cultural level of the non-Great-Russian peoples of the USSR, denying the necessity of compulsory universal education for these peoples, means putting these peoples into spiritual bondage to the reactionary nationalists?

Lenin did indeed qualify the slogan of national culture *under the rule of the bourgeoisie* as a reactionary slogan. But could it be otherwise?

What is national culture under the rule of the national bourgeoisie? It is culture that is *bourgeois* in content and national in form, having the object of doping the masses with the poison of nationalism and of strengthening the rule of the bourgeoisie.

What is national culture under the dictatorship of the proletariat? It is culture that is *socialist* in content and national in form, having the object of educating the masses in the spirit of socialism and internationalism.

How is it possible to confuse these two fundamentally different things without breaking with Marxism?

Is it not obvious that in combating the slogan of national culture under the bourgeois order, Lenin was striking at the bourgeois *content* of national culture and not at its national form?

It would be foolish to suppose that Lenin regarded socialist culture as *non-national*, as not having a particular national form. The Bundists did at one time actually ascribe this nonsense to Lenin. But it is known

¹⁵⁹ See *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part II, 1953, p. 559.

from the works of Lenin that he protested sharply against this slander and emphatically dissociated himself from this nonsense. Have our worthy deviators really followed in the footsteps of the Bundists?

After all that has been said, what is left of the arguments of our deviators?

Nothing, except juggling with the flag of internationalism and slander against Lenin.

Those who are deviating towards Great-Russian chauvinism are profoundly mistaken in believing that the period of building socialism in the USSR is the period of the collapse and abolition of national cultures. The very opposite is the case. In point of fact, the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the building of socialism in the USSR is a period of the *flowering* of national cultures that are *socialist* in content and national in form; for, under the Soviet system, the nations themselves are not the ordinary “modern” nations, but *socialist* nations, just as in content their national cultures are not the ordinary bourgeois cultures, but *socialist* cultures.

They apparently fail to understand that national cultures are bound to develop *with new strength* with the introduction and firm establishment of compulsory universal elementary education in the native languages. They fail to understand that only if the national cultures are developed will it be possible really to draw the backward nationalities into the work of socialist construction.

They fail to understand that it is just this that is the basis of the Leninist policy of *helping* and *promoting* the development of the national cultures of the peoples of the USSR.

It may seem strange that we who stand for the future *merging* of national cultures into one common (both in form and content) culture, with one common language, should at the same time stand for the *flowering* of national cultures at the present moment, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there is nothing strange about it. The national cultures must be allowed to develop and unfold, to reveal all their potentialities, in order to create the conditions for merging them into one common culture with one common language in the period of the victory of socialism all over the world. The flowering of cultures that are national in form and socialist in content under the dictatorship of the proletariat

in one country *for the purpose* of merging them into one common socialist (both in form and content) culture, with one common language, when the proletariat is victorious all over the world and when socialism becomes the way of life—it is just this that constitutes the dialectics of the Leninist presentation of the question of national culture.

It may be said that such a presentation of the question is “contradictory.” But is there not the same “contradictoriness” in our presentation of the question of the state? We stand for the withering away of the state. At the same time we stand for the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the mightiest and strongest state power that has ever existed. The highest development of state power with the object of preparing the conditions *for* the withering away of state power—such is the Marxist formula. Is this “contradictory?” Yes, it is “contradictory.” But this contradiction is bound up with life, and it fully reflects Marx’s dialectics.

Or, for example, Lenin’s presentation of the question of the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secession. Lenin sometimes depicted the thesis on national self-determination in the guise of the simple formula: “disunion for union.” Think of it—disunion for union. It even sounds like a paradox. And yet, this “contradictory” formula reflects that living truth of Marx’s dialectics which enables the Bolsheviks to capture the most impregnable fortresses in the sphere of the national question.

The same may be said about the formula relating to national culture: the flowering of national cultures (and languages) in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country with the object of preparing the conditions for their withering away and merging into one common socialist culture (and into one common language) in the period of the victory of socialism all over the world.

Anyone who fails to understand this peculiar feature and “contradiction” of our transition period, anyone who fails to understand these dialectics of the historical processes, is dead as far as Marxism is concerned.

The misfortune of our deviators is that they do not understand, and do not wish to understand, Marx’s dialectics.

That is how matters stand as regards the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism.

It is not difficult to understand that this deviation reflects the striving of the moribund classes of the formerly dominant Great-Russian nation to recover their lost privileges.

Hence the danger of Great-Russian chauvinism as the chief danger in the Party in the sphere of the national question.

What is the essence of the deviation towards local nationalism?

The essence of the deviation towards local nationalism is the endeavor to isolate and segregate oneself within the shell of one's own nation, the endeavor to slur over class contradictions within one's own nation, the endeavor to protect oneself from Great-Russian chauvinism by withdrawing from the general stream of socialist construction, the endeavor not to see what draws together and unites the laboring masses of the nations of the USSR and to see only what can draw them apart from one another.

The deviation towards local nationalism reflects the discontent of the moribund classes of the formerly oppressed nations with the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat, their striving to isolate themselves in their national bourgeois state and to establish their class rule there.

The danger of this deviation is that it cultivates bourgeois nationalism, weakens the unity of the working people of the different nations of the USSR and plays into the hands of the interventionists.

Such is the essence of the deviation towards local nationalism.

The Party's task is to wage a determined struggle against this deviation and to ensure the conditions necessary for the education of the laboring masses of the peoples of the USSR in the spirit of internationalism.

*Excerpts from the Reply to the Discussion on the
Political Report*

The second batch of notes concerns the national question. One of them—the most interesting, in my opinion—compares the treatment of the problem of national languages in my report at the Sixteenth Congress with the treatment of it in my speech at the University of the Peoples of the East in 1925 and finds a certain lack of clarity which needs elucidating. The note says:

You objected at that time to the theory (Kautsky's) of the dying away of national languages and the formation of a single, common language in the period of socialism (in one country), while now, in your report at the Sixteenth Congress, you state that Communists believe in the merging of national cultures and national languages into one common culture with one common language (in the period of the victory of socialism on a world scale). Is there not a lack of clarity here?

I think that there is neither lack of clarity nor the slightest contradiction here. In my speech in 1925 I objected to Kautsky's national-chauvinist theory on the basis of which a victory of the proletarian revolution in the middle of the past century in the united Austro-German state was bound to lead to the merging of the nations into one common German nation, with one common German language, and to the Germanization of the Czechs. I objected to this theory as being anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist, and in refutation of it quoted facts from life in our country after the victory of socialism in the USSR. I still oppose this theory, as can be seen from my report at this Sixteenth Congress. I oppose it because the theory of the merging of all the nations of, say, the USSR into one common Great-Russian nation with one common Great-Russian language is a national-chauvinist, anti-Leninist theory, which contradicts the basic thesis of Leninism that national differences cannot disappear in the near future, that they are bound to remain for a long time even after the victory of the proletarian revolution on a world scale.

As for the more remote prospects for national cultures and national languages, I have always adhered and continue to adhere to the Leninist view that in the period of the victory of socialism on a world scale, when socialism has been consolidated and become the way of life, the national languages are inevitably bound to merge into one common language, which, of course, will be neither Great-Russian nor German, but something new. I made a definite statement on this also in my report at the Sixteenth Congress.

Where, then, is the lack of clarity here and what is it exactly that needs elucidating?

Evidently, the authors of the note were not quite clear on at least two things:

First and foremost, they were not clear on the fact that in the USSR we have already entered the period of socialism; moreover, despite the fact that we have entered this period, the nations are not only not dying away, but, on the contrary, are developing and flourishing. Have we, in actual fact, already entered the period of socialism? Our period is usually called the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. It was called a transition period in 1918, when Lenin, in his celebrated article, “*Left-Wing Childishness and Petit bourgeois Mentality*,”¹⁶⁰ first described this period with its five forms of economy. It is called a transition period today, in 1930, when some of these forms, having become obsolete, are already on the way to disappearance, while one of them, namely, the new form of economy in the sphere of industry and agriculture, is growing and developing with unprecedented speed. Can it be said that these two transition periods are identical, are not radically different from each other? Obviously not.

What did we have in the sphere of the national economy in 1918? A ruined industry and cigarette lighters; neither collective farms nor state farms on a mass scale; the growth of a “new” bourgeoisie in the towns and of the kulaks in the countryside.

What have we today? Socialist industry, restored and undergoing reconstruction, an extensive system of state farms and collective farms, accounting for more than 40 percent of the total sown area of the USSR in the spring-sown sector alone, a moribund “new” bourgeoisie in the town and a moribund kulak class in the countryside.

The former was a transition period and so is the latter. Nevertheless, they are as far apart as heaven and earth. And nevertheless, no one can deny that we are on the verge of eliminating the last important capitalist class, the kulak class. Clearly, we have already emerged from the transition period in the old sense and have entered the period of direct and sweeping socialist construction along the whole front. Clearly, we have already entered the period of socialism, for the socialist sector now controls all the economic levers of the entire national economy, although we are still far from having completely built a socialist society and from having abolished class distinctions. Nevertheless, the national languages are not only not

¹⁶⁰ V. I. Lenin, “‘Left-Wing’ Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII.

dying away or merging into one common tongue, but, on the contrary, the national cultures and national languages are developing and flourishing. Is it not clear that the theory of the dying away of national languages and their merging into one common language within the framework of a single state in the period of sweeping socialist construction, in the period of socialism in one country, is an incorrect, anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist theory?

Secondly, the authors of the note were not clear on the fact that the dying away of national languages and their merging into one common language is not an intra-state question, not a question of the victory of socialism in one country, but an international question, a question of the victory of socialism on an international scale. They failed to understand that the victory of socialism in one country must not be confused with the victory of socialism on an international scale. Lenin had good reason for saying that national differences will remain for a long time even after the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat on an international scale.

Besides, we must take into consideration still another circumstance, which affects a number of the nations of the USSR. There is a Ukraine which forms part of the USSR. But there is also another Ukraine which forms part of other states. There is a Byelorussia which forms part of the USSR. But there is also another Byelorussia which forms part of other states. Do you think that the question of the Ukrainian and Byelorussian languages can be settled without taking these specific conditions into account?

Then take the nations of the USSR situated along its southern border, from Azerbaijan to Kazakhstan and Buryat-Mongolia. They are all in the same position as the Ukraine and Byelorussia. Naturally, here too we have to take into consideration the specific conditions of development of these nations.

Is it not obvious that all these and similar questions that are bound up with the problem of national cultures and national languages cannot be settled within the framework of a single state, within the framework of the USSR?

That, comrades, is how matters stand with respect to the national question in general and the above-mentioned note on the national question in particular.

CONCERNING THE
DEVIATION TOWARDS
NATIONALISM

January 26, 1934

*Excerpts From the Report to the Seventeenth
Party Congress on the Work of the Central
Committee of the CPSU(B)*

Or take, for example, the *national question*. Here, too, in the sphere of the national question, just as in the sphere of other questions, there is in the views of a section of the Party a confusion which creates a certain danger. I have spoken of the tenacity of the survivals of capitalism. It should be observed that the survivals of capitalism in people's minds are much more tenacious in the sphere of the national question than in any other sphere. They are more tenacious because they are able to disguise themselves well in national costume. Many think that Skrypnyk's fall from grace was an individual case, an exception to the rule. This is not true. The fall from grace of Skrypnyk and his group in the Ukraine is not an exception. Similar aberrations are observed among certain comrades in other national republics as well.

What is the deviation towards nationalism—regardless whether it is a matter of the deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism or the deviation towards local nationalism? The deviation towards nationalism is the adaptation of the internationalist policy of the working class to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie. The deviation towards nationalism reflects the attempts of “one's own,” “national” bourgeoisie to undermine the Soviet system and to restore capitalism. The source of both these deviations, as you see, is the same. It is a *departure* from Leninist internationalism. If you want to keep both deviations under fire, then aim primarily against this source, against those who depart from internationalism—regardless whether it is a matter of the deviation towards local nationalism or the deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism. [*Stormy applause.*]

There is a controversy as to which deviation represents the chief danger: the deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism, or the deviation towards local nationalism. Under present conditions, this is a formal and, therefore, a pointless controversy. It would be foolish to attempt to give ready-made recipes suitable for all times and for all conditions as regards the chief and the lesser danger. Such recipes do not exist. The chief danger is the deviation against which we have ceased to fight, thereby allowing it to grow into a danger to the state. [*Prolonged applause.*]

In the Ukraine, only very recently, the deviation towards Ukrainian nationalism did not represent the chief danger; but when the fight against it ceased, and it was allowed to grow to such an extent that it linked up with the interventionists, this deviation became the chief danger. The question as to which is the chief danger in the sphere of the national question is determined not by futile, formal controversies, but by a Marxist analysis of the situation at the given moment, and by a study of the mistakes that have been committed in this sphere.

ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE USSR

November 25, 1936

*Excerpts from the Report Delivered at the
Extraordinary Eighth Congress of the Soviets
of the USSR*

The picture of the changes in the social life of the USSR would be incomplete without a few words about the changes in yet another sphere. I have in mind the sphere of *national relationships in the USSR*. As you know, within the Soviet Union there are about 60 nations, national groups and nationalities. The Soviet state is a multi-national state. Clearly, the question of the relations among the peoples of the USSR cannot but be of prime importance for us.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as you know, was formed in 1922, at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R. It was formed on the principles of equality and voluntary affiliation of the peoples of the USSR. The Constitution now in force, adopted in 1924, was the first Constitution of the USSR. That was the period when relations among the peoples had not yet been properly adjusted, when survivals of distrust towards the Great-Russians had not yet disappeared, and when centrifugal forces still continued to operate. Under those conditions it was necessary to establish fraternal co-operation among the peoples on the basis of economic, political, and military mutual aid by uniting them in a single, federal, multi-national state. The Soviet power had a very clear conception of the difficulties attending this task. It had before it the unsuccessful experiments of multi-national states in bourgeois countries. It had before it the experiment of old Austria-Hungary, which ended in failure. Nevertheless, it resolved to make the experiment of creating a multi-national state; for it knew that a multi-national state which has arisen on the basis of socialism is bound to stand any and every test.

Since then 14 years have elapsed. A period long enough to test the experiment. And what do we find? This period has shown beyond a doubt that the experiment of forming a multi-national state based on socialism has been completely successful. This is an unquestionable victory of the Leninist national policy. [*Prolonged applause.*]

How is this victory to be explained?

The absence of exploiting classes, which are the principal organizers of strife between nations; the absence of exploitation, which cultivates

mutual distrust and kindles nationalist passions; the fact that power is in the hands of the working class, which is the foe of all enslavement and the true vehicle of the ideas of internationalism; the actual practice of mutual aid among the peoples in all spheres of economic and social life; and, finally, the flourishing of the national culture of the peoples of the USSR, culture which is national in form and socialist in content—all these and similar factors have brought about a radical change in the aspect of the peoples of the USSR; their feeling of mutual distrust has disappeared, a feeling of mutual friendship has developed among them, and thus real fraternal co-operation among the peoples has been established within the system of a single federal state.

As a result, we now have a fully formed multi-national socialist state, which has stood all tests, and whose stability might well be envied by any national state in any part of the world. [*Loud applause.*]

Bourgeois constitutions tacitly proceed from the premise that nations and races cannot have equal rights, that there are nations with full rights and nations without full rights, and that, in addition, there is a third category of nations or races, for example in the colonies, which have even fewer rights than the nations without full rights. This means that, at bottom, all these constitutions are nationalistic, i.e., constitutions of ruling nations.

Unlike these constitutions, the Draft of the new Constitution of the USSR is, on the contrary, profoundly internationalistic. It proceeds from the premise that all nations and races have equal rights. It proceeds from the fact that neither difference in color or language, cultural level or level of political development, nor any other difference between nations and races, can serve as grounds for justifying national inequality of rights. It proceeds from the proposition that all nations and races, irrespective of their past and present position, irrespective of their strength or weakness, should enjoy equal rights in all spheres of the economic, social, political and cultural life of society.

Then follows an amendment to Article 17 of the Draft Constitution. The amendment proposes that we completely delete from the Constitution Article 17, which reserves to the Union Republics the right of free secession from the USSR. I think that this proposal is a wrong one and therefore should not be adopted by the congress. The USSR is a voluntary union of Union Republics with equal rights. To delete from the Constitution the article providing for the right of free secession from the USSR would be to violate the voluntary character of this union. Can we agree to this step? I think that we cannot and should not agree to it. It is said that there is not a single Republic in the USSR that would want to secede from the USSR, and that therefore Article 17 is of no practical importance. It is, of course, true that there is not a single Republic that would want to secede from the USSR. But this does not in the least mean that we should not fix in the Constitution the right of Union Republics freely to secede from the USSR. In the USSR there is not a single Union Republic that would want to subjugate another Union Republic. But that does not in the least mean that we ought to delete from the Constitution of the USSR the article dealing with the equality of rights of the Union Republics.

3) Then there is a proposal that we add a new article to Chapter II of the Draft Constitution, to the following effect: that on reaching the proper level of economic and cultural development Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics may be raised to the status of Union Soviet Socialist Republics. Can this proposal be adopted? I think that it should not be adopted. It is a wrong proposal not only because of its content but also because of the condition it lays down. Economic and cultural maturity can no more be urged as grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics than economic or cultural backwardness can be urged as grounds for leaving any particular Republic in the list of Autonomous Republics. That would not be a Marxist, not a Leninist approach. The Tatar Republic, for example, remains an Autonomous Republic, while the Kazakh Republic is to become a Union Republic; but that does not mean that from the standpoint of cultural and economic development the Kazakh Republic is on a higher level than the Tatar Republic. The very opposite is the case. The same can be said, for example, of the Volga German Autonomous Republic and the Kirghiz Union Republic, of which the

former is on a higher cultural and economic level than the latter, although it remains an Autonomous Republic.

What are the grounds for transferring Autonomous Republics to the category of Union Republics?

There are three such grounds.

First, the republic concerned must be a border republic, not surrounded on all sides by USSR territory. Why? Because since the Union Republics have the right to secede from the USSR, a republic, on becoming a Union Republic, must be in a position logically and actually to raise the question of secession from the USSR. And this question can be raised only by a republic which, say, borders on some foreign state, and, consequently, is not surrounded on all sides by USSR territory. Of course, none of our Republics would actually raise the question of seceding from the USSR. But since the right to secede from the USSR is reserved to the Union Republics, it must be so arranged that this right does not become a meaningless scrap of paper. Take, for example, the Bashkir Republic or the Tatar Republic. Let us assume that these Autonomous Republics are transferred to the category of Union Republics. Could they logically and actually raise the question of seceding from the USSR? No, they could not. Why? Because they are surrounded on all sides by Soviet Republics and regions, and, strictly speaking, they have nowhere to go to if they secede from the USSR. [*Laughter and applause.*] Therefore, it would be wrong to transfer such Republics to the category of Union Republics.

Secondly, the nationality which gives its name to a given Soviet Republic must constitute a more or less compact majority within that republic. Take the Crimean Autonomous Republic, for example. It is a border Republic, but the Crimean Tatars do not constitute the majority in that Republic; on the contrary, they are a minority. Consequently, it would be wrong and illogical to transfer the Crimean Republic to the category of Union Republics.

Thirdly, the republic must not have too small a population; it should have a population of, say, not less but more than a million, at least. Why? Because it would be wrong to assume that a small Soviet Republic with a very small population and a small army could hope to maintain its existence as an independent state. There can hardly be any doubt that the imperialist beasts of prey would soon lay hands on it.

I think that unless these three objective grounds exist, it would be wrong at the present historical moment to raise the question of transferring any particular Autonomous Republic to the category of Union Republics.

Next it is proposed to delete from Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 the detailed enumeration of the administrative territorial division of the Union Republics into territories and regions. I think that this proposal is also unacceptable. There are people in the USSR who are always ready and eager to go on tirelessly recarving the territories and regions and thus cause confusion and uncertainty in our work. The Draft Constitution puts a check on those people. And that is a very good thing, because here, as in many other things, we need an atmosphere of certainty, we need stability and clarity.

The fifth amendment concerns Article 33. The creation of two Chambers is regarded as inexpedient, and it is proposed that the Soviet of Nationalities be abolished. I think that this amendment is also wrong. A single-chamber system would be better than a dual-chamber system if the USSR were a single-nation state. But the USSR is not a single nation state. The USSR, as we know, is a multi-national state. We have a supreme body in which are represented the *common* interests of all the working people of the USSR irrespective of nationality. This is the Soviet of the Union. But in addition to common interests, the nationalities of the USSR have *their particular, specific interests*, connected with their specific national characteristics. Can these specific interests be ignored? No, they cannot. Do we need a special supreme body to reflect precisely these specific interests? Unquestionably, we do. There can be no doubt that without such a body it would be impossible to administer a multi-national state like the USSR. Such a body is the second Chamber, the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR.

Reference is made to the parliamentary history of European and American states; it is pointed out that the dual-chamber system in these countries has produced only negative results—that the second chamber usually degenerates into a center of reaction and a brake on progress. All that is true. But this is due to the fact that in those countries there is no equality between the two chambers. As we know, the second chamber is not infrequently granted more rights than the first chamber and, moreover,

as a rule the second chamber is constituted undemocratically, its members not infrequently being appointed from above. Undoubtedly, these defects will be obviated if equality is established between the chambers and if the second chamber is constituted as democratically as the first.

Further, an addendum to the Draft Constitution is proposed calling for an equal number of members in both Chambers. I think that this proposal might be adopted. In my opinion, it has obvious political advantages, for it emphasizes the equality of the Chambers.

Next comes an addendum to the Draft Constitution which proposes that the members of the Soviet of Nationalities be elected by direct vote, as in the case of the members of the Soviet of the Union. I think that this proposal might also be adopted. True, it may create certain technical inconveniences during elections; but, on the other hand, it would be of great political advantage, for it would enhance the prestige of the Soviet of Nationalities.

ON SOVIET PATRIOTISM

November 6, 1944

*Excerpts From Speech Delivered at the Joint
Celebration Meeting of the Moscow Soviet of
Working People's Deputies and Representatives
of Moscow Party and Public Organizations*

The strength of Soviet patriotism lies in the fact that it is based not on racial or nationalistic prejudices, but upon the profound devotion and loyalty of the people to their Soviet Motherland, on the fraternal co-operation of the working people of all the nations inhabiting our country. Soviet patriotism is a harmonious blend of the national traditions of the peoples and the common vital interests of all the working people of the Soviet Union. Soviet patriotism does not disunite but unites all the nations and nationalities inhabiting our country in a single fraternal family. This should be regarded as the basis of the indestructible and ever-growing friendship that exists among the peoples of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the peoples of the USSR respect the rights and independence of the peoples of foreign countries and have always shown their readiness to live in peace and friendship with neighboring countries. This should be regarded as the basis upon which the ties between our country and other freedom-loving peoples are expanding and growing stronger.

The Soviet people hate the German invaders not because they belong to a foreign nation, but because they have caused our people and all freedom-loving peoples incalculable misfortune and suffering. There is an old saying among our people: "The wolf is not beaten because he is grey, but because he devours the sheep." [*Laughter. Prolonged applause.*]

The German fascists chose the misanthropic race theory as their ideological weapon in the expectation that the advocacy of brutal nationalism would create the moral and political prerequisites for the domination of the German invaders over enslaved peoples. The policy of race hatred pursued by the Hitlerites, however, actually became a source of internal weakness for the German fascist state, and of its political isolation from other states. The ideology and policy of race hatred have been one of the factors that led to the collapse of the Hitler brigand bloc. It cannot be regarded as an accident that against the German imperialists have risen not only the enslaved peoples of France, Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, but also Hit-

ler's former vassals—the Italians, the Rumanians, the Finns and Bulgarians. By their cannibal policy the Hitler clique has roused all the people of the world against Germany, and the so-called “chosen German race” has become the object of universal hatred.

In the course of the war the Hitlerites have sustained not only military but also moral and political defeat. The ideology of the equality of all races and nations, which has become firmly established in our country, the ideology of friendship among nations, has achieved complete victory over the ideology of brutal nationalism and race hatred preached by the Hitlerites.

Now that our Patriotic War is drawing to a triumphant close, the historic role played by the Soviet people stands out in all its grandeur. Everybody admits now that by their self-sacrificing struggle the Soviet people saved the civilization of Europe from the fascist pogrom-mongers. This is the great historic service the Soviet people have rendered mankind.

ON THE TREATY OF
FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL
HELP BETWEEN THE
SOVIET UNION AND
FINLAND

April 7, 1948

*Speech given at the dinner in honor of the
Finish Government Delegation*

I would like to say a few words about the significance of the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Help between the Soviet Union and Finland, which was signed yesterday.

This treaty signifies a change in the relations between our countries. As it is known, in the course of 150 years of relations between Russia and Finland, there has been mutual distrust. The Finns distrusted the Russians, the Russians distrusted the Finns. From the Soviet side there resulted an attempt in the past to break the distrust that stood between the Russians and the Finns. That was at the time that Lenin, in 1917, proclaimed the independence of Finland. From an historical point of view, that was an outstanding act. But sadly the distrust was not thereby broken—the distrust stayed distrust. The result was two wars between us.

I would like us to go over from the long period of mutual distrust in the course of which we went to war with each other twice, to a new period in our relations: the period of mutual trust.

It is necessary that the conclusion of this treaty breaks this distrust and builds a new basis for relations between our peoples and that it signifies a great change in the relations between our countries towards trust and friendship.

We want this acknowledged not only by those present in this hall but also by those outside this hall, as much in Finland as in the Soviet Union.

One must not believe that the distrust between our peoples can be removed all at once. That is not done so quickly. For a long time there will be remnants of this distrust, for the abolition of which one must work and struggle hard, and to build and strengthen a tradition of mutual friendship between the USSR and Finland.

There are treaties that are based upon equality and some that are not. The Soviet-Finnish treaty is a treaty that is based upon equality, it has been concluded on the basis of full equality of the partners.

Many believe that between a big and little nation there cannot be relations which are based on equality. But we Soviet people are of the opinion that such relations can and should exist. We Soviet people are

of the opinion that every nation, great or small, has special qualities that only they have and no other nation possesses. These peculiarities are their contribution, that every nation should contribute to the common treasure of the culture of the world. In this sense, all nations, big and small, are in the same situation, and every nation is as equally important as the next nation.

So the Soviet people are of the opinion that Finland, although a small country, is in this treaty, as equal a partner as the Soviet Union.

You do not find many politicians of the great powers that would regard the small nations as the equals of the larger nations. Most of them look down upon the small nations. They are not disinclined, occasionally, to make a one-sided guarantee for a small nation. These politicians do not, in general, conclude treaties which depend on equality, with small nations, as they do not regard small nations as their partners.

I propose a toast to the Soviet-Finnish treaty, and to the change for the better in the relations between our countries that this treaty signifies.

DIALECTICAL & HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

CONCERNING QUESTIONS OF LENINISM

Contents

Dialectical and Historical Materialism	581
Concerning Questions of Leninism	615
I. The Definition of Leninism	616
II. The Main Thing in Leninism	618
III. The Question of “Permanent” Revolution	620
IV. The Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat	623
V. The Party and the Working Class in the System of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat	634
VI. The Question of the Victory of Socialism in One Country	660
VII. The Fight for the Victory of Socialist Construction	674

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is *dialectical*, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is *materialistic*.

Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and of its history.

When describing their dialectical method, Marx and Engels usually refer to Hegel as the philosopher who formulated the main features of dialectics. This, however, does not mean that the dialectics of Marx and Engels is identical with the dialectics of Hegel. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from the Hegelian dialectics only its “rational kernel,” casting aside its Hegelian idealistic shell, and developed dialectics further so as to lend it a modern scientific form.

My dialectic method [says Marx,] is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel... the process of thinking, which, under the name of ‘the Idea,’ he even transforms into an independent subject, is the *demiurgos* (creator) of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of ‘the Idea.’ With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.¹

When describing their materialism, Marx and Engels usually refer to Feuerbach as the philosopher who restored materialism to its rights. This, however, does not mean that the materialism of Marx and Engels is identical to Feuerbach’s materialism. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from Feuerbach’s materialism its “inner kernel,” developed it into a scientific, philosophical theory of materialism and cast aside its idealistic and religious-ethical encumbrances. We know that Feuerbach, although he was fundamentally a materialist, objected to the name materialism. Engels more than once declared that “in spite of” the materialist “foundation,”

¹ Karl Marx, “Afterword to the Second German Edition”, *Capital*, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, p. 19.

Feuerbach “remained... bound by the traditional idealist fetters,” and that “the real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics.”²

Dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego*, to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions. There were philosophers in ancient times who believed that the disclosure of contradictions in thought and the clash of opposite opinions was the best method of arriving at the truth. This dialectical method of thought, later extended to the phenomena of nature, developed into the dialectical method of apprehending nature, which regards the phenomena of nature as being in constant movement and undergoing constant change, and the development of nature as the result of the development of the contradictions in nature, as the result of the interaction of opposed forces in nature.

In its essence, dialectics is the direct opposite of metaphysics.

1) The principal features of the *Marxist dialectical method* are as follows:

a) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomena, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of, each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by, each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena.

b) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continu-

² F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

ous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away.

The dialectical method therefore requires that phenomena should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being.

The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.

All nature, [says Engels,] from the smallest thing to the biggest, from grains of sand to suns, from *protista* [the primary living cells—*J. St.*] to man, has its existence in eternal coming into being and going out of being, in a ceaseless flux, in unresting motion and change.³

Therefore, dialectics, Engels says, “takes things and their perceptual images essentially in their interconnection, in their concatenation, in their movement, in their rise and disappearance.”⁴

c) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally, but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood not as movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative

³ F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954.

⁴ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher:

Nature [says Engels,] is the test of dialectics, and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical, that it does not move in an eternally uniform and constantly repeated circle, but passes through a real history. Here prime mention should be made of Darwin, who dealt a severe blow to the metaphysical conception of nature by proving that the organic world of today, plants and animals, and consequently man too, is all a product of a process of development that has been in progress for millions of years.⁵

Describing dialectical development as a transition from quantitative changes to qualitative changes, Engels says:

In physics... every change is a passing of quantity into quality, as a result of a quantitative change of some form of movement either inherent in a body or imparted to it. For example, the temperature of water has at first no effect on its liquid state; but as the temperature of liquid water rises or falls, a moment arrives when this state of cohesion changes and the water is converted in one case into steam and in the other into ice.... A definite minimum current is required to make a platinum wire glow; every metal has its melting temperature; every liquid has a definite freezing point and boiling point at a given pressure, as far as we are able with the means at our disposal to attain the required temperatures; finally, every gas has its critical point at which, by proper pressure and cooling, it can be converted into a liquid state.... What are known as the constants of physics [the point at which one state passes into another—*J. St.*] are in most cases nothing but designations for the nodal points at which a quantitative (change) increase or decrease of movement

⁵ F. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 58.

causes a qualitative change in the state of the given body, and at which, consequently, quantity is transformed into quality.⁶

Passing to chemistry, Engels continues:

Chemistry may be called the science of the qualitative changes which take place in bodies as the effect of changes of quantitative composition. This was already known to Hegel.... Take oxygen: if the molecule contains three atoms instead of the customary two, we get ozone, a body definitely distinct in odor and reaction from ordinary oxygen. And what shall we say of the different proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulphur, and each of which produces a body qualitatively different from all other bodies!⁷

Finally, criticizing Duhring, who scolded Hegel for all he was worth, but surreptitiously borrowed from him the well-known thesis that the transition from the insentient world to the sentient world, from the kingdom of inorganic matter to the kingdom of organic life, is a leap to a new state, Engels says:

This is precisely the Hegelian nodal line of measure relations in which at certain definite nodal points, the purely quantitative increase or decrease gives rise to a *qualitative leap*, for example, in the case of water which is heated or cooled, where boiling point and freezing point are the nodes at which—under normal pressure—the leap to a new aggregate state takes place, and where consequently quantity is transformed into quality.⁸

d) Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of devel-

⁶ F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, *op. cit.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*

opment, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a “struggle” of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions.

“In its proper meaning,” Lenin says, “dialectics is the study of the contradiction *within the very essence of things*.”⁹

And further:

“Development is the ‘struggle’ of opposites.”¹⁰

Such, in brief, are the principal features of the Marxist dialectical method.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of the dialectical method to the study of social life and the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If there are no isolated phenomena in the world, if all phenomena are interconnected and interdependent, then it is clear that every social system and every social movement in history must be evaluated not from the standpoint of “eternal justice” or some other preconceived idea, as is not infrequently done by historians, but from the standpoint of the conditions which gave rise to that system or that social movement and with which they are connected.

The slave system would be senseless, stupid and unnatural under modern conditions. But under the conditions of a disintegrating primitive communal system, the slave system is a quite understandable and natural phenomenon, since it represents an advance on the primitive communal system.

The demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic when tsardom and bourgeois society existed, as, let us say, in Russia in 1905, was a quite understandable, proper and revolutionary demand; for at that time a bourgeois republic would have meant a step forward. But now, under the conditions

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*.

¹⁰ V. I. Lenin, “On the Question of Dialectics” in *Collected Works*, Vol.XXXVIII.

of the USSR, the demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic would be a senseless and counter-revolutionary demand, for a bourgeois republic would be a retrograde step compared with the Soviet republic.

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place.

It is clear that without such a *historical* approach to social phenomena, the existence and development of the science of history is impossible; for only such an approach saves the science of history from becoming a jumble of accidents and an agglomeration of most absurd mistakes.

Further, if the world is in a state of constant movement and development, if the dying away of the old and the upgrowth of the new is a law of development, then it is clear that there can be no “immutable” social systems, no “eternal principles” of private property and exploitation, no “eternal ideas” of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist.

Hence, the capitalist system can be replaced by the socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system.

Hence, we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.

In the eighties of the past century, in the period of the struggle between the Marxists and the Narodniks, the proletariat in Russia constituted an insignificant minority of the population, whereas the individual peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. But the proletariat was developing as a class, whereas the peasantry as a class was disintegrating. And just because the proletariat was developing as a class, the Marxists based their orientation on the proletariat. And they were not mistaken; for, as we know, the proletariat subsequently grew from an insignificant force into a first-rate historical and political force.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward. Further, if the passing of slow quantitative changes into rapid and abrupt qualitative changes is a law of development, then it is clear that revolutions made by oppressed classes are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence, the transition from capitalism to socialism and the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism cannot be effected by slow changes, by reforms, but only by a qualitative change of the capitalist system, by revolution.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must be a revolutionary, not a reformist.

Further if development proceeds by way of the disclosure of internal contradictions, by way of collisions between opposite forces on the basis of these contradictions and so as to overcome these contradictions, then it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence, we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle but carry it to its conclusion.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must pursue an uncompromising proletarian class policy, not a reformist policy of harmony of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a compromisers' policy of the "growing" of capitalism into socialism.

Such is the Marxist dialectical method when applied to social life, to the history of society.

As to Marxist philosophical materialism, it is fundamentally the direct opposite of philosophical idealism.

2) The principal features of *Marxist philosophical materialism* are as follows:

a) Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material*, that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena, as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."

“The materialistic outlook on nature,” says Engels, “means no more than simply conceiving nature just as it exists, without any foreign admixture.”¹¹

Speaking of the materialist views of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who held that “the world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down,” Lenin comments: “A very good exposition of the rudiments of dialectical materialism.”¹²

b) Contrary to idealism, which asserts that only our consciousness really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our consciousness, in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist philosophical materialism holds that matter, nature, being, is an objective reality existing outside and independent of our consciousness; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, consciousness, and that consciousness is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain, and the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. Engels says:

The question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of spirit to nature is the paramount question of the whole of philosophy.... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature... comprised the camp of *idealism*. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of *materialism*.¹³

And further:

The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality.... Our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a

¹¹ F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, *op. cit.*

¹² V. I. Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks*, *op. cit.*

¹³ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *op. cit.*

product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter.¹⁴

Concerning the question of matter and thought, Marx says:

It is impossible to separate thought from matter that thinks. Matter is the subject of all changes.¹⁵

Describing Marxist philosophical materialism, Lenin says:

Materialism in general recognizes objectively real being (matter) as independent of consciousness, sensation, experience.... Consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true (adequate, perfectly exact) reflection of it.¹⁶

And further:

Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation.... Matter, nature, being, the physical—is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical—is secondary.¹⁷

The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how “*matter thinks*.”¹⁸

The brain is the organ of thought.¹⁹

c) Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognize objective truth, and holds that the world is full of “things-in-themselves” that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ F. Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

¹⁶ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1972, p. 394.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

are as yet not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.

Criticizing the thesis of Kant and other idealists that the world is unknowable and that there are “things-in-themselves” which are unknowable, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our knowledge is authentic knowledge, Engels writes:

The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice, namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable “thing-in-itself.” The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained such “things-in-themselves” until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the “thing-in-itself” became a thing for us, as, for instance, alizarin, the coloring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand chances to one in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But when Leverrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when Galle really found this planet, the Copernican system was proved.²⁰

Accusing Bogdanov, Bazarov, Yushkevich and the other followers of Mach of fideism (a reactionary theory, which prefers faith to science) and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our scientific knowledge of the laws of nature is authentic knowledge, and that the laws of science represent objective truth, Lenin says:

Contemporary fideism does not at all reject science, all it rejects is the “exaggerated claims” of science, to wit, its claim

²⁰ F. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, *op. cit.*

to objective truth. If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human “experience,” is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted.²¹

Such, in brief, are the characteristic features of the Marxist philosophical materialism.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of philosophical materialism to the study of social life, of the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If the connection between the phenomena of nature and their interdependence are laws of the development of nature, it follows, too, that the connection and interdependence of the phenomena of social life are laws of the development of society, and not something accidental.

Hence, social life, the history of society, ceases to be an agglomeration of “accidents,” for the history of society becomes a development of society according to regular laws, and the study of the history of society becomes a science.

Hence, the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of “outstanding individuals,” not on the dictates of “reason,” “universal morals,” etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws.

Further, if the world is knowable and our knowledge of the laws of development of nature is authentic knowledge, having the validity of objective truth, it follows that social life, the development of society, is also knowable, and that the data of science regarding the laws of development of society are authentic data having the validity of objective truths.

Hence, the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology, and capable of making use of the laws of development of society for practical purposes.

Hence, the party of the proletariat should not guide itself in its practical activity by casual motives, but by the laws of development of society, and by practical deductions from these laws.

²¹ V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

Hence, socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.

Hence, the bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice, their unity, should be the guiding star of the party of the proletariat.

Further, if nature, being, the material world, is primary, and consciousness, thought, is secondary, derivative; if the material world represents objective reality existing independently of the consciousness of men, while consciousness is a reflection of this objective reality, it follows that the material life of society, its being, is also primary, and its spiritual life secondary, derivative, and that the material life of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the spiritual life of society is a reflection of this objective reality, a reflection of being.

Hence, the source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

Hence, if in different periods of the history of society different social ideas, theories, views and political institutions are to be observed; if under the slave system we encounter certain social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, under feudalism others, and under capitalism others still, this is not to be explained by the “nature,” the “properties” of the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves but by the different conditions of the material life of society at different periods of social development.

Whatever is the being of a society, whatever are the conditions of material life of a society, such are the ideas, theories, political views and political institutions of that society. In this connection, Marx says:

It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.²²

²² K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, in order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract “principles of human reason,” but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society, as the determining force of social development; not on the good wishes of “great men,” but on the real needs of development of the material life of society.

The fall of the utopians, including the Narodniks, anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but, independently of and in spite of these needs, on “ideal plans” and “all-embracing projects” divorced from the real life of society.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism lies in the fact that it does base its practical activity on the needs of the development of the material life of society and never divorces itself from the real life of society.

It does not follow from Marx’s words, however, that social ideas, theories, political views and political institutions are of no significance in the life of society, that they do not reciprocally affect social being, the development of the material conditions of the life of society. We have been speaking so far of the *origin* of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, of *the way they arise*, of the fact that the spiritual life of society is a reflection of the conditions of its material life. As regards the *significance* of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, as regards their *role* in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the important role and significance of these factors in the life of society, in its history.

There are different kinds of social ideas and theories. There are old ideas and theories which have outlived their day and which serve the interests of the moribund forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they hamper the development, the progress of society. Then there are new and advanced ideas and theories which serve the interests of the advanced forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they facilitate the development, the progress of society; and their significance is the greater the more accurately they reflect the needs of development of the material life of society.

New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organizing, mobilizing and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is *impossible* to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organizing, mobilizing and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces, which hamper the development of the material life of society.

Thus social ideas, theories and political institutions, having arisen on the basis of the urgent tasks of the development of the material life of society, the development of social being, themselves then react upon social being, upon the material life of society, creating the conditions necessary for completely carrying out the urgent tasks of the material life of society, and for rendering its further development possible.

In this connection, Marx says:

“Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.”²³

Hence, in order to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society and to accelerate their development and their improvement, the party of the proletariat must rely upon such a social theory, such a social idea as correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, and which is therefore capable of setting into motion broad masses of the people and of mobilizing them and organizing them into a great army of the proletarian party, prepared to smash the reactionary forces and to clear the way for the advanced forces of society.

The fall of the “Economists” and the Mensheviks was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the mobilizing, orga-

²³ K. Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Introduction, Cambridge University Press, 1970.

nizing and transforming role of advanced theory, of advanced ideas and, sinking to vulgar materialism, reduced the role of these factors almost to nothing, thus condemning the Party to passivity and inaction.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism is derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of this theory.

That is the answer historical materialism gives to the question of the relation between social being and social consciousness, between the conditions of development of material life and the development of the spiritual life of society.

3) Historical Materialism

It now remains to elucidate the following question: What, from the viewpoint of historical materialism, is meant by the “conditions of material life of society” which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc.?

What, after all, are these “conditions of material life of society,” what are their distinguishing features?

There can be no doubt that the concept “conditions of material life of society” includes, first of all, nature which surrounds society, geographical environment, which is one of the indispensable and constant conditions of material life of society and which, of course, influences the development of society. What role does geographical environment play in the development of society? Is geographical environment the chief force determining the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system of man, the transition from one system to another, or isn't it?

Historical materialism answers this question in the negative.

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the *determining* influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of geographical environment. In the space of 3,000 years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the

feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe, in the USSR, even four social systems have been superseded. Yet during this period geographical conditions in Europe have either not changed at all, or have changed so slightly that geography takes no note of them. And that is quite natural. Changes in geographical environment of any importance require millions of years, whereas a few hundred or a couple of thousand years are enough for even very important changes in the system of human society.

It follows from this that geographical environment cannot be the chief cause, the *determining* cause of social development; for that which remains almost unchanged in the course of tens of thousands of years cannot be the chief cause of development of that which undergoes fundamental changes in the course of a few hundred years.

Further, there can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" also includes growth of population, density of population of one degree or another; for people are an essential element of the conditions of material life of society, and without a definite minimum number of people there can be no material life of society. Is growth of population the chief force that determines the character of the social system of man, or isn't it?

Historical materialism answers this question too in the negative.

Of course, growth of population does influence the development of society, does facilitate or retard the development of society, but it cannot be the chief force of development of society, and its influence on the development of society cannot be the *determining* influence because, by itself, growth of population does not furnish the clue to the question why a given social system is replaced precisely by such-and-such a new system and not by another, why the primitive communal system is succeeded precisely by the slave system, the slave system by the feudal system, and the feudal system by the bourgeois system, and not by some other.

If growth of population were the determining force of social development, then a higher density of population would be bound to give rise to a correspondingly higher type of social system. But we do not find this to be the case. The density of population in China is four times as great as in the USA, yet the USA stands higher than China in the scale of social development; for in China a semi-feudal system still prevails, whereas the USA has long ago reached the highest stage of development of capitalism. The

density of population in Belgium is 19 times as great as in the USA, and 26 times as great as in the USSR. Yet the USA stands higher than Belgium in the scale of social development; and as for the USSR, Belgium lags a whole historical epoch behind this country, for in Belgium the capitalist system prevails, whereas the USSR has already done away with capitalism and has set up a socialist system.

It follows from this that growth of population is not, and cannot be, the chief force of development of society, the force which *determines* the character of the social system, the physiognomy of society.

a) What, then, is the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another?

This force, historical materialism holds, is the *method of procuring the means of life* necessary for human existence, the *mode of production of material values*—food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc.—which are indispensable for the life and development of society.

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people must have the instruments of production with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced; they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them.

The *instruments of production* wherewith material values are produced, the *people* who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain *production experience* and *labor skill*—all these elements jointly constitute the *productive forces* of society.

But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's *relations of production*. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilize nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions social production. In the production of material values

men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another. These may be relations of co-operation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation; they may be relations of domination and subordination; and, lastly, they may be transitional from one form of relations of production to another. But whatever the character of the relations of production may be, always and in every system, they constitute just as essential an element of production as the productive forces of society.

In production [Marx says,] men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations with one another and only within these social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production take place.²⁴

Consequently, production, the mode of production, embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values.

b) The first feature of production is that it never stays at one point for a long time and is always in a state of change and development, and that, furthermore, changes in the mode of production inevitably call forth changes in the whole social system, social ideas, political views and political institutions—they call forth a reconstruction of the whole social and political order. At different stages of development people make use of different modes of production, or, to put it more crudely, lead different manners of life. In the primitive commune there is one mode of production, under slavery there is another mode of production, under feudalism a third mode of production, and so on. And, correspondingly, men's social system, the spiritual life of men, their views and political institutions also vary.

Whatever is the mode of production of a society, such in the main is the society itself, its ideas and theories, its political views and institutions.

Or, to put it more crudely, whatever is man's manner of life, such is his manner of thought.

²⁴ K. Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital & Wages, Price and Profit*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 27.

This means that the history of development of society is above all the history of the development of production, the history of the modes of production which succeed each other in the course of centuries, the history of the development of productive forces and of people's relations of production.

Hence, the history of social development is at the same time the history of the producers of material values themselves, the history of the laboring masses, who are the chief force in the process of production and who carry on the production of material values necessary for the existence of society.

Hence, if historical science is to be a real science, it can no longer reduce the history of social development to the actions of kings and generals, to the actions of "conquerors" and "subjugators" of states, but must above all devote itself to the history of the producers of material values, the history of the laboring masses, the history of peoples.

Hence, the clue to the study of the laws of history of society must not be sought in men's minds, in the views and ideas of society, but in the mode of production practiced by society in any given historical period; it must be sought in the economic life of society.

Hence, the prime task of historical science is to study and disclose the laws of production, the laws of development of the productive forces and of the relations of production, the laws of economic development of society. Hence, if the party of the proletariat is to be a real party, it must above all acquire a knowledge of the laws of development of production, of the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its program and in its practical activities proceed primarily from the laws of development of production, from the laws of economic development of society.

c) *The second feature* of production is that its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, *depending* on these changes and *in conformity with them*, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change. This,

however, does not mean that the relations of production do not influence the development of the productive forces and that the latter are not dependent on the former. While their development is dependent on the development of the productive forces, the relations of production in their turn react upon the development of the productive forces, accelerating or retarding it. In this connection it should be noted that the relations of production cannot for too long a time lag behind and be in a state of contradiction to the growth of the productive forces, inasmuch as the productive forces can develop in full measure only when the relations of production correspond to the character, the state of the productive forces and allow full scope for their development. Therefore, however much the relations of production may lag behind the development of the productive forces, they must, sooner or later, come into correspondence with—and actually do come into correspondence with—the level of development of the productive forces, the character of the productive forces. Otherwise we would have a fundamental violation of the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production within the system of production, a disruption of production as a whole, a crisis of production, a destruction of productive forces.

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

In contrast, an instance in which the relations of production completely correspond to the character of the productive forces is the socialist national economy of the USSR, where the social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production, and where, because of this, economic crises and the destruction of productive forces are unknown.

Consequently, the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production, but are also the determining element in the development of production.

Whatever are the productive forces such must be the relations of production.

While the state of the productive forces furnishes the answer to the question—with what instruments of production do men produce the material values they need?—the state of the relations of production furnishes the answer to another question—who owns the *means of production* (the land, forests, waters, mineral resources, raw materials, instruments of production, production premises, means of transportation and communication, etc.), who commands the means of production, whether the whole of society, or individual persons, groups, or classes which utilize them for the exploitation of other persons, groups or classes?

Here is a rough picture of the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day. The transition from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow, and the accompanying transition from the life of hunters to the domestication of animals and primitive pasturage; the transition from stone tools to metal tools (the iron axe, the wooden plough fitted with an iron coulter, etc.), with a corresponding transition to tillage and agriculture; a further improvement in metal tools for the working up of materials, the introduction of the blacksmith's bellows, the introduction of pottery, with a corresponding development of handicrafts, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture, the development of an independent handicraft industry and, subsequently, of manufacture; the transition from handicraft tools to machines and the transformation of handicraft and manufacture into machine industry; the transition to the machine system and the rise of modern large-scale machine industry—such is a general and far from complete picture of the development of the productive forces of society in the course of man's history. It will be clear that the development and improvement of the instruments of production was effected by men who were related to production, and not independently of men; and, consequently, the change and development of the instruments of production was accompanied by a change and development of men, as the most important element of the productive forces, by a change and development of their production experience, their labor skill, their ability to handle the instruments of production.

In conformity with the change and development of the productive forces of society in the course of history, men's relations of production, their economic relations also changed and developed.

Five *main* types of relations of production are known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.

The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. This in the main corresponds to the character of the productive forces of that period. Stone tools, and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combating the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or to neighboring societies. Labor in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production, which were at the same time means of defense against beasts of prey. Here there was no exploitation, no classes.

The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave-owner owns the means of production; he also owns the worker in production—the slave, whom he can sell, purchase, or kill as though he were an animal. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Instead of stone tools, men now have metal tools at their command; instead of the wretched and primitive husbandry of the hunter, who knew neither pasturage nor tillage, there now appear pasturage, tillage, handicrafts, and a division of labor between these branches of production. There appears the possibility of the exchange of products between individuals and between societies, of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the actual accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a minority, and the possibility of subjugation of the majority by a minority and the conversion of the majority into slaves. Here we no longer find the common and free labor of all members of society in the production process—here there prevails the forced labor of slaves, who are exploited by the non-laboring slave-owners. Here, therefore, there is no common ownership of the means of production or of the fruits of produc-

tion. It is replaced by private ownership. Here the slave-owner appears as the prime and principal property owner in the full sense of the term.

Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, and a fierce class struggle between them—such is the picture of the slave system.

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production—the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labor. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of iron; the spread of the iron plough and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops—such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

The new productive forces demand that the laborer shall display some kind of initiative in production and an inclination for work, an interest in work. The feudal lord therefore discards the slave, as a laborer who has no interest in work and is entirely without initiative, and prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord.

Here private ownership is further developed. Exploitation is nearly as severe as it was under slavery—it is only slightly mitigated. A class struggle between exploiters and exploited is the principal feature of the feudal system.

The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production—the wage laborers, whom the capitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labor power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside of capitalist property in the means of production, we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen in the means of production,

these peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labor. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery.

The new productive forces require that the workers in production shall be better educated and more intelligent than the downtrodden and ignorant serfs, that they be able to understand machinery and operate it properly. Therefore, the capitalists prefer to deal with wage-workers, who are free from the bonds of serfdom and who are educated enough to be able properly to operate machinery.

But having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent, capitalism has become enmeshed in contradictions which it is unable to solve. By producing larger and larger quantities of commodities, and reducing their prices, capitalism intensifies competition, ruins the mass of small and medium private owners, converts them into proletarians and reduces their purchasing power, with the result that it becomes impossible to dispose of the commodities produced. On the other hand, by expanding production and concentrating millions of workers in huge mills and factories, capitalism lends the process of production a social character and thus undermines its own foundation, inasmuch as the social character of the process of production demands the social ownership of the means of production; yet the means of production remain private capitalist property, which is incompatible with the social character of the process of production.

These irreconcilable contradictions between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production make themselves felt in periodical crises of over-production, when the capitalists, finding no effective demand for their goods owing to the ruin of the mass of the population which they themselves have brought about, are compelled to burn products, destroy manufactured goods, suspend production, and destroy productive forces at a time when millions of people are forced to suffer unemployment and starvation, not because there are not enough goods, but because there is an over-production of goods.

This means that the capitalist relations of production have ceased to correspond to the state of productive forces of society and have come into irreconcilable contradiction with them.

This means that capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission it is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by socialist ownership.

This means that the main feature of the capitalist system is a most acute class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.

The basis of the relations of production under the socialist system, which so far has been established only in the USSR, is the social ownership of the means of production. Here there are no longer exploiters and exploited. The goods produced are distributed according to labor performed, on the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Here the mutual relations of people in the process of production are marked by comradely co-operation and the socialist mutual assistance of workers who are free from exploitation. Here the relations of production fully correspond to the state of productive forces; for the social character of the process of production is reinforced by the social ownership of the means of production.

For this reason socialist production in the USSR knows no periodical crises of over-production and their accompanying absurdities.

For this reason, the productive forces here develop at an accelerated pace; for the relations of production that correspond to them offer full scope for such development.

Such is the picture of the development of men's relations of production in the course of human history.

Such is the dependence of the development of the relations of production on the development of the productive forces of society, and primarily, on the development of the instruments of production, the dependence by virtue of which the changes and development of the productive forces sooner or later lead to corresponding changes and development of the relations of production.

The use and fabrication of instruments of labor,²⁵ [says Marx,] although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labor-process, and

²⁵ By "instruments of labor" Marx has in mind primarily instruments of production.—*J. St.*

Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labor possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economical forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, that enables us to distinguish different economical epochs. Instruments of labor not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labor has attained, but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labor is carried on.²⁶

And further:

Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist.²⁷

There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement.²⁸

Speaking of historical materialism as formulated in *The Communist Manifesto*, Engels says:

Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch;... consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; ...this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits

²⁶ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*

²⁷ K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1978.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time for ever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles.²⁹

d) *The third feature* of production is that the rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them does not take place separately from the old system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system; it takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man. It takes place spontaneously and independently of the will of man for two reasons.

Firstly, because men are not free to choose one mode of production or another, because as every new generation enters life it finds productive forces and relations of production already existing as the result of the work of former generations, owing to which it is obliged at first to accept and adapt itself to everything it finds ready-made in the sphere of production in order to be able to produce material values.

Secondly, because, when improving one instrument of production or another, one element of the productive forces or another, men do not realize, do not understand or stop to reflect what social results these improvements will lead to, but only think of their everyday interests, of lightening their labor and of securing some direct and tangible advantage for themselves.

When, gradually and gropingly, certain members of primitive communal society passed from the use of stone tools to the use of iron tools, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social results this innovation would lead to; they did not understand or realize that the change to metal tools meant a revolution in production, that it would in the long run lead to the slave system. They simply wanted to lighten their labor and secure an immediate and tangible advantage; their conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this everyday personal interest.

When, in the period of the feudal system, the young bourgeoisie of Europe began to erect, alongside of the small guild workshops, large manufactories, and thus advanced the productive forces of society, it, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this innovation would lead to; it did not realize or understand that this “small”

²⁹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, Preface to the German Edition, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 9.

innovation would lead to a regrouping of social forces which was to end in a revolution both against the power of kings, whose favors it so highly valued, and against the nobility, to whose ranks its foremost representatives not infrequently aspired. It simply wanted to lower the cost of producing goods, to throw larger quantities of goods on the markets of Asia and of recently discovered America, and to make bigger profits. Its conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this commonplace practical aim.

When the Russian capitalists, in conjunction with foreign capitalists, energetically implanted modern large-scale machine industry in Russia, while leaving tsardom intact and turning the peasants over to the tender mercies of the landlords, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this extensive growth of productive forces would lead to; they did not realize or understand that this big leap in the realm of the productive forces of society would lead to a regrouping of social forces that would enable the proletariat to effect a union with the peasantry and to bring about a victorious socialist revolution. They simply wanted to expand industrial production to the limit, to gain control of the huge home market, to become monopolists, and to squeeze as much profit as possible out of the national economy.

Their conscious activity did not extend beyond their commonplace, strictly practical interests.

Accordingly, Marx says:

In the social production of their life [that is, in the production of the material values necessary to the life of men—*J. St.*], men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and *independent*³⁰ of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces.³¹

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary, such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary

³⁰ My italics.—*J. St.*

³¹ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*

overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceed spontaneously, independently of the will of men. But that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity. After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders—the ruling classes—become that “insuperable” obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes, by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution. Here there stands out in bold relief the *tremendous role* of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society, there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organize and mobilize the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and to firmly establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution.

The proletariat, [says Marx,] during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class... by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production.³²

And further:

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.³³

³² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.³⁴

Here is the formulation—a formulation of genius—of the essence of historical materialism given by Marx in 1859 in his historic Preface to his famous book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness

³⁴ Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*

must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.³⁵

Such is Marxist materialism as applied to social life, to the history of society.

Such are the principal features of dialectical and historical materialism.

³⁵ K. Marx, *Preface and Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*

CONCERNING QUESTIONS OF LENINISM

Dedicated to the Leningrad Organization of the CPSU(B.)

I. THE DEFINITION OF LENINISM

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

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.³⁶

Is this definition correct?

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

All that, one would think, needs no special comment.

Nevertheless, it appears that there are people in our Party who consider it necessary to define Leninism somewhat differently. Zinoviev, for example, thinks that:

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

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

³⁶ Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 2.—Ed.

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

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

It goes without saying that the peasant question is of very great importance for Russia, that our country is a peasant country. But what significance can this fact have in characterizing the foundations of Leninism? Was Leninism elaborated only on Russian soil, for Russia alone, and not on the soil of imperialism, and for the imperialist countries generally? Do such works of Lenin as *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, *The State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, etc., apply only to Russia, and not to all imperialist countries in general? Is not Leninism the generalization of the experience of the revolutionary movement of *all* countries? Are not the fundamentals of the theory and tactics of Leninism suitable, are they not obligatory, for the proletarian parties of all countries? Was not Lenin right when he said that "Bolshevism *can serve as a model of tactics for all*"?³⁷ Was not Lenin right when he spoke about the "*international significance*"³⁸ of Soviet power and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics?"³⁹ Are not, for example, the following words of Lenin correct?

"In Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain specific features from that in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petit-bourgeois character of our country. But the basic forces—and the basic forms of social economy—are the same in Russia as in any capitalist country, so that *these specific features can relate only to what is not most important*."^{40, 41}

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

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

³⁷ V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, p. 88.

³⁸ My italics.—*J. St.*

³⁹ V. I. Lenin, *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1965, p. 2.

⁴⁰ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁴¹ V. I. Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX.

II. THE MAIN THING IN LENINISM

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

Some think that the fundamental thing in Leninism is the peasant question, that the point of departure of Leninism is the question of the peasantry, of its role, its relative importance. This is absolutely wrong. The fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, is not the peasant question, but the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the conditions under which it can be achieved, of the conditions under which it can be consolidated. The peasant question, as the question of the ally of the proletariat in its struggle for power, is a derivative question.⁴²

Is this thesis correct?

I think it is correct. This thesis follows entirely from the definition of Leninism. Indeed, if Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution, and the basic content of the proletarian revolution is the dictatorship of the proletariat, then it is clear that the main thing in Leninism is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the elaboration of this question, the substantiation and concretization of this question.

Nevertheless, Zinoviev evidently does not agree with this thesis. In his article "In Memory of Lenin," he says, "As I have already said, the question of the role of the peasantry is the *fundamental question*⁴³ of Bolshevism, of Leninism."

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

Is Lenin's thesis that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the "root content of the proletarian revolution" correct?⁴⁴ It is unquestionably correct. Is the thesis that Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution correct? I think it is correct. But what follows from this? From this it follows that the fundamental question of Leninism, its point of departure, its foundation, is the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

⁴² Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.—*Ed.*

⁴³ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁴⁴ V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

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

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

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

One or the other:

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

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

Here one must choose.

III. THE QUESTION OF "PERMANENT" REVOLUTION

In the pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism*, the "theory of permanent revolution" is appraised as a "theory" which underestimates the role of the peasantry. There it is stated:

Consequently, Lenin fought the adherents of "permanent" revolution not over the question of uninterruptedness, for Lenin himself maintained the point of view of uninterrupted revolution, but because they underestimated the role of the peasantry, which is an enormous reserve of the proletariat....⁴⁵

This characterization of the Russian "permanentists" was considered as generally accepted until recently. Nevertheless, although in general correct, it cannot be regarded as exhaustive. The discussion of 1924, on the one hand, and a careful analysis of the works of Lenin, on the other hand, have shown that the mistake of the Russian "permanentists" lay not only in their underestimation of the role of the peasantry but also in their underestimation of the strength of the proletariat and its capacity to lead the peasantry, in their disbelief in the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

That is why, in my pamphlet *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists* (December 1924), I broadened this characterization and replaced it by another, more complete one. Here is what is stated in that pamphlet:

Hitherto only one aspect of the theory of "permanent revolution" has usually been noted—lack of faith in the revolutionary potentialities of the peasant movement. Now, in fairness, this must be supplemented by another aspect—lack of faith in the strength and capacity of the proletariat in Russia.⁴⁶

This does not mean, of course, that Leninism has been or is opposed to the idea of permanent revolution, without quotation marks, which was proclaimed by Marx in the forties of the last century.⁴⁷ On the contrary,

⁴⁵ Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, p. 31.—*Ed.*

⁴⁶ Joseph Stalin, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists" in *Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1976.

⁴⁷ K. Marx, F. Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" in *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, Vol. I,

Lenin was the only Marxist who correctly understood and developed the idea of permanent revolution. What distinguishes Lenin from the “permanentists” on this question is that the “permanentists” distorted Marx’s idea of permanent revolution and transformed it into lifeless, bookish wisdom, whereas Lenin took it in its pure form and made it one of the foundations of his own theory of revolution. It should be borne in mind that the idea of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, propounded by Lenin as long ago as 1905, is one of the forms of the embodiment of Marx’s theory of permanent revolution. Here is what Lenin wrote about this as far back as 1905:

From the democratic revolution we shall at once, and just in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. *We stand for uninterrupted revolution.*⁴⁸ We shall not stop halfway...

Without succumbing to adventurism or going against our scientific conscience, without striving for cheap popularity, we can and do say *only one thing*: we shall put every effort into assisting the entire peasantry to carry out the democratic revolution *in order thereby to make it easier* for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on, as quickly as possible, to the new and higher task—the socialist revolution.⁴⁹

And here is what Lenin wrote on this subject 16 years later, after the conquest of power by the proletariat:

The Kautskys, Hilferdings, Martovs, Chernovs, Hillquits, Longuets MacDonalds, Turatis, and other heroes of “Two-and-a-Half” Marxism were incapable of understanding... the relation between the bourgeois-democratic and the proletarian-socialist revolutions. *The first grows over into the second.*⁵⁰ The second, in passing, solves the questions of the first. The second

pp. 98-108.—*Ed*

⁴⁸ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin, “The Attitude of Social-Democracy Towards the Peasant Movement” in *Collected Works*, Vol. IX.

⁵⁰ My italics.—*J. St.*

III. The Question of “Permanent” Revolution

consolidates the work of the first. Struggle, and struggle alone, decides how far the second succeeds in outgrowing the first .⁵¹

I draw special attention to the first of the above quotations taken from Lenin’s article entitled “The Attitude of Social Democracy Towards the Peasant Movement,” published on September 1, 1905. I emphasize this for the information of those who still continue to assert that Lenin arrived at the idea of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, that is to say, the idea of permanent revolution, after the imperialist war. This quotation leaves no doubt that these people are profoundly mistaken.

⁵¹ V. I. Lenin, “Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

IV. THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

What are the characteristic features of the proletarian revolution as distinct from the bourgeois revolution?

The distinction between the proletarian revolution and the bourgeois revolution may be reduced to five main points.

1) The bourgeois revolution usually begins when there already exist more or less ready-made forms belonging to the capitalist order, forms which have grown and matured within the womb of feudal society prior to the open revolution, whereas the proletarian revolution begins when ready-made forms belonging to the socialist order are either absent, or almost absent.

2) The main task of the bourgeois revolution consists of seizing power and making it conform to the already existing bourgeois economy, whereas the main task of the proletarian revolution consists, after seizing power, in building a new, socialist economy.

3) The bourgeois revolution is usually consummated with the seizure of power, whereas in the proletarian revolution the seizure of power is only the beginning, and power is used as a lever for transforming the old economy and organizing the new one.

4) The bourgeois revolution limits itself to replacing one group of exploiters in power by another group of exploiters, in view of which it need not smash the old state machine; whereas the proletarian revolution removes all exploiting groups from power and places in power, the leader of all the toilers and exploited, the class of proletarians, in view of which it cannot manage without smashing the old state machine and substituting a new one for it.

5) The bourgeois revolution cannot rally the millions of the toiling and exploited masses around the bourgeoisie for any length of time, for the very reason that they are toilers and exploited; whereas the proletarian revolution can and must link them, precisely as toilers and exploited, in a durable alliance with the proletariat, if it wishes to carry out its main task of consolidating the power of the proletariat and building a new, socialist economy.

Here are some of Lenin's main theses on this subject:

IV. The Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution [says Lenin,] is that for the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic organizations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. Bourgeois revolution was confronted by only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding society. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfills all that is required of it: it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult it is for it to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. To the tasks of destruction are added new tasks of unprecedented difficulty—organizational tasks.⁵²

Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution [continues Lenin,] which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905, given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have seized power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of ready-made organizational forms of a movement embracing millions. These ready-made forms were the Soviets, and that is why in the political sphere there awaited us those brilliant successes, the continuous triumphant march, that we experienced; for the new form of political power was ready to hand, and all we had to do was, by passing a few decrees, to transform the power of the Soviets from the embryonic state in which it existed in the first months of the revolution into a legally recognized form which has become established in the Russian state—i.e., into the Russian Soviet Republic.⁵³

⁵² V. I. Lenin, "Seventh Congress of the RCP(B)—March 6-8, 1918" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVII.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

But two problems of enormous difficulty still remained, [says Lenin,] the solution of which could not possibly be the triumphant march which our revolution experienced in the first months....⁵⁴

Firstly, there were the problems of internal organization, which confront every socialist revolution. The difference between socialist revolution and bourgeois revolution lies precisely in the fact that the latter finds ready-made forms of capitalist relationships, while Soviet power—proletarian power—does not inherit such ready-made relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism, which, strictly speaking, extended to but a small top layer of industry and hardly touched agriculture. The organization of accounting, the control of large enterprises, the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that works in such a way that hundreds of millions of people are guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organizational problem that rested on our shoulders. Under the present conditions of labor this problem could not possibly be solved by the “hurrah” methods by which we were able to solve the problems of the Civil War.⁵⁵

The second enormous difficulty... was the international question. The reason why we were able to cope so easily with Krensky's gangs, why we so easily established our power and without the slightest difficulty passed the decrees on the socialization of the land and on workers' control, the reason why we achieved all this so easily was only that a fortunate combination of circumstances protected us for a short time from international imperialism. International imperialism, with the entire might of its capital, with its highly organized military technique, which is a real force, a real fortress of international capital, could in no case, under no circumstances, live side by side with the Soviet Republic, both because of its objective position and

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

IV. The Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

because of the economic interests of the capitalist class which is embodied in it—it could not do so because of commercial connections, of international financial relations. In this sphere a conflict is inevitable. Therein lies the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem: the necessity of solving the international tasks, the necessity of calling forth an international revolution.⁵⁶

Such is the intrinsic character and the basic meaning of the proletarian revolution.

Can such a radical transformation of the old bourgeois order be achieved without a violent revolution, without the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Obviously not. To think that such a revolution can be carried out peacefully, within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which is adapted to the rule of the bourgeoisie, means that one has either gone out of one's mind and lost normal human understanding, or has grossly and openly repudiated the proletarian revolution.

This thesis must be emphasized all the more strongly and categorically for the reason that we are dealing with the proletarian revolution which for the time being has triumphed only in one country, a country which is surrounded by hostile capitalist countries and the bourgeoisie of which cannot fail to receive the support of international capital.

That is why Lenin says:

The emancipation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class.⁵⁷

First let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, i.e., while the rule and yoke of capital still exists, express themselves in favor of the party of the proletariat, and only then can and should the party take power—*so say the*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, p. 10.

petit-bourgeois democrats who call themselves 'Socialists' but who are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie.^{58, 59}

*We say:*⁶⁰ Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, and smash the bourgeois state apparatus, then the victorious proletariat will be able rapidly to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the toiling non-proletarian masses by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters.⁶¹

In order to win the majority of the population to its side, [Lenin says further,] the proletariat must, in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power; secondly, it must introduce Soviet power and smash the old state apparatus to bits, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, prestige and influence of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian toiling masses. Thirdly, it must *entirely destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian toiling masses by satisfying *their* economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters.*⁶²

Such are the characteristic features of the proletarian revolution.

What, in this connection, are the main features of the dictatorship of the proletariat, once it is admitted that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the basic content of the proletarian revolution?

Here is the most general definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat given by Lenin:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle, but its continuation in new forms. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat, which has won victory and has seized political power, against the bour-

⁵⁸ My italics.—*J. St*

⁵⁹ V. I. Lenin, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX.

⁶⁰ My italics.—*J. St*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

IV. The Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

geoisie, which although vanquished has not been annihilated, has not disappeared, has not ceased its resistance, has increased its resistance.⁶³

Arguing against confusing the dictatorship of the proletariat with “popular” government, “elected by all,” with “non-class” government, Lenin says:

The class which took political power into its hands did so knowing that it took power *alone*.⁶⁴ That is a part of the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat. This concept has meaning only when this one class knows that it alone is taking political power in its hands, and does not deceive itself or others with talk about “popular” government, “elected by all, sanctified by the whole people.”⁶⁵

This does not mean, however, that the power of one class, the class of the proletarians, which does not and cannot share power with other classes, does not need aid from, and an alliance with, the laboring and exploited masses of other classes for the achievement of its aims. On the contrary. This power, the power of one class, can be firmly established and exercised to the full only by means of a special form of alliance between the class of proletarians and the laboring masses of the petit-bourgeois classes, primarily the laboring masses of the peasantry.

What is this special form of alliance? What does it consist of? Does not this alliance with the laboring masses of other, non-proletarian, classes wholly contradict the idea of the dictatorship of one class?

This special form of alliance consists in that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat. This special form of alliance consists in that the leader of the state, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is *one* party, the party of the proletariat, the Party of the Communists, which *does not and cannot share* leadership with other parties.

As you see, the contradiction is only an apparent, a seeming one.

⁶³ V. I. Lenin, “Foreword to ‘Deception of the People with Slogans on Freedom and Equality’” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

⁶⁴ My italics.—J. St

⁶⁵ V. I. Lenin, “Speech Delivered at the All-Russia Congress of Transport Workers” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

The dictatorship of the proletariat [says Lenin,] is a *special form of class alliance* between the proletariat, the vanguard of the working people, and the numerous non-proletarian strata of working people (the petit bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, the peasantry, the intelligentsia, etc.), or the majority of these; it is an alliance against capital, an alliance aiming at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete suppression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and of any attempt on its part at restoration, an alliance aiming at the final establishment and consolidation of socialism. It is a special type of alliance, which is being built up in special circumstances, namely, in the circumstances of fierce civil war; it is an alliance of the firm supporters of socialism with the wavering allies of socialism and sometimes with “neutrals” (then instead of an agreement for struggle, the alliance becomes an agreement for neutrality), *an alliance between classes which differ economically, politically, socially and ideologically*.^{66, 67}

In one of his instructional reports, Kamenev, disputing this conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, states:

“The dictatorship *is not*⁶⁸ an alliance of one class with another.”

I believe that Kamenev here has in view, primarily, a passage in my pamphlet *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, where it is stated:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not simply a governmental top stratum “skillfully” “selected” by the careful hand of an “experienced strategist,” and “judiciously relying” on the support of one section or another of the population. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class alliance between the proletariat and the laboring masses of the peasantry for the purpose of overthrowing capital, for achieving the final victory of social-

⁶⁶ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁶⁷ V. I. Lenin, “Foreword to ‘Deception of the People with Slogans on Freedom and Equality’”, *op. cit.*

⁶⁸ My italics.—*J. St.*

ism, on the condition that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat.⁶⁹

I wholly endorse this formulation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for I think that it fully and entirely coincides with Lenin's formulation, just quoted.

I assert that Kamenev's statement that "the dictatorship *is not* an alliance of one class with another," in the categorical form in which it is made, has nothing in common with Lenin's theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

I assert that such statements can be made only by people who have failed to understand the meaning of the idea of the bond, the idea of the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry the idea of the *hegemony* of the proletariat within this alliance.

Such statements can be made only by people who have failed to understand Lenin's thesis:

"*Only an agreement with the peasantry*⁷⁰ can save the socialist revolution in Russia as long as the revolution in other countries has not taken place."⁷¹

Such statements can be made only by people who have failed to understand Lenin's thesis:

"*The supreme principle of the dictatorship*⁷² is the maintenance of the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and state power."⁷³

Pointing out one of the most important aims of the dictatorship, the aim of suppressing the exploiters, Lenin says:

⁶⁹ Joseph Stalin, "The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists", *op. cit.*

⁷⁰ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁷¹ V. I. Lenin, "Seventh Congress of the RCP(B)-March 6-8, 1918," *op. cit.*

⁷² My italics.—*J. St.*

⁷³ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International June 22—July 12, 1921" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

The scientific concept of dictatorship means nothing more nor less than completely unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and resting directly on the use of force.⁷⁴

Dictatorship means—note this once and for all, Messrs. Cadets—unrestricted power, based on force and not on law. In time of civil war any victorious power can be only a dictatorship.⁷⁵

But of course, the dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean only the use of force, although there is no dictatorship without the use of force.

Dictatorship [says Lenin,] does not mean only the use of force, although it is impossible without the use of force; it also means the organization of labor on a higher level than the previous organization.⁷⁶

The dictatorship of the proletariat... is not only the use of force against the exploiters, and not even mainly the use of force. The economic foundation of this revolutionary use of force, the guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organization of labor compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of communism.⁷⁷

Its quintessence [i.e., of the dictatorship—*J. St.*] is the organization and discipline of the advanced detachment of the working people, of its vanguard, its sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build socialism, to abolish the division of society into classes, to make all members of society working people, to remove the basis for any exploitation of man by man. This

⁷⁴ V. I. Lenin, "A Contribution to the History of the Question of the Dictatorship" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ V. I. Lenin, "First All-Russia Congress on Adult Education" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

⁷⁷ V. I. Lenin, *A Great Beginning*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing 1977, p. 11.

IV. The Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from capitalism to socialism, because the reorganization of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of petit-bourgeois and bourgeois conduct of economy can be overcome only by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.⁷⁸

Such are the characteristic features of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Hence the three main aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

- 1) The utilization of the rule of the proletariat for the suppression of the exploiters, for the defense of the country, for the consolidation of the ties with the proletarians of other lands, and for the development and victory of the revolution in all countries.
- 2) The utilization of the rule of the proletariat in order to detach the laboring and exploited masses once and for all from the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the alliance of the proletariat with these masses, to draw these masses into the work of socialist construction, and to ensure the state leadership of these masses by the proletariat.
- 3) The utilization of the rule of the proletariat for the organization of socialism, for the abolition of classes, for the transition to a society without classes, to a socialist society.

The proletarian dictatorship is a combination of all these three aspects. No single one of these aspects can be advanced as the *sole* characteristic feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, in the circumstances of capitalist encirclement, the absence of even one of these features is sufficient for the dictatorship of the proletariat to cease being a dictatorship. Therefore, not one of these three aspects can be omitted without running the risk of distorting the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only all these three aspects taken together give us the complete and finished concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

⁷⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

The dictatorship of the proletariat has its periods, its special forms, diverse methods of work. During the period of civil war, it is the forcible aspect of the dictatorship that is most conspicuous. But it by no means follows from this that no constructive work is carried on during the period of civil war. Without constructive work it is impossible to wage civil war. During the period of socialist construction, on the other hand, it is the peaceful, organizational and cultural work of the dictatorship, revolutionary law, etc., that are most conspicuous. But, again, it by no means follows from this that the forcible aspect of the dictatorship has ceased to exist or can cease to exist in the period of construction. The organs of suppression, the army and other organizations, are as necessary now, at the time of construction, as they were during the period of civil war. Without these organs, constructive work by the dictatorship with any degree of security would be impossible. It should not be forgotten that for the time being the revolution has been victorious in only one country. It should not be forgotten that as long as capitalist encirclement exists, the danger of intervention, with all the consequences resulting from this danger, will also exist.

V. THE PARTY AND THE WORKING CLASS IN THE SYSTEM OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

I have dealt above with the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of its historical inevitability, from the point of view of its class content, from the point of view of its state nature, and, finally, from the point of view of the destructive and creative tasks which it performs throughout the entire historical period that is termed the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Now we must say something about the dictatorship of the proletariat from the point of view of its structure, from the point of view of its “mechanism,” from the point of view of the role and significance of the “transmission belts,” the “levers,” and the “directing force” which in their totality constitute “the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat” (*Lenin*), and with the help of which the daily work of the dictatorship of the proletariat is accomplished.

What are these “transmission belts” or “levers” in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat? What is this “directing force?” Why are they needed?

The levers or transmission belts are those very mass organizations of the proletariat without the aid of which the dictatorship cannot be realized.

The directing force is the advanced detachment of the proletariat, its vanguard, which is the main guiding force of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The proletariat needs these transmission belts, these levers, and this directing force, because without them, in its struggle for victory, it would be a weaponless army in face of organized and armed capital. The proletariat needs these organizations because without them it would suffer inevitable defeat in its fight for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in its fight for the consolidation of its rule, in its fight for the building of socialism. The systematic help of these organizations and the directing force of the vanguard are needed because in the absence of these conditions it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all durable and firm.

What are these organizations?

Firstly, there are the workers’ trade unions, with their central and local ramifications in the shape of a whole series of organizations concerned with

production, culture, education, etc. These unite the workers of all trades. They are non-Party organizations. The trade unions may be termed the all-embracing organization of the working class, which is in power in our country. They are a school of communism. They promote the best people from their midst for the work of leadership in all branches of administration. They form the link between the advanced and the backward elements in the ranks of the working class. They connect the masses of the workers with the vanguard of the working class.

Secondly, there are the *Soviets*, with their numerous central and local ramifications in the shape of administrative, economic, military, cultural and other state organizations, plus the innumerable mass associations of the working people which have sprung up of their own accord and which encompass these organizations and connect them with the population. The Soviets are a mass organization of all the working people of town and country. They are a non-Party organization. The Soviets are the direct expression of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is through the Soviets that all measures for strengthening the dictatorship and for building socialism are carried out. It is through the Soviets that the state leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat is exercised. The Soviets connect the vast masses of the working people with the vanguard of the proletariat.

Thirdly, there are the *co-operatives* of all kinds, with all their ramifications. These are a mass organization of the working people, a non-Party organization, which unites the working people primarily as consumers, and also, in the course of time, as producers (agricultural co-operatives). The co-operatives acquire special significance after the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, during the period of extensive construction. They facilitate contact between the vanguard of the proletariat and the mass of the peasantry and make it possible to draw the latter into the channel of socialist construction.

Fourthly, there is the *Youth League*. This is a mass organization of young workers and peasants; it is a non-Party organization, but is linked with the Party. Its task is to help the Party to educate the young generation in the spirit of socialism. It provides young reserves for all the other mass organizations of the proletariat in all branches of administration. The Youth League has acquired special significance since the consolidation of the dicta-

V. The Party and the Working Class in the System of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

torship of the proletariat, in the period of extensive cultural and educational work carried on by the proletariat.

Lastly, there is the *party* of the proletariat, its vanguard. Its strength lies in the fact that it draws into its ranks all the best elements of the proletariat from all the mass organizations of the latter. Its function is to *combine* the work of all the mass organizations of the proletariat without exception and to *direct* their activities towards a single goal, the goal of the emancipation of the proletariat. And it is absolutely necessary to combine and direct them towards a single goal; for otherwise unity in the struggle of the proletariat is impossible, for otherwise the guidance of the proletarian masses in their struggle for power, in their struggle for building socialism, is impossible. But only the vanguard of the proletariat, its party, is capable of combining and directing the work of the mass organizations of the proletariat. Only the party of the proletariat, only the Communist Party, is capable of fulfilling this role of main leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why?

Because, in the first place, it is the rallying center 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 center of 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 centralizing 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.⁷⁹

The Party is the main guiding force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, p. 94.—*Ed.*

⁸⁰ V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.—*Ed.*

To sum up: the *trade unions*, as the mass organization of the proletariat, linking the Party with the class primarily in the sphere of production; the *Soviets*, as the mass organization of the working people, linking the Party with the latter primarily in the sphere of state administration; the *co-operatives*, as the mass organization mainly of the peasantry, linking the Party with the peasant masses primarily in the economic sphere, in the sphere of drawing the peasantry into the work of socialist construction; the *Youth League*, as the mass organization of young workers and peasants, whose mission it is to help the vanguard of the proletariat in the socialist education of the new generation and in training young reserves; and, finally the *Party*, as the main directing force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whose mission it is to lead all these mass organizations—such, in general, is the picture of the “mechanism” of the dictatorship, the picture of “the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Without the Party as the main guiding force, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all durable and firm.

Thus, in the words of Lenin:

Taken as a whole, we have a formally non-Communist, flexible and relatively wide, and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked with the *class* and with the *masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *dictatorship of the class* is exercised.^{81, 82}

Of course, this must not be understood in the sense that the Party can or should take the place of the trade unions, the Soviets, and the other mass organizations. The Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, it exercises it not directly, but with the help of the trade unions, and through the Soviets and their ramifications. Without these “transmission belts,” it would be impossible for the dictatorship to be at all firm.

It is impossible to exercise the dictatorship [says Lenin,] without having a number of “transmission belts” from the vanguard

⁸¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

V. The Party and the Working Class in the System of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

to the mass of the advanced class, and from the latter to the mass of the working people.⁸³

The Party, so to speak, draws into its ranks the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without a foundation like the trade unions the dictatorship cannot be exercised, state functions cannot be fulfilled. And these functions have to be exercised *through* a number of special institutions also of a new type, namely, *through* the Soviet apparatus.^{84, 85}

The highest expression of the leading role of the Party, here in the Soviet Union, in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for example, is the fact that not a single important political or organizational question is decided by our Soviet and other mass organizations without guiding directives from the Party. In *this* sense it could be said that the dictatorship of the proletariat is, *in essence*, the “dictatorship” of its vanguard, the “dictatorship” of its Party, as the main guiding force of the proletariat. Here is what Lenin said on this subject at the Second Congress of the Comintern:⁸⁶

Tanner says that he stands for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the dictatorship of the proletariat is not conceived quite in the same way as we conceive it. He says that by the dictatorship of the proletariat we mean, *in essence*,⁸⁷ the dictatorship of its organized and class-conscious minority.

And, as a matter of fact, in the era of capitalism, when the masses of the workers are continuously subjected to exploitation and cannot develop their human potentialities, the most characteristic feature of working-class political parties is that they can embrace only a minority of their class. A political party can comprise only a minority of the class, in the same

⁸³ V. I. Lenin, “The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky’s Mistakes” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

⁸⁴ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ V. I. Lenin, “The Second Congress of the Communist International” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

⁸⁷ My italics.—*J. St.*

way as the really class-conscious workers in every capitalist society constitute only a minority of all the workers. That is why we must admit that only this class-conscious minority can guide the broad masses of the workers and lead them. And if Comrade Tanner says that he is opposed to parties, but at the same time is in favor of the minority consisting of the best organized and most revolutionary workers showing the way to the whole of the proletariat, then I say that there is really no difference between us.⁸⁸

But this, however, must not be understood in the sense that a *sign of equality* can be put between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leading role of the Party (the “dictatorship” of the Party), that the former can be *identified* with the latter that the latter can be *substituted* for the former. Sorin, for example, says that “*the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party.*” This thesis, as you see, identifies the “dictatorship of the Party” with the dictatorship of the proletariat. Can we regard this identification as correct and yet remain on the ground of Leninism? No, we cannot. And for the following reasons:

Firstly. In the passage from his speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern quoted above, Lenin does not by any means identify the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat. He merely says that “only this class-conscious minority (i.e., the Party—*J. St.*) can guide the broad masses of the workers and lead them,” that it is *precisely in this sense* that “by the dictatorship of the proletariat we mean, *in essence*,⁸⁹ the dictatorship of its organized and class-conscious minority.”

To say “in essence” does not mean “wholly.” We often say that the national question is, in essence, a peasant question. And this is quite true. But this does not mean that the national question is covered by the peasant question, that the peasant question is equal in scope to the national question, that the peasant question and the national question are identical. There is no need to prove that the national question is wider and richer in its scope than the peasant question. The same must be said by analogy as regards the leading role of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Although the Party carries out the dictatorship of the proletariat, and in this

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ My italics.—*J. St.*

sense the dictatorship of the proletariat is, *in essence*, the “dictatorship” of its Party, this does not mean that the “dictatorship of the Party” (its leading role) is *identical* with the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the former is *equal* in scope to the latter.

There is no need to prove that the dictatorship of the proletariat is wider and richer in its scope than the leading role of the Party. The Party carries out the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it carries out the dictatorship of the *proletariat*, and not any other kind of dictatorship. Whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes “dictatorship” of the Party for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Secondly. Not a single important decision is arrived at by the mass organizations of the proletariat without guiding directives from the Party. That is perfectly true. But does that mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat *consists entirely* of the guiding directives given by the Party? Does that mean that, in view of this, the guiding directives of the Party can be identified with the dictatorship of the proletariat? Of course not. The dictatorship of the proletariat consists of the guiding directives of the Party plus the carrying out of these directives by the mass organizations of the proletariat, plus their fulfillment by the population. Here, as you see, we have to deal with a whole series of transitions and intermediary steps which are by no means unimportant elements of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Hence, between the guiding directives of the Party and their fulfillment lie the will and actions of those who are led, the will and actions of the class, its willingness (or unwillingness) to support such directives, its ability (or inability) to carry out these directives, its ability (or inability) to carry them out in strict accordance with the demands of the situation. It scarcely needs proof that the Party, having taken the leadership into its hands, cannot but reckon with the will, the condition, the level of political consciousness of those who are led, cannot leave out of account the will, the condition, and level of political consciousness of its class. Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the directives given by the Party for the will and actions of the class.

Thirdly. “The dictatorship of the proletariat,” says Lenin, “is the class struggle of the proletariat, which has won victory and has seized political

power.”⁹⁰ How can this *class* struggle find expression? It may find expression in a series of armed actions by the proletariat against the sorties of the overthrown bourgeoisie, or against the intervention of the foreign bourgeoisie. It may find expression in civil war, if the power of the proletariat has not yet been consolidated. It may find expression, after power has already been consolidated, in the extensive organizational and constructive work of the proletariat, with the enlistment of the broad masses in this work. In all these cases, the acting force is the proletariat as *a class*. It has never happened that the Party, the Party alone, has undertaken all these actions with only its own forces, without the support of the class. Usually it only directs these actions, and it can direct them only to the extent that it has the support of the class. For the Party cannot cover, cannot replace the class. For, despite all its important leading role, the Party still remains *a part* of the class. Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the Party for the class.

Fourthly. The Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. “The Party is the direct governing vanguard of the proletariat; it is the leader.” (*Lenin*.)⁹¹ In this sense the Party *takes* power, the Party *governs the country*. But this must not be understood in the sense that the Party exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat separately from the state power, without the state power; that the Party governs the country separately from the Soviets, not through the Soviets. This does not mean that the Party can be identified with the Soviets, with the state power. The Party is the core of this power, but it is not and cannot be identified with the state power.

“As the ruling Party,” says Lenin, “we could not but merge the Soviet ‘top leadership’ with the Party ‘top leadership’—in our country they are merged and will remain so.” (See Vol. XXVI, p. 208.)⁹² This is quite true. But by this Lenin by no means wants to imply that our Soviet institutions as a whole, for instance our army, our transport, our economic institutions, etc., are Party institutions, that the Party can replace the Soviets and their ramifications, that the Party can be identified with the state power. Lenin

⁹⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Foreword to ‘Deception of the People with Slogans on Freedom and Equality,’” *op. cit.*

⁹¹ V. I. Lenin, “Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

⁹² V. I. Lenin, “Tenth Congress of the RCP(B)” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

repeatedly said that “the system of Soviets is the dictatorship of the proletariat,” and that “the Soviet power is the dictatorship of the proletariat”;⁹³ but he never said that the Party is the state power, that the Soviets and the Party are one and the same thing. The Party, with a membership of several hundred thousand, guides the Soviets and their central and local ramifications, which embrace tens of millions of people, both Party and non-Party, but it cannot and should not supplant them. That is why Lenin says that,

the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organized in the Soviets, the proletariat led by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks; [that] all the work of the Party is carried on *through*⁹⁴ the Soviets, which embrace the laboring masses irrespective of occupation;⁹⁵ [and that the dictatorship] has to be exercised... *through*⁹⁶ the Soviet apparatus.⁹⁷

Therefore, whoever identifies the leading role of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat substitutes the Party for the Soviets, i.e., for the state power.

Fifthly. The concept of dictatorship of the proletariat is a state concept. The dictatorship of the proletariat necessarily includes the concept of force. There is no dictatorship without the use of force, if dictatorship is to be understood in the strict sense of the word. Lenin defines the dictatorship of the proletariat as “power based directly on the *use of force*.”⁹⁸ Hence, to talk about dictatorship of the Party *in relation to the proletarian class*, and to identify it with the dictatorship of the proletariat, is tantamount to saying that in relation to its class the Party must be not only a guide, not only a leader and teacher, but also a sort of dictator employing force against it, which, of course, is quite incorrect. Therefore, whoever identifies “dictatorship of the Party” with the dictatorship of the proletariat tacitly proceeds from the assumption that the prestige of the Party can be built up on force

⁹³ V. I. Lenin, “First Congress of the Communist International” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVIII.

⁹⁴ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁹⁵ V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁹⁶ My italics.—*J. St.*

⁹⁷ V. I. Lenin, “The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky’s Mistakes,” *op. cit.*

⁹⁸ V. I. Lenin, “The ‘Disarmament’ Slogan” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIII.

employed against the working class, which is absurd and quite incompatible with Leninism. The prestige of the Party is sustained by the confidence of the working class. And the confidence of the working class is gained not by force—force only kills it—but by the Party’s correct theory, by the Party’s correct policy, by the Party’s devotion to the working class, by its connection with the masses of the working class, by its readiness and ability to *convince* the masses of the correctness of its slogans.

What, then, follows from all this?

From this it follows that:

- 1) Lenin uses the word *dictatorship* of the Party not in the strict sense of the word (“power based on the use of force”), but in the figurative sense, in the sense of its undivided leadership;
- 2) whoever identifies the leadership of the Party with the *dictatorship* of the proletariat distorts Lenin, wrongly attributing to the Party the function of employing force against the working class as a whole;
- 3) whoever attributes to the Party the function, which it does not possess, of employing force against the working class as a whole, violates the elementary requirements of correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class, between the Party and the proletariat.

Thus, we have come right up to the question of the mutual relations between the Party and the class, between Party and non-Party members of the working class.

Lenin defines these mutual relations as “*mutual confidence*”⁹⁹ between the vanguard of the working class and the mass of the workers.”¹⁰⁰

What does this mean?

It means, firstly, that the Party must closely heed the voice of the masses; that it must pay careful attention to the revolutionary instinct of the masses; that it must study the practice of the struggle of the masses and on this basis test the correctness of its own policy; that, consequently, it must not only teach the masses but also learn from them.

It means, secondly, that the Party must day by day win the confidence of the proletarian masses; that it must by its policy and work secure the

⁹⁹ My italics.—*J. St*

¹⁰⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Tenth Congress of the RCP(B),” *op.cit.*

support of the masses; that it must not command but primarily convince the masses, helping them to realize through their own experience the correctness of the policy of the Party; that, consequently, it must be the guide, the leader and teacher of its class.

To violate these conditions means to upset the correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class, to undermine “mutual confidence,” to shatter both class and Party discipline.

Certainly [says Lenin,] almost everyone now realizes that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, without the strictest, truly iron discipline in our Party, and *without the fullest and unreserved support of the latter by the whole mass of the working class*,¹⁰¹ that is, by all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements, capable of leading or of carrying with them the backward strata.¹⁰²

The dictatorship of the proletariat [says Lenin further,] is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit 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*,¹⁰³ without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully.¹⁰⁴

But how does the Party acquire this confidence and support of the class? How is the iron discipline necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat built up within the working class, on what soil does it grow up?

Here is what Lenin says on this subject:

¹⁰¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁰² V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁰³ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

How is the discipline of the revolutionary party of the proletariat maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? Firstly, by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its stamina, self-sacrifice and heroism. Secondly, by its ability to link itself with, to keep in close touch with, and to a certain extent, if you like, *to merge with the broadest masses of the working people*¹⁰⁵—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian*, laboring masses. Thirdly, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided that the broadest masses have been convinced *through their own experience* of this correctness. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party that is really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, attempts to establish discipline inevitably become a cipher, an empty phrase, mere affectation. On the other hand, these conditions cannot arise all at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated only by correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.¹⁰⁶

And further:

Victory over capitalism requires the correct correlation between the leading, Communist, Party, the revolutionary class—the proletariat—and the masses, i.e., the working people and exploited as a whole. Only the Communist Party, if it is really the vanguard of the revolutionary class, if it contains all the best representatives of that class, if it consists of fully class-conscious and devoted Communists who have been educated and steeled by the experience of stubborn revolutionary struggle,

¹⁰⁵ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

if this Party has succeeded in linking itself inseparably with the whole life of its class and, through it, with the whole mass of exploited, and if it has succeeded in inspiring *the complete confidence* of this class and *this mass*¹⁰⁷—only such a party is capable of leading the proletariat in the most ruthless, resolute and final struggle against all the forces of capitalism. On the other hand, only under the leadership of such a party can the proletariat develop the full might of its revolutionary onslaught and nullify the inevitable apathy and, partly, resistance of the small minority of the labor aristocracy corrupted by capitalism, and of the old trade-union and co-operative leaders, etc.—only then will it be able to display its full strength, which, owing to the very economic structure of capitalist society, is immeasurably greater than the proportion of the population it constitutes.¹⁰⁸

From these quotations it follows that:

- 1) the prestige of the Party and the iron discipline within the working class that are necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat are built up not on fear or on “unrestricted” rights of the Party, but on the confidence of the working class in the Party, on the support which the Party receives from the working class;
- 2) the confidence of the working class in the Party is not acquired at one stroke, and not by means of force against the working class, but by the Party’s prolonged work among the masses, by the correct policy of the Party, by the ability of the Party to convince the masses through their own experience of the correctness of its policy, by the ability of the Party to secure the support of the working class and to take the lead of the masses of the working class;
- 3) without a correct Party policy, reinforced by the experience of the struggle of the masses, and without the confidence of the working class, there is not and cannot be real leadership by the Party;

¹⁰⁷ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁰⁸ V. I. Lenin, “Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

4) the Party and its leadership, if the Party enjoys the confidence of the class, and if this leadership is real leadership, cannot be counterposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat, because without the leadership of the Party (the “dictatorship” of the Party), enjoying the confidence of the working class, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be at all firm.

Without these conditions, the prestige of the Party and iron discipline within the working class are either empty phrases or boastfulness and adventurism.

It is impossible to counterpose the dictatorship of the proletariat to the leadership (the “dictatorship”) of the Party. It is impossible because the leadership of the Party is the principal thing in the dictatorship of the proletariat, if we have in mind a dictatorship that is at all firm and complete, and not one like the Paris Commune, for instance, which was neither a complete nor a firm dictatorship. It is impossible because the dictatorship of the proletariat and the leadership of the Party lie, as it were, on the same line of activity, operate in the same direction.

The mere presentation of the question [says Lenin,] dictatorship of the Party *or* dictatorship of the class, dictatorship (Party) of the leaders *or* dictatorship (Party) of the masses testifies to the most incredible and hopeless confusion of thought.... Everyone knows that the masses are divided into classes...; that usually, and in the majority of cases, at least in modern civilized countries, classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are directed by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members who are elected to the most responsible positions and are called leaders... To go so far... as to counterpose, in general, dictatorship of the masses to dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd and stupid.¹⁰⁹

That is absolutely correct. But that correct statement proceeds from the premise that correct mutual relations exist between the vanguard and the masses of the workers, between the Party and the class. It proceeds from the assumption that the mutual relations between the vanguard and the

¹⁰⁹ V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” Communism, an Infantile Disorder, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

V. The Party and the Working Class in the System of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

class remain, so to say, normal, remain within the bounds of “mutual confidence.”

But what if the correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class, the relations of “mutual confidence” between the Party and the class are upset?

What if the Party itself begins, in some way or other, to counterpose itself to the class, thus upsetting the foundations of its correct mutual relations with the class, thus upsetting the foundations of “mutual confidence?”

Are such cases at all possible?

Yes, they are.

They are possible:

- 1) *if* the Party begins to build its prestige among the masses, not on its work and on the confidence of the masses, but on its “unrestricted” rights;
- 2) *if* the Party’s policy is obviously wrong and the Party is unwilling to reconsider and rectify its mistake;
- 3) *if* the Party’s policy is correct on the whole but the masses are not yet ready to make it their own, and the Party is either unwilling or unable to bide its time so as to give the masses an opportunity to become convinced through their own experience that the Party’s policy is correct, and seeks to impose it on the masses.

The history of our Party provides a number of such cases. Various groups and factions in our Party have come to grief and disappeared because they violated one of these three conditions, and sometimes all these conditions taken together.

But it follows from this that counterposing the dictatorship of the proletariat to the “dictatorship” (leadership) of the Party can be regarded as incorrect only:

- 1) *if* by dictatorship of the Party in relation to the working class we mean not a dictatorship in the proper sense of the word (“power based on the use of force”), but the leadership of the Party, which precludes the use of force against the working class as a whole, against its majority, precisely as Lenin meant it;

2) *if* the Party has the qualifications to be the real leader of the class, i.e., if the Party's policy is correct, if this policy accords with the interests of the class;

3) *if* the class, if the majority of the class, accepts that policy, makes that policy its own, becomes convinced, as a result of the work of the Party, that that policy is correct, has confidence in the Party and supports it.

The violation of these conditions inevitably gives rise to a conflict between the Party and the class, to a split between them, to their being counterposed to each other.

Can the Party's leadership be imposed on the class by force? No, it cannot. At all events, such a leadership cannot be at all durable. If the Party wants to remain the party of the proletariat, it must know that it is, primarily and principally, the guide, the leader, the teacher of the working class. We must not forget what Lenin said on this subject in his pamphlet *The State and Revolution*:

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, which is capable of taking power and *of leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organizing the new order, of being the *teacher*, the *guide*, the *leader*¹¹⁰ of all the toilers and exploited in building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.¹¹¹

Can one consider the Party as the real leader of the 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 reconsider its policy, must correct its policy, must acknowledge its mistake and correct it. In confirmation of this thesis one could cite, for example, such a fact from the history of our Party as 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 decided to reconsider this policy. Here is what Lenin said at

¹¹⁰ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹¹¹ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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 peasantry is not satisfied with the form of relations that has been established with it, that it does not want this form of relations and will not go on living in this way. That is indisputable. It has definitely expressed this will. This is the will of the vast mass of the laboring population. We must reckon with this; and we are sufficiently sober politicians to say straight forwardly: *Let us reconsider our policy towards the peasantry.*^{112, 113}

Can one consider that the Party should take the initiative and leadership in organizing decisive actions by the masses merely on the ground that its policy is correct on the whole, *if* that policy does not yet meet the confidence and support of the class because, say, of the latter's 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, one cannot. 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 through their own experience that this policy is correct.

If the revolutionary party [says Lenin] has not a majority in the advanced detachments of the revolutionary classes and in the country, an uprising is out of the question.¹¹⁴

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.¹¹⁵

The proletarian vanguard has been won over ideologically. That is the main thing. Without this not even the first step towards

¹¹² My italics.—*J. St.*

¹¹³ V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the RCP(B)," *op. cit.*

¹¹⁴ V. I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXVI.

¹¹⁵ V. I. Lenin, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

victory can be made. But it is still a fairly long way from victory. Victory cannot be won with the vanguard alone. 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 working people and those oppressed by capital may take up such a position, propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. For this the masses must have their own political experience.¹¹⁶

We know that this is precisely how our Party acted during the period from Lenin's April Theses to the October uprising of 1917. And it was precisely because it acted according to these directives of Lenin's that it was successful in the uprising.

Such, basically, are the conditions for correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class.

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

Leadership under these 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's positions and help them to realize through their own experience the correctness of the Party's policy; the ability to raise the masses to the Party's level of political consciousness and thus secure the support of the masses and their readiness for the decisive struggle.

Therefore, the method of persuasion is the principal method of the Party's leadership of the working class.

If we, in Russia today, [says Lenin,] after two-and-a-half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente, were to make "recognition of the dictatorship" a condition of trade-union membership, we should be committing a folly, we should be damaging our influence over the

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

masses, we should be helping the Mensheviks. For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to *convince* the backward elements, to be able to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them by artificial and childish “Left” slogans.¹¹⁷

This, of course, must not be understood in the sense that the Party must convince all the workers, down to the last man, and that only after this is it possible to proceed to action, that only after this is it possible to start operations. Not at all! It only means that before entering upon decisive political actions the Party must, by means of prolonged revolutionary work, secure for itself the support of the majority of the masses of the workers, or at least the benevolent neutrality of the majority of the class. Otherwise Lenin’s thesis, that a necessary condition for victorious revolution is that the Party should win over the majority of the working class, would be devoid of all meaning.

Well, and what is to be done with the minority, if it does not wish, if it does not agree voluntarily to submit to the will of the majority? Can the Party—must the Party—enjoying the confidence of the majority, compel the minority to submit to the will of the majority? Yes, it can and it must. Leadership is ensured by the method of persuading the masses, as the principal method by which the Party influences the masses. This, however, does not preclude, but presupposes, the use of coercion, if such coercion is based on confidence in the Party and support for it on the part of the majority of the working class, if it is applied to the minority after the Party has convinced the majority.

It would be well to recall the controversies around this subject that took place in our Party during the discussion on the trade-union question. What was the mistake of the opposition, the mistake of the Tsektran,¹¹⁸ at that time? Was it that the opposition then considered it possible to resort

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹¹⁸ Tsektran—the Central Committee of the Joint Union of Rail and Water Transport Workers—was formed in September 1920. In 1920 and in the beginning of 1921, the leadership of the Tsektran was in the hands of Trotskyites, who used methods of sheer compulsion and dictation in conducting trade-union activities. In March 1921 the First All-Russian Joint Congress of Rail and Water Transport Workers expelled the Trotskyites from the leadership of the Tsektran, elected a new Central Committee and outlined new methods of trade-union work.—*Ed.*

to coercion? No! It was not that. The mistake of the opposition at that time was that, being unable to convince the majority of the correctness of its position, having lost the confidence of the majority, it nevertheless began to apply coercion, began to insist on “shaking up” those who enjoyed the confidence of the majority.

Here is what Lenin said at that time, at the Tenth Congress of the Party, in his speech on the trade unions:

In order to establish mutual relations and mutual confidence between the vanguard of the working class and the masses of the workers, it was necessary, if the Tsektran had made a mistake... to correct this mistake. But when people begin to defend this mistake, it becomes a source of political danger. Had not the utmost possible been done in the way of democracy in heeding the moods expressed here by Kutuzov, we would have met with political bankruptcy. *First we must convince, and then coerce. We must at all costs first convince, and then coerce.*¹¹⁹ We were not able to convince the broad masses, and we upset the correct relations between the vanguard and the masses.¹²⁰

Lenin says the same thing in his pamphlet *On the Trade Unions*:¹²¹

“We applied coercion correctly and successfully only when we were able to create beforehand a basis of conviction for it.”¹²²

And that is quite true, for without those conditions no leadership is possible. For only in that way can we ensure unity of action in the Party, if we are speaking of the Party, or unity of action of the class, if we are speaking of the class as a whole. Without this there is splitting, confusion and demoralization in the ranks of the working class.

Such in general are the fundamentals of correct leadership of the working class by the Party.

Any other conception of leadership is syndicalism, anarchism, bureaucracy—anything you please, but not Bolshevism, not Leninism.

¹¹⁹ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹²⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Tenth Congress of the RCP(B),” *op. cit.*

¹²¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Trade Unions, the Present Situation and Trotsky’s Mistakes,” *op. cit.*

¹²² *Ibid.*

The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be counterposed to the leadership (“dictatorship”) of the Party if correct mutual relations exist between the Party and the working class, between the vanguard and the masses of the workers. But from this it follows that it is all the more impermissible to identify the Party with the working class, the leadership (“dictatorship”) of the Party with the dictatorship of the working class. *On the ground* that the “dictatorship” of the Party can not be counterposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat Sorin arrived at the wrong conclusion that “*the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party.*”

But Lenin not only speaks of the impermissibility of such counterposition, he also speaks of the impermissibility of counterposing “the dictatorship of the masses to the dictatorship of the leaders.” Would you, *on this ground*, have us identify the dictatorship of leaders with the dictatorship of the proletariat? If we took that line, we would have to say that “*the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our leaders.*” But it is precisely to this absurdity that we are led, properly speaking, by the policy of identifying the “dictatorship” of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat....

Where does Zinoviev stand on this subject?

In essence, Zinoviev shares Sorin’s point of view of identifying the “dictatorship” of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat—with the difference, however, that Sorin expresses himself more openly and clearly, whereas Zinoviev “wiggles.” One need only take, for instance, the following passage in Zinoviev’s book *Leninism* to be convinced of this:

What [says Zinoviev] is the system existing in the USSR from the standpoint of its class content? It is the dictatorship of the proletariat. What is the direct mainspring of power in the USSR? Who exercises the power of the working class? The Communist Party! In this sense *we have the dictatorship of the Party.*¹²³ What is the juridical form of power in the USSR? What is the new type of state system that was created by the October Revolution? The Soviet system. The one does not in the least contradict the other.

¹²³ My italics.—*J. St.*

That the one does not contradict the other is, of course, correct *if* by the dictatorship of the Party in relation to the working class as a whole we mean the leadership of the Party.

But how is it possible, *on this ground*, to place a sign of equality between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the “dictatorship” of the Party, between the Soviet system and the “dictatorship” of the Party? Lenin identified the system of Soviets with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and he was right; for the Soviets, *our* Soviets, are organizations which rally the laboring masses around the proletariat under the leadership of the Party. But when, where, and in which of his writings did Lenin place a sign of equality between the “dictatorship” of the Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, between the “dictatorship” of the Party and the system of Soviets, as Zinoviev does now? Neither the leadership (“dictatorship”) of the Party nor the leadership (“dictatorship”) of the leaders contradicts the dictatorship of the proletariat. Would you, *on this ground*, have us proclaim that our country is the country of the dictatorship of the proletariat, *that is to say*, the country of the dictatorship of the Party, *that is to say*, the country of the dictatorship of the leaders? And yet the “principle” of identifying the “dictatorship” of the Party with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Zinoviev enunciates surreptitiously and uncourageously, leads precisely to this absurdity.

In Lenin’s numerous works I have been able to note only five cases in which he touches, in passing, on the question of the dictatorship of the Party.

The first case is in his controversy with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, where he says:

When we are reproached with the dictatorship of one party, and when, as you have heard, a proposal is made to establish a united socialist front, we reply: “Yes, the dictatorship of one party! We stand by it, and cannot depart from it; for it is that Party which, in the course of decades, has won the position of vanguard of the whole factory and industrial proletariat.”¹²⁴

¹²⁴ V. I. Lenin, “Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Workers in Education and Socialist Culture” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

The second case is in his "Letter to the Workers and Peasants in Connection with the Victory over Kolchak," in which he says:

Some people (especially the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries—all of them, even the "Lefts" among them) are trying to scare the peasants with the bogey of the 'dictatorship of one party,' the Party of Bolsheviks, Communists.

The peasants have learnt from the instance of Kolchak not to be afraid of this bogey.

Either the dictatorship (i.e., iron rule) of the landlords and capitalists, or the dictatorship of the working class.¹²⁵

The third case is Lenin's speech at the Second Congress of the Comintern in his controversy with Tanner. I have quoted it above.¹²⁶

The fourth case is a few lines in the pamphlet "*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*." The passages in question have already been quoted above.¹²⁷

And the fifth case is in his draft outline of the dictatorship of the proletariat, published in the *Lenin Miscellany*, Volume III, where there is a sub-heading "Dictatorship of One Party."¹²⁸

It should be noted that in two out of the five cases, the last and the second, Lenin puts the words "dictatorship of one party" in quotation marks, thus clearly emphasizing the inexact, figurative sense of this formula.

It should also be noted that in every one of these cases, by the "dictatorship of the Party" Lenin meant dictatorship ("iron rule") over the "landlords and capitalists," and not over the working class, contrary to the slanderous fabrications of Kautsky and Co.

It is characteristic that in none of his works, major or secondary, in which Lenin discusses or merely alludes to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the role of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is there any hint whatever that "the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of our Party." On the contrary, every page, every line of these

¹²⁵ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to the Workers and Peasants Apropos of the Victory over Kolchak" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

¹²⁶ See pp. 57-58.

¹²⁷ See pp. 61-69.

¹²⁸ See *Lenin Miscellany*, Vol. III.

works cries out against such a formula. (See *The State and Revolution*, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, “Left-Wing” Communism, *an Infantile Disorder*, etc.)

Even more characteristic is the fact that in the theses of the Second Congress of the Comintern on the role of a political party,¹²⁹ which were drawn up under the direct guidance of Lenin, and to which Lenin repeatedly referred in his speeches as a model of the correct formulation of the role and tasks of the Party, we find *not one word*, literally *not one word*, about dictatorship of the Party.

What does all this indicate?

It indicates that:

- a) Lenin did not regard the formula “dictatorship of the Party” as irreproachable and exact, for which reason it is very rarely used in Lenin’s works, and is sometimes put in quotation marks;
- b) on the few occasions that Lenin was obliged, in controversy with opponents, to speak of the dictatorship of the Party, he usually referred to the “dictatorship of one party,” i.e., to the fact that our Party holds power alone, that it does not share power with other parties. Moreover, he always made it clear that the dictatorship of the Party *in relation to the working class* meant the leadership of the Party, its leading role;
- c) in all those cases in which Lenin thought it necessary to give a scientific definition of the role of the Party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, he spoke *exclusively* of the leading role of the Party in relation to the working class (and there are thousands of such cases);
- d) that is why it never “occurred” to Lenin to include the formula “dictatorship of the Party” in the fundamental resolution on the role of the Party—I have in mind the resolution adopted at the Second Congress of the Comintern;
- e) the comrades who identify, or try to identify, the “dictatorship” of the Party and, therefore, the “dictatorship of the leaders” with the

¹²⁹ See V. I. Lenin, “Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the Second Congress of the Communist International,” *op. cit.*

V. The Party and the Working Class in the System of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

dictatorship of the proletariat are wrong from the point of view of Leninism, and are politically shortsighted, for they thereby violate the conditions for correct mutual relations between the vanguard and the class.

This is apart from the fact that the formula “dictatorship of the Party,” when taken without the above-mentioned reservations, can give rise to quite a number of dangers and political setbacks in our practical work. This formula, taken without reservations, says, as it were,

a) *to the non-Party masses*: don’t dare to contradict, don’t dare to argue, for the Party can do everything, for we have the dictatorship of the Party;

b) *to the Party cadres*: act more boldly, tighten the screw, there is no need to heed what the non-Party masses say, we have the dictatorship of the Party;

c) *to the top leadership of the Party*: you may indulge in the luxury of a certain amount of complacency, you may even become conceited, for we have the dictatorship of the Party, and, “consequently,” the dictatorship of the leaders.

It is opportune to call attention to these dangers precisely at the present moment, in a period when the political activity of the masses is rising, when the readiness of the Party to heed the voice of the masses is of particular value to us, when attention to the requirements of the masses is a fundamental precept of our Party, when it is incumbent upon the Party to display particular caution and particular flexibility in its policy, when the danger of becoming conceited is one of the most serious dangers confronting the Party in its task of correctly leading the masses.

One cannot but recall Lenin’s golden words at the Eleventh Congress of our Party:

Among the mass of the people we [the Communists—*J. St.*] are after all but a drop in the ocean, and we can administer only when we properly express what the people are conscious of. Unless we do this the Communist Party will not lead the pro-

letariat, the proletariat will not lead the masses, and the whole machine will collapse.¹³⁰

“Properly express what the people are conscious of”—this is precisely the necessary condition that ensures for the Party the honorable role of the principal guiding force in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

¹³⁰ V. I. Lenin, *“Eleventh Congress of the RCP(B)”* in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.

VI. THE QUESTION OF THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

The pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism* (May 1924, first edition) contains two formulations on the question of the victory of socialism in one country. The first of these says:

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 fits in 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.¹³¹

This thesis is quite correct and needs no comment. It is directed against the theory of the Social-Democrats, who regard the seizure of power by the proletariat in one country, without the simultaneous victory of the revolution in other countries, as utopian.

But the pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism* contains a second formulation, which says:

But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. The principal task of socialism—the organization of socialist production—has still to be fulfilled. Can this task be fulfilled, can the final victory of socialism be achieved in one country, without the joint efforts of the proletarians in several advanced countries? No, it cannot. To overthrow the bourgeois-

¹³¹ Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.—*Ed.*

sie the efforts of one country are sufficient; this is proved by the history of our revolution. For the final victory of socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of a peasant country like Russia, are insufficient; for that, the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are required.¹³²

This second formulation was directed against the assertions of the critics of Leninism, against the Trotskyites, who declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, in the absence of victory in other countries, could not “hold out in the face of a conservative Europe.”

To that extent—but only to that extent—this formulation was then (May 1924) adequate, and undoubtedly it was of some service.

Subsequently, however, when the criticism of Leninism in this sphere had already been overcome in the Party, when a new question had come to the fore—the question of the possibility of building a complete socialist society by the efforts of our country, without help from abroad—the second formulation became obviously inadequate, and therefore incorrect.

What is the defect in this formulation?

Its defect is that it joins two different questions into one: it joins the question of the *possibility* of building socialism by the efforts of one country—which must be answered in the affirmative—with the question whether a country in which the dictatorship of the proletariat exists can consider itself *fully guaranteed* against intervention, and consequently against the restoration of the old order, without a victorious revolution in a number of other countries—which must be answered in the negative. This is apart from the fact that this formulation may give occasion for thinking that the organization of a socialist society by the efforts of one country is impossible—which, of course, is incorrect.

On this ground I modified and corrected this formulation in my pamphlet *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists* (December 1924); I divided the question into two—into the question of a *full guarantee against the restoration of the bourgeois order*, and the question of the *possibility of building a complete socialist society* in one country. This was effected, in the first place, by treating the “complete victory of socialism” as a “full guarantee against the restoration of the old order,” which is possible

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 34.—Ed..

only through “the joint efforts of the proletarians of several countries”; and, secondly, by proclaiming, on the basis of Lenin’s pamphlet *On Cooperation*,¹³³ the indisputable truth that we have all that is necessary for building a complete socialist society.¹³⁴

It was this new formulation of the question that formed the basis for the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference “The Tasks of the Comintern and the RCP(B),”¹³⁵ which examines the question of the victory of socialism in one country in connection with the stabilization of capitalism (April 1925), and considers that the building of socialism by the efforts of our country is possible and necessary.

This new formulation also served as the basis for my pamphlet *The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the RCP(B)* published in May 1925, immediately after the Fourteenth Party Conference.

With regard to the presentation of the question of the victory of socialism in one country, this pamphlet states:

Our country exhibits two groups of contradictions. One group consists of the internal contradictions that exist between the proletariat and the peasantry [this refers to the building of socialism in one country—*J. St.*]. The other group consists of the external contradictions that exist between our country, as the land of socialism, and all the other countries as lands of capitalism [this refers to the final victory of socialism—*J. St.*]. ...Anyone who confuses the first group of contradictions, which can be overcome entirely by the efforts of one country, with the second group of contradictions, the solution of which requires the efforts of the proletarians of several countries com-

¹³³ V. I. Lenin, “On Cooperation” in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXIII.—*Ed.*

¹³⁴ Joseph Stalin, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, *op. cit.* This new formulation of the question was substituted for the old one in subsequent editions of the pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism*.—*Ed.*

¹³⁵ For the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference on “The Tasks of the Comintern and the RCP(B) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.,” see *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, pp. 43-52.—*Ed.*

mits a gross error against Leninism. He is either a muddle-head or an incorrigible opportunist,¹³⁶

On the question of the *victory* of socialism in our country, the pamphlet states:

We can build socialism, and we will build it together with the peasantry under the leadership of the working class. [For] under the dictatorship of the proletariat we possess ...all that is needed to build a complete socialist society, overcoming all internal difficulties, for we can and must overcome them by our own efforts.¹³⁷

On the question of the final victory of socialism, it states:

The final victory of socialism is the full guarantee against attempts at intervention, and hence against restoration; for any serious attempt at restoration can take place only with serious support from outside, only with the support of international capital. Therefore, the support of our revolution by the workers of all countries, and still more the victory of the workers in at least several countries, is a necessary condition for fully guaranteeing the first victorious country against attempts at intervention and restoration, a necessary condition for the final victory of socialism.¹³⁸

Clear, one would think.

It is well known that this question was treated in the same spirit in my pamphlet *Questions and Answers* (June 1925) and in the political report of the Central Committee to the Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU (B)¹³⁹ (December 1925).

Such are the facts.

¹³⁶ Joseph Stalin, "The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the RCP(B)" in *Works*, Vol. VII, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, pp. 111 and 120-21.—*Ed.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 111 and 117-18.—*Ed.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.—*Ed.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 267-403.—*Ed.*

These facts, I think, are known to all the comrades, including Zinoviev.

If now, nearly two years after the ideological struggle in the Party and after the resolution that was adopted at the Fourteenth Party Conference (April 1925), Zinoviev finds it possible in his reply to the discussion at the Fourteenth Party Congress (December 1925) to dig up the old and quite inadequate formula contained in Stalin's pamphlet written in April 1924, and to make it the basis for deciding the already decided question of the victory of socialism in one country—then this peculiar trick of his only goes to show that he has got completely muddled on this question. To drag the Party back after it has moved forward, to evade the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference after it has been confirmed by a plenum of the Central Committee,¹⁴⁰ means to become hopelessly entangled in contradictions, to have no faith in the cause of building socialism, to abandon the path of Lenin, and to acknowledge one's own defeat.

What is meant by the *possibility* of the victory of socialism in one country?

It means the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry by means of the internal forces of our country, the possibility of the proletariat seizing power and using that power to build a complete socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and the support of the proletarians of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

Without such a possibility, building socialism is building without prospects, building without being sure that socialism will be completely built. It is no use engaging in building socialism without being sure that we can build it completely, without being sure that the technical backwardness of our country is not an *insuperable* obstacle to the building of a complete socialist society. To deny such a possibility means disbelief in the cause of building socialism, departure from Leninism.

¹⁴⁰ This refers to the plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) which was held April 23-30, 1925. The plenum endorsed the resolutions adopted by the Fourteenth Conference of the RCP(B), including the resolution on "The Tasks of the Comintern and the RCP(B) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I." which defined the Party's position on the question of the victory of socialism in the USSR (See *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, pp. 43-52.)—Ed.

What is meant by the *impossibility* of the complete, final victory of socialism in one country without the victory of the revolution in other countries?

It means the impossibility of having a full guarantee against intervention, and consequently against the restoration of the bourgeois order, without the victory of the revolution in at least a number of countries. To deny this indisputable thesis means departure from internationalism, departure from Leninism.

We are living [says Lenin,] not merely in a state, but *in a system of states*, and the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end comes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable. That means that if the ruling class, the proletariat, wants to, and will hold sway, it must prove this by its military organization also.¹⁴¹

We have before us [says Lenin in another passage,] a certain equilibrium, which is in the highest degree unstable, but an unquestionable, an indisputable equilibrium nevertheless. Will it last long? I do not know and, I think, it is impossible to know. And therefore we must exercise very great caution. And the first precept of our policy, the first lesson to be learnt from our governmental activities during the past year, the lesson which all the workers and peasants must learn, is that we must be on the alert, we must remember that we are surrounded by people, classes and governments who openly express their intense hatred for us. We must remember that we are at all times but a hair's breadth from every manner of invasion.¹⁴²

Clear, one would think.

Where does Zinoviev stand as regards the question of the victory of socialism in one country?

Listen:

¹⁴¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B)" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXIX.

¹⁴² V. I. Lenin, "Ninth All-Russia Congress of Soviets" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXI.

VI. The Question of the Victory of Socialism in One Country

By the final victory of socialism is meant, at least: 1) the abolition of classes, and therefore 2) the abolition of the dictatorship of one class, in this case the dictatorship of the proletariat. ... In order to get a clearer idea of how the question stands here, in the USSR, in the year 1925 [says Zinoviev further,] we must distinguish between two things: 1) the assured *possibility* of engaging in building socialism—such a possibility, it stands to reason, is quite conceivable within the limits of one country; and 2) the final construction and consolidation of socialism, i.e., the achievement of a socialist system, of a socialist society.

What can all this signify?

It signifies that by the final victory of socialism in one country Zinoviev understands, not a guarantee against intervention and restoration, but the possibility of completely building socialist society. And by the victory of socialism in one country Zinoviev understands the kind of building socialism which cannot and should not lead to completely building socialism. Building at haphazard, without prospects, building socialism, although completely building a socialist society is impossible—such is Zinoviev's position.

To engage in building socialism *without the possibility* of completely building it, *knowing that it cannot be completely built*—such are the absurdities in which Zinoviev has involved himself.

But this is a mockery of the question, not a solution of it!

Here is another extract from Zinoviev's reply to the discussion at the Fourteenth Party Congress:

Take a look, for instance, at what Comrade Yakovlev went so far as to say at the last Kursk Gubernia Party Conference. He asks: "Is it possible for us, surrounded as we are on all sides by capitalist enemies, to completely build socialism in one country under such conditions?" And he answers: "On the basis of all that has been said we have the right to say not only that we are building socialism, but that in spite of the fact that for the time being we are alone, that for the time being we are the

only Soviet country, the only Soviet state in the world, we shall completely build socialism.”¹⁴³

“*Is this the Leninist method of presenting the question,*” Zinoviev asks, “*does not this smack of national narrow-mindedness?*”¹⁴⁴

Thus, according to Zinoviev, to recognize the possibility of completely building socialism in one country means adopting the point of view of national narrow-mindedness, while to deny such a possibility means adopting the point of view of internationalism.

But if that is true, is it at all worthwhile fighting for victory over the capitalist elements in our economy? Does it not follow from this that such a victory is impossible?

Capitulation to the capitalist elements in our economy—that is what the inherent logic of Zinoviev’s line of argument leads us to.

And this absurdity, which has nothing in common with Leninism, is presented to us by Zinoviev as “internationalism,” as “100 percent Leninism!”

I assert that on this most important question of building socialism Zinoviev is deserting Leninism and slipping to the standpoint of the Menshevik Sukhanov.

Let us turn to Lenin. Here is what he said about the victory of socialism in one country even before the October Revolution, in August 1915:

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately. The victorious proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and *organized its own socialist production*,¹⁴⁵ would stand up *against* the rest of the world, the capitalist world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, raising revolts in those countries against the capitalists, and

¹⁴³ *Kurskaya Pravda*, No. 279, December 8, 1925.

¹⁴⁴ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁴⁵ My italics.—*J. St.*

in the event of necessity coming out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.¹⁴⁶

What is meant by Lenin's phrase "having... organized its own socialist production," which I have stressed? It means that the proletariat of the victorious country, having seized power, *can* and *must* organize its own socialist production. And what does "organize socialist production" mean? It means completely building a socialist society. It scarcely needs proof that this clear and definite statement of Lenin's requires no further comment. Otherwise Lenin's call for the seizure of power by the proletariat in October 1917 would be incomprehensible.

You see that this clear thesis of Lenin's, in comparison with Zinoviev's muddled and anti-Leninist "thesis" that we can engage in building socialism "within the limits of one country," although it is *impossible* to build it completely, is as different from the latter as the heavens from the earth.

The statement quoted above was made by Lenin in 1915, before the proletariat had taken power. But perhaps he modified his views after the experience of taking power, after 1917? Let us turn to Lenin's pamphlet *On Cooperation*, written in 1923.

As a matter of fact, [says Lenin,] state power over all large-scale means of production, state power 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 for building a complete socialist society from the co-operatives, from the co-operatives alone, which we formerly looked down upon as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to look down upon as such now, under NEP? *Is this not all that is necessary for 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.*^{147, 148}

¹⁴⁶ V. I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXI.

¹⁴⁷ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁴⁸ V. I. Lenin, "On Cooperation," *op. cit.*

In other words, we can and must build a complete socialist society; for we have at our disposal all that is necessary and sufficient for this building.

I think it would be difficult to express oneself more clearly.

Compare this classical thesis of Lenin's with the anti-Leninist rebuke Zinoviev administered to Yakovlev, and you will realize that Yakovlev was only repeating Lenin's words about the possibility of completely building socialism in one country, whereas Zinoviev, by attacking this thesis and castigating Yakovlev, deserted Lenin and adopted the point of view of the Menshevik Sukhanov, the point of view that it is impossible to build socialism completely in our country owing to its technical backwardness.

One can only wonder why we took power in October 1917 if we did not count on completely building socialism.

We should not have taken power in October 1917—this is the conclusion to which the inherent logic of Zinoviev's line of argument leads us.

I assert further that in the highly important question of the victory of socialism Zinoviev has gone *counter* to the definite decisions of our Party, as registered in the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference "The Tasks of the Comintern and the RCP(B) in Connection with the Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI."

Let us turn to this resolution. Here is what it says about the victory of socialism in one country:

The existence of two directly opposite social systems gives rise to the constant menace of capitalist blockade, of other forms of economic pressure, of armed intervention, of restoration. Consequently, the only guarantee of the *final victory of socialism*, i.e., *the guarantee against restoration*, is a victorious socialist revolution in a number of countries.... Leninism teaches that the *final victory of socialism, in the sense of a full guarantee against the restoration* of bourgeois relationships, is possible only on an international scale.... But it *does not follow* from this that it is impossible to build a *complete socialist society*¹⁴⁹ in a backward country like Russia, without the "state aid" (Trotsky) of countries more developed technically and economically.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁵⁰ *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, pp. 49 and 46.—*Ed.*

As you see, the resolution interprets the final victory of socialism as a guarantee against intervention and restoration, *in complete contrast* to Zinoviev's interpretation in his book *Leninism*.

As you see, the resolution recognizes the possibility of building a complete socialist society in a backward country like Russia without the "state aid" of countries more developed technically and economically, *in complete contrast* to what Zinoviev said when he rebuked Yakovlev in his reply to the discussion at the Fourteenth Party Congress.

How else can this be described if not as a struggle on Zinoviev's part *against* the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference?

Of course, Party resolutions are sometimes not free from error. Sometimes they contain mistakes. Speaking generally, one may assume that the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference also contains certain errors. Perhaps Zinoviev thinks that this resolution is erroneous. But then he should say so clearly and openly, as befits a Bolshevik. For some reason or other, however, Zinoviev does not do so. He preferred to choose another path, that of attacking the resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference from the rear, while keeping silent about this resolution and refraining from any open criticism of the resolution. Zinoviev evidently thinks that this will be the best way of achieving his purpose. And he has but one purpose, namely—to "improve" the resolution, and to amend Lenin "just a little bit." It scarcely needs proof that Zinoviev has made a mistake in his calculations.

What is Zinoviev's mistake due to? What is the root of this mistake?

The root of this mistake, in my opinion, lies in Zinoviev's conviction that the technical backwardness of our country is an *insuperable* obstacle to the building of a complete socialist society; that the proletariat cannot completely build socialism owing to the technical backwardness of our country. Zinoviev and Kamenev once tried to raise this argument at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Party prior to the April Party Conference.¹⁵¹ But they received a rebuff and were compelled to retreat, and *formally* they submitted to the opposite point of view, the point of view of the majority of the Central Committee. But although he formally submitted to it, Zinoviev has continued to wage a struggle against it all the time. Here is what the Moscow Committee of our Party says about this "incident" in the Central

¹⁵¹ This refers to the Fourteenth Conference of the RCP(B), held April 27-29, 1925.—*Ed.*

Committee of the RCP(B) in its "Reply" to the letter of the Leningrad Gubernia Party Conference:¹⁵²

Recently, in the Political Bureau, Kamenev and Zinoviev advocated the point of view that we cannot cope with the internal difficulties due to our technical and economic backwardness unless an international revolution comes to our rescue. We, however, with the majority of the members of the Central Committee, think that we can build socialism, are building it, and will completely build it, notwithstanding our technical backwardness and in spite of it. We think that the work of building will proceed far more slowly, of course, than in the conditions of a world victory; nevertheless, we are making progress and will continue to do so. We also believe that the view held by Kamenev and Zinoviev expresses disbelief in the internal forces of our working class and of the peasant masses who follow its lead. We believe that it is a departure from the Leninist position.¹⁵³

This document appeared in the press during the first sittings of the Fourteenth Party Congress. Zinoviev, of course, had the opportunity of attacking this document at the congress. It is characteristic that Zinoviev and Kamenev found no arguments against this grave accusation directed against them by the Moscow Committee of our Party. Was this accidental? I think not. The accusation, apparently, hit the mark. Zinoviev and Kamenev "replied" to this accusation by silence, because they had no "card to beat it."

The "New Opposition" is offended because Zinoviev is accused of disbelief in the victory of socialist construction in our country. But if after a whole year of discussion on the question of the victory of socialism in one country; after Zinoviev's viewpoint has been rejected by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee (April 1925); after the Party has arrived at a definite opinion on this question, recorded in the well-known resolution of the Fourteenth Party Conference (April 1925)—if, after all this, Zinoviev

¹⁵² The reply of the Moscow Committee of the RCP(B) to the letter of the Twenty-Second Leningrad Gubernia Party Conference, a letter that was a factional attack by the followers of Zinoviev and Kamenev, was published in *Pravda*, No. 291, December 20, 1925.—*Ed.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*—*Ed.*

ventures to oppose the point of view of the Party in his book *Leninism* (September 1925), if he then repeats this opposition at the Fourteenth Party Congress—how can all this, this stubbornness, this persistence in his error, be explained if not by the fact that Zinoviev is infected, hopelessly infected, with disbelief in the victory of socialist construction in our country?

It pleases Zinoviev to regard this disbelief of his as internationalism. But since when have we come to regard departure from Leninism on a cardinal question of Leninism as internationalism?

Will it not be more correct to say that it is not the Party but Zinoviev who is sinning against internationalism and the international revolution? For what is our country, the country “that is building socialism,” if not the base of the world revolution? But can it be a real base of the world revolution if it is incapable of completely building a socialist society? Can it remain the mighty center of attraction for the workers of all countries that it undoubtedly is now, if it is incapable of achieving victory at home over the capitalist elements in our economy, the victory of socialist construction? I think not. But does it not follow from this that disbelief in the victory of socialist construction, the dissemination of such disbelief, will lead to our country being discredited as the base of the world revolution? And if our country is discredited the world revolutionary movement will be weakened. How did Messrs. the Social-Democrats try to scare the workers away from us? By preaching that “the Russians will not get anywhere.” What are we beating the Social-Democrats with now, when we are attracting a whole series of workers’ delegations to our country and thereby strengthening the position of communism all over the world? By our successes in building socialism. Is it not obvious, then, that whoever disseminates disbelief in our successes in building socialism thereby indirectly helps the Social-Democrats, reduces the sweep of the international revolutionary movement, and inevitably departs from internationalism?...

You see that Zinoviev is in no better position in regard to his “internationalism” than in regard to his “100 per cent Leninism” on the question of building socialism in one country.

Concerning Questions of Leninism

That is why the Fourteenth Party Congress rightly defined the views of the “New Opposition” as “disbelief in the cause of socialist construction,” as “a distortion of Leninism.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, p. 77.—*Ed.*

VII. THE FIGHT FOR THE VICTORY OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

I think that disbelief in the victory of socialist construction is the principal error of the "New Opposition." In my opinion, it is the principal error because from it spring all the other errors of the "New Opposition." The errors of the "New Opposition" on the questions of NEP, state capitalism, the nature of our socialist industry, the role of the co-operatives under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the methods of fighting the kulaks, the role and importance of the middle peasantry—all these errors are to be traced to the principal error of the opposition, to disbelief in the possibility of completely building a socialist society by the efforts of our country.

What is disbelief in the victory of socialist construction in our country?

It is, first of all, lack of confidence that, owing to certain conditions of development in our country, the main mass of the peasantry *can be drawn* into the work of socialist construction.

It is, secondly, lack of confidence that the proletariat of our country, which holds the key positions in our national economy, *is capable* of drawing the main mass of the peasantry into the work of socialist construction.

It is from these theses that the opposition tacitly proceeds in its arguments about the paths of our development—no matter whether it does so consciously or unconsciously.

Can the main mass of the Soviet peasantry be drawn into the work of socialist construction?

In the pamphlet *The Foundations of Leninism* there are two main theses on this subject:

- 1) 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 scarcely needs proof that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and *political* collaboration with the proletariat and which owes its freedom to this friendship and collaboration, cannot but represent exceptionally favorable material for *economic* collaboration with the proletariat.

2) 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 Soviet power and the nationalization of the principal instruments and means of production preclude 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 co-operatives, along the path of developing in the countryside a mass co-operative movement supported by the state by means of preferential credits. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on co-operation 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 co-operatives, 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....

It scarcely needs proof that the vast majority of the peasantry will eagerly take this new path of development, rejecting the

path of private capitalist latifundia and wage slavery, the path of destitution and ruin.¹⁵⁵

Are these theses correct?

I think that both theses are correct and incontrovertible for the whole of our construction period under the conditions of NEP.

They are merely the expression of Lenin's well-known theses on the bond between the proletariat and the peasantry, on the inclusion of the peasant farms in the system of socialist development of our country; of his theses that the proletariat must march towards socialism together with the main mass of the peasantry, that the organization of the vast masses of the peasantry in co-operatives is the high road of socialist construction in the countryside, that with the growth of our socialist industry, "for us, the mere growth of co-operation... is identical with the growth of socialism."¹⁵⁶

Indeed, along what path can and must the development of peasant economy in our country proceed?

Peasant economy is not capitalist economy. Peasant economy, if you take the overwhelming majority of the peasant farms, is small commodity economy. And what is peasant small commodity economy? It is economy standing at the cross-roads between capitalism and socialism. It may develop in the direction of capitalism, as it is now doing in capitalist countries, or in the direction of socialism, as it must do here, in our country, under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Whence this instability, this lack of independence of peasant economy? How is it to be explained?

It is to be explained by the scattered character of the peasant farms, their lack of organization, their dependence on the towns, on industry, on the credit system, on the character of the state power in the country, and, lastly, by the well-known fact that the countryside follows, and necessarily must follow, the town both in material and in cultural matters.

The capitalist path of development of peasant economy means development through profound differentiation among the peasantry, with large latifundia at one extreme and mass impoverishment at the other. Such a path of development is inevitable in capitalist countries, because the countryside, peasant economy, is dependent on the towns, on industry, on credit

¹⁵⁵ Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-57.—*Ed.*

¹⁵⁶ V. I. Lenin, "On Cooperation," *op. cit.*

concentrated in the towns, on the character of the state power—and in the towns it is the bourgeoisie, capitalist industry, the capitalist credit system and the capitalist state power that hold sway.

Is this path of development of peasant farms obligatory for our country, where the towns have quite a different aspect, where industry is in the hands of the proletariat, where transport, the credit system, the state power, etc., are concentrated in the hands of the proletariat, where the nationalization of the land is a universal law of the country? Of course not. On the contrary. Precisely because the towns do lead the countryside, while we have in the towns the rule of the proletariat, which holds all the key positions of national economy—precisely for this reason the peasant farms in their development must proceed along a different path, the path of socialist construction.

What is this path?

It is the path of the mass organization of millions of peasant farms into co-operatives in all spheres of co-operation, the path of uniting the scattered peasant farms around socialist industry, the path of implanting the elements of collectivism among the peasantry at first in the sphere of *marketing* agricultural produce and *supplying* the peasant farms with the products of urban industry and later in the sphere of agricultural *production*.

And the further we advance the more this path becomes inevitable under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, because co-operative marketing, co-operative supplying, and, finally, co-operative credit and production (agricultural co-operatives) are the only way to promote the welfare of the countryside, the only way to save the broad masses of the peasantry from poverty and ruin.

It is said that our peasantry, by its position, is not socialist, and, therefore, incapable of socialist development. It is true, of course, that the peasantry, by its position, is not socialist. But this is no argument against the development of the peasant farms along the path of socialism, once it has been proved that the countryside follows the town, and in the towns it is socialist industry that holds sway. The peasantry, by its position, was not socialist at the time of the October Revolution either, and it did not by any means want to establish socialism in our country. At that time it strove mainly for the abolition of the power of the landlords and for the ending of the war, for the establishment of peace. Nevertheless, it followed the lead

of the socialist proletariat. Why? Because the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the socialist proletariat was at that time the only way of getting out of the imperialist war, the only way of establishing peace. Because there was no other way at that time, nor could there be any. Because our Party was able to hit upon that degree of the combination of the specific interests of the peasantry (the overthrow of the landlords, peace) with, and their subordination to, the general interests of the country (the dictatorship of the proletariat) which proved acceptable and advantageous to the peasantry. And so the peasantry, in spite of its non-socialist character, at that time followed the lead of the socialist proletariat.

The same must be said about socialist construction in our country, about drawing the peasantry into the channel of this construction. The peasantry is non socialist by its position. But it must, and certainly will take the path of socialist development; for there is not, and cannot be, any other way of saving the peasantry from poverty and ruin except the bond with the proletariat, except the bond with socialist industry, except the inclusion of peasant economy in the common channel of socialist development by the mass organization of the peasantry in co-operatives.

But why precisely by the mass organization of the peasantry in co-operatives?

Because in the mass organization in co-operatives "we have found that degree of the combination of private interest, private trading interest, with state supervision and control of this interest, that degree of its subordination to the common interests" (*Lenin*)¹⁵⁷ which is acceptable and advantageous to the peasantry and which ensures the proletariat the possibility of drawing the main mass of the peasantry into the work of socialist construction. It is precisely because it is advantageous to the peasantry to organize the sale of its products and the purchase of machines for its farms through co-operatives, it is precisely for that reason that it should and will proceed along the path of mass organization in co-operatives.

What does the mass organization of peasant farms in cooperatives mean when we have the supremacy of socialist industry?

It means that peasant small commodity economy *abandons* the old capitalist path, which is fraught with mass ruin for the peasantry, and *goes over* to the new path of development, the path of socialist construction.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

This is why the fight for the new path of development of peasant economy, the fight to draw the main mass of the peasantry into the work of socialist construction, is the immediate task facing our Party.

The Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU (B), therefore, was right in declaring:

The main path of building socialism in the countryside consists in using the growing economic leadership of socialist state industry, of the state credit institutions, and of the other key positions in the hands of the proletariat to draw the main mass of the peasantry into co-operative organization and to ensure for this organization a socialist development, while utilizing, overcoming and ousting its capitalist elements.¹⁵⁸

The profound mistake of the "New Opposition" lies in the fact that it does not believe in this new path of development of the peasantry, that it does not see, or does not understand, the absolute inevitability of this path under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And it does not understand this because it does not believe in the victory of socialist construction in our country, it does not believe in the capacity of our proletariat to lead the peasantry along the path to socialism.

Hence the failure to understand the dual character of NEP, the exaggeration of the negative aspects of NEP and the treatment of NEP as being mainly a retreat.

Hence the exaggeration of the role of the capitalist elements in our economy, and the belittling of the role of the levers of our socialist development (socialist industry, the credit system, the co-operatives, the rule of the proletariat, etc.).

Hence the failure to understand the socialist nature of our state industry, and the doubts concerning the correctness of Lenin's co-operative plan.

Hence the inflated accounts of differentiation in the countryside, the panic in face of the kulak, the belittling of the role of the middle peasant, the attempts to thwart the Party's policy of securing a firm alliance with the middle peasant, and, in general, the wobbling from one side to the other on the question of the Party's policy in the countryside.

¹⁵⁸ *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, p. 78.—*Ed.*

Hence the failure to understand the tremendous work of the Party in drawing the vast masses of the workers and peasants into building up industry and agriculture, revitalizing the co-operatives and the Soviets, administering the country, combating bureaucracy, improving and remodeling our state apparatus—work which marks a new stage of development and without which no socialist construction is conceivable.

Hence the hopelessness and consternation in face of the difficulties of our work of construction, the doubts about the possibility of industrializing our country, the pessimistic chatter about degeneration of the Party, etc.

Over there, among the bourgeoisie, all is going on fairly well, but here, among the proletarians, things are fairly bad; unless the revolution in the West takes place pretty soon, our cause is lost—such is the general tone of the “New Opposition” which, in my opinion, is a liquidationist tone, but which, for some reason or other (probably in jest), the opposition tries to pass off as “internationalism.”

NEP is capitalism, says the opposition. NEP is mainly a retreat, says Zinoviev. All this, of course, is untrue. In actual fact, NEP is the Party's policy, permitting a struggle between the socialist and the capitalist elements and aimed at the victory of the socialist elements over the capitalist elements. In actual fact, NEP only began as a retreat, but it aimed at regrouping our forces during the retreat and launching an offensive. In actual fact, we have been on the offensive for several years now, and are attacking successfully, developing our industry, developing Soviet trade, and ousting private capital.

But what is the meaning of the thesis that NEP is capitalism, that NEP is mainly a retreat? What does this thesis proceed from?

It proceeds from the wrong assumption that what is now taking place in our country is simply the restoration of capitalism, simply a “return” to capitalism. This assumption alone can explain the doubts of the opposition regarding the socialist nature of our industry. This assumption alone can explain the panic of the opposition in face of the kulak. This assumption alone can explain the haste with which the opposition seized upon the inaccurate statistics on differentiation in the peasantry. This assumption alone can explain the opposition's special forgetfulness of the fact that the middle peasant is the central figure in our agriculture. This assumption alone can explain the underestimation of the importance of the middle peasant and

the doubts concerning Lenin's co-operative plan. This assumption alone can serve to "substantiate" the "New Opposition's" disbelief in the new path of development of the countryside, the path of drawing it into the work of socialist construction.

As a matter of fact, what is taking place in our country now is not a one-sided process of restoration of capitalism, but a double process of development of capitalism and development of socialism—a contradictory process of struggle between the socialist and the capitalist elements, a process in which the socialist elements are overcoming the capitalist elements. This is equally incontestable as regards the towns, where state industry is the basis of socialism, and as regards the countryside, where the main foothold for socialist development is mass co-operation linked up with socialist industry.

The simple restoration of capitalism is impossible, if only for the reason that the proletariat is in power, that large-scale industry is in the hands of the proletariat, and that transport and credit are in the possession of the proletarian state.

Differentiation in the countryside cannot assume its former dimensions, the middle peasants still constitute the main mass of the peasantry, and the kulak cannot regain his former strength, if only for the reason that the land has been nationalized, that it has been withdrawn from circulation, while our trade, credit, tax and co-operative policy is directed towards restricting the kulaks' exploiting proclivities, towards promoting the welfare of the broad mass of the peasantry and leveling out the extremes in the countryside. That is quite apart from the fact that the fight against the kulaks is now proceeding not only along the old line of organizing the poor peasants against the kulaks, but also along the new line of strengthening the alliance of the proletariat and the poor peasants with the mass of the middle peasants against the kulaks. The fact that the opposition does not understand the meaning and significance of the fight against the kulaks along this second line once more confirms that the opposition is straying towards the old path of development in the countryside—the path of capitalist development, when the kulaks and the poor peasants constituted the main forces in the countryside, while the middle peasants were "melting away."

Co-operation is a variety of state capitalism, says the opposition, citing in this connection Lenin's pamphlet *The Tax in Kind*;¹⁵⁹ and, conse-

¹⁵⁹ V. I. Lenin, "The Tax in Kind" in *Collected Works*, Vol. XXXII.

quently, it does not believe it possible to utilize the co-operatives as the main foothold for socialist development. Here, too, the opposition commits a gross error.

Such an interpretation of co-operation was adequate and satisfactory in 1921, when *The Tax in Kind* was written, when we had no developed socialist industry, when Lenin conceived of state capitalism as the possible basic form of conducting our economy, and when he considered co-operation in conjunction with state capitalism. But this interpretation has now become inadequate and has been rendered obsolete by history; for times have changed since then: our socialist industry has developed, state capitalism never took hold to the degree expected, whereas the co-operatives, which now have over 10 million members, have begun to link up with socialist industry.

How else are we to explain the fact that already in 1923, two years after *The Tax in Kind* was written, Lenin began to regard co-operation in a different light, and considered that "co-operation, under our conditions, very often entirely coincides with socialism."¹⁶⁰

How else can this be explained except by the fact that during those two years socialist industry had grown, whereas state capitalism had failed to take hold to the required extent, in view of which Lenin began to consider co-operation, not in conjunction with state capitalism, but in conjunction with socialist industry?

The conditions of development of co-operation had changed. And so the approach to the question of co-operation had to be changed also.

Here, for instance, is a remarkable passage from Lenin's pamphlet *On Cooperation* (1923), which throws light on this matter:

Under state capitalism, co-operative enterprises differ from state capitalist enterprises, firstly, in that they are private enterprises and, secondly, in that they are collective enterprises. *Under our present system*, co-operative enterprises differ from private capitalist enterprises because they are collective enterprises, but they *do not differ*¹⁶¹ from socialist enterprises if the land on

¹⁶⁰ V. I. Lenin, "On Cooperation," *op. cit.*

¹⁶¹ My italics.—*J. St.*

which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, i.e., the working class.¹⁶²

In this short passage two big questions are solved. Firstly, that “our present system” is not state capitalism. Secondly, that co-operative enterprises taken in conjunction with “our system” “do not differ” from socialist enterprises.

I think it would be difficult to express oneself more clearly.

Here is another passage from the same pamphlet of Lenin’s:

...For us, the mere growth of co-operation (with the “slight” exception mentioned above) is identical with the growth of socialism, and at the same time we must admit that a radical change has taken place in our whole outlook on socialism.¹⁶³

Obviously, the pamphlet *On Cooperation* gives a new appraisal of the co-operatives, a thing which the “New Opposition” does not want to admit, and which it is carefully hushing up, in defiance of the facts, in defiance of the obvious truth, in defiance of Leninism.

Co-operation taken in conjunction with state capitalism is one thing, and co-operation taken in conjunction with socialist industry is another.

From this, however, it must not be concluded that a gulf lies between *The Tax in Kind* and *On Cooperation*. That would, of course, be wrong. It is sufficient, for instance, to refer to the following passage in *The Tax in Kind* to discern immediately the inseparable connection between *The Tax in Kind* and the pamphlet *On Cooperation* as regards appraisal of the co-operatives. Here it is:

The transition from concessions to socialism is a transition from one form of large-scale production to another form of large-scale production. The transition from small-proprietor co-operatives to socialism is a transition from small-scale production to large-scale production, i.e., it is a more complicated transition, but, if successful, is capable of embracing wider masses of the population, is capable of pulling up the deeper and more

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

tenacious roots of the old, *pre-socialist*¹⁶⁴ and even pre-capitalist relations, which most stubbornly resist all “innovations.”¹⁶⁵

From this quotation it is evident that even during the time of *The Tax in Kind*, when we had as yet no developed socialist industry, Lenin was of the opinion that, *if successful*, co-operation could be transformed into a powerful weapon in the struggle against “pre-socialist,” and, hence, against *capitalist relations*. I think it was precisely this idea that subsequently served as the point of departure for his pamphlet *On Cooperation*.

But what follows from all this?

From all this it follows that the “New Opposition” approaches the question of co-operation, not in a Marxist way, but metaphysically. It regards co-operation not as a historical phenomenon taken in conjunction with other phenomena, in conjunction, say, with state capitalism (in 1921) or with socialist industry (in 1923), but as something constant and immutable, as a “thing in itself.”

Hence the mistakes of the opposition on the question of co-operation, hence its disbelief in the development of the countryside towards socialism through co-operation, hence its turning back to the old path, the path of capitalist development in the countryside.

Such, in general, is the position of the “New Opposition” on the practical questions of socialist construction.

There is only one conclusion: the line of the opposition, so far as it has a line, its wavering and vacillation, its disbelief in our cause and its consternation in face of difficulties, lead to capitulation to the capitalist elements in our economy.

For, if NEP is mainly a retreat, if the socialist nature of state industry is doubted, if the kulak is almost omnipotent, if little hope can be placed in the co-operatives, if the role of the middle peasant is progressively declining, if the new path of development in the countryside is open to doubt, if the Party is almost degenerating, while the revolution in the West is not very near—then what is there left in the arsenal of the opposition, what can it

¹⁶⁴ My italics.—*J. St.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

count on in the struggle against the capitalist elements in our economy? You cannot go into battle armed only with "The Philosophy of the Epoch."¹⁶⁶

It is clear that the arsenal of the "New Opposition," if it can be termed an arsenal at all, is an unenviable one. It is not an arsenal for battle. Still less is it one for victory.

It is clear that the Party would be doomed "in no time" if it entered the fight equipped with such an arsenal; it would simply have to capitulate to the capitalist elements in our economy.

That is why the Fourteenth Congress of the Party was absolutely right in deciding that "the fight for the victory of socialist construction in the USSR is the main task of our Party"; that one of the necessary conditions for the fulfilment of this task is

To combat disbelief in the cause of building socialism in our country and the attempts to represent our enterprises, which are of a "consistently socialist type" (*Lenin*), as state capitalist enterprises; [that] such ideological trends, which prevent the masses from adopting a conscious attitude towards the building of socialism in general and of a socialist industry in particular, can only serve to hinder the growth of the socialist elements in our economy and to facilitate the struggle of private capital against them; [that] the congress therefore considers that widespread educational work must be carried on for the purpose of overcoming these distortions of Leninism.¹⁶⁷

The historical significance of the Fourteenth Congress of the CPSU (B) lies in the fact that it was able radically to expose the mistakes of the "New Opposition," that it rejected their disbelief and whining, that it clearly and precisely indicated the path of the further struggle for socialism, opened before the Party the prospect of victory, and thus armed the proletariat with an invincible faith in the victory of socialist construction.

¹⁶⁶ "The Philosophy of the Epoch" was the title of an anti-Party article written by Zinoviev in 1925. For a criticism of this article, see Joseph Stalin, *Works*, Vol. VII, *op. cit.*—*Ed.*

¹⁶⁷ See *Resolutions and Decisions of CPSU Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1953, Part II, pp. 75 and 77.—*Ed.*

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