

1870



1960

IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE BIRTH OF LENIN

LENIN
ON
PROLETARIAN
REVOLUTION
AND
PROLETARIAN
Dictatorship

Michael
Hanson
1970

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

LENIN
ON
PROLETARIAN
REVOLUTION
AND
PROLETARIAN
DICTATORSHIP

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1960

First Edition September 1960
Second Edition October 1960

Published in conformity with the
Chinese edition prepared by the Peo-
ple's Publishing House, Peking, 1960.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

CONTENTS

I. THE BASIC QUESTION IN ANY REVOLUTION IS THAT OF STATE POWER	1
The Transfer of State Power from One Class to Another Class Is the First, the Principal, the Basic Sign of a Revolution	1
Laws, Deputies Are Naught If They Are Not Possessed of Power	3
The Dictatorship of the Proletariat Is the Cul- mination of the Revolutionary Role of the Pro- letariat in History	7
Only He Is a Marxist Who Extends the Recogni- tion of the Class Struggle to the Recognition of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat	9
II. FIGHT FOR THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD STATE MACHINE, IN ORDER THAT THE ARMED PROLETARIAT ITSELF SHALL BECOME THE GOVERNMENT	13
The Bourgeois State Machine Must Be Broken Up and Smashed	13

A New State Apparatus Must Be Created for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat	22
The Bourgeois State Cannot Be Superseded by the Proletarian State Through the Process of "Withering Away," but, as a General Rule, Only Through a Violent Revolution	23
III. THE REACTIONARY CLASSES ARE USUALLY THE FIRST TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE; THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTION IS EXTREMELY RARE	27
The Proletariat Would Prefer to Take Power Peacefully, but the Bourgeoisie Will Not Surrender It Voluntarily	27
Peaceful Development of the Revolution Is Possible Only When the Arms Are in the Hands of the People and No Coercion from Without Is Exercised in Regard to the People	34
In the October Revolution, Revolutionary Violence Produced Brilliant Results	38
IV. BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS SHOULD BE USED IN A REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT; TO CONFINE THE CLASS STRUGGLE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STRUGGLE IS IN PRACTICE TO GO OVER TO THE BOURGEOISIE	42
Explain the Bourgeoisie's Deceit from the Parliamentary Platform and Educate the Broad Masses	42

It Is the Height of Folly or Hypocrisy to Hold That Power Must Be Won Only After Winning a Majority in Elections	46
V. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN A MASS ALLY	51
The Alliance of Workers and Peasants Is an Essential Condition for the Victory of the Socialist Revolution	51
Amalgamate the Revolutionary Onslaught of the Proletarians of the Capitalist Countries with the Revolutionary Onslaught of Hundreds of Millions of People in the Colonies	55
Most Thoroughly, Carefully, Attentively and Skilfully Use Every "Rift" Among the Enemies and Also Take Advantage of Every Opportunity to Gain a Mass Ally	57
Not to Renounce Compromises Once and for All, but to Be Able to Consolidate and Develop the Cause of Revolution Through Necessary Compromises	61
VI. OPPOSITION TO REVISIONISM IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR VICTORY IN THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION	65
The Difference Between Revisionism and Marxism Lies Precisely in the Contrast Between Peaceful and Violent Revolutions	65

Victory over Revisionism Will Win the Working
Masses and Take the People Along the Road to
the Dictatorship of the Proletariat 72

VII. THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO
COMMUNISM CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT
ONLY BY THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE
PROLETARIAT 75

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat Is Not the
End of the Class Struggle but Its Continuation
in New Forms 75

Capitalism Cannot Be Defeated and Eradicated
Without the Ruthless Suppression of the Resis-
tance of the Exploiters 81

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat Is a Million
Times More Democratic than the Most Dem-
ocratic Bourgeois Republic 83

VIII. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT
IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE LEADER-
SHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY 86

I. THE BASIC QUESTION IN ANY REVOLUTION IS THAT OF STATE POWER

THE TRANSFER OF STATE POWER FROM ONE CLASS TO ANOTHER CLASS IS THE FIRST, THE PRINCIPAL, THE BASIC SIGN OF A REVOLUTION

The basic question in any revolution is that of
state power. Unless this question is understood,
there can be no conscious participation in the revolu-
tion, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.

From "On the Dual Power" (pub-
lished in *Pravda*, No. 28, April 9, 1917).

The transfer of state power from one *class* to
another *class* is the first, the principal, the basic
sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific
and in the practical political meaning of the term.

From "Letters on Tac-
tics" (April 8-13, 1917).

It is not enough to say that the class struggle becomes real, consistent and developed only when it embraces the sphere of politics. In politics, too, it is possible to limit oneself to petty details, or one can go deeper, right down to essentials. Marxism recognizes the class struggle as fully developed, "nationwide" *only* when it not only embraces politics but also takes in politics the most essential thing: the structure of state power.

From "About the Liberal and Marxist Understanding of the Class Struggle" (published in *Prosveshcheniye*, No. 5, May 1913).

The main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power. In the hands of which class power is — this decides everything. And when the paper of the chief government party in Russia, the *Dyelo Naroda*, recently complained (in No. 147) that owing to the controversies over power, both the question of the Constituent Assembly and the question of bread are being forgotten, one should have answered these Socialist-Revolutionaries, "Blame yourselves." For it is the vacillations and the indecision of *your* party that are mostly to blame both for the rapid changes of the Cabinet, and for

the interminable postponements of the Constituent Assembly, as well as for the capitalists undermining the planned and adopted measures of a grain monopoly and of securing food for the country.

The question of power can be neither evaded nor brushed aside; for this is the fundamental question which determines *everything* in the development of a revolution, in its foreign and domestic policies.

From "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution" (published in *Rabochi Put*, No. 10, September 27, 1917).

LAWS, DEPUTIES ARE NAUGHT IF THEY ARE NOT POSSESSED OF POWER

The Conference of the Mensheviks, or new *Iskra*-ists, committed the same error that the liberals, the *Osvobozhdentsi* are constantly committing. The *Osvobozhdentsi* prattle about a "constituent" assembly and bashfully shut their eyes to the fact that power and authority remain in the hands of the tsar, forgetting that in order to "constitute" one must possess the *power* to do so. The Conference also forgot that it is a far cry from a "decision" adopted by representatives — no matter who they are — to the

fulfilment of that decision. The Conference further forgot that so long as power remained in the hands of the tsar, all decisions passed by any representatives whatsoever would remain empty and miserable prattle, as was the case with the "decisions" of the Frankfurt Parliament, famous in the history of the German Revolution of 1848. In his *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx, the representative of the revolutionary proletariat, castigated the Frankfurt liberal *Osvobozhdentsi* with merciless sarcasm precisely because they uttered fine words, adopted all sorts of democratic "decisions," "constituted" all kinds of liberties, while actually they left power in the hands of the king and failed to organize an armed struggle against the military forces at the disposal of the king. And while the Frankfurt *Osvobozhdentsi* were prattling — the king bided his time, consolidated his military forces, and the counter-revolution, relying on real force, utterly routed the democrats with all their fine "decisions."

From "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (June-July 1905).

The revolution teaches. It gives all the classes of the people and all the nations of Russia excellent object lessons on the subject of the *essence of the constitution*. The revolution teaches by bringing forward, in their most obvious and palpable reality, the immediate political tasks that require tackling, thus compelling the masses of the people to be acutely conscious of these tasks, making the very existence of the people impossible unless these tasks are tackled, unmasking in actual fact the worthlessness of any and all camouflage, subterfuges, promises, confessions. "We are given everything, but we have nothing." Because we are "given" only promises, because we have no real power. We have come close to freedom, we have forced all and everyone, even the tsar, to recognize the necessity of freedom. But what we need is not the recognition of freedom but real freedom. What we need is not a scrap of paper, promising legislative rights to the people's representatives. What we need is the real autocracy of the people. The closer we came to it, the more intolerable its absence became. The more alluring the tsar's manifestoes, the more impossible the tsar's power.

The struggle is coming to a head, approaching the solution of the question of whether real power will remain in the hands of the tsarist government. So far as recognition of the revolution is concerned, everyone recognizes it already. It was recognized quite a long time ago by Mr. Struve and the *Osvobodzentsi*, and has now been recognized by Mr. Witte, recognized by Nikolai Romanov. I promise you all you want, says the tsar, only leave power in my hands and allow me to fulfil my promises myself. This is what the tsar's manifesto boils down to, and it clearly could not but impel to resolute struggle. I grant all except power — declares tsarism. All is illusion, except power — answer the revolutionary people.

From "Things Are Coming to a Head"
(published in *Proletarii*, No. 25, November
16, 1905).

The people are convinced *by experience* that popular representation is *naught* if it is not vested with full power, if it is summoned by the old government, if the old government remains intact side by

side with it. The objective course of events puts on the order of the day, not the question of how the laws or the constitution are worded, but that of *power*, of real power. Laws, deputies are *naught* if they are not possessed of power.

From "The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat" (July 1906).

THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT IS THE CULMINATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF THE PROLETARIAT IN HISTORY

Our Party stands firmly on the point of view that the role of the proletariat is the *role of leader* in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that to carry this revolution through to the end demands the *joint action* of the proletariat and peasantry, that without *conquest of political power* by the revolutionary classes there can be no victory. Abandonment of these truths dooms Social-Democrats inevitably to wavering, to "the movement without an aim," even to the preaching of unprincipled compromises from case to case, and in practice this means precisely being a prisoner of the Cadets, that is, the vassalage

of the working class to the liberal-monarchist, counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

From "The Aim of the Struggle of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" (published in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Nos. 3 and 4, March 9 and 21, 1909).

In order to carry out this social revolution the proletariat must win political power, which will make it the master of the situation and allow it to remove all obstacles that stand in the way of its great objective. In this sense the dictatorship of the proletariat is the necessary political condition of the social revolution.

From "Draft of a Programme for the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party" (late January-early February 1902).

"The state, i.e., the proletariat organized as the ruling class," this theory of Marx is inseparably bound with all he taught on the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

From "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917)

ONLY HE IS A MARXIST WHO EXTENDS THE RECOGNITION OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE TO THE RECOGNITION OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's teachings is the class struggle; but this is not true. And from this untruth very often springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification in such a way as to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the doctrine of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and generally speaking it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the doctrine of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and

recognition of Marxism is to be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the "Kautskyites" (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats who *repudiate* the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Ibid.

If Comrade Crispien now says that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a new thing and adds: "We have always stood for the capture of political power," it shows that he is evading the main issue. The capture of political power is recognized, but dictatorship is not. All literature — not only German, but French and English — proves that the leaders of the opportunist parties (for example, MacDonald in England) stand for the capture of political power. They are all sincere Socialists — I am not jesting — but they are opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat! Since we have a good, Communist, revolutionary party worthy of attention, it should carry on propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat to distinguish it from the old views of the

Second International. This is what Comrade Crispien glossed over and obscured, and thereby committed the fundamental mistake that is characteristic of all Kautsky's adherents.

From "Speech on the Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International, Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 30, 1920).

The Longuetists remained, in practice, reformists as before, covering up their reformism with revolutionary phrases and employing the new expression "dictatorship of the proletariat" only as a revolutionary figure of speech. Such leaders as the leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the leaders of the Independent Labour Party in England, are not needed by the proletariat. With such leaders the proletariat cannot realize its dictatorship.

To recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat does not mean: at all costs, at *any* moment, to go in for assaults by storm, for insurrection. This is nonsense. For a successful uprising long, skilful, determined preparation, demanding many sacrifices, is required.

To recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat does mean; a resolute, merciless and above all —

completely conscious and completely consistently carried out break with opportunism, reformism, with the half-hearted nature, and evasiveness of the Second International; a break with leaders who *cannot but* carry on the old tradition, with old (not in age but in methods) parliamentarians, officials of trade unions and co-operatives, etc.

We must break with them. To pity them is criminal: it means betraying for the insignificant interests of ten or a hundred thousand the basic interests of tens of millions of workers and small peasants.

To recognize the dictatorship of the proletariat means: radically to remould the daily work of the Party, to go down to those millions of workers, *farm labourers* and small peasants who cannot be saved from the disasters of capitalism and war without *Soviets*, without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. To explain this concretely, simply, vividly for the masses, for the tens of millions, to say to them that *their* Soviets must take *all* the power, that their vanguard, the party of the revolutionary proletariat, must *lead* the struggle — that is what the dictatorship of the proletariat is.

From "Notes of a Publicist" (February 14, 1920).

II. FIGHT FOR THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD STATE MACHINE, IN ORDER THAT THE ARMED PROLETARIAT ITSELF SHALL BECOME THE GOVERNMENT

THE BOURGEOIS STATE MACHINE MUST BE
BROKEN UP AND SMASHED

Marx sums up his conclusions from the Revolution of 1848-51, on the question of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument, contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

" . . . But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851" (the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'etat), "it had completed one half of its preparatory work; it is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it per-

fects the *executive power*, reduces it to its purest expression, isolates it, sets it up against itself as the sole target, *in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it*" (italics ours). "And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: Well grubbed, old mole!"

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its complex and ingenious state machinery, embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten." The first French revolution developed centralization, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon perfected this state machinery." The legitimatist monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labour, . . ."

". . . Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. *All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it*" (italics ours). "The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg 1907.)

In this remarkable argument Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter, the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all the revolutions which have occurred up to now perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxian teaching on the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been not

only completely *forgotten* by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties, but simply *distorted* (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, K. Kautsky.

From "The State and Revolution"
(August-September 1917).

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make in the *Communist Manifesto*, he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become antiquated," and *they go on to say*:

. . . *The Commune especially proved that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.'* . . .

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*.

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as a substantial correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

It is extremely characteristic that it is precisely this substantial correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully further on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous utterance just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasizes the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *exactly the opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery," and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

Ibid.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the end of the

nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. We shall see that the same process has been going on more slowly, in more varied forms, on a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (England, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the "spoils" of office, while the foundations of bourgeois society remained unchanged; and, finally, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power," its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism — the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly

capitalism — has demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852 to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

Ibid.

The entire history of the bourgeois-parliamentary, and to a considerable extent also of the bourgeois-constitutional countries, shows that a change of Ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is saturated through and through with an anti-democratic spirit, it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie and it depends upon them in every way. This army is surrounded by an atmosphere of bourgeois relations; it breathes only this atmosphere; it is

inert, petrified, fossilized; it has not the power to extricate itself from this atmosphere; it cannot think, feel, or act otherwise than in the old way. This army is bound by the relations of rank worship, by certain privileges of "state" service, while the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of stocks and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to some degree its agent, the vehicle of its interests and influence.

To attempt, by means of *this* state apparatus, to carry out such reforms as the abolition of landowners' property in land without compensation, the grain monopoly, etc., is the greatest illusion, the greatest self-deception and a deception of the people. This apparatus *can* serve a republican bourgeoisie, creating a republic in the shape of a "monarchy without a monarch," like the Third Republic in France, but of carrying out reforms seriously undermining or limiting the rights of capital, the rights of "sacred private property," not to speak of abolishing them—such a state apparatus is absolutely incapable. This is why we have, under all sorts of "coalition" Cabinets with the participation of "Socialists," the phenomenon that these Socialists, even

where individual persons among them are absolutely sincere, in reality prove to be either a useless ornament or a screen for the bourgeois government, a lightning rod to divert the people's indignation from that government, an instrument for that government to deceive the masses. This was the case with Louis Blanc in 1848; this was the case dozens of times in England and France when the Socialists participated in the Cabinets; this was the case with the Chernovs and Tseretelis in 1917; so it has been and so it will be as long as the bourgeois system persists and as long as the old bourgeois, bureaucratic state apparatus remains intact.

From "One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution" (published in *Rabochi Put*, No. 10, September 27, 1917).

The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one* which, in the words of Engels, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word."

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (October - November 1918).

**A NEW STATE APPARATUS MUST BE CREATED
FOR THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE
PROLETARIAT**

. . . The proletariat can achieve this aim *not* by restarting the old machinery of state power, but *by smashing* it to atoms and not leaving a stone of it standing (heedless of the howls of the panic-stricken respectable citizens and of the threats of the saboteurs). It must then create a *new* state apparatus, an apparatus which is adapted for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for the struggle of the latter against the bourgeoisie *for* the support of the non-proletarian toiling masses. This new apparatus is not somebody's invention, but *grows out* of the class struggle of the proletariat, as that struggle grows in width and depth. This new apparatus of state power, this new *type* of state power, is the *Soviet power*.

From "The Constituent Assembly Elections
and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat"
(December 16, 1919).

Only the Soviet organization of state power is in a position effectively and immediately to demolish, and eliminate for all time, the old, i.e., bourgeois,

bureaucratic and judicial apparatus, which under capitalism is inevitably retained even in the most democratic republics and which represents, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epochal step along this path; the Soviet government has taken the second step.

From "Theses and Report on Bourgeois
Democracy and the Dictatorship of the
Proletariat, Presented to the First Congress
of the Communist International" (March
4, 1919).

**THE BOURGEOIS STATE CANNOT BE SUPERSEDED
BY THE PROLETARIAN STATE THROUGH THE
PROCESS OF "WITHERING AWAY," BUT, AS
A GENERAL RULE, ONLY THROUGH
A VIOLENT REVOLUTION**

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the teaching of Marx and Engels concerning the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of

“withering away,” but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx’s repeated declarations — (recall the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*, with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution; recall what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in his criticism of the Gotha Programme of 1875, when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that programme) — this panegyric is by no means a mere “impulse,” a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of *all* the teachings of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their teaching by the now predominant social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends is expressed in striking relief by the neglect of *such* propaganda and agitation by both these trends.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of “withering away.”

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each separate revolutionary situation, when they analysed the lessons of the experience of each individual revolution.

From “The State and Revolution” (August-September 1917).

To imagine Socialism as though Messrs. Socialists will present it to us on a platter, in a ready-made little dress, is not permissible — it will not happen. Not a single question of the class struggle has yet been solved in history except by violence. Violence, when it occurs from the side of the toiling, exploited masses against the exploiters — yes, we are for such violence! And we are not a bit embarrassed by the wails of people who, consciously or unconsciously, stand on the side of the bourgeoisie or are so intimidated, so oppressed by its domination that now, seeing this class struggle of unheard-of sharpness, they have lost their bearings, begun to weep, forgot all their premises and demand from us the impossible — that we Socialists should attain com-

plete victory without struggle against the exploiters, without crushing their resistance.

From "Report on the Work of the Council of People's Commissars, Made to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies"
(January 11, 1918).

III. THE REACTIONARY CLASSES ARE USUALLY THE FIRST TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE; THE POSSIBILITY OF PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTION IS EXTREMELY RARE

THE PROLETARIAT WOULD PREFER TO TAKE POWER PEACEFULLY, BUT THE BOURGEOISIE WILL NOT SURRENDER IT VOLUNTARILY

. . . The editors of *Rabochaya Mysl* ascribe to workers' Socialism only that which is achieved in a *peaceful* way, excluding the revolutionary way. This narrowing down of Socialism and its reduction to ordinary, commonplace bourgeois liberalism is again a huge step backward in relation to the views of all the Russian and the immense, overwhelming majority of European Social-Democrats. The working class would prefer, of course, to take power *peacefully* (we have already said before that this seizure of power can be brought about only by the organized working class, that has gone through the school of class struggle), but to *reject* the revolutionary sei-

zure of power would be *reckless* on the part of the proletariat, both from the theoretical and from the practical-political point of view, and would mean only a shameful retreat before the bourgeoisie and all the propertied classes. It is very probable — and even most probable — that the bourgeoisie will not make a peaceful concession to the proletariat, but will, at the decisive moment, resort to force in defence of its privileges. Then there will remain to the working class no other way but revolution to realize its aims. That is why the programme of “workers’ Socialism” speaks in general about the conquest of political power *without defining* the method of this conquest, because the choice of method depends on the future which we cannot determine exactly. But to restrict the activities of the proletariat in any case to peaceful “democratization” alone, means, we repeat, completely arbitrarily narrowing down and vulgarizing the concept of workers’ Socialism.

From “A Retrograde Direction in Russian Social-Democracy” (end of 1899).

In different countries, it [the revolution] develops differently. It always proceeds over a long

time and with difficulty. Bad is the Socialist who thinks that the capitalists will abdicate their rights at once. No. The world has not yet produced such kind-hearted capitalists. Socialism can develop only in struggle with capitalism. There has never yet been in the world a ruling class which would give up without struggle.

From “Speech at the Workers’ Conference of the Presnya District” (December 14, 1918).

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

fore the slogan of dictatorship that the genuinely revolutionary class must advance.

From "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" (June - July 1905).

Dictatorship is domination of one part of society over the rest of society, and domination, moreover, that rests directly on violence. Dictatorship of the proletariat, the only consistently revolutionary class, is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and repel its attempts at counter-revolution. The question of proletarian dictatorship is of such overriding importance that he who denies the need for such dictatorship, or recognizes it only in words, cannot be a member of the Social-Democratic Party. However, it cannot be denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, in some small country, for instance, after the social revolution had been accomplished in a neighbouring big country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is *possible*, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states Socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason

the *only* programme of international Social-Democracy must be recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals.

From "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism'" (August-October 1916).

Of course from the point of view of a capitalist society which passed over to Socialism peacefully in times of peace there would be no more urgent task than the raising of productivity. Only one little word has to be said: "if." If Socialism were born peacefully in this way; the capitalist gentlemen were unwilling to allow it to be born so. So there is a little something missing. Even if there had been no war, the capitalist gentlemen would have done everything to prevent such a peaceful development. Great revolutions, even when they have begun peacefully like the Great French Revolution, have ended in furious wars which the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie has started. It cannot be otherwise if we look at this question from the point of view of the class struggle and not from that of philistine phrase-mongering about freedom,

equality, Labour Democracy and the will of the majority, or that stupid philistine phrase-mongering to which the Mensheviks, S.-R.'s, and all those "Democrats" are treating us. There can be no peaceful development to Socialism.

From "First All-Russian Congress on Extra-School Education: The Deception of the People by the Slogans of Freedom and Equality" (May 19, 1919).

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot forget, unless we become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, that we are living in a class society, that there is no way out of this society, and there can be none, except by means of the class struggle. In every class society, whether it is based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, on wage labour, the oppressing class is armed. Not only the modern standing army, but even the modern militia — even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, Switzerland, for example — represent the bourgeoisie armed *against* the proletariat. This is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. It is suf-

ficient to recall the use of troops against strikers in all capitalist countries.

The fact that the bourgeoisie is armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, most fundamental, and most important facts in modern capitalist society. And in face of this fact, revolutionary Social-Democrats are urged to "demand" "disarmament"! This is tantamount to the complete abandonment of the point of view of the class struggle, the renunciation of all thought of revolution. Our slogan must be: the arming of the proletariat for the purpose of vanquishing, expropriating and disarming the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics a revolutionary class can adopt, tactics which follow logically from the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism, and dictated by that development. Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historical mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap heap; and the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but *only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before.*

From "The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" (September 1916).

**PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTION IS
POSSIBLE ONLY WHEN THE ARMS ARE IN THE
HANDS OF THE PEOPLE AND NO COERCION
FROM WITHOUT IS EXERCISED IN
REGARD TO THE PEOPLE**

Too often has it happened that, when history has taken a sharp turn, even advanced parties have been unable for a certain length of time to adapt themselves to the new situation and have continued to repeat slogans which had formerly been true, but which had now lost all meaning, having lost their meaning as "suddenly" as the sharp turn in history was "sudden."

Something of the sort may apparently repeat itself in connection with the slogan calling for the transfer of the entire power of the state to the Soviets. That slogan was correct during a period of our revolution—say from February 27 to July 4—that has now passed irrevocably. That slogan has patently ceased to be correct now. Unless this is understood, it is impossible to understand anything of the urgent questions of the day. Every particular slogan must be deduced from the entire complex of specific features of a definite political situation. And

the political situation in Russia now, after July 4, radically differs from the situation as it existed from February 27 to July 4.

During that, now past, period of the revolution the so-called "dual power" existed in the state, which both materially and formally expressed the indefinite and transitional character of the state power. Let us not forget that the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution.

At that time the state power was in a condition of instability. It was shared, by voluntary agreement, between the Provisional Government and the Soviets. The Soviets were delegations from the mass of free—i.e., not subject to external coercion—and armed workers and soldiers. The *essence* of the matter was that the arms were in the hands of the people, and that no coercion from without was exercised in regard to the people. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan "All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets" was a slogan for the next step, the directly feasible step, along this peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for a peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible and, of course, most desirable between Febru-

ary 27 and July 4 but which is now absolutely impossible.

From "On Slogans" (middle of July 1917).

The Russian revolution is experiencing so abrupt and original a turn of events that we, as a party, may propose a voluntary compromise — true, not to the bourgeoisie, our direct and main class enemy, but to our nearest adversaries, the "ruling" petty-bourgeois democratic parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

We may propose a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, only because a specific situation exists, which obviously will last only a very short time; and it seems to me we should do so.

The compromise, on our part, would consist of a return to the pre-July demand: All power to the Soviets and a government of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

At this moment, and only at this moment, perhaps *only for a few days*, or for a week or two, such a government might be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. It is extremely probable that it would guarantee the peaceful *advance* of the whole Russian revolution, and provide unusually

good chances for greater strides towards peace and the victory of Socialism on the part of the world movement.

For the sake, and only for the sake, of such a peaceful development of the revolution — a possibility *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, a possibility that comes only in exceptionally rare cases — the Bolsheviks, partisans of world revolution and of revolutionary methods, may, and should, in my opinion, consent to such a compromise.

.....

* * *

The above lines were written on Friday, September 1, but owing to accidental causes (under Kerensky, history will say, not all the Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. And after reading Saturday's and today's, Sunday's, papers, I say to myself: Apparently, the proposal for a compromise is already too late. Apparently, the few days in which a peaceful development was *still* possible have *already* passed. Yes, everything points to the fact that they have already passed. In one way or another, Keren-

sky will *abandon* both the Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves, and will consolidate his position with the help of the bourgeoisie *without* the Socialist-Revolutionaries, thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances the days when by chance the road of peaceful development became possible have *already* passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled "Belated Thoughts." Even belated thoughts are perhaps at times not devoid of interest.

From "On Compromises"
(September 1-3, 1917).

IN THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION, REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE PRODUCED BRILLIANT RESULTS

I am writing these lines on the evening of the 24th. The situation is critical in the extreme. It is absolutely clear that now, in truth, to delay the uprising would be fatal.

I exhort comrades with all my strength to realize that everything now hangs on a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of

Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed masses.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovites and the removal of Verkhovsky show that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, first having disarmed the cadets (defeated them, if they resist), and so forth.

We must not wait!! We may lose everything!!

.....

It would be a disaster, or a sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of October 25. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution, the people have the right and are in duty bound to direct their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This is proved by the history of all revolutions; and it would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the moment slip, knowing that upon them depends the *salvation of the revolution*, the proposal of peace, the salvation of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants.

The government is tottering. It must be *given the death-blow* at all costs.

To delay action will be fatal.

From "A Letter to the Members of the Central Committee" (October 24, 1917).

The yellow socialists who now, having gathered in Berne, are getting ready to rejoice us with the visit of notable foreigners, love best of all to throw forward phrases like: "The Bolsheviks believe in the all-mightiness of violence." This phrase shows only that it is thrown forward by people who, in the heat of revolutionary struggle, when they are completely under the pressure of the violence of the bourgeoisie — look what is happening in Germany — are not able to teach their own proletariat the tactics of *necessary violence*.

There are conditions in which violence is both necessary and useful, and there are conditions in which violence cannot produce any results. There have been examples, however, of this distinction not being grasped by everyone, and one must speak of this. In the October Revolution, violence, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by Soviet power, the

removal of the old government, revolutionary violence, produced brilliant results.

Why? Because, firstly, the masses were organized in the Soviets, and because, secondly, the enemy — the bourgeoisie — was sapped, undermined, eroded like an ice block by the waters of spring, by the long political period from February to October, and was already completely weakened internally. And the movement in the October Revolution, even compared with the present revolutionary movement in Germany, so easily produced, with us, the complete, brilliant victory of revolutionary violence.

From "Successes and Difficulties of the Soviet Power" (published March-April 1919).

IV. BOURGEOIS PARLIAMENTS SHOULD BE USED IN A REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT; TO CONFINE THE CLASS STRUGGLE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY STRUGGLE IS IN PRACTICE TO GO OVER TO THE BOURGEOISIE

EXPLAIN THE BOURGEOISIE'S DECEIT FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY PLATFORM AND EDUCATE THE BROAD MASSES

Parliament is the product of historical development, which we cannot obliterate from life until we are strong enough to disperse the bourgeois parliament. Only by being a member of a bourgeois parliament is it possible, on the basis of the given historical conditions, to fight against bourgeois society and parliamentarism. The proletariat must use the same weapons in the struggle as are used by the bourgeoisie — for altogether different aims, of course. You cannot deny that this is so; and if

you want to challenge it you must wipe out the experience of all the revolutionary events in the world.

From "Speech on Parliamentarism, Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (August 2, 1920).

One has only to think over this complex, difficult and long history of proletarian struggle for power — a struggle rich in amazingly variegated forms and in multiplicity of sharp changes, turns and switches from one form to another — clearly to see the error of those who would "forbid" participation in bourgeois parliaments, reactionary trade unions, tsarist or Scheidemann Shop Stewards' Committees or works' councils, and so on and so forth. This error has its source in the lack of revolutionary experience among utterly sincere, convinced and valiant working-class revolutionaries. Consequently, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were a thousand times right in January 1919 when, observing this mistake and pointing to it, they nevertheless chose to remain with the proletarian revolutionaries mistaken on a minor question, rather than side with the traitors to Socialism, the Scheidemannites and Kautskyites, who were not mistaken in the matter

of participating in bourgeois parliaments, but who had ceased to be Socialists and became philistine democrats and accomplices of the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, a mistake remains a mistake and it is necessary to criticize it and fight for its rectification.

From "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists" (October 10, 1919).

So long as we are still not strong enough to disperse the bourgeois parliament, we must work against it from both outside and inside. So long as a more or less considerable number of toilers — not only proletarians but also semi-proletarians and small peasants — still have faith in the bourgeois-democratic instruments of the bourgeoisie's deceit of the workers, we must explain this deceit *precisely from that platform* which the backward strata of the workers and in particular of the non-proletarian toiling masses consider to be the most substantial and the most authoritative.

So long as we Communists are not yet strong enough to take state power and carry out elections by the toilers alone of *their own* Soviets against the bourgeoisie, so long as the bourgeoisie still

wields state power and calls on all classes of the population to take part in elections, we are obliged to participate in the elections for the purpose of agitation among all toilers, not the proletarians alone. So long as in the bourgeois parliaments, deception is practised on the workers by using phrases about "democracy" to cover up financial swindles and all forms of bribery (nowhere, so much as in the bourgeois parliaments, does the bourgeoisie practise so widely its bribery of a particularly "subtle" type in relation to writers, deputies, lawyers, etc.) — so long must we, Communists, be obliged to unwaveringly expose deceit, to expose each and every case of the desertion of the Renners and Co. to the side of the capitalists against the workers, precisely in this institution, which supposedly *expresses the will of the people* but in fact covers up *the deception of the people by the money-bags*. It is precisely in parliament that the relations between the bourgeois parties and factions most often reveal themselves and reflect the relations between all the classes of bourgeois society. Because of this, it is precisely in the bourgeois parliament, from inside it, that we Communists must explain to the people the *truth* about the relations of classes to parties, the relations

of landlords to farm labourers, of rich peasants to the poorest peasantry, of big capital to employees and petty owners, etc.

From "Letter to the Austrian Communists" (August 15, 1920).

**IT IS THE HEIGHT OF FOLLY OR HYPOCRISY TO
HOLD THAT POWER MUST BE WON ONLY AFTER
WINNING A MAJORITY IN ELECTIONS**

It is essential that the party of the revolutionary proletariat should participate in bourgeois parliamentarism for the purpose of educating the masses by means of elections and the struggle of parties within parliament. But to confine the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or to regard the latter as the supreme and decisive form of struggle, to which all other forms of struggle are subordinate, is in practice to desert the proletariat for the bourgeoisie.

From "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (December 16, 1919).

We must also note that Engels is most definite in calling universal suffrage an instrument of bour-

geois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously summing up the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

"the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state."

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this "more" from universal suffrage. They themselves share and instil into the minds of the people the false notion that universal suffrage "in the *modern* state" is really capable of ascertaining the will of the majority of the toilers and of securing its realization.

From "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917).

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—such is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

Ibid.

The same holds true for the working-class struggle against the bourgeoisie. Today there is no revolutionary situation, the conditions that cause ferment among the masses or heighten their activities do not exist; today you are given a ballot paper — take it. Learn how to organize in order to be able to use it as a weapon against your enemies and not as a means of getting soft parliamentary jobs for men who cling to their seats in fear of having to go to prison. Tomorrow, you are deprived of the ballot paper, you are given a rifle and a splendid quick-firing gun constructed according to the last word of engineering technique — take this weapon of death and destruction, do not listen to the sentimental whiners who are afraid of war. Much has been left in the world that *must* be destroyed by fire and iron in order that the emancipation of the working class may be achieved. And if anger and desperation grow among the masses, if a revolutionary situation arises, prepare to create new organizations and *utilize* these useful weapons of death and destruction *against your* government and *your* bourgeoisie.

From "The Collapse of the Second International" (from latter half of May to first half of June 1915).

Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out *under the yoke of the bourgeoisie*, under *the yoke of wage-slavery*, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy; it is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution.

The proletariat wages its class struggle and does not wait for voting to begin a strike, although for the complete success of a strike it is necessary to have the sympathy of the majority of the working people (and, it follows, of the majority of the population); the proletariat wages its class struggle and overthrows the bourgeoisie without waiting for any preliminary (supervised by the bourgeoisie and carried out under its oppression) voting; and the proletariat is perfectly well aware that for the success of its revolution, for the successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the sympathy of the majority of the working people (and, it follows, of the majority of the population) is *absolutely necessary*.

From "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists" (October 10, 1919).

The Bernsteinites accepted and accept Marxism *with the exception* of its directly-revolutionary aspect. They consider parliamentary struggle not as one of the means of struggle, suited particularly to certain historical periods, but as the chief and almost the exclusive form of struggle, which makes "violence," "seizure," "dictatorship," unnecessary. Exactly this vulgar petty-townsman distortion of Marxism is now also being carried over to Russia by the Messrs. Blank and other liberal praisers of Plekhanov. They have become so used to this distortion that they do not even consider it necessary to give proofs for consigning Marxist principles and ideas to oblivion in the period of the revolutionary whirlwind.

From "Cadet Victory and the Tasks of the Workers' Party" (March 24-28, 1906).

V. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN A MASS ALLY

THE ALLIANCE OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE VICTORY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The proletariat is a really revolutionary class, it acts in a really socialist manner only when it comes out and acts as the vanguard of all the toilers and the exploited, as their leader in the struggle for the overthrow of the exploiters; but this cannot be done unless the class struggle is carried into the rural districts, unless the masses of the rural toilers are united around the Communist Party of the urban proletariat, and unless the former are trained by the latter.

From "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question" (early June 1920).

An essential condition for the victory of the socialist revolution, which alone can guarantee the lasting success and complete realization of the Land Law, is the closest alliance between the toiling and exploited peasantry and the working class — the proletariat — in all advanced countries. The whole structure and administration of the state, from top to bottom, must henceforth in the Russian Republic be based upon such an alliance. Rejecting each and every attempt, direct and indirect, open or covert, to return to the policy, condemned by experience, of compromise with the bourgeoisie and with those who carry out the policy of the bourgeoisie, such an alliance is alone capable of securing the triumph of Socialism throughout the world.

From "Draft Resolution Submitted to the Extraordinary All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies" (published in *Izvestia of the Central Executive Committee*, No. 226, November 15, 1917).

It is necessary only to establish that main thing which has most of all united us, and which is most essential from the point of view of the most es-

sential and most fundamental question of our whole revolution and of all future socialist revolutions (if one takes them on a world scale, in general).

The most fundamental, the most essential question is — the relation of the working class to the peasantry; it is — the alliance of the working class with the peasantry; it is — the ability of the advanced workers who have gone through the long, hard but also worthwhile school of the big factory, their ability to manage affairs in such a way as to attract to their side the mass of the peasants, ground down by capitalism, ground down by the landlords, ground down by their old, beggarly, wretched economy, and to prove to them that only in alliance with the workers, whatever difficulties might be experienced along this road — and the difficulties are many and we cannot close our eyes to them — that only in this alliance lies the liberation of the peasantry from age-old oppression by landlords and capitalists. Only in the consolidation of the alliance of workers and peasants lies the general liberation of all humanity from such things as the recent imperialist carnage, from those savage contradictions we now see in the capitalist world, where a small number, a most negligible handful of the richest

powers are choking in their own wealth, while the gigantic population of the globe lives in poverty, being unable to use the culture and rich resources that are on hand, which have no outlet because of insufficient circulation.

From "On the Domestic and Foreign Policy of the Republic, Report to the Ninth All-Russian Congress of Soviets" (December 23, 1921).

The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything else* than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it — without such participation, *mass* struggle is *impossible*, without it *no* revolution is possible — and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive, *mass* struggle, will be able to unite and

direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to appropriate the trusts (hated by all, though for different reasons) and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of Socialism, which, however, will by no means immediately "purge" itself of petty-bourgeois slag.

From "Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" (July 1916).

**AMALGAMATE THE REVOLUTIONARY ONSLAUGHT
OF THE PROLETARIANS OF THE CAPITALIST
COUNTRIES WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY
ONSLAUGHT OF HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS
OF PEOPLE IN THE COLONIES**

The social revolution cannot come about except in the form of an epoch of proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries combined with a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including movements for national liberation, in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations.

From "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism" (August-October 1916).

. . . The socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie — no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialism-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries against international imperialism. Characterizing the approach of the world social revolution in the programme of our Party which we adopted in March of last year, we said that the civil war of the toilers against the imperialists and exploiters in all the advanced countries is beginning to be combined with national wars against international imperialism. That is confirmed by the course of the revolution, and will be more and more confirmed as time goes on.

From "Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East" (November 22, 1919).

The amalgamation of the revolutionary proletarians of capitalist, advanced countries with the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no proletariat, or hardly any, with the oppressed masses of colonial, Eastern countries, is taking place

at this congress. The riveting of the bonds of unity depends upon us, and I am sure that we shall do that. World imperialism must fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming the resistance of the petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper stratum of the labour aristocracy, will unite with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who up to now have stood outside of history and have been regarded merely as the object of history.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

**MOST THOROUGHLY, CAREFULLY, ATTENTIVELY
AND SKILFULLY USE EVERY "RIFT" AMONG THE
ENEMIES AND ALSO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN A MASS ALLY**

To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between

states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilize the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporize and compromise 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 heretofore 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? And yet we find that people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are ordained by god himself to talk such nonsense for a period) meet with the support — whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, does not matter — of some members of the Communist Party of Holland!!

After the first socialist revolution of the proletariat, after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie in one country, the proletariat of that country *for a long time* remains *weaker* than the bourgeoisie, simply because of the latter's extensive international connections, and also because of the spontaneous and

continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and *without fail*, most thoroughly, carefully, attentively and skilfully using every, even the smallest, "rift" among the enemies, of every antagonism of interest among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of every, even the smallest, opportunity of gaining a mass ally, even though this ally be temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who fail to understand this, fail to understand even a particle of Marxism, or of scientific, modern Socialism *in general*. Those who have not proved by *deeds* over a fairly considerable period of time, and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to assist the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to

the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has conquered political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels; and it is the greatest mistake, the greatest crime on the part of such "patented" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., that they have not understood this, have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not the pavement of the Nevsky Prospect" (the clean, broad, smooth pavement of the perfectly straight principal street of St. Petersburg) — N.G. Chernyshevsky, the great Russian Socialist of the pre-Marxian period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time Russian revolutionaries have paid the price of numerous sacrifices for ignoring or forgetting this truth. We must strive at all costs to *prevent* the Left Communists and the West-European and American revolutionaries who are devoted to the working class paying *as dearly* for the assimilation of this truth as the backward Russians did.

From "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (April-May 1920).

NOT TO RENOUNCE COMPROMISES ONCE AND FOR ALL, BUT TO BE ABLE TO CONSOLIDATE AND DEVELOP THE CAUSE OF REVOLUTION THROUGH NECESSARY COMPROMISES

It is not for nothing that Marx and Engels are considered the founders of scientific Socialism. They were ruthless enemies of all phrase-mongering. They taught that problems of Socialism (including problems of socialist tactics) must be posed scientifically. In the seventies of last century, when Engels analysed the revolutionary manifesto of the French Blanquists, Commune fugitives, he told them in plain terms that their boastful declaration of "no compromise" was an empty phrase. The idea of compromises must not be renounced. The point is, through all the compromises which are sometimes necessarily imposed by force of circumstance upon even the most revolutionary party of even the most revolutionary class, to be able to preserve, strengthen, steel and develop the revolutionary tactics and organization, the revolutionary consciousness, determination and preparedness of the working class and its organized vanguard, the Communist Party.

From "On Compromises" (March-April 1920).

The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain of one's demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands by agreement with another party.

The usual idea of the man in the street regarding the Bolsheviks, an idea fostered by the systematic calumniations of the press, is that the Bolsheviks are opposed to all compromises, no matter with whom and under what circumstances.

That idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it shows that even our enemies are obliged to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of Socialism and the revolution. Nevertheless, the truth must be told: this idea does not correspond to the facts. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration, "No compromise!" That is a mere phrase, he said, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd once and for all to refuse "to stop at intermediate stations." The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to renounce compromises once and for all, but to be able *throughout all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to re-

main true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of preparing the way for the revolution and of educating the masses for victory in the revolution.

From "On Compromises"
(September 1-3, 1917).

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle," to reject the admissibility of compromises in general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to take seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must know how to single out *concrete* cases when such compromises are inadmissible, when they are an expression of opportunism and *treachery*, and direct all the force of criticism, the full edge of merciless exposure and relentless war, against *those concrete* compromises, and not allow the past masters at "practical" Socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by disquisitions on "compromises in general." It is precisely in this way that Messrs. the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labour Party, dodge responsibility

for the treachery they have perpetrated, for having made such a compromise that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are compromises and compromises. One must be able to analyse the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who gave the bandits money and firearms in order to lessen the damage they can do and facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives bandits money and firearms in order to share in the loot.

From "Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder" (April-May 1920).

VI. OPPOSITION TO REVISIONISM IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR VICTORY IN THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REVISIONISM AND MARXISM LIES PRECISELY IN THE CONTRAST BETWEEN PEACEFUL AND VIOLENT REVOLUTIONS

Kautsky has to resort to trickery literally at every step to cover up his apostasy!

And note how he inadvertently betrayed the cloven hoof; he wrote: "peacefully, *that is, in a democratic way*"!!

In defining dictatorship, Kautsky tried his utmost to conceal from the reader the fundamental feature of this concept, namely, revolutionary *violence*. But now the truth is out: it is a question of the contrast between *peaceful* and *violent revolutions*.

That is where the trouble lies. Kautsky had to resort to all these subterfuges, sophistries and fraud-

ulent falsifications only in order to *dissociate* himself from *violent* revolution, and to conceal his renunciation of it, his desertion to the *liberal* labour policy, i.e., to the bourgeoisie. That is where the trouble lies.

Kautsky the "historian" so shamelessly falsifies history that he "forgets" the fundamental fact that pre-monopoly capitalism—which reached its zenith actually in the 1870's—was by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, which found most typical expression in England and in America, distinguished by a, relatively speaking, maximum fondness for peace and freedom. Imperialism, on the other hand, i.e., monopoly capitalism, which finally matured only in the twentieth century, is, by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, distinguished by a minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by a maximum and universal development of militarism. To "fail to notice" this in discussing the extent to which a peaceful or violent revolution is typical or probable is to stoop to the position of a most ordinary lackey of the bourgeoisie.

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (October-November 1918).

“. . . The object of the mass strike," Kautsky continues, "can never be to *destroy* the state power; its only object can be to wring concessions from the government on some particular question, or to replace a hostile government by one that would be more yielding (*entgegenkommende*) to the proletariat. . . . But never, under any conditions, can it" (that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government) "lead to the *destruction* of the state power; it can lead only to a certain *shifting* (*Verschiebung*) of the relation of forces *within the state power*. . . . The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government." (pp. 726, 727, 732.)

This is nothing but the purest and the most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in word. Kautsky's thoughts go no further than a "government that would be more yielding to the proletariat"—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organization of the proletariat as the ruling class."

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidemanns, Plekhanovs and Vander-

veldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government "that would be more yielding to the proletariat."

But we shall break with these traitors to Socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself *shall become the government*. These are "two vastly different things."

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the relation of forces within the state power," for "winning a majority in parliament," and converting parliament into the "master of the government." A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

But we shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight — not to "shift the relation of forces," but to *overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of*

Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

From "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917).

This best of good fellows, who is probably the most virtuous father of a family, the most honest of citizens, the most conscientious reader and writer of scholarly volumes, has forgotten quite a little detail: he has forgotten that such an "ordered" and "regulated" transition to Socialism (a transition which is undoubtedly most advantageous for the "people," speaking in the abstract) presupposes the absolute firmness of the victory of the proletariat, the absolute hopelessness of the position of the capitalists and the absolute necessity for them to submit conscientiously and their readiness to do so.

Is such a concatenation of circumstances possible?

Theoretically, that is, speaking in the present instance, completely in the abstract; yes, of course. For example: Let us suppose that in nine countries, including all the Great Powers, the Wilsons, Lloyd Georges, Millerands and other such heroes of capitalism are already in the situation that Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin and their ministers

are in with us. Let us suppose that in the tenth, small country after this the capitalists propose to the workers: Come, we will help you conscientiously, submit to your decisions, carry through an "ordered" and peaceful (without destruction!) "expropriation of the expropriators," getting for this for the first year five-ninths of our present income, and in the second year, four-ninths.

It is quite conceivable that under the conditions I have indicated the capitalists of the tenth country, in one of the smallest and "peaceful" countries should make such a proposal, and there would be absolutely nothing harmful in the workers of this country discussing this proposal in a business-like way, and (after bargaining: the merchant can't do without overcharging) accepting it.

Perhaps now, after this popular explanation, even the learned Otto Bauer and the philosopher (who is just as successful as a politician) Frederick Adler will understand what it's all about.

Not yet? You don't get it?

Just think, my dear Otto Bauer, my dear Frederick Adler, is the situation of world capitalism and its leaders at the present time similar to that of Yudenich, Kolchak and Denikin in Russia?

No, it is not. In Russia the capitalists have been smashed after a desperate resistance. In the whole world they are still in power. They are the masters.

If you, dear Otto Bauer and Frederick Adler, still don't understand what it is all about, then I will add to it in an even more popular form for you:

Imagine that at the time when Yudenich stood before St. Petersburg, Kolchak held the Urals, and Denikin the whole Ukraine, when the pockets of these three heroes held wads of telegrams from Wilson, Lloyd George, Millerand & Co., about the dispatch of money, guns, officers and soldiers, imagine that at such a time a representative of the Russian workers came to Yudenich, Kolchak or Denikin and said: We workers are in the majority; we will give you five-ninths of your income and then take away the rest in an "ordered" and peaceful way. It's a bargain, "without destruction," do you agree?

If this representative of the workers was simply dressed and only a Russian general like Denikin received him, he would probably put that worker into a madhouse or simply drive him out.

But if the representative of the workers was an intellectual in a decent suit and in addition was the

son of a respectable papa (like nice, good Frederick Adler), if, in addition, Denikin was not alone, but received him together with a French or English "adviser" then this adviser would undoubtedly say to Denikin:

"Listen, General, this representative of the workers is so wise, that he is exactly suited to become one of our ministers, like Henderson in England, Albert Thomas in France, or Otto Bauer and Frederick Adler in Austria."

From "Notes of a Publicist" (February 14, 1920).

VICTORY OVER REVISIONISM WILL WIN THE WORKING MASSES AND TAKE THE PEOPLE ALONG THE ROAD TO THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

One of the essential conditions for preparing the proletariat for victory is a prolonged, persistent and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and tendencies, which are inevitable as long as the proletariat acts under capitalist conditions. Unless such a struggle is fought, and unless a complete vic-

tory over opportunism within the working-class movement is preliminarily gained, there can be no hope for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would never have triumphed over the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 had it not previously learned, during the years 1903-17, to defeat and ruthlessly expel the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists and social-chauvinists, from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

From "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (December 16, 1919).

Against the social-traitors, against reformism and opportunism, this political line can and must be followed in *all* spheres of the struggle without exception. And then we shall win the working masses. And with the working masses the Marxist centralized political party, the vanguard of the proletariat, will take the people along the right road to the triumph of proletarian dictatorship, to proletarian instead of bourgeois democracy, to the Soviet Republic, to the socialist system.

From "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists" (October 10, 1919).

Opportunism is our principal enemy. Opportunism in the upper ranks of the working-class movement is not proletarian Socialism, but bourgeois socialism. Practice has shown that the active people in the working-class movement who adhere to the opportunist trend are better defenders of the bourgeoisie, than the bourgeoisie itself. Without their leadership of the workers, the bourgeoisie could not have remained in power. This is not only proved by the history of the Kerensky regime in Russia; it is also proved by the democratic republic in Germany, headed by its Social-Democratic government; it is proved by Albert Thomas' attitude towards his bourgeois government. It is proved by the analogous experience in Great Britain and the United States. This is where our principal enemy is; and we must conquer this enemy. We must leave this congress with the firm determination to carry this struggle on to the very end in all parties. This is our main task.

From "The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International, Report Delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International" (July 19, 1920).

VII. THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM CAN BE BROUGHT ABOUT ONLY BY THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

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 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 gained the victory and taken political power into its hands, against the defeated, but not destroyed bourgeoisie, which has not disappeared and has not ceased to offer resistance — against the bourgeoisie intensifying this resistance.

From "Preface to *On the Deception of the People by the Slogans of Freedom and Equality*" (June 23, 1919).

The transition from capitalism to Communism 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 hundred fold, 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 . . .).

From “The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky” (October-November 1918).

. . . During every transition from capitalism to Socialism, dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons, or along two main channels. Firstly, capitalism cannot be defeated and eradicated without the ruthless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot at once be deprived of their

wealth, of their advantages of organization and knowledge, and consequently for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor; secondly, every great revolution, and a socialist revolution in particular, even if there were no external war, is inconceivable without internal war, i.e., civil war, which is even more devastating than external war, and involves thousands and millions of cases of wavering and desertion from one side to another, implies a state of extreme indefiniteness, lack of equilibrium and chaos. And of course, all the elements of disintegration of the old society, which are inevitably very numerous and connected mainly with the petty bourgeoisie (because it is the petty bourgeoisie that every war and every crisis ruins and destroys first) cannot but “reveal themselves” during such a profound revolution. And these elements of disintegration *cannot* “reveal themselves” otherwise than in the increase of crime, hooliganism, corruption, profiteering and outrages of every kind. To put these down requires time and *requires an iron hand*.

There has not been a single great revolution in history in which the people did not instinctively

realize this and did not reveal salutary firmness by shooting thieves on the spot. The misfortune of previous revolutions was that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, which sustained them in their state of tension and gave them the strength ruthlessly to suppress the elements of disintegration, did not last long. The social, i.e., the class reason for this instability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses was the weakness of the proletariat, which *alone* is able (if it is sufficiently numerous, class conscious and disciplined) to win over to its side *the majority* of the working and exploited people (the majority of the poor, to speak more simply and popularly) and retain power sufficiently long to suppress completely all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration.

It was this historical experience of all revolutions, it was this world-historical — economic and political — lesson that Marx summed up in giving his short, sharp, concise and expressive formula: dictatorship of the proletariat.

From "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" (March-April 1918).

Our task is — to defeat all the resistance of the capitalists, not only military and political but also ideological, which is the deepest and the most powerful.

From "Speech at the All-Russian Conference of the Political Educational Administrations of the Provincial and District People's Educational Departments" (November 3, 1920).

Present-day opportunism in the person of its principal representative, the ex-Marxist, K. Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterization of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits the recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relationships. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognize the class struggle "in principle"!.) Opportunism *does not extend* the recognition of class struggle to what is the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to Communism, to the period of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly

violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

To proceed. The essence of Marx's teaching on the state has been mastered only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society," from Communism. The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to Communism certainly cannot but yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

From "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917).

CAPITALISM CANNOT BE DEFEATED AND ERADICATED WITHOUT THE RUTHLESS SUPPRESSION OF THE RESISTANCE OF THE EXPLOITERS

Dictatorship is rule based directly upon force and unrestricted by any laws.

The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is unrestricted by any laws.

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (October-November 1918).

The Hungarian proletarian revolution is helping even the blind to see. The form of transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary is altogether different from that in Russia: Voluntary resignation of the bourgeois government, instantaneous restoration of working-class unity, unification of the socialist movement *on a communist programme*. This makes the essence of Soviet government all the clearer: Soviet power, dictatorship of the proletariat, is the only form of government any-

where in the world that can have the support of the working people led by the proletariat.

This dictatorship presupposes ruthlessly severe, swift and resolute use of force to crush the resistance of the exploiters, the capitalists, landlords and their underlings. Whoever does not understand this is not a revolutionary, and must be removed from the post of leader or adviser of the proletariat.

But the essence of proletarian dictatorship does not lie in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its quintessence is the organization and discipline of the advanced detachment of the working people, of their vanguard, their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build Socialism, abolish the division of society into classes, make all members of society working people, remove the basis for any kind of exploitation of man by man. This 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 petty-bourgeois and bourgeois property relations can be overcome only by a long and stub-

born 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.

From "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers" (May 27, 1919).

**THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT IS A
MILLION TIMES MORE DEMOCRATIC THAN THE
MOST DEMOCRATIC BOURGEOIS REPUBLIC**

Proletarian democracy is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy; Soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

To fail to see this one must either deliberately serve the bourgeoisie, or be politically as dead as a doornail, unable to see real life from behind the dusty pages of bourgeois books, be thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices, and thereby objectively convert himself into a lackey of the bourgeoisie.

To fail to see this one must be incapable of *presenting the question* from the point of view of the *oppressed classes*:

Is there a single country in the world, even among the most democratic bourgeois countries, in which the *average rank-and-file* worker, the average rank-and-file *village labourer*, or village semi-proletarian generally (i.e., the representative of the oppressed masses, the overwhelming majority of the population), enjoys anything approaching such *liberty* of holding meetings in the best buildings, such *liberty* of using the largest printing-plants and biggest stocks of paper to express his ideas and to defend his interests, such *liberty* of promoting men and women of his own class to administer and to "put into shape" the state, as in Soviet Russia?

It is ridiculous to think that Mr. Kautsky could find in any country even one out of a thousand of well-informed workers or agricultural labourers who would have any doubts as to the reply to this question. Instinctively, from hearing fragments of admissions of the truth in the bourgeois press, the workers of the whole world sympathize with the Soviet Republic precisely because they regard it as a *proletarian* democracy, a *democracy for the poor*, and not a democracy for the rich that every bourgeois democracy, even the best, actually is.

We are governed (and our state is "put into shape") by bourgeois bureaucrats, by bourgeois members of parliament, by bourgeois judges — such is the simple, obvious and indisputable truth, which tens and hundreds of millions of people belonging to the exploited classes in all bourgeois countries, including the most democratic, know from their living experience, feel and realize every day.

But in Russia the bureaucratic machine has been completely smashed, razed to the ground; the old judges have all been sent packing, the bourgeois parliament has been dispersed — and *far more accessible* representation has been given to the workers and peasants; *their* Soviets have replaced the bureaucrats, or *their* Soviets have been placed in control of the bureaucrats, and *their* Soviets have been authorized to elect the judges. This fact alone is enough to cause all the oppressed classes to recognize that Soviet power, i.e., the present form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

From "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky" (October-November 1918).

VIII. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The abolition of classes 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 organizational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralization and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organizational* role of the proletariat (and that is

its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent 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. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralized big bourgeoisie than to “vanquish” the millions and millions of small owners; yet they, by their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralizing activity, achieve the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to *restore* the bourgeoisie. Whoever weakens ever so little the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship), actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

From “‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder” (April-May 1920).

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat which is capable of assuming power and of *leading the whole people* to Socialism, of directing and organizing the new order, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the toilers and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. As against this, the opportunism which now holds sway trains the membership of the workers' party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the rank and file, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, i.e., renounce their role of revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

From "The State and Revolution" (August-September 1917).

Marxism teaches — and this tenet has not only been formally endorsed by the whole of the Communist International in the decisions of the Second (1920) Congress of the Comintern on the role of the political party of the proletariat, but has also been confirmed in practice by our revolution — that only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Com-

munist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organizing a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people. Without this the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

From "Preliminary Draft of the Resolution of the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party on the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party" (March 1921).

列宁論无產階級革命
和无產階級專政

•
外文出版社出版（北京）

1960年9月第一版 1960年10月第二版

編号：（英）3050—401

