

MLRH CURRICULUM

STAGE 1

MARXIST-LENINIST READING HUB CURRICULUM: STAGE 1

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Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub

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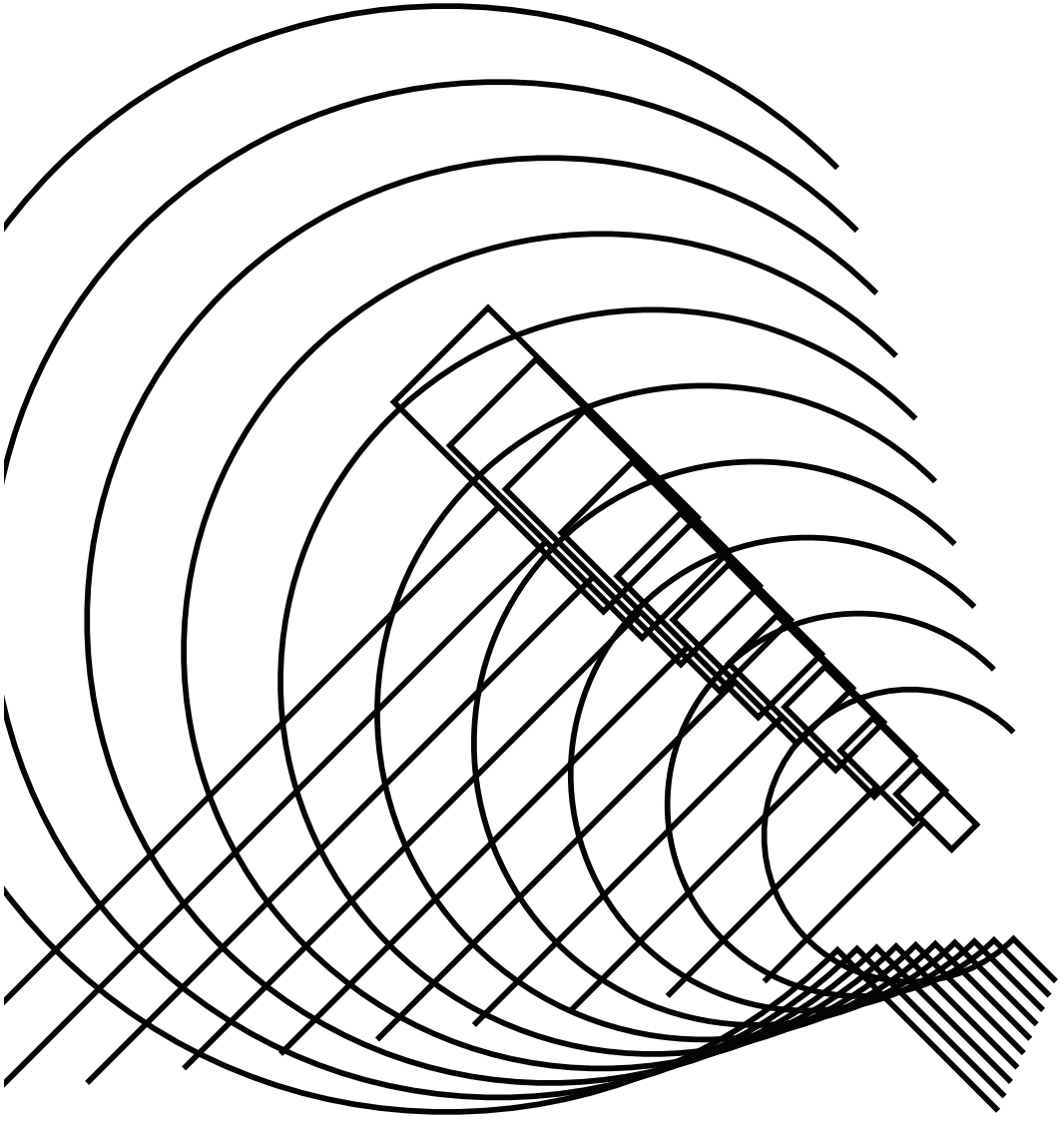
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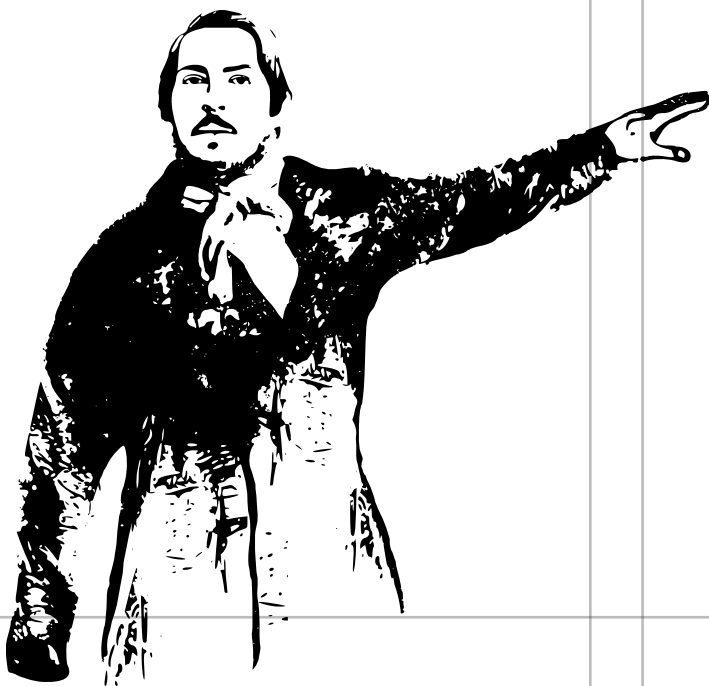
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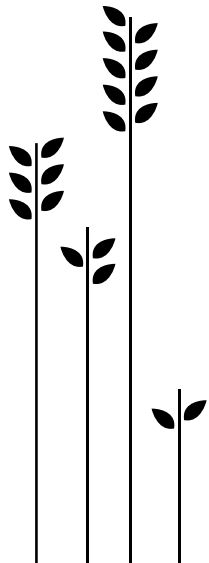
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THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM





THE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNISM

1. What is Communism?

Communism is the doctrine of the conditions of the liberation of the proletariat.[1]

2. What is the proletariat?

The proletariat is that class in society which lives entirely from the sale of its labor-power* and does not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor-power—hence, on the changing state of business, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or the class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class under Capitalism.

* Engels originally writes "labor" here, but in later writings distinguishes "labor" (the act of labor) from "labor-power" (the commodity form of labor). Throughout this text "labor" has been changed to "labor-power" accordingly.—*Ed*.

3. Proletarians, then, have not always existed?

No. There have always been poor and working classes; and the working class have mostly been poor. But there have not always been workers and poor people living under conditions as they are today; in other words, there have not always been proletarians, any more than there have always been free unbridled competitions.

4. How did the proletariat originate?

The Proletariat originated in the industrial revolution, which took place in England in the last half of the 18th century, and which has since then been repeated in all the civilized countries[2] of the world. This industrial revolution was precipitated by the discovery of the steam engine, various spinning machines, the mechanical loom, and a whole series of other mechanical devices. These machines, which were very expensive and hence could be bought only by big capitalists, altered the whole mode of production and displaced the former workers, because the machines turned out cheaper and better commodities than the workers could produce with their inefficient spinning wheels and handlooms. The machines delivered industry wholly into the hands of the big capitalists and rendered entirely worthless the meager property of the workers (tools, looms, etc.). The result was that the capitalists soon had everything in their hands and nothing remained to the workers. This marked the introduction of the factory system into the textile industry. Once the impulse to the introduction of machinery and the factory system had been given, this system spread quickly to all other branches of industry, especially cloth and book-printing, pottery, and the metal industries. Labor was more and more divided among the individual workers so that the worker who previously had done a complete piece of work now did only a part of that piece. This division of labor made it possible to produce things faster and cheaper. It reduced the activity of the individual worker to simple, endlessly repeated mechanical motions which could be

performed not only as well but much better by a machine. In this way, all these industries fell, one after another, under the dominance of steam, machinery, and the factory system, just as spinning and weaving had already done. But at the same time, they also fell into the hands of big capitalists, and their workers were deprived of whatever independence remained to them. Gradually, not only genuine manufacture,* but also handicrafts came within the province of the factory system as big capitalists increasingly displaced the small master craftsmen by setting up huge workshops, which saved many expenses and permitted an elaborate division of labor. This is how it has come about in civilized countries at the present time, nearly all kinds of labor are performed in factories; and, in nearly all branches of work, handicrafts and manufacture have been superseded. This process has, to an ever-greater degree, ruined the old middle class, especially the small handicraftsmen; it has entirely transformed the condition of the workers; and two new classes have been created which are gradually swallowing up all the others. These are:

1. The class of big capitalists, who, in all civilized countries, are already in almost exclusive possession of all the means of subsistence and of the instruments (machines, factories) and materials necessary for the production of the means of subsistence. This is the bourgeois class, or the bourgeoisie.

2. The class of the wholly propertyless, who are obliged to sell their labor-power to the bourgeoisie in order to get, in exchange, the means of subsistence for their support. This is called the class of proletarians, or the proletariat.

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* Manufacture is used here in a now obsolete sense meaning production by hand. Manufacture was the first form of industrialization of production in the pre-machine age, the organization of production by hand on a large scale as against individual production under the guild system. Manufacture was the forerunner of modern machine industry.—*Ed*.

5. Under what conditions does this sale of labor-power of the proletarians to the bourgeoisie take place?

Labor-power is a commodity, like any other, and its price is therefore determined by exactly the same laws that apply to other commodities. In a regime of big industry or of free competition—as we shall see, the two come to the same thing—the price of a commodity is, on the average, always equal to its cost of production. Hence, the price of labor-power is also equal to the cost of production of labor-power. But, the costs of production of labor-power consist of precisely the quantity of means of subsistence necessary to enable the worker to continue working, and to prevent the working class from dying out. The worker will therefore get no more for his labor-power than is necessary for this purpose; the price of labor-power, or the wage, will, in other words, be the lowest, the minimum, required for the maintenance of life.[3] However, since business is sometimes better and sometimes worse, it follows that the worker sometimes gets more and sometimes gets less for his commodities. But, again, just as the industrialist, on the average of good times and bad, gets no more and no less for his commodities than what they cost, similarly, on the average the worker gets no more and no less than his minimum. This economic law of wages operates the more strictly the greater the degree to which big industry has taken possession of all branches of production.

6. What working classes were there before the industrial revolution?

The working classes have always, according to the different stages of development of society, lived in different circumstances and had different relations to the owning and ruling classes. In antiquity, the workers were the slaves of the owners, just as they still are in many backward countries and even in the southern part of the United States. In the Middle Ages, they were the *serfs* of the land-owning nobility, as they still are in Hungary,

Poland, and Russia. In the Middle Ages, and indeed right up to the industrial revolution, there were also journeymen in the cities who worked in the service of petty-bourgeois masters. Gradually, as manufacture developed, these journeymen became manufacturing workers who were even then employed by larger capitalists.

7. In what way do proletarians differ from slaves?

The slave is sold once and for all; the proletarian must sell himself daily and hourly. The individual slave, property of *one* master, is assured an existence, however miserable it may be, because of the master's interest. The individual proletarian, property as it were of the entire bourgeois *class*, which buys his labor-power only when someone has need of it, has no secure existence. This existence is assured only to the *class* as a whole. The slave is outside competition; the proletarian is in it and experiences all its vagaries. The slave counts as a thing, not as a member of society. Thus, the slave can have a better existence than the proletarian,[4] while the proletarian belongs to a higher stage of social development and, himself, stands on a higher social level than the slave. The slave frees himself when he abolishes the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.

8. In what way do proletarians differ from serfs?

The serf possesses and uses an instrument of production, a piece of land, in exchange for which he gives up a part of his product or part of the services of his labor. The proletarian works with the instruments of production of another, for the benefit of this other, in exchange for a part of the product. The serf gives up, the proletarian receives. The serf has an assured existence, the proletarian has not. The serf is outside competition, the proletarian is in it. The serf liberates himself in one of three ways: either he runs away to the city and there

becomes a handicraftsman; or, instead of products and services, he gives money to his lord and thereby becomes a free tenant; or he overthrows his feudal lord and himself becomes a property owner. In short, by one route or another, he gets into the owning class and enters into competition. The proletarian liberates himself by abolishing competition, private property, and all class differences.

9. In what way do proletarians differ from handicraftsmen?

In contrast to the proletarian, the so-called handicraftsman, as he still existed almost everywhere in the 18th century and still exists here and there at present, is a temporary proletarian at most. His goal is to acquire capital himself to then exploit other workers. He can often achieve this goal where guilds still exist or where freedom from guild restrictions has not yet led to the introduction of factory-style methods into the crafts, nor yet to fierce competition. But as soon as the factory system has been introduced into the crafts and competition flourishes fully, this perspective dwindles away and the handicraftsman becomes more and more a proletarian. The handicraftsman therefore frees himself by becoming either bourgeois or entering the middle class in general, or becoming a proletarian because of competition (as is now more often the case). In which case he can free himself by joining the proletarian movement, i.e., the more or less communist movement.

10. In what way do proletarians differ from manufacturing workers?

The manufacturing worker of the 16th to 18th centuries still had, with but few exceptions, an instrument of production in his own possession: his loom, the family spinning wheel, a little plot of land which he cultivated in his spare time. The proletarian has none of these things. The manufacturing worker almost always lives in the countryside and in a more or less patriarchal relation

to his landlord or employer; the proletarian lives, for the most part, in the city and his relation to his employer is purely a cash relation. The manufacturing worker is torn out of his patriarchal relation by big industry, loses whatever property he still has, and in this way becomes a proletarian.

11. What were the immediate consequences of the industrial revolution and of the division of society into bourgeoisie and proletariat?

First, the lower and lower prices of industrial products brought about by machine labor totally destroyed, in all countries of the world, the old system of manufacture or industry based upon hand labor. In this way, all semi-barbarian countries, which had hitherto been more or less strangers to historical development, and whose industry had been based on manufacture, were violently forced out of their isolation. They bought the cheaper commodities of the English and allowed their own manufacturing workers to be ruined. Countries which had known no progress for thousands of years—for example, India—were thoroughly revolutionized, and even China is now on the way to a revolution. We have come to the point where a new machine invented in England deprives millions of Chinese workers of their livelihood within a year's time. In this way, big industry has brought all the people of the Earth into contact with each other, has merged all local markets into one world market, has spread civilization and progress everywhere and has thus ensured that whatever happens in civilized countries will have repercussions in all other countries. It follows that if the workers in England or France now liberate themselves, this must set off revolution in all other countries—revolutions which, sooner or later, must accomplish the liberation of their respective working class.

Second, wherever big industries displaced manufacture, the bourgeoisie developed wealth and power to the utmost and made itself the first class of the country. The result was that wherever

this happened, the bourgeoisie took political power into its own hands and displaced the hitherto ruling classes, the aristocracy, the guildmasters, and their representative, the absolute monarchy. The bourgeoisie annihilated the power of the aristocracy, the nobility, by abolishing the entailment of estates; in other words, by making landed property subject to purchase and sale, and by doing away with the special privileges of the nobility. It destroyed the power of the guildmasters by abolishing guilds and handicraft privileges. In their place, it put competition; that is, a state of society in which everyone has the right to enter into any branch of industry, the only obstacle being a lack of the necessary capital. The introduction of free competition is thus public declaration that, from now on, the members of society are unequal only to the extent that their capitals are unequal, that capital is the decisive power, and that therefore the capitalists, the bourgeoisie, have become the first class in society. Free competition is necessary for the establishment of big industry, because it is the only condition of society in which big industry can make its way. Having destroyed the social power of the nobility and the guildmasters, the bourgeoisie also destroyed their political power. Having raised itself to the actual position of first class in society, it proclaims itself to be also the dominant political class. This it does through the introduction of the representative system which rests on bourgeois equality before the law and the recognition of free competition, and in European countries takes the form of constitutional monarchy. In these constitutional monarchies, only those who possess a certain capital are voters; that is to say, only members of the bourgeoisie.[5] These bourgeois voters choose the deputies, and these bourgeois deputies choose a bourgeois government by virtue of their right of refusal to grant taxes.*

* The right of parliaments to grant taxes is the foundation of tremendous power, even in a pseudo constitutional monarchy, such as Germany as before

Third, everywhere the proletariat develops in step with the bourgeoisie. In proportion, as the bourgeoisie grows in wealth, the proletariat grows in numbers. Since the proletarians can be employed only by capital, and since capital extends only through employing labor, it follows that the growth of the proletariat proceeds at precisely the same pace as the growth of capital. Simultaneously, this process draws members of the bourgeoisie and proletarians together into the great cities where industry can be carried on most profitably, and by thus throwing great masses in *one* spot it gives to the proletarians a consciousness of their own strength. Moreover, the further this process advances, the more labor-saving machines are invented, the greater is the pressure exercised by big industry on wages, which, as we have seen, sink to their minimum and shortly render the condition of the proletariat increasingly unbearable. The growing dissatisfaction of the proletariat thus joins with its rising power to prepare a proletarian social revolution.

12. What were the further consequences of the industrial revolution?

Big industry created, with the steam engine and other machines, the means of endlessly expanding industrial production, speeding it up, and cutting its costs. With production thus facilitated, the free competition, which is necessarily bound up with big industry, assumed the most extreme forms; a multitude of capitalists invaded industry, and, in a short while,

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World War I. The dependency of the government on parliament for its only steadily yielding source of income, taxes and tariffs, etc., forces even the semi-feudal monarchy into the role of a servant to the bourgeoisie. The monarch claiming to rule by the grace of God sinks into the position of a lackey of capitalism, reigning by the grace of the bourgeoisie.

Capitalism, however, at the same time, changes the economic basis of the old nobility and thus turns it into a subdivision of the modern capitalist class representing mostly agrarian capital.—*Ed*.

more was produced than was needed. As a consequence, finished commodities could not be sold, and a so-called commercial crisis broke out. Factories had to be closed, their owners went bankrupt, and the workers were without bread. Deepest misery reigned everywhere. After a time, the superfluous products were sold, the factories began to operate again, wages rose, and gradually business got better than ever. But it was not long before too many commodities were again produced and a new crisis broke out, only to follow the same course as its predecessor. Ever since the beginning of the 19th century, the condition of industry has constantly fluctuated between periods of prosperity and periods of crisis; nearly every five to seven years, a fresh crisis has intervened, always with the greatest hardship for workers, and always accompanied by general revolutionary stirrings and the direct peril to the whole existing order of things.

13. What follows from these periodic commercial crises?

First, that although big industry in its earliest stage created free competition, it has now outgrown free competition; that, for big industry, competition and generally the individualistic organization of production have become a fetter which it must and will shatter; that, so long as big industry remains on its present footing, it can be maintained only at the cost of general chaos every seven years, each time threatening the whole of civilization and not only plunging the proletarians into misery but also ruining large sections of the bourgeoisie; hence, either that big industry must itself be given up, which is an absolute impossibility, or that it makes unavoidably necessary an entirely new organization of society in which production is no longer directed by mutually competing individual industrialists, but rather by the whole society operating according to a definite plan and taking account of the needs of all.

Second, that big industry, and the limitless expansion of production which it makes possible, bring within the range of

feasibility a social order in which so much is produced that every member of society will be in a position to exercise and develop all his powers and faculties in complete freedom. It thus appears that the very qualities of big industry which, in our present-day society, produce misery and crises are those which, in a different form of society, will abolish this misery and these catastrophic depressions.

We see with the greatest clarity:

1. That all these evils are from now on to be ascribed solely to a social order which no longer corresponds to the requirements of the real situation; and

2. That it is possible, through a new social order, to do away with these evils altogether.

14. What will this new social order have to be like?

Above all, it will have to take the control of industry and of all branches of production out of the hands of mutually competing individuals, and instead institute a system in which all these branches of production are operated by society as a whole; that is, for the common benefit, according to a common plan, and with the participation of all members of society. It will, in other words, abolish competition and replace it with association. Moreover, since the management of industry by individuals necessarily implies private property, and since competition is in reality merely the manner and form in which the control of industry by private property owners expresses itself, it follows that private property cannot be separated from competition and the individual management of industry. Private property must, therefore, be abolished and in its place must come the common utilization of all instruments of production and the distribution of all products according to common agreement; in a word, what is called the communal ownership of goods.[6] In fact, the abolition of private property is, without doubt, the shortest and most significant way to characterize the revolution in the whole social order which has been made necessary by

the development of industry; and for this reason, it is rightly advanced by communists as their main demand.

15. Was not the abolition of private property possible at an earlier time?

No. Every change in the social order, every revolution in property relations, is the necessary consequence of the creation of new forces of production which no longer fit into the old property relations. Private property has not always existed. When, towards the end of the Middle Ages, there arose a new mode of production which could not be carried on under the then existing feudal and guild forms of property, this manufacture, which had outgrown the old property relations, created a new property form, private property. And for manufacture and the earliest stage of development of big industry, private property was the only possible property form; the social order based on it was the only possible social order. So long as it is not possible to produce so much that there is enough for all, with more left over for expanding the social capital and extending the forces of production, so long as this is not possible, there must always be a ruling class directing the use of society's productive forces, and a poor, oppressed class. How these classes are constituted depends on the stage of development. The agrarian Middle Ages give us the baron and the serf; the cities of the later Middle Ages show us the guildmaster and the journeyman and the day laborer; the 17th century has its manufacturing workers; the 19th has big factory owners and proletarians. It is clear that, up to now, the forces of production have never been developed to the point where enough could be developed for all, and that private property has become a fetter and a barrier in relation to the further development of the forces of production. Now, however, the development of big industry has ushered in a new period. *First*, capital and the forces of production have been expanded to an unprecedented extent, and the means are at hand to multiply them without limit in the near future. *Second*, the

forces of production have been concentrated in the hands of a few bourgeoisie, while the great mass of the people are more and more falling into the proletariat, their situation becoming more wretched and intolerable in proportion to the increase of wealth of the bourgeoisie. And *third*, these mighty and easily extended forces of production have so far outgrown private property and the bourgeoisie, that they threaten at any moment to unleash the most violent disturbances of the social order. Now, under these conditions, the abolition of private property has become not only possible but absolutely necessary.

16. Will the peaceful abolition of private property be possible?

It would be desirable if this could happen, and the communists would certainly be the last to oppose it. Communists know only too well that all conspiracies are not only useless, but even harmful. They know all too well that revolutions are not made intentionally and arbitrarily, but that, everywhere and always, they have been the necessary consequence of conditions which were wholly independent of the will and direction of individual parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries has been violently suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of communism have been working toward a revolution with all their strength. If the oppressed proletariat is finally driven to revolution, then we communists will defend the interests of the proletarians with deeds as we now defend them with words.

17. Will it be possible for private property to be abolished at one stroke?

No, no more than existing forces of production can at one stroke be multiplied to the extent necessary for the creation of a communal society. In all probability, the proletarian revolution will transform existing society gradually and will be able to

abolish private property only when the means of production are available in sufficient quantity.

18. What will be the course of this revolution?

Above all, it will establish a *democratic constitution*, and through this, the direct or indirect dominance of the proletariat. Direct in England, where the proletarians are already a majority of the people. Indirect in France and Germany, where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians, but also of small peasants and petty bourgeoisie who are in the process of falling into the proletariat, who are more and more dependent in all their political interests on the proletariat, and who must, therefore, soon adapt to the demands of the proletariat. Perhaps this will cost a second struggle, but the outcome can only be the victory of the proletariat.

Democracy would be wholly valueless to the proletariat if it were not immediately used as a means for putting through measures directed against private property and ensuring the livelihood of the proletariat. The main measures, emerging as the necessary result of existing relations, are the following:[7]

1. Limitation of private property through progressive taxation, heavy inheritance taxes, abolition of inheritance through collateral lines (brothers, nephews, etc.) forced loans, etc.

2. Gradual expropriation of landowners, industrialists, railroad magnates and shipowners, partly through competition by state industry, partly directly through compensation in the form of bonds.

3. Confiscation of the possessions of all emigrants and rebels against the majority of the people.

4. Organization of labor or employment of proletarians on publicly owned land, in factories and workshops, with competition among the workers being abolished and with the factory owners, insofar as they still exist, being obliged to pay the same high wages as those paid by the state.

5. An equal obligation on all members of society to work until such time as private property has been completely abolished. Formation of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.

6. Centralization of money and credit in the hands of the state through a national bank with state capital, and the suppression of all private banks and bankers.

7. Increase in the number of national factories, workshops, railroads, ships; bringing new lands into cultivation and improvement of land already under cultivation—all in proportion to the growth of the capital and labor force at the disposal of the nation.

8. Education of all children, from the moment they can leave their mother's care, in national establishments at national cost. Education and production together.

9. Construction, on public lands, of great palaces as communal dwellings for associated groups of citizens engaged in both industry and agriculture and combining in their way of life the advantages of urban and rural conditions while avoiding the one-sidedness and drawbacks of each.

10. Destruction of all unhealthy and badly-built dwellings in urban districts.

11. Equal inheritance rights for children born in and out of marriage.

12. Concentration of all means of transportation in the hands of the nation.

It is impossible, of course, to carry out all these measures at once. But one will always bring others in its wake. Once the first radical attack on private property has been launched, the proletariat will find itself forced to go ever further, to concentrate increasingly in the hands of the state all capital, all agriculture, all transport, all trade. All the foregoing measures are directed to this end; and they will become practicable and feasible, capable of producing their centralizing effects to precisely the degree that the proletariat, through its labor, multiplies the country's productive forces. Finally, when all capital, all production, all

exchange have been brought together in the hands of the nation, private property will disappear of its own accord, money will become superfluous, and production will so expand and man so change that society will be able to slough off whatever of its old economic habits may remain.

19. Will it be possible for this revolution to take place in one country alone?

No. By creating the world market, big industry has already brought all the peoples of the Earth, and especially the civilized peoples, into such close relation with one another that none is independent of what happens to the others. Further, it has coordinated the social development of the civilized countries to such an extent that, in all of them, bourgeoisie and proletariat have become the decisive classes, and the struggle between them the great struggle of the day. It follows that the communist revolution will not merely be a national phenomenon but must take place simultaneously in all civilized countries; that is to say, at least in England, America, France, and Germany. It will develop in each of these countries more or less rapidly, as one country or the other has a more developed industry, greater wealth, a more significant mass of productive forces. Hence, it will go slowest and will meet most obstacles in Germany, most rapidly and with the fewest difficulties in England.[8] It will have a powerful impact on the other countries of the world, and will radically alter the course of development which they have followed up to now, while greatly stepping up its pace. It is a universal revolution and will, accordingly, have a universal range.

20. What will be the consequences of the ultimate disappearance of private property?

Society will take all forces of production and means of commerce, as well as the exchange and distribution of products, out of the hands of private capitalists and will manage them in

accordance with a plan based on the availability of resources and the needs of the whole society. In this way, most important of all, the evil consequences which are now associated with the conduct of big industry will be abolished. There will be no more crises; the expanded production, which for the present order of society is overproduction and hence a prevailing cause of misery, will then be insufficient and in need of being expanded much further. Instead of generating misery, overproduction will reach beyond the elementary requirements of society to assure the satisfaction of the needs of all; it will create new needs and, at the same time, the means of satisfying them. It will become the condition of, and the stimulus to, new progress, which will no longer throw the whole social order into confusion, as progress has always done in the past. Big industry, freed from the pressure of private property, will undergo such an expansion that what we now see will seem as petty in comparison as manufacture seems when put beside the big industry of our own day. This development of industry will make available to society a sufficient mass of products to satisfy the needs of everyone. The same will be true of agriculture, which also suffers from the pressure of private property and is held back by the division of privately owned land into small parcels. Here, existing improvements and scientific procedures will be put into practice, with a resulting leap forward which will assure to society all the products it needs. In this way, such an abundance of goods will be able to satisfy the needs of all its members. The division of society into different, mutually hostile classes will then become unnecessary. Indeed, it will be not only unnecessary but intolerable in the new social order. The existence of classes originated in the division of labor, and the division of labor, as it has been known up to the present, will completely disappear. Mechanical and chemical processes are not enough to bring industrial and agricultural production up to the level we have described; the capacities of the men who make use of these processes must undergo a corresponding development. Just as the peasants and manufacturing workers

of the last century changed their whole way of life and became quite different people when they were drawn into big industry, in the same way, communal control over production by society as a whole, and the resulting new development, will both require an entirely different kind of human material. People will no longer be, as they are today, subordinated to a single branch of production, bound to it, exploited by it; they will no longer develop *one* of their skills at the expense of all others; they will no longer know only *one* branch, or one branch of a single branch of production as a whole. Even industry as it is today is finding such people less and less useful. Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in balanced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety. The form of the division of labor which makes one a peasant, another a cobbler, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stock-market operator, has already been undermined by machinery and will completely disappear. Education will enable young people to quickly familiarize themselves with the whole system of production and to pass from one branch of production to another in response to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will, therefore, free them from the one-sided character which the present-day division of labor impresses upon every individual. Communist society will, in this way, make it possible for its members to put their comprehensively developed faculties to full use. But, when this happens, classes will necessarily disappear. It follows, society organized on a communist basis is incompatible with the existence of classes on the one hand, and that the very building of such a society provides the means of abolishing class differences on the other.

A result of this is that the difference between city and country is destined to disappear. The management of agriculture and industry by the same people rather than by two different classes of people is, if only for purely material reasons, a necessary condition of communist association. The dispersal of

the agricultural population on the land, alongside the crowding of the industrial population into the great cities, is a condition which corresponds to an undeveloped state of both agriculture and industry and can already be felt as an obstacle to further development.

The general cooperation of all members of society for the purpose of planned exploitation of the forces of production, the expansion of production to the point where it will satisfy the needs of all, the abolition of a situation in which the needs of some are satisfied at the expense of the needs of others, the complete liquidation of classes and their conflicts, the rounded development of the capacities of all members of society through the elimination of the present division of labor, through industrial education, through engaging in varying activities, through the participation by all in the enjoyments produced by all, through the combination of city and country—these are the main consequences of the abolition of private property.

21. What will be the influence of communist society on the family?

It will transform the relations between the sexes into a purely private matter which concerns only the persons involved and into which society has no occasion to intervene. It can do this since it does away with private property and educates children on a communal basis, and in this way removes the two bases of traditional marriage—the dependence rooted in private property, of the women on the man, and of the children on the parents. And here is the answer to the outcry of the highly moral philistines against the "community of women."* Community of

* "Community of Women" is a 19th century euphemism in which men are able to have sexual intercourse with a given group of women. Since women were considered property by conservative ideologues, they saw the collectivization of private property as a threat to collectivize "their women."—*Ed*.

women is a condition which belongs entirely to bourgeois society and which today finds its complete expression in prostitution. But prostitution is based on private property and falls with it. Thus, communist society, instead of introducing community of women, in fact abolishes it.

22. What will be the attitude of communism to existing nationalities?

The nationalities of the peoples associating themselves in accordance with the principle of community will be compelled to mingle with each other as a result of this association and thereby to dissolve themselves, just as the various estate and class distinctions must disappear through the abolition of their basis, private property.

23. What will be its attitude to existing religions?

All religions so far have been the expression of historical stages of development of individual peoples or groups of peoples. But communism is the stage of historical development which makes all existing religions superfluous and brings about their disappearance.*

24. How do communists differ from socialists?

The so-called socialists are divided into three categories.

Reactionary Socialists: The first category consists of adherents of a feudal and patriarchal society which has already been destroyed, and is still daily being destroyed, by big industry and world trade and their creation, bourgeois society. This category concludes, from the evils of existing society, that feudal and patriarchal society must be restored because it was

* This is not an attack on religion itself, nor should Marxists be antagonistic towards religion. Engels is noting as scientific explanation of the world expands and suffering due to inequality ceases, fewer people will turn to religion as an ungrounded explanation and consolation to their suffering.—*Ed*.

free of such evils. In one way or another, all their proposals are directed to this end. This category of reactionary socialists, for all their seeming partisanship and their scalding tears for the misery of the proletariat, is nevertheless energetically opposed by the communists for the following reasons:

1. It strives for something which is entirely impossible.

2. It seeks to establish the rule of the aristocracy, the guildmasters, the small producers, and their entourage of absolute or feudal monarchs, officials, soldiers, and priests; a society which was, to be sure, free of the evils of present-day society but which brought it at least as many evils without even offering to the oppressed workers the prospect of liberation through a communist revolution.

3. As soon as the proletariat becomes revolutionary and communist, these reactionary socialists show their true colors by immediately making common cause with the bourgeoisie against the proletarians.

Bourgeois Socialists: The second category consists of adherents of present-day society who have been frightened for its future by the evils to which it necessarily gives rise. What they want, therefore, is to maintain this society while getting rid of the evils which are an inherent part of it. To this end, some propose mere welfare measures; while others come forward with grandiose systems of reform which, under the pretense of re-organizing society, are in fact intended to preserve the foundations, and hence the life, of existing society. Communists must unremittingly struggle against these bourgeois socialists because they work for the enemies of communists and protect the society which communists aim to overthrow.

Democratic Socialists: Finally, the third category consists of democratic socialists who favor some of the same measures the communists advocate, as described in Question 18, not as part of the transition to communism, however, but as measures which they believe will be sufficient to abolish the misery and evils of present-day society. These democratic socialists are either

proletarians who are not yet sufficiently clear about the conditions of the liberation of their class, or they are representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, a class which, prior to the achievement of democracy and the socialist measures to which it gives rise, has many interests in common with the proletariat. It follows that, in moments of action, the communists will have to come to an understanding with these democratic socialists, and in general to follow as far as possible a common policy with them—provided that these socialists do not enter into the service of the ruling bourgeoisie and attack the communists. It is clear that this form of cooperation in action does not exclude the discussion of differences.

25. What is the attitude of the communists to the other political parties of our time?[9]

This attitude is different in different countries. In England, France, and Belgium, where the bourgeoisie rules, the communists still have a common interest with the various democratic parties, an interest which is all the greater the more closely the socialistic measures they champion approach the aims of the communists; that is, the more clearly and definitely they represent the interests of the proletariat and the more they depend on the proletariat for support. In *England*, for example, the working-class Chartists[10] are infinitely closer to the communists than the democratic petty bourgeoisie or the so-called Radicals.

In *America*, where a democratic constitution has already been established, the communists must make common cause with the party which will turn this constitution against the bourgeoisie and use it in the interests of the proletariat; that is, with the Agrarian National Reformers.[11]

In *Switzerland*, the radicals, though a very mixed party, are the only group with which the communists can cooperate, and, among these radicals, the Vaudois and Genevese are the most advanced.

In *Germany*, finally, the decisive struggle now on the order of the day is that between the bourgeoisie and the absolute monarchy. Since the communists cannot enter upon the decisive struggle between themselves and the bourgeoisie until the bourgeoisie is in power, it follows that it is in the interest of the communists to help the bourgeoisie to power as soon as possible in order the sooner to be able to overthrow it. Against the governments, therefore, the communists must continually support the radical liberal party, taking care to avoid the self-deceptions of the bourgeoisie and not fall for the enticing promises of benefits which a victory for the bourgeoisie would allegedly bring to the proletariat. The sole advantages which the proletariat would derive from a bourgeois victory would consist:

1. In various concessions which would facilitate the unification of the proletariat into a closely knit, battle-worthy, and organized class; and

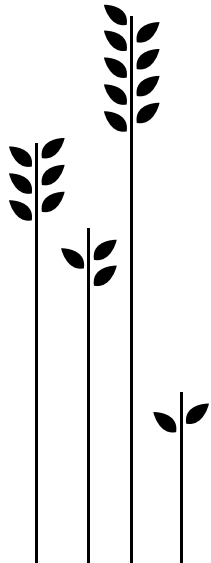
2. In the certainty that, on the very day the absolute monarchies fall, the struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat will start. From that day on, the policy of the communists will be the same as it is now in the countries where the bourgeoisie is already in power.



J. V. Stalin

THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM





INTRODUCTION

THE FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM[12] IS A BIG subject. To exhaust it a whole volume would be required. Indeed, a whole number of volumes would be required. Naturally, therefore, my lectures cannot be an exhaustive exposition of Leninism; at best they can only offer a concise synopsis of the foundations of Leninism. Nevertheless, I consider it useful to give this synopsis, in order to lay down some basic points of departure necessary for the successful study of Leninism.

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

And so, what is Leninism?

Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to the situation in Russia. This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way. But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to Russia, it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian and only a Russian, phenomenon. We know, however, that Leninism is not merely a Russian, but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from one-sidedness.

Others say that Leninism is the revival of the revolutionary elements of Marxism of the 40's of the nineteenth century, as distinct from the Marxism of subsequent years, when, it is alleged, it became moderate, non-revolutionary. If we disregard this foolish and vulgar division of the teachings of Marx into two parts, revolutionary and moderate, we must admit that even this totally inadequate and unsatisfactory definition contains a particle of truth. This particle of truth is that Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. Still, that is but a particle of the truth. The whole truth about Leninism is that Leninism not only restored Marxism, but also took a step forward, developing Marxism further under the new conditions of capitalism and of the class struggle of the proletariat.

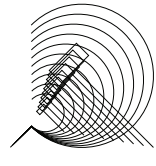
What, then, in the last analysis, is Leninism?

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians'

preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

That is why Leninism is the further development of Marxism.

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



CHAPTER 1

The Historical Roots of Leninism

LENINISM GREW UP AND TOOK SHAPE UNDER the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached an extreme point, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for revolution had arrived at and passed into a new period, that of direct assault on capitalism.

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

The *first contradiction* is the contradiction between labor and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and cooperatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place

yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working class to revolution.

The *second contradiction* is the contradiction among the various financial groups and imperialist Powers in their struggle for sources of raw materials, for foreign territory. Imperialism is the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, the frenzied struggle for monopolist possession of these sources, the struggle for a re-division of the already divided world, a struggle waged with particular fury by new financial groups and Powers seeking a "place in the sun" against the old groups and Powers, which cling tenaciously to what they have seized. This frenzied struggle among the various groups of capitalists is notable in that it includes as an inevitable element, imperialist wars—wars for the annexation of foreign territory. This circumstance, in its turn, is notable in that it leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists, to the weakening of the position of capitalism in general, to the acceleration of the advent of the proletarian revolution and to the practical necessity of this revolution.

The *third contradiction* is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, "civilized" nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhumane oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build these railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centers. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement—such are the inevitable results of this "policy." The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance

is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.

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

The significance of the imperialist war which broke out ten years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them on to the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

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

Such was the international situation which gave birth to Leninism.

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

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

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

To begin with, tsarist Russia was the home of every kind of oppression—capitalist, colonial and militarist—in its most inhuman and barbarous form. Who does not know that in Russia the omnipotence of capital was combined with the despotism of tsarism, the aggressiveness of Russian nationalism with tsarism's role of executioner in regard to the non-Russian peoples, the

exploitation of entire regions—Turkey, Persia, China—with the seizure of these regions by tsarism, with wars of conquest? Lenin was right in saying that tsarism was "military-feudal imperialism." Tsarism was the concentration of the worst features of imperialism, raised to a high pitch.

To proceed. Tsarist Russia was a major reserve of Western imperialism, not only in the sense that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metallurgical industries, but also in the sense that it could supply the Western imperialists with millions of soldiers. Remember the Russian army, 14 million strong, which shed its blood on the imperialist fronts to safeguard the staggering profits of the British and French capitalists.

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

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

That is why the interests of tsarism and of Western imperialism were interwoven and ultimately became merged in a single skein of imperialist interest.

Could Western imperialism resign itself to the loss of such a powerful support in the East and of such a rich reservoir of manpower and resources as old, tsarist, bourgeois Russia was without exerting all its strengths to wage a life-and-death struggle against the revolution in Russia, with the object of defending and preserving tsarism? Of course not.

But from this it follows that whoever wanted to strike at tsarism necessarily raised his hand against imperialism, whoever rose against tsarism had to rise against imperialism as well; for

whoever was bent on overthrowing tsarism had to overthrow imperialism too, if he really intended not merely to defeat tsarism, but to make a clean sweep of it. Thus, the revolution against tsarism verged on and had to pass into a revolution against imperialism, into a proletarian revolution.

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

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

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

Under these circumstances, could the Russian Communist confine their work within the narrow national bounds of the Russian revolution? Of course not. On the contrary, the whole situation, both internal (the profound revolutionary crisis) and external (the war), impelled them to go beyond these bounds in their work, to transfer the struggle to the international arena, to expose the ulcers of imperialism, to prove that the collapse of capitalism was inevitable, to smash social-chauvinism and

social-pacifism, and, finally, to overthrow capitalism in their own country and to forge a new fighting weapon for the proletariat—the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution—in order to facilitate the task of overthrowing capitalism for the proletarians of all countries. Nor could the Russian Communist act otherwise, for only this path offered the chance of producing certain changes in the international situation which could safeguard Russia against the restoration of the bourgeois order.

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

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

> "The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany, because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilization and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution. "[13]

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

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

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

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

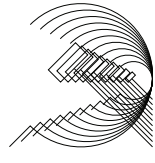
> "History has now confronted us [i.e., the Russian Marxists—*J. St.*] with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks confronting the proletariat of any country. The fulfillment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but also (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat."[14]

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

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

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

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



CHAPTER 2

Method

I HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT BETWEEN MARX AND Engels on the one hand, and Lenin, on the other, there lies a whole period of domination of the opportunism of the Second International. For the sake of exactitude, I must add that it is not the formal domination of opportunism I have in mind, but only its actual domination. Formally, the Second International was headed by "faithful" Marxists, by the "orthodox"—Kautsky and others. Actually, however, the main work of the Second International followed the line of opportunism. The opportunists adapted themselves to the bourgeois because of their adaptive, petty-bourgeois nature; the "orthodox," in their turn, adapted themselves to the opportunists in order to "preserve unity" with them, in the interests of "peace within the party." Thus, the link between the policy of the bourgeois and the policy of the "orthodox" was closed, and, as a result, opportunism reigned supreme.

This was the period of the relatively peaceful development of capitalism, the pre-war period, so to speak, when the catastrophic contradictions of imperialism had not yet became so glaringly

evident, when workers' economic strikes and trade unions were developing more or less "normally," when election campaigns and parliamentary groups yielded "dizzying" successes, when legal forms of struggle were lauded to the skies, and when it was thought that capitalism would be "killed" by legal means—in short, when the parties of the Second International were living in clover and had no inclination to think seriously about revolution, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, about the revolutionary education of the masses.

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

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

Instead of the party being trained and taught correct revolutionary tactics on the basis of its own mistakes, there was a studied evasion of vexed questions, which were glossed over and veiled. For the sake of appearances, of course, there was no objection to talking about vexed questions, but only in order to wind up with some sort of "elastic" resolution.

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

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

It became necessary to overhaul the entire activity of the Second International, its entire method of work, and to drive out all philistinism, narrow-mindedness, political scheming, regency,

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

The honor of bringing about this general overhauling and general cleansing of the Augean stables of the Second International fell to Leninism.

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

What are the requirements of this method?

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

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

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

Fourthly, *self-criticism* within the proletarian parties, their education and training on the basis of their own mistakes; for only in this way can genuine cadres and genuine leaders of the Party be trained.

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

How was this method applied in practice?

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

First dogma: concerning the conditions for the seizure of power by the proletariat. The opportunists assert that the proletariat cannot and ought not to take power unless it constitutes a majority in the country. No proofs are brought forward, for there are no proofs, either theoretical or practical, that can bear out this absurd thesis. Let us assume that this is so, Lenin replies to the gentlemen of the Second International; but suppose a historical situation has arisen (a war, an agrarian crisis, etc.) in which the proletariat, constituting a minority of the population, has an opportunity to rally around itself the vast majority of the laboring masses; why should it not take power then? Why should the proletariat not take advantage of a favorable international and internal situation to pierce the front of capital and hasten the general denouement? Did not Marx say as far back as the fifties of the last century that things could go "splendidly" with the proletarian revolution in Germany were it possible to back it by, so to speak, a "second edition of the Peasant War"?[15] Is it not a generally known fact that in those days the number of proletarians in Germany was relatively smaller than, for example, in Russia in 1917? Has not the practical experience of the Russian proletarian revolution shown that this favorite dogma of the heroes of the Second International is devoid of all vital significance for the proletariat? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses refutes and smashes this obsolete dogma?

Second dogma: the proletariat cannot retain power if it lacks an adequate number of trained cultural and administrative cadres capable of organizing the administration of the country; these cadres must first be trained under capitalist conditions, and only then can power be taken. Let us assume that this is so, replies Lenin; but why not turn it this way: first take power, create favorable conditions for the development of the proletariat, and

then proceed with seven-league strides to raise the cultural level of the laboring masses and train numerous cadres of leaders and administrators from among the workers? Has not Russian experience shown that the cadres of leaders recruited from the ranks of the workers develop a hundred times more rapidly and effectively under the rule of the proletariat than under the rule of capital? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle of the masses ruthlessly smashes this theoretical dogma of the opportunists too?

Third dogma: the proletariat cannot accept the method of the *political* general strike because it is unsound in theory (see Engels's criticism) and dangerous in practice (it may disturb the normal course of economic life in the country, it may deplete the coffers of the trade unions), and cannot serve as a substitute for parliamentary forms of struggle, which are the principal form of the class struggle of the proletariat. Very well, reply the Leninists; but *firstly*, Engels did not criticize every kind of general strike. He only criticized a certain kind of general strike, namely, the *economic general strike advocated by the Anarchists*[16] in place of the political struggle of the proletariat. What has this to do with the method of the *political* general strike?

Secondly, where and by whom has it ever been proved that the parliamentary form of struggle is the principal form of struggle of the proletariat? Does not the history of the revolutionary movement show that the parliamentary struggle is only a school for, and an auxiliary in, organizing the extra-parliamentary struggle of the proletariat, that under capitalism the fundamental problems of the working-class movement are solved by force, by the direct struggle of the proletarian masses, their general strike, their uprising?

Thirdly, who suggested that the method of the political general strike be substituted for the parliamentary struggle? Where and when have the supporters of the political general strike sought to substitute extra-parliamentary forms of struggle for parliamentary forms?

Fourthly, has not the revolution in Russia shown that the *political* general strike is a highly important school for the proletarian revolution and an indispensable means of mobilizing and organizing the vast masses of the proletariat on the eve of storming the citadels of capitalism? Why then the philistine lamentations over the disturbance of the normal course of economic life and over the coffers of the trade unions? Is it not clear that the practical experience of the revolutionary struggle smashes this dogma of the opportunists too? And so on and so forth.

This is why Lenin said that "revolutionary theory is not a dogma," that it "assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement"[17]; for theory must serve practice, for "theory must answer the questions raised by practice,"[18] for it must be tested by practical results.

As to the political slogans and the political resolutions of the parties of the Second International, it is sufficient to recall the history of the slogan "war against war" to realize how utterly false and utterly rotten are the political practices of these parties, which use pompous revolutionary slogans and resolutions to cloak their anti-revolutionary deeds. We all remember the pompous demonstrations of the Second International at the Basle Congress,* at which it threatened the imperialist with all the horrors of insurrection if they should dare to start a war, and with the menacing slogan "war against war." But who does not remember that sometime after, on the very eve of the war, the

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

Basle resolution was pigeonholed and the workers were given a new slogan to exterminate each other for the glory of their capitalist fatherlands? Is it not clear that revolutionary slogans and resolutions are not worth a farthing unless backed by deeds? One need only contrast the Leninist policy of transforming the imperialist war into civil war with the treacherous policy of the Second International during the war to understand the utter baseness of the opportunist politicians and the full grandeur of the method of Leninism.

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

> "Kautsky is pursuing a characteristically petty-bourgeois, philistine policy by pretending... that *putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced all sorts of 'slogans' to deceive the people. The point is to *test* their sincerity, to compare their words with their *deeds,* not to be satisfied with idealistic or charlatan *phrases,* but to get down to *class reality.*"[19]

There is no need to mention the fear the parties of the Second International have of self-criticism, their habit of concealing their mistakes, of glossing over vexed questions, of covering up their shortcomings by a deceptive show of well-being which blunts living thought and prevents the Party from deriving revolutionary training from its own mistakes, a habit which was ridiculed and pilloried by Lenin. Here is what Lenin wrote about self-criticism in proletarian parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism*:

> "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfills *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people*. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for

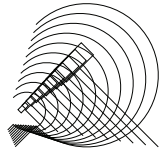
> it, analyzing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class*, and then the *masses*."[20]

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

> "They [i.e., the opponents of the Marxists—*J. St.*] gloat and grimace over our disputes; they will, of course, try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the failings and shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends. The Russian Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle not to be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, their work of self-criticism and ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will unquestionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-class movement grows."[21]

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

What is contained in Lenin's method was in the main already contained in the teachings of Marx, which, according to Marx himself, were "in its essence critical and revolutionary."[22] It is precisely this critical and revolutionary spirit that pervades Lenin's method from beginning to end. But it would be wrong to suppose that Lenin's method is merely the restoration of the method of Marx. As a matter of fact, Lenin's method is not only the restoration of, but also the concretization and further development of the critical and revolutionary method of Marx, of his materialist dialectics.



CHAPTER 3

Theory

FROM THIS THEME I TAKE THREE QUESTIONS:

1) the importance of theory for the proletarian movement;
2) criticism of the "theory" of spontaneity;
3) the theory of the proletarian revolution.

1. The Importance of Theory

Some think that Leninism is the precedence of practice over theory in the sense that its main point is the translation of the Marxist theses into deeds, their "execution"; as for theory, it is alleged that Leninism is rather unconcerned about it. We know that Plekhanov time and again chaffed Lenin about his "unconcern" for theory, and particularly for philosophy. We also know that theory is not held in great favor by many present-day Leninist practical workers, particularly in view of the immense amount of practical work imposed upon them by the situation. I must declare that this more than odd opinion about Lenin and Leninism is quite wrong and bears no relation whatsoever to the

truth; that the attempt of practical workers to brush theory aside runs counter to the whole spirit of Leninism and is fraught with serious dangers to the work.

Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illuminated by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realize not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future. None other than Lenin uttered and repeated scores of times the well-known thesis that "*without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.*"*[23]

Lenin, better than anyone else, understood the great importance of theory, particularly for a party such as ours, in view of the vanguard fighter of the international proletariat which has fallen to its lot, and in view of the complicated internal and international situation in which it finds itself. Foreseeing this special role of our Party as far back as 1902, he thought it necessary even then to point out "*the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*"[24]

It scarcely needs proof that now, when Lenin's prediction about the role of our Party has come true, this thesis of Lenin's acquires special force and special importance.

Perhaps the most striking expression of the great importance which Lenin attached to theory is the fact that none other than

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* My italics—*J. St.*

Lenin undertook the very serious task of generalizing, on the basis of materialist philosophy, the most important achievements of science from the time of Engels down to his time, as well as of subjecting to comprehensive criticism the anti-materialistic trends among Marxists. Engels said that "with each epoch-making discovery even in the sphere of natural science, [materialism] has to change its form."[25] It is well known that none other than Lenin accomplished this task for his own time in his remarkable work Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.[26] It is well known that Plekhanov, who loved to chaff Lenin about his "unconcern" for philosophy, did not even dare to make a serious attempt to undertake such a task.

2. Criticism of the "Theory" of Spontaneity, or the Role of the Vanguard in the Movement

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

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

The theory of worshiping spontaneity is decidedly opposed to giving the spontaneous movement a politically conscious, planned character. It is opposed to the Party marching at the head of the working class, to the Party raising the masses to the level of political consciousness, to the Party leading the movement; it is in favor of the politically conscious elements of the movement not hindering the movement from taking its own course; it is in

favor of the Party only heeding the spontaneous movement and dragging at the tail of it. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious element in the movement, the ideology of "tail-ism,"* the logical basis of *all opportunism*.

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

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

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

But the theory of worshiping spontaneity is not an exclusively Russian phenomenon. It is extremely widespread—in a somewhat different form, it is true—in all parties of the Second International, without exception. I have in mind the so-called "productive forces" theory as debased by the leaders of the Second International, which justifies everything and conciliates everybody, which records facts and explains them after everyone has become sick and tired of them, and, having recorded them, rests content. Marx said that the materialist theory could not confine itself to explaining the world, that it must also change it.[27] But Kautsky and Co. are not concerned with this; they prefer to rest content with the first part of Marx's formula.

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* Tail-ism, i.e., "khvostism"—*Ed*.

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

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

It scarcely needs proof that this spurious "Marxism," designed to hide the nakedness of opportunism, is merely a European variety of the selfsame theory of "tail-ism" which Lenin fought even before the first Russian revolution.

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

3. The Theory of the Proletarian Revolution

Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution proceeds from three fundamental theses.

First thesis: The domination of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries; the issue of stocks and bonds as one of the principal operations of finance capital; the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, which is one of the foundations of imperialism; the omnipotence of a financial oligarchy, which is the result of the domination of finance capital—all this reveals the grossly parasitic character of monopolistic capitalism, makes the yoke of the capitalist trusts and syndicates a hundred times more burdensome, intensifies the indignation of the working class with the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation.[28]

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

Second thesis: The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the expansion of "spheres of influence" and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries—all this has, on the one hand, converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called world economy, and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of "advanced" capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast colonies and dependencies, and the huge majority consisting of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to wage a struggle for liberation from the imperialist yoke.[29]

Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the

elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

Third thesis: The monopolistic possession of "spheres of influence" and colonies; the uneven development of the capitalist countries, leading to a frenzied struggle for the redivision of the world between the countries which have already seized territories and those claiming their "share"; imperialist wars as the only means of restoring the disturbed "equilibrium"—all this leads to the intensification of the struggle on the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the union of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation.[30]

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

Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclusion that "*imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.*"*[31]

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

Formerly, the analysis of the pre-requisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in

* My italics—*J. St.*

a single chain called world economy; for the old "cultured" capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of "advanced" countries.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where will the chain break in the near future? Again, where it is weakest. It is not precluded that the chain may break, say, in India. Why? Because that country has a young, militant, revolutionary proletariat, which has such an ally as the national liberation movement—an undoubtedly powerful and undoubtedly important ally. Because there the revolution is confronted by such a well-known foe as foreign imperialism, which has no moral credit and is deservedly hated by all the oppressed and exploited masses in India.

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

> "The West-European capitalist countries consummate their development towards socialism... not consummating it through the gradual 'maturing' of socialism, but through the exploitation of some countries by others, through the exploitation of the first of the countries vanquished in the imperialist war combined with the exploitation of the whole of the East. On the other hand, precisely as a result of the first imperialist war, the East has been definitely drawn into the revolutionary movement, has been definitely drawn into the general maelstrom of the world revolutionary movement."[32]

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

That is why in deciding the question of proletarian revolution statistical estimates of the percentage of the proletarian population in a given country lose the exceptional importance so eagerly attached to them by the doctrinaires of the Second International, who have not understood imperialism and who fear revolution like the plague.

To proceed. The heroes of the Second International asserted (and continue to assert) that between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian revolution there is a chasm, or at any rate a Chinese Wall, separating one from the other by a more or less protracted interval of time, during which the bourgeoisie having come into power, develops capitalism, while the proletariat accumulates strength and prepares for the "decisive struggle" against capitalism. This interval is usually calculated to extend over many decades, if not longer. It scarcely

needs proof that this Chinese Wall "theory" is totally devoid of scientific meaning under the conditions of imperialism, that it is and can be only a means of concealing and camouflaging the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the bourgeoisie. It scarcely needs proof that under the conditions of imperialism, fraught as it is with collisions and wars; under the conditions of the "eve of the socialist revolution," when "flourishing" capitalism becomes "moribund" capitalism [33] and the revolutionary movement is growing in all countries of the world; when imperialism is allying itself with all reactionary forces without exception, down to and including tsarism and serfdom, thus making imperative the coalition of all revolutionary forces, from the proletarian movement of the West, to the national liberation movement of the East; when the overthrow of the survivals of the regime of feudal serfdom becomes impossible without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, it scarcely needs proof that the bourgeois-democratic revolution, in a more or less developed country, must under such circumstances verge upon the proletarian revolution, that the former must pass into the latter. The history of the revolution in Russia has provided palpable proof that this thesis is correct and incontrovertible. It was not without reason that Lenin, as far back as 1905, on the eve of the first Russian revolution, in his pamphlet *Two Tactics* depicted the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution as two links in the same chain, as a single and integral picture of the sweep of the Russian revolution:

> "*The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie*. Such are the tasks of the proletariat which the new-Iskraists present so narrowly in all their arguments and resolutions about the sweep of the revolution."[34]

There is no need to mention other, later works of Lenin's, in which the idea of the bourgeois revolution passing into the proletarian revolution stands out in greater relief than in *Two Tactics* as one of the cornerstones of the Leninist theory of revolution.

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

I might refer to Lenin's well-known speech at the Third Congress of the Party (1905), in which he defined the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, i.e., the victory of the democratic revolution, not as the "organization of 'order'" but as the "organization of war."[35]

Further, I might refer to Lenin's well-known articles "On a Provisional Government" (1905),[36] where, outlining the prospects of the unfolding Russian revolution, he assigns to the Party the task of:

> "Ensuring that the Russian revolution is not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years; that it leads, not merely to a few paltry concessions from the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers."[37]

Where, enlarging further on these prospects and linking them with the revolution in Europe, he goes on to say:

> "And if we succeed in achieving this, then... the revolutionary conflagration will spread to Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and show us 'how it is done'; then the revolutionary upsurge in Europe will have a repercussive

> effect upon Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an era of several revolutionary decades..."[38]

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

> "The proletariat are fighting, and will fight valiantly, to win power, for a republic, for the confiscation of the land... and get the '*non*-proletarian masses of the people' to take part in liberating *bourgeois* Russia from *military-feudal* 'imperialism' (tsarism). The proletariat will *at once** utilize this ridding of bourgeois Russia of tsarism and the rule of the landowners, not to aid the rich peasants in their struggle against the rural workers, but to bring about the socialist revolution in alliance with the proletarians of Europe."[39]

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

> "Things have turned out just as we said they would. The course taken by the revolution has confirmed the correctness of our reasoning. *First*, with the 'whole' of the peasants against the monarchy, against the landowners, against medievalism (and to that extent the revolution remains bourgeois, bourgeois-democratic). *Then*, with the poor peasants, with the semi-proletarians, with all the exploited, *against capitalism*, including the rural rich, the kulaks, the profiteers, and to that extent the revolution becomes a *socialist one*. To attempt to raise an artificial Chinese Wall between the first and second, to separate them *by anything else* than the degree of preparedness of the proletariat and the degree of its unity with the poor peasants, means to distort Marxism dreadfully, to vulgarize it, to substitute liberalism in its place."[40]

That is sufficient, I think.

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* My italics—*J. St*.

** See page55.—*Ed*.

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

Because Lenin proposed that the revolutionary capacities of the peasantry be "exhausted" and that the fullest use be made of their revolutionary energy for the complete liquidation of tsarism and for the transition to the proletarian revolution, whereas the adherents of "permanent revolution" did not understand the important role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution, underestimated the strength of the revolutionary energy of the peasantry, underestimated the strength and ability of the Russian proletariat to lead the peasantry and thereby hampered the work of emancipating the peasantry from the influence of the bourgeoisie, the work of rallying the peasantry around the proletariat.

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

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

The idea of "permanent" revolution should not be regarded as a new idea. It was first advanced by Marx at the end of the forties in his well-known *Address to the Communist League* (1850). It is from this document that our "permanentists" took the idea of uninterrupted revolution. It should be noted that in taking it from Marx our "permanentists" altered it somewhat,

and in altering it "spoiled" it and made it unfit for practical use. The experienced hand of Lenin was needed to rectify this mistake, to take Marx's idea of uninterrupted revolution in its pure form and make it a cornerstone of his theory of revolution.

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

> "While the democratic petty bourgeois wish to bring the revolution to a conclusion as quickly as possible, and with the achievement, at most, of the above demands, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, until all more or less possessing classes have been forced out of their position of dominance, the proletariat has conquered state power, and the association of proletarians, not only in one country but in all the dominant countries of the world, has advanced so far that competition among the proletarians in these countries has ceased and that at least the decisive productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians."[41]

In other words:

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

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

It follows, then, that our Russian "permanentists" have not only underestimated the role of the peasantry in the Russian revolution and the importance of the idea of hegemony of the

proletariat, but have altered (for the worse) Marx's idea of "permanent" revolution and made it unfit for practical use.

That is why Lenin ridiculed the theory of our "permanentists," calling it "original" and "splendid," and accusing them of refusing to "give some thought to the reaon why, in the course of ten whole years, life has been bypassing splendid theory." (Lenin's article was written in 1915, ten years after the appearance of the theory of the "permanentists" in Russia.)[42]

That is why Lenin regarded this theory as a semi-Menshevik theory and said that it:

> "Borrowed [from the Bolsheviks] their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat, while from the Mensheviks it has borrowed 'repudiation' of the peasantry's role."[43]

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

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

only when certain absolutely necessary conditions exist, in the absence of which there can be even no question of the proletariat taking power.

Here is what Lenin says about these conditions:

> "The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realize the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the '*lower classes*' *do not want* to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' *cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: *revolution is impossible without a nationwide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters)*.* It follows that, for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realize that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics... weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it."[44]

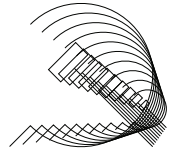
But the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie and establishment of the power of the proletariat in one country does not yet mean that the complete victory of socialism has been ensured. After consolidating its power and leading the peasantry in its wake the proletariat of the victorious country can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

* My italics—*J. St.*

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

Lenin expressed this thought succinctly when he said that the task of the victorious revolution is to do "the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution in *all countries*."[45]

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



CHAPTER 4

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

FROM THIS THEME I TAKE THREE FUNDAMENTAL questions:

1) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution;
2) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the rule of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie;
3) Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

1. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the Instrument of the Proletarian Revolution

The question of the proletarian dictatorship is above all a question of the main content of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution, its movement, its sweep and its achievements acquire flesh and blood only through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the proletarian revolution, its organ, its most important mainstay, brought into being for the purpose of,

firstly, crushing the resistance of the overthrown exploiters and consolidating the achievements of the proletarian revolution, and secondly, carrying the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. The revolution can defeat the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, even without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory and to push forward to the final victory of socialism unless, at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay.

"The key question of every revolution is undoubtedly the question of state power."[46] Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not. The seizure of power is only the beginning. For many reasons, the bourgeoisie that is overthrown in one country remains for a long time stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it. Therefore, the whole point is to retain power, to consolidate it, to make it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this, it is necessary to carry out at least three main tasks that confront the dictatorship of the proletariat "on the morrow" of victory:

a) to break the resistance of the landlords and capitalists who have been overthrown and expropriated by the revolution, to liquidate every attempt on their part to restore the power of capital;
b) to organize construction in such a way as to rally all the working people around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the elimination, the abolition of classes;
c) to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution for the struggle against foreign enemies, for the struggle against imperialism.

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

Lenin says:

> "The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* turns into *attempts* at restoration. After their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the 'paradise', of which they were 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' labor ...). In the train of the capitalist exploiters follow the wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom decades of historical experience of all countries testify that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel, and rush from one camp into the other."[47]

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

Lenin says:

> "If the exploiters are defeated in one country only—and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception—they *still* remain stronger than the exploited..."[48]

Wherein lies the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie?
Firstly:

> "In the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections..."[49]

Secondly, in the fact that:

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

live and think like the bourgeoisie); incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on and so forth."[50]

Thirdly:

"In the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production.* Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.... The abolition of classes means, not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means *abolishing the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be ousted*, or crushed; we *must learn to live* with them. They can (and must) be transformed and re-educated only by means of very prolonged, slow, and cautious organizational work."[51]

That is why Lenin says:

"The dictatorship of the proletariat means a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by their overthrow... The dictatorship of the proletariat means a persistent struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society"[52]

It scarcely needs proof that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of accomplishing all this in a few years. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of "super-revolutionary" acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with advances and retreats, victories and defeats. The historical era is needed not only to create the economic and cultural prerequisites for the complete victory of socialism, but also to enable the proletariat, firstly, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to reeducate and remold the petty-

bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organization of socialist production.

Marx said to the workers:

> "You will have to go through 15, 20, 50 years of civil wars and national struggles, not only to bring about a change in society but also to change yourselves, and prepare yourselves for the exercise of political power."[53]

Continuing and developing Marx's idea still further, Lenin wrote that:

> "[It will be necessary] under the proletarian dictatorship, millions of peasants and small proprietors, hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals, of subordinating them all to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership, of eradicating their bourgeois habits and traditions... just as we must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences."[54]

2. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the Rule of the Proletariat Over the Bourgeoisie

From the foregoing it is evident that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of personalities in the government, a change of the "cabinet," etc., leaving the old economic and political order intact. The Mensheviks and the opportunists of all countries, who fear dictatorship like fire and in their fright substitute the concept "conquest of power" for the concept of dictatorship, usually reduce the "conquest of power" to a change of the "cabinet," to the accession to power of a new ministry made up of people like Scheidemann and Noske, MacDonald and Henderson. It is hardly necessary to explain that these and similar cabinet changes have nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the conquest of real power by the real

proletariat. With the MacDonalds and Scheidemanns in power, while the old bourgeois order is allowed to remain, their so-called governments cannot be anything else than an apparatus serving the bourgeoisie, a screen to conceal the ulcers of imperialism, a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the oppressed and exploited masses. Capital needs such governments as a screen when it finds it inconvenient, unprofitable, difficult to oppress and exploit the masses without the aid of a screen. Of course, the appearance of such governments is a symptom that over there (i.e., in the capitalist camp) all is *not* "quiet at the Shipka Pass"*; nevertheless, governments of this kind inevitably remain governments of capital in disguise. The government of a MacDonald or a Scheidemann is as far removed from the conquest of power by the proletariat as the sky from the earth. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a change of government, but a new state, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the state of the proletariat, which has arisen on the ruins of the old state, the state of the bourgeoisie.

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

The state is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect,* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from

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

the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie. But there is one *substantial* difference. This difference consists in the fact that all hitherto existing class states have been dictatorships of an exploiting minority over the exploited majority, whereas the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.

Briefly: *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the laboring and exploited masses.*[55]

From this follow two main conclusions:

First conclusion: The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be "complete" democracy, democracy for all, for the rich as well as for the poor; the dictatorship of the proletariat "must 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)."[56] The talk of Kautsky and Co. about universal equality, about "pure" democracy, about "perfect" democracy, and the like, is a bourgeois disguise of the indubitable fact that equality between exploited and exploiters is impossible. The theory of "pure" democracy is the theory of the upper stratum of the working class, which has been broken in and is being fed by the imperialist robbers. It was brought into being for the purpose of concealing the ulcers of capitalism, of embellishing imperialism and lending it moral strength in the struggle against the exploited masses. Under capitalism there are no real "liberties" for the exploited, nor can there be, if for no other reason than that the premises, printing plants, paper supplies, etc., indispensable for the enjoyment of "liberties" are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited

* My italics—*J. St.*

** My italics—*J. St.*

masses do not, nor can they ever, really participate in governing the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, under conditions of capitalism, governments are not set up by the people but by the Rothschilds and Stinneses, the Rockefellers and Morgans. Democracy under capitalism is *capitalist* democracy, the democracy of the exploiting minority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority and directed against this majority. Only under the proletarian dictatorship are real liberties for the exploited and real participation of the proletarians and peasants in governing the country possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is *proletarian* democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

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

"The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes," say Marx and Engels in a preface to the *Communist Manifesto*.[57] The task of the proletarian revolution is "...no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another, *but to break it,* and that is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent," says Marx in his letter to Kugelmann in 1871.[58]

Marx's qualifying phrases about the continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for clamoring that Marx had thus conceded the possibility of the peaceful evolution of bourgeois democracy into a proletarian democracy, at least in certain countries outside the European continent (Britain, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to Britain and America in the seventies of the last century,

when monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not yet exist, and when these countries, owing to the particular conditions of their development, had as much as yet no developed militarism and bureaucracy. That was the situation before the appearance of developed imperialism. But later, after a lapse of thirty or forty years, when the situation in these countries had radically changed, when imperialism had developed and had embraced all capitalist countries without exception, when militarism and bureaucracy had appeared in Britain and America also, when the particular conditions for peaceful development in Britain and America had disappeared—then the qualification in regard to these countries necessarily could no longer hold good.

Lenin said:

> "Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon 'liberty', in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, 'the precondition for every real people's revolution' is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the 'ready-made state machinery' (made and brought up to the 'European', general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17)."[59]

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

Of course, in the remote future, if the proletariat is victorious in the principal capitalist countries, and if the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement, a "peaceful" path of development is quite possible for certain capitalist countries, whose capitalists, in view of the "unfavorable" international situation, will consider it expedient "voluntarily" to make substantial concessions to the proletariat. But this

supposition applies only to a remote and possible future. With regard to the immediate future, there is no ground whatsoever for this supposition.

Therefore, Lenin is right in saying "the proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one.*"[60]

3. Soviet Power as the State Form of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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

This new form of organization of the proletariat is the Soviets.[61]

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

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

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

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

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

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

The essence of Soviet power consists in the fact that these most all-embracing and most revolutionary mass organizations of precisely those classes that were oppressed by the capitalist and landlords are now:

> "The *permanent and only* foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state... it is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into *constant* and unfailing, moreover, *decisive,* participation in the democratic administration of the state."*[62]

That is why Soviet power is a *new form* of state organization, different in principle from the old bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary form, a *new* type of state, adapted not to the task

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* All italics mine—*J. St*.

of exploiting and oppressing the laboring masses, but to the task of completely emancipating them from all oppression and exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin is right in saying that with the appearance of Soviet power "the *era* of bourgeois parliamentarism is over, and the *era* of the proletarian dictatorship has *begun.*"[63]

Wherein lies the characteristic features of Soviet power?

In that Soviet power is the most all-embracing and most democratic state organization of all possible state organizations while classes continue to exist; for, being the arena of the bond and collaboration between the workers and the exploited peasants in their struggle against the exploiters, and basing itself in its works on this bond and on this collaboration. Soviet power is thus the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

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

In that Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses by the vanguard of these masses, by the proletariat, as the most united and most politically conscious core of the Soviets.

Lenin says:

> "The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population."[64]

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

In that Soviet power, by combining legislative and executive power in a single state organization and replacing territorial

electoral constituencies by industrial units, factories and mills, thereby directly linking the workers and the laboring masses in general with the apparatus of state administration, teaches them how to govern the country.

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

In that "only the Soviet government of the state can really affect the immediate breakup and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery."[65]

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

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

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

That is why Lenin says:

> "The Republic of Soviets (of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies) is not only a higher type of democratic institution... but is the *only** form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism."[66]

* My italics—*J. St.*

CHAPTER 5

The Peasant Question

FROM THIS THEME I TAKE FOUR QUESTIONS:

1) the presentation of the question;
2) the peasantry during the bourgeois-democratic revolution;
3) the peasantry during the proletarian revolution;
4) the peasantry after the consolidation of Soviet power.

1. The Presentation of the Question

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

This circumstance, however, does not in the least deprive the peasant question of the serious and vital importance it unquestionably has for the proletarian revolution. It is known that the serious study of the peasant question in the ranks of Russian Marxists began precisely on the eve of the first revolution (1905), when the question of overthrowing tsarism and of realizing the hegemony of the proletariat confronted the Party in all its magnitude, and when the question of the ally of the proletariat in the impending bourgeois revolution became of vital importance. It is also known that the peasant question in Russia assumed a still more urgent character during the proletarian revolution, when the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of achieving and maintaining it, led to the question of allies for the proletariat in the impending proletarian revolution. And this was natural. Those who are marching towards and preparing to assume power cannot but be interested in the question of who are their real allies.

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

The attitude of indifference and sometimes even outright aversion displayed by the parties of the Second International towards the peasant question is to be explained not only by the specific conditions of development in the West. It is to be explained primarily by the fact that these parties do not believe in the proletarian dictatorship, that they fear revolution and have no intention of leading the proletariat to power. And those who are afraid of revolution, who do not intend to lead the proletarians to power, cannot be interested in the question of allies for the proletariat in the revolution—to them the question of allies is one of indifference, of no immediate significance. The ironical attitude of the heroes of the Second International towards the peasant question is regarded by them as a sign of good breeding, a sign of "true" Marxism. As a matter of fact, there is not a grain of Marxism in this, for indifference towards

so important a question as the peasant question on the eve of the proletarian revolution is the reverse side of the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is an unmistakable sign of downright betrayal of Marxism.

The question is as follows: Are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the peasantry by virtue of certain conditions of its existence *already exhausted,* or not; and if not, *is there any hope, any basis,* for utilizing these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the peasantry, the exploited majority of it, from the reserve of the bourgeoisie which it was during the bourgeois revolutions in the West and still is even now, into a reserve of the proletariat, into its ally?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, i.e., it recognizes the existence of revolutionary capacities in the ranks of the majority of the peasantry, and the possibility of using these in the interests of the proletarian dictatorship.

The history of the three revolutions in Russia fully corroborates the conclusion of Leninism on this score.

Hence the practical conclusion that the toiling masses of the peasantry must be supported in their struggle against bondage and exploitation, in their struggle for deliverance from oppression and poverty. This does not mean, of course, that the proletariat must support *every* peasant movement. What we have in mind here is support for a movement or struggle of the peasantry which, directly or indirectly, facilitates the emancipation movement of the proletariat, which, in one way or another, brings grist to the mill of the proletarian revolution, and which helps to transform the peasantry into a reserve and ally of the working class.

2. The Peasantry During the Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution

This period extends from the first Russian revolution (1905) to the second revolution (February 1917), inclusive. The characteristic feature of this period is the emancipation

of the peasantry from the influence of the liberal bourgeoisie, the peasantry's *desertion* of the Cadets, its *turn* towards the proletariat, towards the Bolshevik Party. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Cadets (the liberal bourgeoisie) and the Bolsheviks (the proletariat) for the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the Duma period, for the period of the four Dumas served as an object lesson to the peasantry, and this lesson brought home to the peasantry the fact that they would receive neither land nor liberty at the hands of the Cadets; that the tsar was wholly in favor of the landlords, and that the Cadets were supporting the tsar; that the only force they could rely on for assistance was the urban workers, the proletariat. The imperialist war merely confirmed the lessons of the Duma period and consummated the peasantry's desertion of the bourgeoisie, consummated the isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie; for the years of the war revealed the utter futility, the utter deceptiveness of all hopes of obtaining peace from the tsar and his bourgeois allies. Without the object lessons of the Duma period, the hegemony of the proletariat would have been impossible.

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

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

acted as the reserve of the bourgeoisie. There the revolution, in consequence of this, led to an enormous increase in the political weight of the bourgeoisie.

In Russia, on the contrary, the bourgeois revolution produced quite opposite results. The revolution in Russia led not to the strengthening, but to the weakening of the bourgeoisie as a political force, not to an increase in its political reserve, but to the loss of its main reserve, to the loss of the peasantry. The bourgeois revolution in Russia brought to the forefront not the liberal bourgeoisie but the revolutionary proletariat, and rallying around the latter, the millions of the peasantry.

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

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

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

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

a) The unprecedented concentrations of Russian industry on the eve of the revolution. It is known, for instance, that in Russia 54 percent of all the workers were employed in enterprises employing over 500 workers each, whereas

in a country as highly developed as the United States of America no more than 33 percent of all the workers were employed in such enterprises. It scarcely needs proof that these circumstances alone, in view of the existence of a revolutionary party like the Party of the Bolsheviks, transformed the working class of Russia into an immense force in the political life of the country.

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

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

d) The existence in the countryside of the most hideous and most intolerable survivals of serfdom, coupled with the unlimited power of the landlord, a circumstance which threw the peasantry into the embrace of the revolution.

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

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

To whom could the peasantry turn under these circumstances? From whom could it seek support against the unlimited power of the landlords, against the tyranny of the tsar, against the devastating war which was ruining it? From the liberal bourgeoisie? But it was an enemy, as the long years of experience of all four Dumas had proved. From the Socialist-Revolutionaries? The Socialist-Revolutionaries were "better" than the Cadets, of course, and their program was "suitable," almost a peasant program; but what could the Socialist-Revolutionaries offer, considering that they thought of relying only on the peasants and were weak in the towns, from which the enemy primarily drew its forces? Where was the new force which would stop at nothing either in town or country, which would boldly march in the front ranks to fight the tsar and the landlords, which would help the peasantry to extricate itself from bondage, from land hunger, from oppression, from war? Was there such a force in Russia at all? Yes, there was. It was the Russian proletariat, which had shown its strength, its ability to fight to the end, its boldness and revolutionary spirit, as far back as 1905.

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

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

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

3. The Peasantry During the Proletarian Revolution

This period extends from the February Revolution of 1917 to the October Revolution of 1917. This period is comparatively short, eight months in all; but, from the point of view of the

political enlightenment and revolutionary training of the masses, these eight months can safely be put on par with whole decades of ordinary constitutional development, for they were eight months of *revolution.* This characteristic feature of this period, was the further revolutionization of the peasantry, its disillusionment with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the peasantry's *desertion* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, its new turn toward a direct rally around the proletariat as the only consistently revolutionary force capable of leading the country to peace. The history of this period is the history of the struggle between the Socialist-Revolutionaries (petty-bourgeois democracy) and the Bolsheviks (proletarian democracy) for the peasantry, to win over the majority of the peasantry. The outcome of this struggle was decided by the coalition period, the Kerensky period, the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks to confiscate the landlords' land, the fight of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to continue the war, the June offensive at the front, the introduction of capital punishment for soldiers, the Kornilov revolt.

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

But in order to get out of the war it was necessary to overthrow the Provisional Government, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie, it was necessary to overthrow the power of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, for they, and they alone, were dragging out the war to a "victorious

finish." Practically, there was no way of getting out of the war except by overthrowing the bourgeoisie.

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

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

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

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

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

4. The Peasantry After the Consolidation of Soviet Power

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

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

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

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

peasantry which during the bourgeois revolution fought under the leadership of the liberal bourgeoisie, which received land at the hands of that bourgeoisie, and in view of this became the reserve of the bourgeoisie. It scarcely needs proof that the Soviet peasantry, which has learnt to appreciate its political friendship and political collaboration with the proletariat and which owes its freedom to this friendship and collaboration, cannot but represent exceptionally favorable material for economic collaboration with the proletariat.

Engels said:

> "The conquest of political power by the socialist party has become a matter of the foreseeable future. But in order to conquer political power this party must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside."[67]

He wrote this in the nineties of the last century, having in mind the Western peasantry. Does it need proof that the Russian Communists, after accomplishing an enormous amount of work in this field in the course of three revolutions, have already succeeded in gaining in the countryside an influence and backing the likes of which our Western comrades dare not even dream of? How can it be denied that these circumstances must decidedly facilitate the organization of economic collaboration between the working class and the peasantry of Russia?

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

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

> whom we can win over to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished. It will serve us naught to wait with this transformation until capitalist production has developed everywhere to its utmost consequences, until the last small handicraftsman and the last small peasant have fallen victim to capitalist large-scale production. The material sacrifice to be made for this purpose in the interest of the peasants and to be defrayed out of public funds can, from the point of view of capitalist economy, appear only as money thrown away, but it is nevertheless an excellent investment because it will effect a perhaps tenfold saving in the cost of the social reorganization in general. In this sense we can, therefore, afford to deal very liberally with the peasants."[68]

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

Secondly, agriculture in Russia must not be confused with agriculture in the West. There, agriculture is developed along the ordinary lines of capitalism, under conditions of profound differentiation among the peasantry, with large landed estates and private capitalist latifundia at one extreme and pauperism, destitution and wage slavery at the other. Owing to this, disintegration and decay are quite natural there. Not so in Russia. Here agriculture cannot develop along such a path, if for no other reason than that the existence of Soviet power and the nationalization of the principal instruments and means of production preclude such a development. In Russia

the development of agriculture must proceed along a different path, along the path of organizing millions of small and middle peasants in cooperatives, along the path of developing in the countryside a mass cooperative movement supported by the state by means of preferential credits. Lenin rightly pointed out in his articles on cooperation that the development of agriculture in our country must proceed along a new path, along the path of drawing the majority of the peasants into socialist construction through the cooperatives, along the path of gradually introducing into agriculture the principles of collectivism, first in the sphere of marketing and later in the sphere of production of agriculture products.

Of extreme interest in this respect are several new phenomena observed in the countryside in connection with the work of the agricultural cooperatives. It is well known that new, large organizations have sprung up within the Selskosoyuzl,[69] in different branches of agriculture, such as production of flax, potatoes, butter, etc., which have a great future ahead of them. Of these, the Flax Center, for instance, unites a whole network of peasant flax growers' associations. The Flax Centre supplies the peasants with seeds and implements; then it buys all the flax produced by these peasants, disposes of it on the market on a large scale, guarantees the peasants a share in the profits, and in this way links peasant economy with state industry through the Selskosoyouz. What shall we call this form of organization of production? In my opinion, it is the domestic system of large-scale state-socialist production in the sphere of agriculture. In speaking of the domestic system of state-socialist production I do so by analogy with the domestic system under capitalism, let us say, in the textile industry, where the handicraftsman received their raw material and tools from the capitalist and turned over to him the entire product of their labor, thus being in fact semi-wage earners working in their own homes. This is one of numerous indices showing the path along which our agriculture

must develop. There is no need to mention here similar indices in other branches of agriculture.

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

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

> "The power of the state over all large-scale means of production, political power in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured proletarian leadership of the peasantry, etc.—is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society out of cooperatives, out of cooperatives alone, which we formerly ridiculed as huckstering and which from a certain aspect we have the right to treat as such now, under NEP [New Economic Policy—*Ed*.]? Is this not all that is necessary to build a complete socialist society? It is still not the building of socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for it."[70]

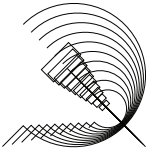
Further on, speaking of the necessity of giving financial and other assistance to the cooperatives, as a "new principal of organizing the population" and a new "social system" under the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin continues:

> "A social system emerges only if it has the financial backing of a definite class. There is no need to mention the hundreds of millions of rubles that the birth of 'free' capitalism cost. At present we have to realize that the cooperative system is the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance. But it must be assistance in the real sense of the word, i.e., it will not be enough to interpret it to mean assistance for any kind of cooperative trade; by assistance we must mean aid to cooperative trade in which *really large classes of the population actually take part*."[71]

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

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

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



CHAPTER 6

The National Question

FROM THIS THEME I TAKE TWO MAIN QUESTIONS:

1) the presentation of the question;
2) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1. The Presentation of the Question

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

Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a narrow circle of questions, concerning, primarily, "civilized" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, and several other European nationalities—that was the circle of unequal peoples in whose destinies the leaders of the Second International were interested. The scores and hundreds

of millions of Asiatic and African peoples who are suffering national oppression in its most savage and cruel form usually remained outside of their field of vision. They hesitated to put white and black, "civilized" and "uncivilized" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of liberating the colonies—that was all the leaders of the Second International could boast of. Now we can say that this duplicity and half-heartedness in dealing with the national question has been brought to an end. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between European and Asiatics, between the "civilized" and "uncivilized" slaves of imperialism, and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. The national question was thereby transformed from a particular and internal state problem into a general and international problem, into a world problem of emancipating the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually misinterpreted, and not infrequently it was narrowed down to the idea of the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to turn the right to self-determination into the right to cultural autonomy, i.e., the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions, leaving all political power in the hands of the ruling nation. As a consequence, the idea of self-determination stood in danger of being transformed from an instrument for combating annexations into an instrument for justifying them. Now we can say that this confusion has been cleared up. Leninism broadened the conception of self-determinism, interpreting it as the right of the oppressed peoples of the dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent existence as states. This precluded the possibility of justifying annexations by interpreting the right to self-determinism as the right to autonomy. Thus, the principle of self-determinism itself was transformed from an instrument for deceiving the masses,

which it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war, into an instrument for exposing all imperialist aspirations and chauvinist machinations, into an instrument for the political education of the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

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

Formerly, the national question was regarded from a reformist point of view, as an independent question having no connection with the general question of the power of capital, of the overthrow of imperialism, of the proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the victory of the proletariat in Europe was possible without a direct, alliance with the liberation movement in the colonies, that the national-colonial question could be solved on the quiet, "of its own accord," off the highway of the proletarian revolution, without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Now we can say that the anti-revolutionary point of view has been exposed. Leninism has proved, and the imperialist

war and the revolution in Russia has confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to victory of the revolution in the West lies through the revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national question is a part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question is as follows: are the revolutionary potentialities latent in the revolutionary liberation movement of the oppressed countries *already exhausted*, or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis, for utilizing these potentialities for the proletarian revolution, for transforming the dependent and colonial countries from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

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

Hence the necessity for the proletariat of the "dominant" nations to support, resolutely and actively, the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.

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

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

Lenin writes:

> "The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a *small part* of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, the part may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected."[72]

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

The same must be said of the revolutionary character of national movements in general. The unquestionably revolutionary character of the vast majority of national movements is as relative and peculiar as is the possible revolutionary character of certain particular national movements. The revolutionary character of a national movement under the conditions of imperialist oppression does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican program of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis of the movement. The struggle that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is

objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism; whereas the struggle waged by such "desperate" democrats and "Socialists," "revolutionaries" and republicans as, for example, Kerensky and Tsereteli, Renaudel and Scheidemann, Chernov and Dan, Henderson and Clynes, during the imperialist war was a *reactionary* struggle, for its result was the embellishment, the strengthening, the victory, of imperialism. For the same reasons, the struggle that the Egyptian merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of Egypt is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the bourgeois origin and bourgeois title of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement, despite the fact that they are opposed to socialism; whereas the struggle that the British "Labor" Government is waging to preserve Egypt's dependent position is for the same reason a *reactionary* struggle, despite the proletarian origin and the proletarian title of the members of the government, despite the fact that they are "for" socialism. There is no need to mention the national movement in other, larger, colonial and dependent countries, such as India and China, every step of which along the road to liberation, even if it runs counter to the demands of formal democracy, is a steam-hammer blow at imperialism, i.e., is undoubtedly a *revolutionary* step.

Lenin was right in saying that the national movement of the oppressed countries should be appraised not from the point of view of formal democracy, but from the point of view of the actual results, as shown by the general balance sheet of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, *not in isolation, but on a world scale*.[73]

2. The Liberation Movement of the Oppressed Peoples and the Proletarian Revolution

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

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

b) the colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute a vast reserve and a very important source of strength for imperialism;

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

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

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

f) the victory of the working class in the developed countries and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of a common revolutionary front;

g) the formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against the

imperialism of its "own country," for "a nation cannot become free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations"[74];

h) this support implies the upholding, defense, and implementation of the slogan of the right of nations to secession, to independent existence as states;
i) unless this slogan is implemented, the union and collaboration of nations within a single world economic system, which is the material basis for the victory of world socialism, cannot be brought about;
j) this union can only be voluntary, arising on the basis of mutual confidence and fraternal relations among peoples.

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

Lenin says:

> "Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the break-down of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc.
>
> "Both tendencies are a universal law of capitalism. The former predominates in the beginning of its development, the latter characterizes a mature capitalism that is moving towards its transformation into socialist society."[75]

For imperialism, these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions; because imperialism cannot exist without exploiting colonies and forcibly retaining them within

the framework of the "integral whole"; because imperialism can bring nations together only by means of annexations and colonial conquest, without which imperialism is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

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

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

Without such a struggle, the education of the working class of the ruling nations, in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of closer relations with the toiling masses of the dependent countries and colonies, in the spirit of real preparation for the proletarian revolution, is inconceivable. The revolution would not have been victorious in Russia, and Kolchak and Denikin would not have been crushed, had not the Russian proletariat enjoyed the sympathy and support of the oppressed peoples of the former Russian Empire. But to win the sympathy and support of these peoples it had first of all to break the fetters of Russian imperialism and free these people from the yoke of national oppression.

Without this it would have been impossible to consolidate Soviet power, to implant real internationalism and to create that remarkable organization for the collaboration of peoples which

is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which is the living prototype of the future union of peoples in a single world economic system.

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

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

Without such a struggle, internationalism would be impossible.

Such is the way in which the toiling masses of the dominant and of the oppressed nations must be educated in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

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

> "Can such education... be *concretely identical* in great, oppressor nations and in small, oppressed nations, in annexing nations and in annexed nations?
>
> "Obviously not. The way to the common goal—complete equality, the closest association and the eventual *amalgamation of all* nations—obviously runs along different routes in each concrete case, as, let us say, the way to a point in the center of this page runs left from one edge and right, from the opposite edge. If a Social-Democrat from a great, oppressing, annexing nation, while advocating the amalgamation of nations in general, were for one moment to forget that 'his' Nicholas II, 'his' Wilhelm, George, Poincaré, etc., *also stand for amalgamation* with small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II for 'amalgamation' with Galicia, Wilhelm II for 'amalgamation' with Belgium, etc.—such a Social-Democrat would be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

"In the internationalist education of the workers of the oppressor countries, emphasis must necessarily be laid on their advocating freedom for the oppressed countries to secede and their fighting for it. Without this there can be no internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Social-Democrat of an oppressor nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as a scoundrel and an imperialist. This is an absolute demand, even where the *chance* of secession being possible and 'practicable' before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand....

"On the other hand, a Social-Democrat from a small nation must emphasize in his agitation the *second* word of our general formula: 'voluntary *integration*' of nations. He may, without failing in his duties as an internationalist, be in favor of *both* the political independence of his nation and its integration with the neighboring state of X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation, consider the whole and the general, subordinate the particular to the general interest.

"People who have not gone into the question thoroughly think that it is 'contradictory' for the Social-Democrats of oppressor nations to insist on the 'freedom to *secede*', while Social-Democrats of oppressed nations insist on the 'freedom to *integrate*'. However, a little reflection will show that there is not, and cannot be, any *other* road to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, any other road *from the given* situation to this goal."[76]



CHAPTER 7

Strategy and Tactics

FROM THIS THEME I TAKE SIX QUESTIONS:

1) strategy and tactics as the science of leadership in the class struggle of the proletariat;
2) stages of the revolution, and strategy;
3) the ebb and flow of the movement, and tactics;
4) strategic leadership;
5) tactical leadership;
6) reformism and revolutionism.

1. Strategy and Tactics as the Science of Leadership in the Class Struggle of the Proletariat

The period of the domination of the Second International was mainly a period of the formation and training of the proletarian political armies under conditions of more or less peaceful development. It was the period of parliamentarism as the predominant form of the class struggle. Questions of great class conflicts, of preparing the proletariat for revolutionary clashes,

of the means of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, did not seem to be on the order of the day at that time. The task was confined to utilizing all means of legal development for the purpose of forming and training the proletarian armies, to utilizing parliamentarism in conformity with the conditions under which the status of the proletariat remained, and, as it seemed, had to remain—that of an opposition. It scarcely needs proof that in such a period, and with such a conception of the tasks of the proletariat, there could be neither an integral strategy nor any elaborated tactics. There were fragmentary and detached ideas about tactics and strategy, but no tactics or strategy as such.

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

Only in the subsequent period, the period of direct action by the proletariat, the period of proletarian revolution, when the question of overthrowing the bourgeoisie became a question of immediate practical action, when the question of the reserves of the proletariat (strategy) became one of the most burning questions, when all forms of struggle and of organization, parliamentary and extra-parliamentary (tactics), had quite clearly manifested themselves… only in this period could an integral strategy and elaborated tactics for the struggle of the proletariat be worked out. It was precisely in this period that Lenin brought out into the light of day the brilliant ideas of Marx and Engels on tactics and strategy that were suppressed by the opportunists of the Second International. But Lenin did not confine himself to restoring particular tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them with new ideas and propositions, combining them all into a system of rules

and guiding principles for the leadership of the class struggle of the proletariat. Lenin's pamphlets, such as *What Is To Be Done?, Two Tactics, Imperialism, The State and Revolution, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, "Left Wing" Communism,* undoubtedly constitute priceless contributions to the general treasury of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactics of Leninism constitute the science of leadership in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

2. Stages of the Revolution and Strategy

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

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

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

> "*The proletariat must carry to completion the democratic revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush by force the resistance of the autocracy and to paralyze the instability of the bourgeoisie*."[77]

Second stage. March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat.

Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighboring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as a favorable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry and to put an end to the revolution by a *compromise* with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry.

> "*The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, by allying to itself the mass of the semi-proletarian elements of the population in order to crush by force the resistance of the bourgeoisie and to paralyze the instability of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie*."[78]

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

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

3. The Flow and Ebb of the Movement and Tactics

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

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

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

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

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

4. Strategic Leadership

The reserves of the revolution can be:

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

Indirect: a) the contradictions and conflicts among the non-proletarian classes within the country, which can be utilized by the proletariat to weaken the enemy and to strengthen its own

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

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

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

What does making proper use of reserves mean?

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

Firstly, the concentration of the main forces of the revolution at the enemy's most vulnerable spot at the decisive moment, when the revolution has already become ripe, when the offensive

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

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

> "1) *Never play* with insurrection, but when beginning it realize firmly that you must *go all the way*.
>
> "2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has the advantage of better preparation and organization, will destroy the insurgents.
>
> "3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. 'The defensive is the death of every armed rising.'
>
> "4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.
>
> "5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain the '*moral superiority.*'"[79]

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

The decisive battle, says Lenin, may be deemed to have fully matured *if*:

> "1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength";
>
> "2) all the vacillating and unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats, as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy, and";
>
> "3) among the proletariat, a mass sentiment favoring the most determined, bold and dedicated revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and summarized above, and if we have chosen the right moment, our victory is assured."[80]

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

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

Thirdly, undeviating pursuit of the course adopted, no matter what difficulties and complications are encountered on the road towards the goal; this is necessary in order that the vanguard may not lose sight of the main goal of the struggle and that the masses may not stray from the road while marching towards that goal and striving to rally around the vanguard. Failure to observe this condition leads to a grave error, well known to sailors as "losing one's bearing." As an example of this "losing

one's bearings" we may take the erroneous conduct of our Party when, immediately after the Democratic Conference, it adopted a resolution to participate in the Pre-parliament. For the moment, the Party, as it were, forgot that the Pre-parliament was an attempt of the bourgeoisie to switch the country from the path of the Soviets to the path of bourgeois parliamentarism, that the Party's participation in such a body might result in mixing everything up and confusing the workers and peasants, who were waging a revolutionary struggle under the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets." This mistake was rectified by the withdrawal of the Bolsheviks from the Pre-parliament.

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

Lenin says:

> "The revolutionary parties had to complete their education. They were learning how to attack. Now they had to realize that such knowledge must be supplemented with the knowledge of how to retreat in good order. They had to realize—and it is from bitter experience that the revolutionary class learns to realize this—that victory is impossible unless one has learned how to attack and retreat properly."[81]

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

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

Lenin said at that time:

> "In concluding a separate peace we free ourselves as much *as it is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperialist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution."[82]

Three years after the Brest Peace, Lenin said that "now even the biggest fool can see that the 'Brest peace' was a concession that strengthened us and dismembered the forces of international imperialism."[83]

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct strategic leadership.

5. Tactical Leadership

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

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

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

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

The point here is not that the vanguard should realize the impossibility of preserving the old regime and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses, the millions, should understand this inevitability and display their readiness

to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience. The task is to enable the vast masses to realize from their own experience the inevitability of the overthrow of the old regime, to promote such methods of struggle and forms of organizations as will make it easier for the masses to realize from experience the correctness of the revolutionary slogans.

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

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

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

explaining" the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois parties and of open struggle in the Soviets were the only correct tactics.

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

Lenin says:

> "Victory cannot be won with a vanguard alone. To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle, before the entire class, the broad masses, have taken up a position either of direct support for the vanguard, or at least of sympathetic neutrality towards it... would be, not merely foolish but criminal. Propaganda and agitation alone are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience. Such is the fundamental law of all great revolutions, which has been confirmed with compelling force and vividness, not only in Russia but in Germany as well. To turn resolutely towards communism, it was necessary, not only for the ignorant and often illiterate masses of Russia, but also for the literate and well-educated masses of Germany, to realize from their own bitter experience the absolute impotence and spinelessness, the absolute helplessness and servility to the bourgeoisie, and the utter vileness of the government of the paladins of the Second International; they had to realize that a dictatorship of the extreme reactionaries (Kornilov in Russia; Kapp and Co. in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat."[84]

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

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

The importance of this thesis may be illustrated by two examples, one of which could be taken from the remote past

(the period of the formation of the Party) and the other from the immediate present (the period of the NEP).

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

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

Lenin says:

> "'It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold of the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link...'
>
> "At the present time... this link is the revival of home *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade is the 'link' in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, which we, the proletarian government, we, the ruling Communist Party, '*must grasp with all our might.*'"[85]

Such are the principal conditions which ensure correct tactical leadership.

6. Reformism and Revolutionism

What is the difference between revolutionary tactics and reformist tactics?

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

Lenin says:

> "To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, protracted and complex than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to renounce in advance any change of tack, or any utilization of a conflict of interests (even if temporary) among one's enemies, or any conciliation or compromise with possible allies (even if they are temporary, unstable, vacillating or conditional allies)—is that not ridiculous in the extreme? Is it not like making a difficult ascent of an unexplored and hitherto inaccessible mountain and refusing in advance ever to move in zigzags, ever to retrace one's steps, or ever to abandon a course once selected, and to try others?"[86]

Obviously, therefore, it is not a matter of reforms or of compromises and agreements, but of the use people make of reforms and agreements. To a reformist, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that rule, an instrument for disintegrating the revolution.

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

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

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

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

That is the essence of reformist tactics.

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

The situation changes somewhat, however, after the overthrow of imperialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under certain conditions, in a certain situation, the proletarian power may find itself compelled temporarily to leave the path of the revolutionary reconstruction of the existing order of things and to take the path of its gradual transformation, the "reformist path," as Lenin says in his well-known article "The Importance of Gold,"[87] the path of flanking movements,

of reforms and concessions to the non-proletarian classes—in order to disintegrate these classes, to give the revolution a respite, to recuperate one's forces and prepare the conditions for a new offensive. It cannot be denied that in a sense this is a "reformist" path. But it must be borne in mind that there is a fundamental distinction here, which consists in the fact that in this case the reform emanates from the proletarian power, it strengthens the proletarian power, it procures for it a necessary respite, its purpose is to disintegrate, not the revolution, but the non-proletarian classes.

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

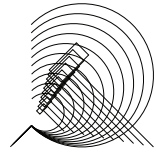
The proletarian power is able to adopt such a policy because, and only because, the sweep of the revolution in the preceding period was great enough and, therefore, provided a sufficiently wide expanse within which to retreat, substituting for offensive tactics the tactics of temporary retreat, the tactics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

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

Lenin says:

> "Marxism alone has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution, although Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect—under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in one country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat....
>
> "After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism....

"After the victory (while still remaining a 'by-product' on an international scale) they [i.e., reforms—*J. St.*] are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate breathing space when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of some transition or another. Victory creates such a 'reserve of strength' that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, hold out both materially and morally."[88]



CHAPTER 8

The Party

IN THE PRE-REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, THE period of more or less peaceful development, when the parties of the Second International were the predominant force in the working-class movement and parliamentary forms of struggle were regarded as the principal forms—under these conditions the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary clashes. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are an instrument of peace and not of war, and that for this very reason they were powerless to take any important steps during the war, during the period of revolutionary action by the proletariat. That is quite true. But what does it mean? It means that the parties of the Second International are unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they are not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle. This, in fact, explains why, in the days when the opportunists of the Second

International were in the ascendancy, it was not the party but its parliamentary group that was the chief political organization of the proletariat. It is well known that the party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It scarcely needs proof that under such circumstances and with such a party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.

But matters have changed radically with the dawn of the new period. The new period is one of open class collisions, of revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganizing all party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and moving up reserves; of establishing an alliance with the proletarians of neighboring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc., etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic parties, brought up as they were in the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair, to inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties, it would be completely unarmed. It scarcely needs proof that the proletariat could not consent to such a state of affairs.

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

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

This new party is the party of Leninism.

What are the specific features of this new party?

1. The Party as the Advanced Detachment* of the Working Class

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

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* Some translations use the term "vanguard" instead of"advanced detachment," e.g., the quote from Lenin at the end of this section.—*Ed*.

The Party is the political leader of the working class.

I have already spoken of the difficulties of the struggle of the working class, of the complicated conditions of the struggle, of strategy and tactics, of reserves and maneuvering, of attack and retreat. These conditions are no less complicated, if not more so, than the conditions of war. Who can see clearly in these conditions, who can give correct guidance to the proletarian millions? No army at war can dispense with an experienced General Staff if it does not want to be doomed to defeat. Is it not clear that the proletariat can still less dispense with such a General Staff if it does not want to allow itself to be devoured by its mortal enemies? But where is this General Staff? Only the revolutionary party of the proletariat can serve as this General Staff. The working class without a revolutionary party is an army without a General Staff.

The Party is the General Staff of the proletariat.

But the Party cannot be only an *advanced* detachment. It must at the same time be a detachment of the *class*, part of the class, closely bound up with it by all the fibers of its being. The distinction between the advanced detachment and the rest of the working class, between Party members and non-Party people, cannot disappear until classes disappear; it will exist as long as the ranks of the proletariat continue to be replenished with former members of other classes, as long as the working class as a whole is not in a position to rise to the level of the advanced detachment. But the Party would cease to be a party if this distinction developed into a gap, if the Party turned in on itself and became divorced from the non-Party masses. The Party cannot lead the class if it is not connected with the non-Party masses, if there is no bond between the Party and the non-Party masses, if these masses do not accept its leadership, if the Party enjoys no moral and political credit among the masses.

Recently, 200,000 new members from the ranks of the workers were admitted into our Party. The remarkable thing about this is the fact that these people did not merely join the

Party themselves, but were rather sent there by all the rest of the non-Party workers, who took an active part in the admission of the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact shows that the broad masses of non-Party workers regard our Party as *their* Party, as a Party *near and dear* to them, in whose expansion and consolidation they are vitally interested and to whose leadership they voluntarily entrust their destiny. It scarcely needs proof that without these intangible moral threads which connect the Party with the non-Party masses, the Party could not have become the decisive force of its class.

The Party is an inseparable part of the working class.

Lenin says:

> "We are the Party of a class, and therefore *almost the entire class* (and in times of war, in a period of civil war, the entire class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism and 'tail-ism' to think that the entire class, or almost the entire class, can ever rise, under capitalism, to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, of its Social-Democratic Party. No sensible Social-Democrat has ever doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped sections) are incapable of embracing the entire, or almost the entire, working class. To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses gravitating towards it, to forget the vanguard's constant duty of *raising* ever wider sections to its own advanced level, means simply to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks."[89]

2. The Party as the Organized Detachment of the Working Class

The Party is not only the *advanced* detachment of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the *organized* detachment of its class. The Party's tasks under the conditions of capitalism are immense

and extremely varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat so as to escape the blow of a powerful enemy when the situation calls for retreat; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfill these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the *organized* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the Party really leading the vast masses of the proletariat.

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organized whole is embodied in Lenin's well-known formulation of the first paragraph of our Party Rules, in which the Party is regarded as the *sum total* of its organizations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organizations of the Party. The Mensheviks, who objected to this formulation as early as 1903, proposed to substitute for it a "system" of self-enrollment in the Party, a "system" of conferring the "title" of Party member upon every "professor" and "high-school student," upon every "sympathizer" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not want to join any one of the Party organizations. It hardly needs proof that had this singular "system" become entrenched in our Party it would inevitably have led to our Party becoming inundated with professors and high-school students and to its degeneration into a loose, amorphous, disorganized "formation," lost in a sea of "sympathizers," that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party's task of raising the unorganized masses to the level of the advanced detachment. Needless to say, under such an opportunist "system" our Party would have been unable to fulfill the role of the organizing core of the working class in the course of our revolution.

Lenin says:

> "As Comrade Martov sees it, on the contrary, the border-line of the Party remains absolutely vague, for 'every striker' can 'proclaim himself a Party member'. What benefit is there in this looseness? A widespread 'title'. Its harm is that it introduces a *disorganizing* idea, the confusing of class and party."[90]

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

Lenin says:

> "Previously, our Party was not a formally organized whole, but merely a sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. *Now* we have become an organized Party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher ones."[91]

The principle of the minority submitting to the majority, the principle of directing Party work from a center, not infrequently gives rise to attacks on the part of wavering elements, to accusations of "bureaucracy," "formalism," etc. It scarcely needs proof that systematic work by the Party as one whole, and the directing of the struggle of the working class, would be impossible without putting these principles into effect. Leninism in questions of organization is the unswerving application of these principles. Lenin terms the fight against these principles "Russian nihilism" and "aristocratic anarchism," which deserves to be ridiculed and swept aside.

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

"This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as 'serfdom'... division of labor under the direction of a center evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against transforming people into 'cogs and wheels'... mention of the organizational Rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark... that one could very well dispense with Rules altogether...

"It is clear, I think, that the outcries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig-leaf... You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the Congress not in accordance with my wishes, but against them; you are a formalist because you take your stand on the formal decisions of the Congress, and not on my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way because you cite the 'mechanical' majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted; you are an autocrat because you refuse to hand over the power to the old snug little band*."[92]

3. The Party as the Highest Form of Class Organization of the Proletariat

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, cooperatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere

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

directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class, for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to solidify the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance or organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergence in leadership? It may be said that each of these organizations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organizations which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

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

non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class.

The Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.

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

That is why Lenin says that the Party is "the *highest form* of proletarian class organization,"[93] whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat.

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

4. The Party as an Instrument of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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

over all other forms of organizations of the proletariat, if the latter had not been confronted with the question of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis had not yet demanded the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement in one spot in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs the Party first of all as its General Staff, which it must have for the successful seizure of power. It scarcely needs proof that without a party capable of rallying around itself the mass organizations of the proletariat, and of centralizing the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle, the proletariat in Russia could not have established its revolutionary dictatorship.

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

Lenin says:

> "It is, I think, almost universally realized at present that the Bolsheviks could not have retained power for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years, without the most rigorous and truly iron discipline in our Party, or without the fullest and unreserved support from the entire mass of the working class, that is, from all thinking, honest, devoted and influential elements in it, capable of leading the backward strata or carrying the latter along with them."[94]

Now, what does it mean to "maintain" and "expand" the dictatorship? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organization; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influence of the petty-bourgeois elemental forces and petty-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the organizing work of the proletarians in re-educating and remolding the petty-bourgeois strata; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes

and of preparing the conditions for the organization of socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a party which is strong because of its solidarity and discipline.

Lenin says:

> "The dictatorship of the proletariat means 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 in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force. Without a party of iron that has been tempered in the struggle, a party enjoying the confidence of all honest people in the class in question, a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, such a struggle cannot be waged successfully."[95]

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

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

5. The Party as the Embodiment of Unity of Will, Incompatible with the Existence of Factions

The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong because of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of conflicts of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and conflict of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be "blind." On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a conflict of opinion has been closed,

after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary conditions without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

Lenin says:

> "In this period of acute civil war, the Communist parties can perform their duty only if they are organized in a most centralized manner, are marked by an iron discipline bordering on military discipline, and have strong and authoritative party centers invested with wide powers and enjoying the unanimous confidence of the membership."[96]

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

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

Lenin says:

> "Whoever brings about even the slightest weakening of the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during its dictatorship), is actually aiding the bourgeoisie against the proletariat."[97]

But from this it follows that the existence of factions is compatible neither with the Party's unity nor with its iron discipline. It scarcely needs proof that the existence of factions leads to the existence of a number of centers, and the existence of a number of centers means the absence of one common center in the Party, the breaking up of unity of will, the weakening and disintegration of discipline, the weakening and disintegration of the dictatorship. Of course, the parties of the Second International, which are fighting against the dictatorship of the proletariat and have no desire to lead the proletarians to power, can afford such liberalism as freedom of factions, for they have no need at all for iron discipline. But the parties of the Communist International, whose activities are conditioned by the task of achieving and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, cannot afford to be "liberal" or to permit freedom of factions.

The Party represents unity of will, which precludes all factionalism and division of authority in the Party.

Hence Lenin's warning about the "danger of factionalism from the point of view of Party unity and of effecting the unity of will of the vanguard of the proletariat as the fundamental condition for the success of the dictatorship of the proletariat," which is embodied in the special resolution of the Tenth Congress of our Party "On Party Unity."[98]

Hence Lenin's demand for the "complete elimination of all factionalism" and the "immediate dissolution of all groups, without exemption formed on the basis of one platform or another," on pain of "unconditional and instant expulsion from the Party."[99]

6. The Party Becomes Strong by Purging Itself of Opportunist Elements

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

Lenin says:

> "This stratum of workers-turned-bourgeois, or the labor aristocracy, who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. For they are the real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, real vehicles of reformism and chauvinism."[100]

In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy

and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to put oneself in the position of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

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

The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.

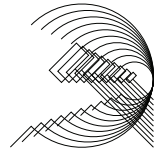
Lenin says:

> "Victory in the proletarian revolution *cannot* be achieved, and that revolution *cannot* be safeguarded, while there are reformists and Mensheviks in one's ranks. That is obvious in principle, and has been strikingly confirmed by the experience both of Russia and of Hungary....

"In Russia, difficult situations have arisen *many times*, when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown if Mensheviks, reformists, petty-bourgeois democrats had remained in our Party...

"In Italy, where, as is generally admitted, decisive battles are in store between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for possession of state power. At such a moment, it is not only absolutely essential to remove the Mensheviks, reformists, Turatists from the party, but it may even be useful to remove some very good Communists too, to remove them from all responsible posts, if they are inclined to waver, and reveal a tendency to drift towards 'unity' with the reformists....

"On the eve of revolution or at the height of the struggle for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything*, frustrate the revolution, and wrest power from the hands of the proletariat, for that power has not yet been consolidated, and the onslaught against it is still very strong. If wavering leaders resign at *such* a time, that does not weaken the party, the working-class movement and the revolution, but strengthens them."[101]



CHAPTER 9

Style in Work

I AM NOT REFERRING TO LITERARY STYLE. WHAT I have in mind is style in work, that specific and peculiar feature in the practice of Leninism which creates the special type of Leninist worker. Leninism is a school of theory and practice which trains a special type of Party and state worker, it creates a special Leninist style in work.

What are the characteristic features of this style? What are its peculiarities?

It has two specific features:

a) Russian revolutionary sweep; and
b) American efficiency.

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

Russian revolutionary sweep is an antidote to inertia, routine, conservationism, mental stagnation and slavish submission to ancient traditions. Russian revolutionary sweep is the life-giving force which stimulates thought, impels things forward, breaks the past and opens up perspectives. Without it no progress is possible.

But Russian revolutionary sweep has every chance of degenerating in practice into empty "revolutionary" Manilovism if it is not combined with American efficiency in work. Examples of this degeneration are only too numerous. Who does not know the disease of "revolutionary" improvisation and "revolutionary" plan drafting, which springs from the belief in the power of decrees to arrange everything and re-make everything? A Russian writer, I. Ehrenburg, in his story *The Percomman (The Perfect Communist Man)*, has portrayed the type of a "Bolshevik" afflicted with this disease, who set himself the task of finding a formula for the ideally perfect man and... became "submerged" in this "work." The story contains a great exaggeration, but it certainly gives a correct likeness of the disease. But no one, I think, has so ruthlessly and bitterly ridiculed those afflicted with this disease as Lenin. Lenin stigmatized this morbid belief in improvisation and in turning out decrees as "communist vanity."*

Lenin says:

> "A member of the Communist Party, who has not yet been combed out, and who imagines he can solve all his problems by issuing communist decrees, is guilty of communist conceit."[102]

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

Lenin says:

> "Fewer pompous phrases, more plain, *everyday* work... Less political fireworks and more attention to the simplest but living facts of communist construction..."[103]

American efficiency, on the other hand, is an antidote to "revolutionary" Manilovism and fantastic improvisation.

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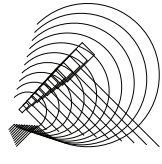
* Some translations use the term "communist conceit" instead of "communist vanity," e.g., the quote by Lenin on this same page.—*Ed.*

American efficiency is that indomitable force which neither knows nor recognizes obstacles; which with its business-like perseverance brushes aside all obstacles; which continues at a task once started until it is finished, even if it is a minor task; and without which serious constructive work is inconceivable.

But American efficiency has every chance of degenerating into narrow and unprincipled practicalism if it is not combined with Russian revolutionary sweep. Who has not heard of that disease of narrow empiricism and unprincipled practicalism which has not infrequently caused certain "Bolsheviks" to degenerate and to abandon the cause of the revolution? We find a reflection of this peculiar disease in a story by B. Pilnyak, entitled *The Barren Year*, which depicts types of Russian "Bolsheviks" of strong will and practical determination who "function" very "energetically," but without vision, without knowing "what it is all about," and who, therefore, stray from the path of revolutionary work. No one has ridiculed this disease of practicalism so incisively as Lenin. He branded it as "narrow-minded empiricism" and "brainless practicalism." He usually contrasted it with vital revolutionary work and the necessity of having a revolutionary perspective in all our daily activities, thus emphasizing that this unprincipled practicalism is as repugnant to true Leninism as "revolutionary" improvisation.

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

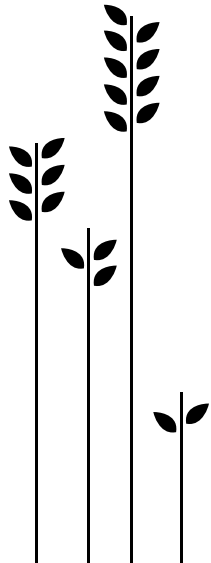
This combination alone produces the finished type of Leninist worker, the style of Leninism in work.



J. V. Stalin

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM





INTRODUCTION

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM IS THE WORLD outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is *dialectical*, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is *materialistic*.

Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life, an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and its history.

When describing their dialectical method, Marx and Engels usually refer to Hegel as the philosopher who formulated the main features of dialectics. This, however, does not mean that the dialectics of Marx and Engels is identical with the dialectics of Hegel. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from the Hegelian dialectics only its "rational kernel," casting aside its idealistic shell, and developed it further so as to lend it a modern scientific form. Marx says:

> "My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e.,

> the process of thinking, which, under the name of 'the Idea,' he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos [creator] of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of 'the Idea.' With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought."[104]

When describing their materialism, Marx and Engels usually refer to Feuerbach as the philosopher who restored materialism to its rights. This, however, does not mean that the materialism of Marx and Engels is identical with Feuerbach's materialism. As a matter of fact, Marx and Engels took from Feuerbach's materialism its "inner kernel," developed it into a scientific-philosophical theory of materialism and cast aside its idealistic and religious-ethical encumbrances. We know that Feuerbach, although he was fundamentally a materialist, objected to the name materialism. Engels more than once declared that "in spite of the [materialist] 'foundation,' [Feuerbach] remained here bound by the traditional idealist fetters," and that "the real idealism of Feuerbach becomes evident as soon as we come to his philosophy of religion and ethics."[105]

Dialectics comes from the Greek *dialego*, to discourse, to debate. In ancient times dialectics was the art of arriving at the truth by disclosing the contradictions in the argument of an opponent and overcoming these contradictions. There were philosophers in ancient times who believed that the disclosure of contradictions in thought and the clash of opposite opinions was the best method of arriving at the truth. This dialectical method of thought, later extended to the phenomena of nature, developed into the dialectical method of comprehending nature, which regards the phenomena of nature as being in constant movement and undergoing constant change, and the development of nature as the result of the development of the contradictions in nature, as the result of the interaction of opposed forces in nature.

In its essence, dialectics is the direct opposite of metaphysics.

CHAPTER 1

Marxist Dialectical Method

THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE MARXIST *dialectical method* are as follows:

a) Nature is Connected and Determined

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomena, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of, each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomena, are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by, each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with the surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable

connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena.

b) Nature is a State of Continuous Motion and Change

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest and immobility, stagnation and immutability, but a state of continuous movement and change, of continuous renewal and development, where something is always arising and developing, and something always disintegrating and dying away.

The dialectical method therefore requires that phenomena should be considered not only from the standpoint of their interconnection and interdependence, but also from the standpoint of their movement, their change, their development, their coming into being and going out of being.

The dialectical method regards as important primarily not that which at the given moment seems to be durable and yet is already beginning to die away, but that which is arising and developing, even though at the given moment it may appear to be not durable, for the dialectical method considers invincible only that which is arising and developing.

Engels says:

> "The whole of nature, from the smallest element to the greatest, from grains of sand to the suns, from protista [the primary living cell—*Ed*.] to man, has its existence in eternal coming into being and passing away, in ceaseless flux, in unresting motion and change."[106]

Therefore, Engels says:

> "[Dialectics] comprehends things and their representations, ideas, in their essential connection, concatenation, motion, origin, and ending."[107]

c) Natural Quantitative Change Leads to Qualitative Change

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard the process of development as a simple process of growth, where quantitative changes do not lead to qualitative changes, but as a development which passes from insignificant and imperceptible quantitative changes to open, fundamental changes, to qualitative changes; a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually, but rapidly and abruptly, taking the form of a leap from one state to another; they occur not accidentally but as the natural result of an accumulation of imperceptible and gradual quantitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development should be understood not as movement in a circle, not as a simple repetition of what has already occurred, but as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state, as a development from the simple to the complex, from the lower to the higher. Engels says:

> "Nature is the proof of dialectics, and it must be said for modern science that it has furnished this proof with very rich materials increasingly daily, and thus has shown that, in the last resort, Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically; that she does not move in the eternal oneness of a perpetually recurring circle, but goes through a real historical evolution. In this connection, Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years."[108]

Describing dialectical development as a transition from quantitative changes to qualitative changes, Engels says:

> "In physics... every change is a transformation of quantity into quality, a consequence of the quantitative change of the amount of motion of one form or another that is either inherent in the body or communicated to it.
>
> "[For example,] 'the temperature of water is, in the first place, a point of no consequence in respect to its liquidity; still with the increase or

diminution of the temperature of liquid water, there comes a point where this state of cohesion alters and the water is converted into steam or ice.' (Hegel, *Encyclopädie, Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 6, p. 217.)

"Similarly, a definite minimum current strength is required to cause the platinum wire of an electric incandescent lamp to glow; and every metal has its temperature of incandescence and fusion, every liquid its definite freezing and boiling point at a given pressure—in so far as our means allow us to produce the temperature required; finally also every gas has its critical point at which it can be liquefied by pressure and cooling. In short, the so-called physical constants [the point at which one state passes into another—*Ed*.] are for the most part nothing but designations of the nodal points at which a quantitative addition or subtraction of motion produces qualitative change in the state of the body concerned, at which, therefore, quantity is transformed into quality."[109]

Passing to chemistry, Engels continues:

"Chemistry can be termed the science of the qualitative changes of bodies as a result of changed quantitative composition. That was already known to Hegel himself... As in the case of oxygen: if three atoms unite into a molecule, instead of the usual two, we get ozone, a body which is very considerably different from ordinary oxygen in its odor and reactions. And indeed the various proportions in which oxygen combines with nitrogen or sulfur, each of which produces a substance qualitatively different from any of the others!"[110]

Finally, criticizing Dühring, who scolded Hegel for all he was worth, but surreptitiously borrowed from him the well-known thesis that the transition from the insentient world to the sentient world, from the kingdom of inorganic matter to the kingdom of organic life, is a leap to a new state, Engels says:

"This is precisely the Hegelian nodal line of measure relations, in which, at certain definite nodal points, the purely quantitative increase or decrease gives rise to a *qualitative leap*; for example, in the case of heated or cooled water, where boiling-point and freezing-point are the nodes at which—under normal pressure—the leap to a new state of aggregation takes place, and where consequently quantity is transformed into quality."[111]

d) Contradictions Inherent in Nature

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature, for they all have their negative and positive sides, a past and a future, something dying away and something developing; and that the struggle between these opposites, the struggle between the old and the new, between that which is dying away and that which is being born, between that which is disappearing and that which is developing, constitutes the internal content of the process of development, the internal content of the transformation of quantitative changes into qualitative changes.

The dialectical method therefore holds that the process of development from the lower to the higher takes place not as a harmonious unfolding of phenomena, but as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and phenomena, as a "struggle" of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions.

Lenin says:

> "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction *in the very essence of objects.*"[112]

And further:

> "Development is the 'struggle' of opposites."[113]

Such, in brief, are the principal features of the Marxist dialectical method.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of the dialectical method to the study of social life and the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If there are no isolated phenomena in the world, if all phenomena are interconnected and interdependent, then it is

clear that every social system and every social movement in history must be evaluated not from the standpoint of "eternal justice" or some other preconceived idea, as is not infrequently done by historians, but from the standpoint of the conditions which gave rise to that system or that social movement and with which they are connected.

The slave system would be senseless, stupid and unnatural under modern conditions. But under the conditions of a disintegrating primitive communal system, the slave system is a quite understandable and natural phenomenon, since it represents an advance on the primitive communal system.

The demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic when tsardom and bourgeois society existed, as, let us say, in Russia in 1905, was a quite understandable, proper and revolutionary demand, for at that time a bourgeois republic would have meant a step forward. But now, under the conditions of the U.S.S.R., the demand for a bourgeois-democratic republic would be a meaningless and counter-revolutionary demand, for a bourgeois republic would be a retrograde step compared with the Soviet republic.

Everything depends on the conditions, time and place.

It is clear that without such a *historical* approach to social phenomena, the existence and development of the science of history is impossible, for only such an approach saves the science of history from becoming a jumble of accidents and an agglomeration of most absurd mistakes.

Further, if the world is in a state of constant movement and development, if the dying away of the old and the upgrowth of the new is a law of development, then it is clear that there can be no "immutable" social systems, no "eternal principles" of private property and exploitation, no "eternal ideas" of the subjugation of the peasant to the landlord, of the worker to the capitalist.

Hence the capitalist system can be replaced by the Socialist system, just as at one time the feudal system was replaced by the capitalist system.

Hence, we must not base our orientation on the strata of society which are no longer developing, even though they at present constitute the predominant force, but on those strata which are developing and have a future before them, even though they at present do not constitute the predominant force.

In the eighties of the past century, in the period of the struggle between the Marxists and the Narodniks,[114] the proletariat in Russia constituted an insignificant minority of the population, whereas the individual peasants constituted the vast majority of the population. But the proletariat was developing as a class, whereas the peasantry as a class was disintegrating. And just because the proletariat was developing as a class the Marxists based their orientation on the proletariat. And they were not mistaken, for, as we know, the proletariat subsequently grew from an insignificant force into a first-rate historical and political force.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must look forward, not backward.

Further, if the passing of slow quantitative changes into rapid and abrupt qualitative changes is a law of development, then it is clear that revolutions made by oppressed classes are a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence the transition from capitalism to Socialism and the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism cannot be affected by slow changes, by reforms, but only by a qualitative change of the capitalist system, by revolution.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must be a revolutionary, not a reformist.

Further, if development proceeds by way of the disclosure of internal contradictions, by way of collisions between opposite forces on the basis of these contradictions and so as to overcome

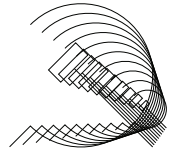
these contradictions, then it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a quite natural and inevitable phenomenon.

Hence, we must not cover up the contradictions of the capitalist system, but disclose and unravel them; we must not try to check the class struggle but carry it to its conclusion.

Hence, in order not to err in policy, one must pursue an uncompromising proletarian class policy, not a reformist policy of harmony of the interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, not a compromisers' policy of "the growing of capitalism into Socialism."

Such is the Marxist dialectical method when applied to social life, to the history of society.

As to Marxist philosophical materialism, it is fundamentally the direct opposite of philosophical idealism.



CHAPTER 2

Marxist Philosophical Materialism

THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF MARXIST philosophical *materialism* are as follows:

a) Materialist

Contrary to idealism, which regards the world as the embodiment of an "absolute idea," a "universal spirit," "consciousness," Marx's philosophical materialism holds that the world is by its very nature *material*, that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion, that interconnection and interdependence of phenomena, as established by the dialectical method, are a law of the development of moving matter, and that the world develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter and stands in no need of a "universal spirit."

Engels says:

> "The materialist outlook on nature means nothing more than the simple conception of nature just as it is, without alien addition."[115]

Speaking of the materialist views of the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, who held that "the world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man, but was, is and ever will be a living flame, systematically flaring up and systematically dying down," Lenin comments: "A very good exposition of the principles of dialectical materialism."[116]

b) Objective Reality

Contrary to idealism, which asserts that only our mind really exists, and that the material world, being, nature, exists only in our mind, in our sensations, ideas and perceptions, the Marxist materialist philosophy holds that matter, nature, being, is an objective reality existing outside and independent of our mind; that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, mind, and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being; that thought is a product of matter which in its development has reached a high degree of perfection, namely, of the brain, and the brain is the organ of thought; and that therefore one cannot separate thought from matter without committing a grave error. Engels says:

> "The question of the relation of thinking to being, the relation of spirit to nature—the paramount question of the whole of philosophy... The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps. Those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature... comprised the camp of *idealism*. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of *materialism*."*[117]

And further:

> "The material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality... Our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of a material, bodily organ, the brain. Matter is not a product of mind, but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter."[118]

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* Italics by J. St.—*Ed*.

Concerning the question of matter and thought, Marx says:

> "It is impossible to separate thought from matter *that* thinks. This *matter is the substratum of all changes going on in the world*."*[119]

Describing the Marxist philosophy of materialism, Lenin says:

> "Materialism in general recognizes objectively real being (matter) as independent of consciousness, sensation, experience… Consciousness is only the reflection of being, at best an approximately true (adequate, perfectly exact) reflection of it."[120]

And further:

> (a) "Matter is that which, acting upon our sense-organs, produces sensation; matter is the objective reality given to us in sensation... Matter, nature, being, the physical—is primary, and spirit, consciousness, sensation, the psychical—is secondary."[121]
>
> (b) "The world picture is a picture of how matter moves and of how '*matter thinks.*'"[122]
>
> (c) "The brain as the organ of thought."[123]

c) The World and Its Laws Are Knowable

Contrary to idealism, which denies the possibility of knowing the world and its laws, which does not believe in the authenticity of our knowledge, does not recognize objective truth, and holds that the world is full of "things-in-themselves" that can never be known to science, Marxist philosophical materialism holds that the world and its laws are fully knowable, that our knowledge of the laws of nature, tested by experiment and practice, is authentic knowledge having the validity of objective truth, and that there are no things in the world which are unknowable, but only things which are still not known, but which will be disclosed and made known by the efforts of science and practice.

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* Italics by J. St.—*Ed*.

Criticizing the thesis of Kant and other idealists that the world is unknowable and that there are "things-in-themselves" which are unknowable, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our knowledge is authentic knowledge, Engels writes:

> "The most telling refutation of this as of all other philosophical crotchets is practice—namely, experiment and industry. If we are able to prove the correctness of our conception of a natural process by making it ourselves, bringing it into being out of its conditions and making it serve our own purposes into the bargain, then there is an end to the Kantian ungraspable "thing-in-itself." The chemical substances produced in the bodies of plants and animals remained just such "things-in-themselves" until organic chemistry began to produce them one after another, whereupon the "thing-in-itself" became a thing for us—as, for instance, alizarin, the coloring matter of the madder, which we no longer trouble to grow in the madder roots in the field, but produce much more cheaply and simply from coal tar. For 300 years, the Copernican solar system was a hypothesis with 100, 1,000, 10,000 to 1 chances in its favor, but still always a hypothesis. But then Le Verrier, by means of the data provided by this system, not only deduced the necessity of the existence of an unknown planet, but also calculated the position in the heavens which this planet must necessarily occupy, and when [Johann] Galle really found this planet [Neptune, discovered 1846, at Berlin Observatory], the Copernican system was proved. "[124]

Accusing Bogdanov, Bazarov, Yushkevich and the other followers of Mach of fideism, and defending the well-known materialist thesis that our scientific knowledge of the laws of nature is authentic knowledge, and that the laws of science represent objective truth, Lenin says:

> "Contemporary fideism does not at all reject science; all it rejects is the 'exaggerated claims' of science, to wit, its claim to objective truth. If objective truth exists (as the materialists think), if natural science, reflecting the outer world in human 'experience,' is alone capable of giving us objective truth, then all fideism is absolutely refuted."[125]

Such, in brief, are the characteristic features of the Marxist philosophical materialism.

It is easy to understand how immensely important is the extension of the principles of philosophical materialism to the study of social life, of the history of society, and how immensely important is the application of these principles to the history of society and to the practical activities of the party of the proletariat.

If the connection between the phenomena of nature and their interdependence are laws of the development of nature, it follows, too, that the connection and interdependence of the phenomena of social life are laws of the development of society, and not something accidental.

Hence social life, the history of society, ceases to be an agglomeration of "accidents," and becomes the history of the development of society according to regular laws, and the study of the history of society becomes a science.

Hence the practical activity of the party of the proletariat must not be based on the good wishes of "outstanding individuals," not on the dictates of "reason," "universal morals," etc., but on the laws of development of society and on the study of these laws.

Further, if the world is knowable and our knowledge of the laws of development of nature is authentic knowledge, having the validity of objective truth, it follows that social life, the development of society, is also knowable, and that the data of science regarding the laws of development of society are authentic data having the validity of objective truths.

Hence the science of the history of society, despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life, can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology, and capable of making use of the laws of development of society for practical purposes.

Hence the party of the proletariat should not guide itself in its practical activity by casual motives, but by the laws of development of society, and by practical deductions from these laws.

Hence Socialism is converted from a dream of a better future for humanity into a science.

Hence the bond between science and practical activity, between theory and practice, their unity, should be the guiding star of the party of the proletariat.

Further, if nature, being, the material world, is primary, and mind, thought, is secondary, derivative; if the material world represents objective reality existing independently of the mind of men, while the mind is a reflection of this objective reality, it follows that the material life of society, its being, is also primary, and its spiritual life secondary, derivative, and that the material life of society is an objective reality existing independently of the will of men, while the spiritual life of society is a reflection of this objective reality, a reflection of being.

Hence the source of formation of the spiritual life of society, the origin of social ideas, social theories, political views and political institutions, should not be sought for in the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves, but in the conditions of the material life of society, in social being, of which these ideas, theories, views, etc., are the reflection.

Hence, if in different periods of the history of society different social ideas, theories, views and political institutions are to be observed; if under the slave system we encounter certain social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, under feudalism others, and under capitalism others still, this is not to be explained by the "nature," the "properties" of the ideas, theories, views and political institutions themselves but by the different conditions of the material life of society at different periods of social development.

Whatever is the being of a society, whatever are the conditions of material life of a society, such are the ideas, theories, political views and political institutions of that society.

In this connection, Marx says:

> "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."[126]

Hence, in order not to err in policy, in order not to find itself in the position of idle dreamers, the party of the proletariat must not base its activities on abstract "principles of human reason," but on the concrete conditions of the material life of society, as the determining force of social development; not on the good wishes of "great men," but on the real needs of development of the material life of society.

The fall of the utopians, including the Narodniks, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but, independently of and in spite of these needs, on "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects" divorced from the real life of society.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism lie in the fact that it does base its practical activity on the needs of the development of the material life of society and never divorces itself from the real life of society.

It does not follow from Marx's words, however, that social ideas, theories, political views and political institutions are of no significance in the life of society, that they do not reciprocally affect social being, the development of the material conditions of the life of society. We have been speaking so far of the *origin* of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, of *the way they arise*, of the fact that the spiritual life of society is a reflection of the conditions of its material life. As regards the *significance* of social ideas, theories, views and political institutions, as regards their *role* in history, historical materialism, far from denying them, stresses the role and importance of these factors in the life of society, in its history.

There are different kinds of social ideas and theories. There are old ideas and theories which have outlived their day and which serve the interests of the moribund forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they hamper the development, the progress of society. Then there are new and advanced ideas and theories which serve the interests of the advanced forces of society. Their significance lies in the fact that they facilitate the development, the progress of society; and their significance is the greater the more accurately they reflect the needs of development of the material life of society.

New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen, they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organizing, mobilizing and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is *impossible* to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organizing, mobilizing and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces which hamper the development of the material life of society.

Thus social ideas, theories and political institutions, having arisen on the basis of the urgent tasks of the development of the material life of society, the development of social being, themselves then react upon social being, upon the material life of society, creating the conditions necessary for completely carrying out the urgent tasks of the material life of society, and for rendering its further development possible.

In this connection, Marx says:

> "[Theory] becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses."[127]

Hence, in order to be able to influence the conditions of material life of society and to accelerate their development and their improvement, the party of the proletariat must rely upon such a social theory, such a social idea as correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, and which is therefore capable of setting into motion broad masses of the people and of mobilizing them and organizing them into a great army of the proletarian party, prepared to smash the reactionary forces and to clear the way for the advanced forces of society.

The fall of the "Economists"[128] and Mensheviks was due among other things to the fact that they did not recognize the mobilizing, organizing and transforming role of advanced theory, of advanced ideas and, sinking to vulgar materialism, reduced the role of these factors almost to nothing, thus condemning the Party to passivity and frailty.

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism are derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of this theory.

That is the answer historical materialism gives to the question of the relation between social being and social consciousness, between the conditions of development of material life and the development of the spiritual life of society.



CHAPTER 3

Historical Materialism

IT NOW REMAINS TO ELUCIDATE THE FOLLOWING question: what, from the viewpoint of historical materialism, is meant by the "conditions of material life of society" which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions, etc.?

What, after all, are these "conditions of material life of society," what are their distinguishing features?

There can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" includes, first of all, nature which surrounds society, geographical environment, which is one of the indispensable and constant conditions of material life of society and which, of course, influences the development of society. What role does geographical environment play in the development of society? Is geographical environment the chief force determining the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system of men, the transition from one system to another?

Historical materialism answers this question in the negative.

Geographical environment is unquestionably one of the constant and indispensable conditions of development of society and, of course, influences the development of society, accelerates or retards its development. But its influence is not the *determining* influence, inasmuch as the changes and development of society proceed at an incomparably faster rate than the changes and development of geographical environment. In the space of 3,000 years three different social systems have been successively superseded in Europe: the primitive communal system, the slave system and the feudal system. In the eastern part of Europe, in the U.S.S.R., even four social systems have been superseded. Yet during this period geographical conditions in Europe have either not changed at all, or have changed so slightly that geography takes no note of them. And that is quite natural. Changes in geographical environment of any importance require millions of years, whereas a few hundred or a couple of thousand years are enough for even very important changes in the system of human society.

It follows from this that geographical environment cannot be the chief cause, the *determining* cause of social development, for that which remains almost unchanged in the course of tens of thousands of years cannot be the chief cause of development of that which undergoes fundamental changes in the course of a few hundred years.

Further, there can be no doubt that the concept "conditions of material life of society" also includes growth of population, density of population of one degree or another, for people are an essential element of the conditions of material life of society, and without a definite minimum number of people there can be no material life of society. Is not growth of population the chief force that determines the character of the social system of man?

Historical materialism answers this question too in the negative.

Of course, growth of population does influence the development of society, does facilitate or retard the development

of society, but it cannot be the chief force of development of society, and its influence on the development of society cannot be the *determining* influence because, by itself, growth of population does not furnish the clue to the question why a given social system is replaced precisely by such and such a new system and not by another, why the primitive communal system is succeeded precisely by the slave system, the slave system by the feudal system, and the feudal system by the bourgeois system, and not by some other.

If growth of population were the determining force of social development, then a higher density of population would be bound to give rise to a correspondingly higher type of social system. But we do not find this to be the case. The density of population in China is four times as great as in the U.S.A., yet the U.S.A. stands higher than China in the scale of social development, for in China a semi-feudal system still prevails, whereas the U.S.A. has long ago reached the highest stage of development of capitalism. The density of population in Belgium is nineteen times as great as in the U.S.A., and twenty-six times as great as in the U.S.S.R. Yet the U.S.A. stands higher than Belgium in the scale of social development; and as for the U.S.S.R., Belgium lags a whole historical epoch behind this country, for in Belgium the capitalist system prevails, whereas the U.S.S.R. has already done away with capitalism and has set up a Socialist system.

It follows from this that growth of population is not, and cannot be, the chief force of development of society, the force which *determines* the character of the social system, the physiognomy of society.

a) What Is the Chief Determinant Force?

What, then, is the chief force in the complex of conditions of material life of society which determines the physiognomy of society, the character of the social system, the development of society from one system to another?

This force, historical materialism holds, is the *method of procuring the means of life* necessary for human existence, the *mode of production of material values*—food, clothing, footwear, houses, fuel, instruments of production, etc.—which are indispensable for the life of development of society.

In order to live, people must have food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc.; in order to have these material values, people must produce them; and in order to produce them, people must have the instruments of production with which food, clothing, footwear, shelter, fuel, etc., are produced; they must be able to produce these instruments and to use them.

The *instruments of production* wherewith material values are produced, the *people* who operate the instruments of production and carry on the production of material values thanks to a certain *production experience* and *labor skill*—all these elements jointly constitute the *productive forces* of society.

But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's *relations of production*. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilize nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in societies. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions *social* production. In the production of material values men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another. These may be relations of cooperation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation; they may be relations of domination and subordination; and, lastly, they may be transitional from one form of relations of production to another. But whatever the character of the relations of production may be, always and

in every system, they constitute just as essential an element of production as the productive forces of society.

Marx says:

> "In the process of production, human beings work not only upon nature, but also upon one another. They produce only by working together in a specified manner and reciprocally exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they enter into definite connections and relations to one another, and only within these social connections and relations does their influence upon nature operate—i.e., does production take place."[129]

Consequently, production, the mode of production, embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values.

b) The First Feature of Production

One of the features of production is that it never stays at one point for a long time and is always in a state of change and development, and that, furthermore, changes in the mode of production inevitably call forth changes in the whole social system, social ideas, political views and political institutions—they call forth a reconstruction of the whole social and political order. At different stages of development people make use of different modes of production, or, to put it more crudely, lead different manners of life. In the primitive commune there is one mode of production, under slavery there is another mode of production, under feudalism a third mode of production, and so on. And, correspondingly, men's social system, the spiritual life of men, their views and political institutions also vary.

Whatever is the mode of production of a society, such in the main is the society itself, its ideas and theories, its political views and institutions.

Or, to put it more crudely, whatever is man's manner of life, such is his manner of thought.

This means that the history of development of society is above all the history of the development of production, the history of the modes of production which succeed each other in the course of centuries, the history of the development of productive forces and people's relations of production.

Hence the history of social development is at the same time the history of the producers of material values themselves, the history of the laboring masses who are the chief force in the process of production and who carry on the production of material values necessary for the existence of society.

Hence, if historical science is to be a real science, it can no longer reduce the history of social development to the actions of kings and generals, to the actions of "conquerors" and "subjugators" of states, but must above all devote itself to the history of the producers of material values, the history of the laboring masses, the history of peoples.

Hence the clue to the study of the laws of history of society must not be sought in men's minds, in the views and ideas of society, but in the mode of production practiced by society in any given historical period; it must be sought in the economic life of society.

Hence the prime task of historical science is to study and disclose the laws of production, the laws of development of the productive forces and of the relations of production, the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if the party of the proletariat is to be a real party, it must above all acquire a knowledge of the laws of development of production, of the laws of economic development of society.

Hence, if it is not to err in policy, the party of the proletariat must both in drafting its program and in its practical activities proceed primarily from the laws of development of production, from the laws of economic development of society.

c) The Second Feature of Production

A second feature of production is that its changes and development always begin with changes and development of the productive forces, and, in the first place, with changes and development of the instruments of production. Productive forces are therefore the most mobile and revolutionary element of production. First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then, *depending* on these changes and *in conformity with them*, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change. This, however, does not mean that the relations of production do not influence the development of the productive forces and that the latter are not dependent on the former. While their development is dependent on the development of the productive forces, the relations of production in their turn react upon the development of the productive forces, accelerating or retarding it. In this connection it should be noted that the relations of production cannot for too long a time lag behind and be in a state of contradiction to the growth of the productive forces, inasmuch as the productive forces can develop in full measure only when the relations of production correspond to the character, the state of the productive forces and allow full scope for their development. Therefore, however much the relations of production may lag behind the development of the productive forces, they must, sooner or later, come into correspondence with—and actually do come into correspondence with—the level of development of the productive forces, the character of the productive forces. Otherwise, we would have a fundamental violation of the unity of the productive forces and the relations of production within the system of production, a disruption of production as a whole, a crisis of production, a destruction of productive forces.

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where

private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

In contrast, an instance in which the relations of production completely correspond to the character of the productive forces is the Socialist national economy of the U.S.S.R., where the social ownership of the means of production fully corresponds to the social character of the process of production, and where, because of this, economic crises and the destruction of productive forces are unknown.

Consequently, the productive forces are not only the most mobile and revolutionary element in production, but are also the determining element in the development of production.

Whatever are the productive forces such must be the relations of production.

While the state of the productive forces furnishes an answer to the question—with what instruments of production do men produce the material values they need?—the state of the relations of production furnishes the answer to another question—who owns the *means of production* (the land, forests, waters, mineral resources, raw materials, instruments of production, production premises, means of transportation and communication, etc.), who commands the means of production, whether the whole of society, or individual persons, groups, or classes which utilize them for the exploitation of other persons, groups or classes?

Here is a rough picture of the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day. The transition from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow, and the accompanying transition from the life of hunters to the domestication of animals and

primitive pasturage; the transition from stone tools to metal tools (the iron axe, the wooden plow fitted with an iron colter, etc.), with a corresponding transition to tillage and agriculture; a further improvement in metal tools for the working up of materials, the introduction of the blacksmith's bellows, the introduction of pottery, with a corresponding development of handicrafts, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture, the development of an independent handicraft industry and, subsequently, of manufacture; the transition from handicraft tools to machines and the transformation of handicraft and manufacture into machine industry; the transition to the machine system and the rise of modern large-scale machine industry—such is a general and far from complete picture of the development of the productive forces of society in the course of man's history. It will be clear that the development and improvement of the instruments of production were affected by men who were related to production, and not independently of men; and, consequently, the change and development of the instruments of production were accompanied by a change and development of men, as the most important element of the productive forces, by a change and development of their production experience, their labor skill, their ability to handle the instruments of production.

In conformity with the change and development of the productive forces of society in the course of history, men's relations of production, their economic relations also changed and developed.

Five *main* types of relations of production are known to history: primitive communal, slave, feudal, capitalist and socialist.

The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. This in the main corresponds to the character of the productive forces of that period. Stone tools, and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combating the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to

gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or to neighboring societies. Labor in common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production which were at the same time means of defense against beasts of prey. Here there was no exploitation, no classes.

The basis of the relations of production under the slave system is that the slave owner owns the means of production; he also owns the worker in production—the slave, whom he can sell, purchase, or kill as though he were an animal. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Instead of stone tools, men now have metal tools at their command; instead of the wretched and primitive husbandry of the hunter, who knew neither pasturage, nor tillage, there now appear pasturage, tillage, handicrafts, and a division of labor between these branches of production. There appears the possibility of the exchange of products between individuals and between societies, of the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few, the actual accumulation of the means of production in the hands of a minority, and the possibility of subjugation of the majority by a minority and their conversion into slaves. Here we no longer find the common and free labor of all members of society in the production process—here there prevails the forced labor of slaves, who are exploited by the non-laboring slave owners. Here, therefore, there is no common ownership of the means of production or of the fruits of production. It is replaced by private ownership. Here the slave owner appears as the prime and principal property owner in the full sense of the term.

Rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, people with full rights and people with no rights, and a fierce class struggle between them—such is the picture of the slave system.

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production—the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labor. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of iron; the spread of the iron plow and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops—such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

The new productive forces demand that the laborer shall display some kind of initiative in production and an inclination for work, an interest in work. The feudal lord therefore discards the slave, as a laborer who has no interest in work and is entirely without initiative, and prefers to deal with the serf, who has his own husbandry, implements of production, and a certain interest in work essential for the cultivation of the land and for the payment in kind of a part of his harvest to the feudal lord.

Here private ownership is further developed. Exploitation is nearly as severe as it was under slavery—it is only slightly mitigated. A class struggle between exploiters and exploited is the principal feature of the feudal system.

The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production—the wage laborers, whom the capitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labor-power to the

capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside of capitalist property in the means of production, we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen in the means of production, these peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labor. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery.

The new productive forces require that the workers in production shall be better educated and more intelligent than the downtrodden and ignorant serfs, that they be able to understand machinery and operate it properly. Therefore, the capitalists prefer to deal with wage workers who are free from the bonds of serfdom and who are educated enough to be able properly to operate machinery.

But having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent, capitalism has become enmeshed in contradictions which it is unable to solve. By producing larger and larger quantities of commodities, and reducing their prices, capitalism intensifies competition, ruins the mass of small and medium private owners, converts them into proletarians and reduces their purchasing power, with the result that it becomes impossible to dispose of the commodities produced. On the other hand, by expanding production and concentrating millions of workers in huge mills and factories, capitalism lends the process of production a social character and thus undermines its own foundation, inasmuch as the social character of the process of production demands the social ownership of the means of production; yet the means of production remain private capitalist property, which is incompatible with the social character of the process of production.

These irreconcilable contradictions between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production make themselves felt in periodic crises of overproduction, when the capitalists, finding no effective demand for their goods owing to the ruin of the mass of the population which they themselves have brought about, are compelled to burn products, destroy manufactured goods, suspend production, and destroy productive forces at a time when millions of people are forced to suffer unemployment and starvation, not because there are not enough goods, but because there is an overproduction of goods.

This means that the capitalist relations of production have ceased to correspond to the state of productive forces of society and have come into irreconcilable contradiction with them.

This means that capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission it is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by socialist ownership.

This means that the main feature of the capitalist system is a most acute class struggle between the exploiters and the exploited.

The basis of the relations of production under the socialist system, which so far has been established only in the U.S.S.R., is the social ownership of the means of production. Here there are no longer exploiters and exploited. The goods produced are distributed according to labor performed, on the principle: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Here the mutual relations of people in the process of production are marked by comradely cooperation and the socialist mutual assistance of workers who are free from exploitation. Here the relations of production fully correspond to the state of productive forces, for the social character of the process of production is reinforced by the social ownership of the means of production.

For this reason, socialist production in the U.S.S.R. knows no periodical crises of overproduction and their accompanying absurdities.

For this reason, the productive forces here develop at an accelerated pace, for the relations of production that correspond to them offer full scope for such development.

Such is the picture of the development of men's relations of production in the course of human history.

Such is the dependence of the development of the relations of production on the development of the production forces of society, and primarily, on the development of the instruments of production, the dependence by virtue of which the changes and development of the productive forces sooner or later lead to corresponding changes and development of the relations of production.

Marx says:

> "The use and fabrication of instruments of labor,* although existing in the germ among certain species of animals, is specifically characteristic of the human labor process, and Franklin therefore defines man as a tool-making animal. Relics of bygone instruments of labor possess the same importance for the investigation of extinct economic forms of society, as do fossil bones for the determination of extinct species of animals. It is not the articles made, but how they are made, and by what instruments, that enables us to distinguish different economic epochs. Instruments of labor not only supply a standard of the degree of development to which human labor has attained but they are also indicators of the social conditions under which that labor is carried on."[130]

And further:

> a) "Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social conditions. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist."[131]

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* By "instruments of labor" Marx has in mind primarily instruments of production.—*Ed*.

b) "There is a continual movement of growth in productive forces, of destruction in social relations, of formation in ideas; the only immutable thing is the abstraction of movement."[132]

Speaking of historical materialism as formulated in *The Communist Manifesto,* Engels says:

"Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently (ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land) all history has been a history of class struggles, struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social evolution; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles."[133]

d) The Third Feature of Production

A third feature of production is that the rise of new productive forces and of the relations of production corresponding to them does not take place separately from the old system, after the disappearance of the old system, but within the old system; it takes place not as a result of the deliberate and conscious activity of man, but spontaneously, unconsciously, independently of the will of man. It takes place spontaneously and independently of the will of man for two reasons.

First, because men are not free to choose one mode of production or another, because as every new generation enters life it finds productive forces and relations of production already existing as the result of the work of former generations, owing to which it is obliged at first to accept and adapt itself to everything it finds ready made in the sphere of production in order to be able to produce material values.

Secondly, because, when improving one instrument of production or another, one element of the productive forces or another, men do not realize, do not understand or stop to reflect what *social* results these improvements will lead to, but only think of their everyday interests, of lightening their labor and of securing some direct and tangible advantage for themselves.

When, gradually and gropingly, certain members of primitive communal society passed from the use of stone tools to the use of iron tools, they, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what *social* results this innovation would lead to; they did not understand or realize that the change to metal tools meant a revolution in production, that it would in the long run lead to the slave system. They simply wanted to lighten their labor and secure an immediate and tangible advantage; their conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this everyday personal interest.

When, in the period of the feudal system, the young bourgeoisie of Europe began to erect, alongside of the small guild workshops, large manufactories, and thus advanced the productive forces of society, it, of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what *social* consequences this innovation would lead to; it did not realize or understand that this "small" innovation would lead to a regrouping of social forces which was to end in a revolution both against the power of kings, whose favors it so highly valued, and against the nobility, to whose ranks its foremost representatives not infrequently aspired. It simply wanted to lower the cost of producing goods, to throw large quantities of goods on the markets of Asia and of recently discovered America, and to make bigger profits. Its conscious activity was confined within the narrow bounds of this commonplace practical aim.

When the Russian capitalists, in conjunction with foreign capitalists, energetically implanted modern large-scale machine industry in Russia, while leaving tsardom intact and turning the peasants over to the tender mercies of the landlords, they,

of course, did not know and did not stop to reflect what social consequences this extensive growth of productive forces would lead to, they did not realize or understand that this big leap in the realm of the productive forces of society would lead to a regrouping of social forces that would enable the proletariat to effect a union with the peasantry and to bring about a victorious Socialist revolution. They simply wanted to expand industrial production to the limit, to gain control of the huge home market, to become monopolists, and to squeeze as much profit as possible out of the national economy. Their conscious activity did not extend beyond their commonplace, strictly practical interests. Accordingly, Marx says:

> "In the social production of their existence [the production of the material values necessary to the life of men—*Ed*.], men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are *independent** of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production."[134]

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary, such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceed spontaneously, independently of the will of men. But that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity. After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders—the ruling classes—become that "insuperable" obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes,

* Italics by J. St.—*Ed*.

by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution. Here there stands out in bold relief the *tremendous role* of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organize and mobilize the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and firmly to establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution. In *The Communist Manifesto* Marx says:

> "The proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organize itself as a class... by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production."[135]

And further:

> a) "The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."[136]
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> b) "Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one."[137]

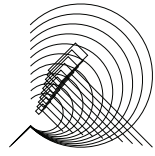
Here is the brilliant formulation of the essence of historical materialism given by Marx in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*:

> "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real

foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or—this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms—with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure. In studying such transformations it is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society. Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation. In broad outline, the Asiatic, ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs marking progress in the economic development of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism but of an antagonism that emanates from the individuals' social conditions of existence—but the productive forces developing within bourgeois society create also the material conditions for a solution of this antagonism. The prehistory of human society accordingly closes with this social formation."[138]

Such is Marxist materialism as applied to social life, to the history of society.

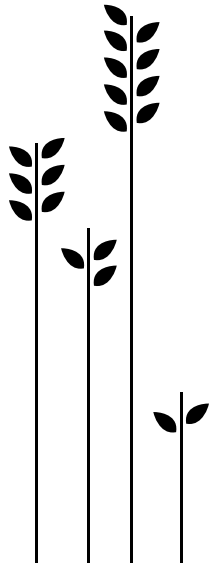
Such are the principal features of dialectical and historical materialism.



Economics Institute of the
Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

EXCERPTS FROM "POLITICAL ECONOMY"


АКАДЕМИЯ
НАУК
СССР



CHAPTER 4

Commodity Production. Commodities and Money

"Political economy belongs to the category of the social sciences. It studies the laws of the social production and distribution of material wealth at the various stages of development of human society."

Commodity Production– the Point of Departure for the Rise of Capitalism and a General Feature of Capitalism

The capitalist mode of production, which arose as successor to the feudal mode of production, is based upon exploitation of the class of wage-workers by the class of capitalists. To understand the essence of the capitalist mode of production one must bear in mind, first and foremost, that the capitalist system has commodity production as its foundation: under capitalism everything takes the form of a commodity and the principle of buying and selling prevails everywhere.

Commodity production is older than capitalist production. It existed in slave-owning society and under feudalism. In the

period when feudalism was breaking down, simple commodity production served as the basis for the rise of capitalist production.

Simple commodity production presupposes, first, the social division of labor, under which individual producers specialize in making particular products, and, second, the existence of private property in the means of production and in the products of labor.

The simple commodity production of craftsmen and peasants is distinguished from capitalist commodity production by the fact that it is based upon the personal labor of the commodity producer. Yet fundamentally it is *similar in kind* to capitalist production, insofar as its foundation is private property in the means of production. Private ownership inevitably gives rise to competition between the commodity producers, which leads to the enrichment of a minority and the ruin of the majority. Thus, petty commodity production serves as the point of departure for the rise and development of capitalist relations.

Under capitalism, commodity production becomes dominant and universal. The exchange of commodities appears as:

> "The simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times."[139]

The Commodity and its Characteristics. Dual Nature of the Labor Embodied in a Commodity

A commodity is a thing which, first, satisfies some human demand and, second, is produced not for personal consumption but for exchange.

The utility of a thing, the characteristics thanks to which it is able to satisfy some human demand, makes the thing a *use-value*. A use-value can either directly satisfy an individual human demand or else serve as a means of production of material wealth. For instance, bread satisfies a demand as food and cloth as clothing, while the use-value of a loom consists

in the fact that cloth is made with its help. In the course of historical development, man continually discovers fresh, useful characteristics in things and fresh ways of using them.

Use-value is possessed by many things which have not in any way been created by human labor, such as, spring-water or the fruits of wild trees. But not everything which has use-value is a commodity. For a thing to become a commodity it must be a product of labor produced for sale.

Use-value forms the material substance of wealth, whatever its social form may be. In a commodity economy, use-value is the depository of the exchange-value of a commodity. *Exchange-value* appears first of all as the *quantitative relationship* in which use-values of one kind are exchanged for use-values of another kind. For example, one axe is exchanged for 20 kilograms of grain. In this quantitative relationship between the commodities exchanged is expressed also their exchange-value. Commodities are treated as equivalent to each other in definite quantities, consequently they must have a common basis. This basis cannot be any of the natural properties of commodities—their weight, size, shape, etc. The natural properties of commodities determine their utility and their use-value, a necessary condition for exchange is difference between the use-values of the commodities to be exchanged. No one will exchange commodities which are identical, such as wheat for wheat, or sugar for sugar. The use-values of different commodities, being different qualitatively, are incommensurable quantitatively.

Commodities of different kinds have only one characteristic in common which makes it possible to compare them for purposes of exchange, and it is that they are all *products of labor*. Underlying the equivalence of two commodities which are exchanged against each other is the social labor expended in producing them. When a commodity producer brings an axe to market in order to exchange it, he finds that for his axe he can get 20 kilograms of grain. This means that the axe *is worth* the same amount of social labor as 20 kilograms of grain are worth.

Value is the social labor of commodity producers embodied in a commodity.

That the value of commodities embodies the social labor expended in producing them is borne out by some generally known facts. Material wealth, which is useful in itself, but requires no expenditure of labor for its production, has no value—e.g., the air. Material wealth, which requires a large expenditure of labor has a high value—e.g., gold, diamonds. Many commodities which at one time were costly have become cheaper as the development of technique has reduced the amount of labor needed to produce them. Changes in the amount of labor expended in producing commodities are usually reflected in the quantitative relationship between these commodities when exchanged, i.e., in their exchange-value. It follows from all this that the exchange-value of a commodity is the form in which its value manifests itself.

Hidden behind the exchange of commodities is the social division of labor between the persons who are the owners of these commodities. When commodity producers compare different commodities, one with another, in doing so they are comparing their different kinds of labor. Thus, value expresses the production-relations between commodity producers. These relations manifest themselves in the exchange of commodities.

A commodity has a *two-fold* character: in one aspect it is a use-value and in another it is a value. The two-fold character of the commodity is caused by the *two-fold nature of the labor* embodied in the commodity. The kinds of labor are just as various as the use-values which are produced. The labor of a joiner is qualitatively different from that of a tailor, a shoemaker, etc. The different kinds of labor are distinguished from one another by their aims, methods, tools and, finally, their results. The joiner does his work with an axe, a saw and a plane and makes wooden articles: tables, chairs, cupboards; the tailor makes clothes, using a sewing machine, scissors and a needle. Thus, in each use-value a definite kind of labor is embodied: in a

table—the joiner's labor, in a suit—the tailor's labor, in a pair of shoes—the shoemaker's labor, etc. Labor expended in a definite form is *concrete labor*. Concrete labor creates the use-value of a commodity.

In the course of exchange, commodities of the most various kinds, created by different kinds of concrete labor, are compared together and measured on a common footing. Consequently, behind the different concrete forms of labor there is hidden something common, something inherent in every form of labor. Both the joiner's labor and the tailor's, despite the qualitative difference between these forms of labor, constitute a productive expenditure of human brains, nerves, muscles, etc., and in this sense are homogeneous human labor, labor *in general*. The labor of commodity producers, considered as expenditure of human labor-power generally, without regard to its concrete form, is *abstract labor*. Abstract labor forms the value of a commodity.

Abstract and concrete labor are two aspects of the labor embodied in a commodity.

> "On the one hand, all labor is, speaking physiologically, an expenditure of human labor-power, and in its character of identical abstract human labor, it creates and forms the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labor is the expenditure of human labor-power in a special form and with a definite aim, and in this, its character of concrete useful labor, it produces use-values."[140]

In a society in which private property in the means of production prevails, the two-fold character of the labor embodied in a commodity reflects the *contradiction between the private and social labor* of the commodity producers. Private ownership of the means of production *separates* people, makes the labor of the individual commodity producer his own *private* affair. Each commodity producer conducts his enterprise separately from the rest. The labor of the separate workers is not concerted or coordinated on the scale of society as a whole. But, from another angle, the social division of labor means that *all-round*

connections exist between the producers, who are working for each other. The more labor is divided in society and the more varied are the products manufactured by the separate producers, the more extensive is the mutual dependence of the latter. Consequently, the labor of each separate commodity producer is essentially *social* labor and forms a particle of the labor of society as a whole. Commodities, which are products of various kinds of particular, concrete labor, are at the same time also products of human labor in general, abstract labor.

It follows that the contradiction of commodity production consists in the labor of commodity producers, which is directly the private affair of each one of them, having at the same time a social character. Owing to the isolation of the commodity products one from another, the social character of their labor in the process of production remains hidden. It finds expression only in the process of exchange, when the commodity comes on to the market and is exchanged against another commodity. Only in the process of exchange is it revealed whether the labor of a particular commodity producer is needed by society and whether it will receive social recognition.

Abstract labor, which forms the value of a commodity, is a historical category, a specific form of social labor belonging to commodity economy only. In natural economy men produce their products not for exchange but for personal consumption, so that the social character of their labor appears directly in concrete form. For example, when a feudal lord extracted surplus product from serf-peasants in the form of labor-rent or rent in kind, he appropriated their labor directly in the form of labor services or definite products. In these circumstances social labor did not assume the form of abstract labor. In commodity production, products are produced not for personal consumption but for sale. The social character of labor is here expressed by means of the comparison of one commodity with another, and this comparison takes place through the reducing of concrete forms of labor to the abstract labor which forms the value of a commodity. This

process takes place spontaneously, without any sort of common plan, behind the backs of the commodity producers.

Socially-Necessary Labor-Time. Simple and Complex Labor

The magnitude of the value of a commodity is determined by labor-time. The more labor-time needed to produce a given commodity, the higher its value. Of course, the individual commodity producers work in varying conditions and expend varying amounts of labor-time in the production of one and the same kind of commodity. Does this mean that the more idle the worker, or the less favorable the conditions in which he is working, the higher the value of the commodity produced by him? No, it does not mean that. The magnitude of the value of a commodity is determined not by the individual labor-time expended by a particular commodity producer in producing a commodity, but by the socially-necessary labor-time.

Socially-necessary labor-time is the time needed for the making of any commodity under average social conditions of production, i.e., with the average level of technique and average skill and intensity of labor. It corresponds to the conditions of production under which the greatest bulk of goods of a particular kind are produced. Socially-necessary labor-time changes as a result of the growth of the productivity of labor.

The productivity of labor is expressed in the amount of products created in a given unit of labor-time. The productivity of labor grows as a result of the improvement or fuller utilization of the instruments of production, the development of science, the increase in the worker's skill, the rationalization of work, and other improvements in the production process. To a greater or less extent it is also dependent on natural conditions. The higher the productivity of labor, the less the time needed for the production of a unit of the given commodity and the lower the value of this commodity.

The intensity of labor must be distinguished from the productivity of labor. The *intensity of labor* is determined by the amount of labor expended in a unit of time. A growth in the intensity of labor means an increase in the expenditure of labor in one and the same interval of time. More intensive labor embodies itself in a greater quantity of products and creates a greater value in a given unit of time, as compared with less intensive labor.

Workers of varying skill take part in the production of commodities. The labor of a worker who has had no special training is *simple* labor. Labor which requires special training is *complex* or *skilled* labor.

Complex labor creates value of greater magnitude than is created by simple labor in the same unit of time. Into the value of a commodity created by complex labor there enters also part of the labor expended on the worker's training, on raising his degree of skill. Complex labor is equivalent to *multiplied* simple labor; one hour of complex labor is equal to several hours of simple labor. The reduction of various forms of complex labor to simple labor takes place spontaneously under commodity production based on private property. The magnitude of the value of a commodity is determined by the socially-necessary amount of simple labor.

Development of the Forms of Value. Nature of Money

The value of a commodity is created by labor in the process of production, but it can manifest itself only through the comparison of one commodity with another in the process of exchange, i.e., through exchange-value.

The simplest form of value is the expression of the value of one commodity in terms of another commodity: e.g., one axe = 20 kilograms of grain. Let us examine this form.

In this case, the value of the axe is expressed in terms of grain. The grain serves as a means of expressing the value of the axe. It is possible to express the value of the axe in the use-value of grain only because labor is expended both in the production of the grain and in that of the axe. Behind the equality of these commodities is concealed the equal expenditure of labor in producing them. A commodity which expresses its value in another commodity (in our example, the axe), has a *relative* form of value. A commodity, the use-value of which serves as the means of expressing the value of another commodity (in our example, the grain), has an *equivalent* form. The grain is the equivalent to (is worth) the other commodity, viz., the axe.

The use-value of one commodity, grain, thus becomes the form in which the value of another commodity, the axe, is expressed.

In the beginning, exchange, which originated already in primitive society, was of a casual nature and took place in the form of direct exchange of one product for another. To this stage in the development of exchange corresponds the *elementary* or *accidental* form of value:

1 axe = 20 kilograms of grain

Under the elementary form of value, the value of an axe can be expressed only in the use-value of a single commodity; in the given example, grain.

With the rise of the first major social division of labor—the separation of pastoral tribes from the general mass of tribes—exchange becomes more regular. Certain tribes, e.g., the cattle-raising ones, begin to produce a surplus of cattle products, which they exchange for products of agriculture or handicraft which they lack. To this level of the development of exchange corresponds the *total* or *expanded* form of value. There now take part in exchange not two but a whole series of commodities:

1 sheep = { 20 kilograms of grain / *or* / 20 meters of cloth / *or* / 2 axes } = 3 grams of gol

... Under the money form of value, the value of every commodity is expressed in the use-value of a single commodity, which has become the universal equivalent.

Money thus arose as a result of a long process of development of exchange and of forms of value. With the rise of money, a polarization took place in the world of commodities; at one pole remained the ordinary commodities, while to the other pole went the commodity which played the role of money. Now all commodities begin to express their value in the money commodity. Consequently, money appears, in contradiction to all other commodities, as the general embodiment of value—the universal equivalent. Money possesses the property of being directly exchangeable for any commodity and so serves as the means of satisfying all the requirements of the commodity owners, whereas all other commodities can satisfy only one or other of their requirements—e.g., bread, clothing, etc.

Consequently, *money* is the commodity which is the universal equivalent of all commodities; it embodies social labor and expresses the production relations between the commodity producers....

The Law of Value– an Economic Law of Commodity Production

In commodity production based on private property, the production of commodities is carried out by separate private commodity producers. A competitive struggle goes on between

these commodity producers. Each one tries to push the others aside and to maintain and extend his own position in the market. Production proceeds without any sort of general plan. Each one produces on his own account, regardless of the others; nobody knows what the demand is for the commodity which he is producing or how many other commodity producers are engaged in producing the same commodity, whether he will be able to find a market for his commodity or whether he will be reimbursed for the labor he has expended. With the development of commodity production the power exercised by the market over the commodity producers becomes ever greater.

This means that in commodity production based on private ownership of the means of production there operates *the economic law of competition and anarchy of production*. This law expresses the spontaneous nature of production and exchange, the struggle between private commodity producers for more advantageous conditions of production and sale of goods.

Under the conditions of anarchy of production, which reign in commodity production based on private property, the law of value appears as the spontaneous regulator of production, acting through market-competition.

The law of value is an economic law of commodity production, by which the exchange of commodities is effected in accordance with the amount of socially-necessary labor expended on their production.

The law of value *regulates the distribution of social labor and means of production among different branches of commodity economy* spontaneously, through the price mechanism. Under the influence of fluctuations in the relationship of supply and demand the prices of commodities continually diverge either above or below their value. Divergences of prices from values are not a result of some defect in the operation of the law of value, but, on the contrary, are the only possible way in which it can become effective. In a society in which production is in the hands of private owners, working blindly, only the spontaneous

fluctuations of prices on the market inform the commodity producers whether they have produced goods in excess of the effective demand by the population or have not produced sufficient to meet it. Only the spontaneous fluctuations of prices around values oblige commodity producers to extend or restrict the production of particular commodities. Under the influence of price-fluctuations, commodity producers rush into those branches which appear most profitable at the given moment because the prices of commodities are higher than their values, and quit those branches where the prices of commodities are lower than their values.

The operation of the law of value conditions the *development of the productive forces* of commodity economy. As we have seen, the magnitude of the value of a commodity is determined by socially-necessary labor-time. The commodity producers who are the first to introduce a higher technique produce their commodities at reduced cost, in comparison with that which is socially-necessary, but sell these commodities at the prices which correspond to the socially-necessary labor. When they sell their commodities, they receive a surplus of money and grow rich. This impels the remaining commodity producers to make technical improvements in their own enterprises. Thus, as a result of the separate actions of separate commodity producers, each striving for his own private advantages, progress takes place in technique and the productive forces of society are developed.

As a result of competition and anarchy of production, the distribution of labor and means of production between the various branches of economy and the development of the forces of production are accomplished in a commodity economy at the price of great waste of social labor, and lead to the contradictions of this economy becoming more and more acute.

In conditions of commodity production based on private property, the operation of the law of value leads to the *rise and development of capitalist relations*. Spontaneous fluctuations of market prices around values, and divergences of individual labor

costs from the socially-necessary labor which determines the magnitude of the value of a commodity, intensify the economic inequality of the commodity producers and the struggle among them. This competitive struggle leads to some commodity producers *being ruined* and transformed into proletarians while others are *enriched* and become capitalists. The operation of the law of value thus brings about a differentiation among the commodity producers.

> "Small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale."[141]

Commodity Fetishism

In conditions of commodity production based on private ownership of the means of production, the social link between people which exists in the production process makes its appearance only through the medium of exchange of commodities. The fate of the commodity producers is found to be closely connected with the fate of the commodities which they create. The prices of commodities continually change, independently of people's will or consciousness, and yet the level of prices is often a matter of life and death for the commodity producers.

Relations between things conceal the social relations between people. Thus, though the value of a commodity expresses the social relationship between commodity producers, it appears as a kind of natural property of the commodity, like, say, its color or its weight.

Marx wrote:

> "It is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things."[142]

In this way, in a commodity economy based on private property, the production-relations between people inevitably appear as relations between things (commodities). In this

transmutation of production-relations between persons into relations between things is inherent also the *commodity fetishism* which is characteristic of commodity production.*

Commodity fetishism is displayed with special clarity in money. In commodity economy, money is a tremendous force, giving power over men. Everything can be bought for money. It comes to seem that this capacity to buy anything and everything is a natural property of gold, whereas in reality it is a result of definite social relations.

Commodity fetishism has deep roots in commodity production, in which the labor of a commodity producer appears directly as private labor, and its social character is revealed only *in the exchange* of commodities. Only when private property in the means of production is abolished does commodity fetishism disappear.

Brief Conclusions

1) The point of departure for the rise of capitalism was the simple commodity production of craftsmen and peasants. Simple commodity production differs from capitalism in that it is based upon the individual labor of the commodity producer. At the same time it belongs fundamentally to the same type as capitalist production, in as much as its foundation is private ownership of the means of production. Under capitalism, when not only the products of labor, but labor-power too becomes a commodity, commodity production acquires a dominant, universal character.

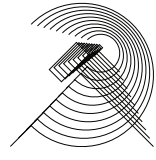
2) A commodity is a product which is made for exchange, it appears from one angle as a use-value and from the other as

* The transmutation of production-relations between persons into relations between things, characteristic of commodity production, is called "commodity fetishism" because of its resemblance to the religious fetishism which is involved in the deification by primitive men of objects which they themselves have made.

a value. The labor which creates a commodity possesses a dual character. Concrete labor is labor expended in a definite form—it creates the use-value of a commodity. Abstract labor is the expenditure of human labor-power in general—it creates the value of a commodity.

3) Value is the social labor of the commodity producers embodied in a commodity. Value is a historical category which belongs only to commodity economy. The magnitude of the value of a commodity is determined by the labor which is socially-necessary for its production. The contradiction in simple commodity economy consists in the fact that the commodity producers' labor, which is directly their own private affair, bears at the same time a social character....

6) In a commodity economy based on private property in the means of production, the law of value is the spontaneous regulator of the distribution of social labor between branches of production. The operation of the law of value causes a differentiation among the petty commodity producers and the development of capitalist relations.



CHAPTER 7

Capital and Surplus-Value.
The Basic Economic Law of Capitalism

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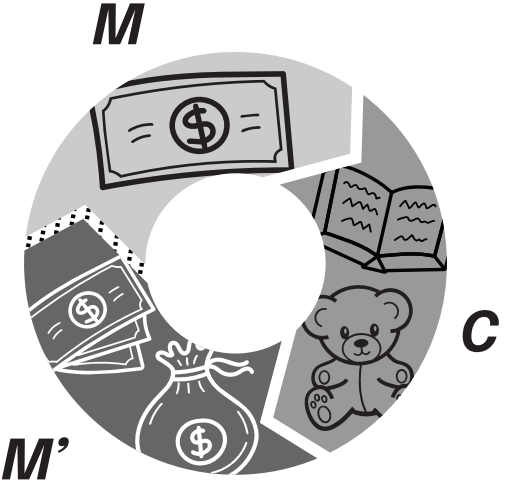
Transformation of Money into Capital

Each unit of capital begins its career in the form of a certain sum of money. Money does not in itself constitute capital. When, for instance, independent petty commodity producers exchange their commodities, money plays its part as a circulation medium, but does not serve as capital. The formula of commodity circulation is: *C* (commodity)-*M* (money)-*C* (commodity), i.e., the selling of one commodity in order to buy another. Money becomes capital when it is used to exploit the labor of others. The general formula of capital is *M*-*C*-*M*, i.e., buying in order to sell so as to make money.

The formula *C*-*M*-*C* means that one use-value is exchanged for another: a commodity producer hands over a commodity which he does not need and receives in exchange another commodity which he needs for use. The purpose of the circulation process is a use-value. In the formula *M*-*C*-*M*, on the contrary, the starting

and finishing points of the movement coincide: at the beginning of the process the capitalist had money and at the end of it he has money. The movement of capital would be pointless if at the end of the process the capitalist had the same amount of money as at the beginning. The whole sense of the capitalist's activity is that as the result of the operation he has more money than he had at the beginning. The purpose of the circulation process is an increase in value. Therefore the general formula of capital in its full form is: *M-C-M'*, with *M'* standing for an increased amount of money.

Capital advanced by a capitalist, i.e., put into circulation by him, returns to its owner with a certain increment.



What is the source of this growth of capital? Bourgeois economists, in their endeavor to hide the true source of money-making by the capitalists, often assert that this increment comes about in the process of commodity circulation. This assertion is unsound. Consider the facts. If commodities and money of equal value, i.e., equivalents, are exchanged, none of the commodity owners can derive from circulation any value greater than that

which is embodied in his own commodity. If sellers succeed in selling their commodities above their value, by 10 percent, say, when they become buyers, they have to pay back this 10 percent to the sellers. Thus, what the commodity owners gain as sellers they lose as buyers. Yet in actual fact increments to capital are secured by the whole class of capitalists. Evidently, the owner of money, in order to become a capitalist, must find on the market a commodity which when consumed creates its own value and something over besides, more than it possesses itself. In other words, the owner of money must find on the market a commodity the use-value of which possesses the property of being a source of value. This commodity is labor-power.

Labor-Power as a Commodity Value and Use-Value of the Commodity Labor-Power

Labor-power, as the aggregate of physical and mental qualities of which a person disposes and which he puts into action whenever he produces material wealth, is a necessary element of production in any form of society. Only under capitalism, however, does labor-power become a *commodity*.

Capitalism is commodity production at the highest stage of its development, when labor-power too becomes a commodity. With the transformation of labor-power into a commodity, commodity production takes on a *universal* character. Capitalist production is based on wage-labor, and the hiring of a worker by a capitalist is nothing else than the buying and selling of the commodity labor-power: the worker sells his labor-power and the capitalist buys it.

When he has hired a worker, a capitalist has the worker's labor-power at his free disposal. The capitalist uses this labor-power in the process of production; and that is where the increment to capital takes place.

Like every other commodity, labor-power is sold at a definite price, which is based upon its value. What is this value?

For the worker to retain his ability to work he must satisfy his need for food, clothing, footwear and housing. Satisfaction of these necessary vital requirements means restoring the vital energy—of muscles, nerves and brains—which the worker has expended and putting him once more in a fit state to work. Furthermore, capital needs a constant flow of labor-power; for this reason, the worker must be able to maintain not only himself but also his family. In this way the reproduction, i.e., the continuous renewal, of labor-power is ensured. Finally, capital needs not only unskilled but also skilled workers, able to handle complex machinery, while the acquisition of skill involves a certain outlay of labor on training. For this reason, the expenses of producing and reproducing labor-power also include a definite minimum of expenditure on the training of the rising generations of the working class.

It follows from the above that the *value of labor-power as a commodity* is equal to the value of the means of existence which are necessary for the maintenance of the worker and his family.

> "The value of labor-power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labor-time necessary for the production, and consequently also the reproduction, of this special article."[143]

In the course of the historical development of society both the level of worker's customary requirements and also the means needed to satisfy these requirements have undergone changes. The level of a worker's customary requirements varies from country to country. The special features of the historical path followed by a given country and the conditions in which the class of wage-workers was formed have much to do with determining the nature of these requirements. Climatic and other natural conditions also have a certain bearing on the workers' requirements in respect of food, clothing and shelter. The value of labor-power includes not only the value of the consumer goods needed to restore the physical strength of the worker but also the cost of satisfying certain cultural requirements of

himself and his family, engendered by the very conditions of society in which the workers live and are brought up (education of children, purchase of newspapers and books, visits to the cinema and the theatre, etc.). The capitalists try, all the time and everywhere, to reduce the material and cultural conditions of the working class to the lowest possible level.

When he begins in business, a capitalist buys everything that he needs for production: buildings, machinery, equipment, raw materials, fuel. Then he engages workers, and the production-process commences in the enterprise which he owns. When the commodity is ready, the capitalist sells it. The value of the finished commodity comprises: first, the value of the means of production expended (the raw material worked up, the fuel used, a certain part of the value of the buildings, machinery and tools); second, the new value created by the workers in the enterprise itself.

What does this new value consist of?

The capitalist mode of production presupposes a comparatively high level of productivity of labor, under which the worker needs only part of the working day to create value equal to the value of his labor-power. Let us suppose that one hour of simple average labor creates value equivalent to one dollar and the daily value of labor-power is equivalent to 6 dollars. In this case the worker, so as to pay for the daily value of his labor-power, would have to work 6 hours. But the capitalist has bought his labor-power for the whole day, and he compels the worker to work not 6 hours but for an entire working day, lasting, say, 12 hours. During these 12 hours the worker creates value equivalent to 12 dollars, even though the value of his labor-power is equivalent only to 6 dollars.

We now see what the specific use-value of the commodity labor-power consists of for the person who buys it—the capitalist. *The use-value of the commodity labor-power* is its capacity to be the source of value, and withal, of more than it possesses itself.

The Production of Surplus-Value– Basic Economic Law of Capitalism

The value of labor-power and the value which is created in the process of using it are, in fact, two quite distinct magnitudes. The difference which exists between these magnitudes is the necessary prerequisite for capitalist exploitation.

In our example, the capitalist, who has spent 6 dollars on hiring workers, obtains value created by their labor which is equivalent to 12 dollars. The capitalist recovers the capital which he originally advanced plus an increment or surplus equivalent to 6 dollars. It is this increment that constitutes surplus-value.

Surplus-value is the value created by the labor of a wage-worker over and above the value of his labor-power and appropriated by the capitalist without payment. Thus, surplus labor is the result of the worker's unpaid labor.

The working day in a capitalist enterprise is divided into two parts: necessary labor-time and surplus labor-time, and the labor of the wage-worker into necessary and surplus labor. During the necessary labor-time the worker reproduces the value of his labor-power, and during the surplus labor-time he creates surplus-value.

A worker's labor, under capitalism, is a process of use by the capitalist of the commodity labor-power, or a process of extraction of surplus-value from the worker by the capitalist. The labor-process is characterized, under capitalism, by two fundamental peculiarities. First, the worker works under the control of the capitalist to whom the worker's labor belongs. Second, not only does the worker's labor belong to the capitalist but also the product of this labor. These peculiarities of the labor-process transform the wage-worker's labor into a heavy and hateful burden.

The immediate aim of capitalist production is the production of surplus-value. In accordance with this, productive labor means under capitalism only such labor as creates surplus-value. If the

worker does not create surplus-value, his work is unproductive work, useless for capital.

In contrast to the previous forms of exploitation—slave-owning and feudal—capitalist exploitation is masked. When the wage-worker sells his labor-power to the capitalist, this transaction appears at first sight to be an ordinary transaction between commodity owners, the usual exchange of a commodity against money, carried out in accord with the law of value. The transaction of buying and selling labor-power, however, is merely the outward form, behind which is hidden the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist, the appropriation by the capitalist, without any equivalent, of the worker's unpaid labor.

In order to clarify the essential nature of capitalist exploitation we will suppose that the capitalist, when he engages the worker, pays him the full value of his labor-power, determined by the law of value. It will be shown later when we examine wages that, unlike the prices of other commodities, the price of labor-power, as a rule, diverges *below* its value. This circumstance still further increases the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class.

Capitalism enables the wage-worker to work, and consequently to live, only insofar as for a certain amount of his time he works gratis for the capitalist. If he leaves one capitalist enterprise, the most favorable thing that can happen to the worker will be to find himself in another capitalist enterprise, where he will be subjected to the same exploitation. When he exposed the system of wage-labor as a system of wage-slavery, Marx pointed out that whereas the Roman slave was bound by chains, the wage-worker was bound by invisible threads to his owner. This owner is the capitalist class as a whole.

Surplus-value, created by the unpaid labor of wage-workers, constitutes the common source of the unearned incomes of the various groups of the bourgeois class: industrialists, traders and bankers, and also the class of landowners.

Production of surplus-value is *the basic economic law of capitalism*. Analyzing capitalism, Marx wrote: "Production of surplus-value is the absolute law of this mode of production."[144]

The essential features of this law consist in the production of surplus-value on an ever-increasing scale and the appropriation of it by the capitalists on the basis of bourgeois ownership of the means of production by means of increasing exploitation of wage-labor and the extension of production.

Capital did not invent surplus labor. Wherever society consists of exploiters and exploited, the ruling class pumps surplus labor out of the exploited classes. But unlike the slave-owner and the feudalist, who in conditions where natural economy prevailed, used the greater part of the product of the surplus labor of the slaves and serf-peasants for the direct satisfaction of their needs and whims, the capitalist transforms the whole of what his wage-workers produce into money. Part of this money the capitalist spends on buying consumer goods and luxury articles, the rest he invests again, as additional capital, to bring him in further surplus-value. This is why capital displays, in Marx's words, truly wolf-like greed for surplus labor.

The pursuit of surplus-value is the principal driving-force of the development of the productive forces under capitalism. None of the previous forms of society based on exploitation, neither slavery nor feudalism, possessed such a force, hastening forward the growth of technique.

Lenin called the doctrine of surplus-value the corner-stone of Marx's economic theory. By disclosing in his doctrine of surplus-value the essence of capitalist exploitation, Marx dealt a mortal blow to bourgeois political economy and its talk about the harmony of interests under capitalism, and gave the working class a spiritual weapon for overthrowing capitalism....

CHAPTER 8

Wages

The Price of Labor-Power. Essential Nature of Wages

... "Wages are not what they *appear* to be, namely the *value*, or *price*, *of labor*, but only a masked form for the *value*, or *price*, *of labor-power*."[145]

Wages are the monetary expression of the value of labor-power, its price, outwardly appearing as the price of labor.

Under slavery no buying and selling of labor-power takes place between slave-owner and slave. The slave is the property of the slave-owner. It therefore seems as though the whole of the slave's labor is given for nothing, that even that part of his labor which replaces what has been spent on his upkeep is unpaid labor, labor for the slave-owner. In feudal society the necessary labor of the peasant on his own holding and his surplus labor on the landlord's demesne are distinctly separated in time and space. Under the capitalist system even the unpaid labor of the wage-worker appears to be paid for.

Wages conceal all traces of the division of the working day into necessary and surplus labor-time, into paid and unpaid labor, and so cover up the relation of capitalist exploitation....

Nominal and Real Wages

In the early stage of capitalism's development, payment of wages to the workers in kind was widespread: the worker received shelter, some meagre food and a little money.

Wages in kind survive to some extent even into the machine period of capitalism. They existed, for instance in the extractive and textile industries of pre-revolutionary Russia. Wages in kind are widespread in capitalist agriculture where the labor of poor peasants is used, in certain branches of industry in the capitalist countries, and in the colonial and dependent countries. The forms in which the worker is paid in kind vary. The capitalists place the workers in a position where they are forced to take food on credit from the factory shop, to lease a dwelling near the mine or on the plantation on oppressive terms fixed by their employer, etc. Under methods of wage-payment in kind the capitalist exploits the wage-worker not only as a seller of labor-power but also as a consumer.

Money wages are characteristic of the capitalist mode of production in its developed form.

Nominal wages must be distinguished from real wages.

Nominal wages are wages expressed in money; the sum of money which the worker receives from the sale of his labor-power to the capitalist.

Nominal wages do not in themselves give any idea of the actual level of payment received by the worker. For example, nominal wages may remain unchanged, but if at the same time taxes and the prices of consumer goods rise, the worker's actual wages fall. Nominal wages may even increase, but if the cost of living rises to a greater extent in the same period of time, then in fact wages have fallen.

Real wages are wages expressed in terms of the worker's means of subsistence; they show how many and what kinds of consumer goods and services a worker can buy with his money wages. To determine a worker's real wage, one must start with the size of his nominal wages, the prices of goods, the price of rents, the burden of taxes borne by the workers, the circumstances that some days he may receive no wages owing to short-time working, and the number of unemployed and semi-unemployed who are supported by the working class. One must also take into account the length the working day and the degree of intensity of labor.

In determining the average level of wages, bourgeois statistics distort reality: they include in wages the incomes of the upper administrative groups of the industrial and financial bureaucracy (managers of enterprises, bank directors, etc.); include only the wages of skilled workers in the category of wages while excluding from it the numerous stratum of poorly-paid, unskilled workers and the agricultural proletariat; ignore the huge army of unemployed and semi-unemployed, the rise in the prices of mass consumer goods and in taxation; and resort to other methods of falsification so as to embellish the situation of the working class under capitalism.

Even falsified bourgeois statistics cannot, however, hide the fact that wages under capitalism, owing to their low level, the raising of the cost of living and the growth of unemployment fail to guarantee a living wage to the majority of the workers.

In 1938 some bourgeois economists in the U.S.A. worked out, using extremely modest standards, a living wage for a worker's family consisting of four persons: 2,177 dollars a year. Yet in 1938 the average wage per head of an industrial worker in the U.S.A. amounted to 1,176 dollars, i.e., considerably less than half of his living wage; if the unemployed were brought into the calculation, the figure came to 740 dollars, i.e., only a third of this subsistence minimum. In 1937 a quite humble living wage for an average worker's family in Britain was defined by some

bourgeois economists at 55s a week. Official figures showed that 80 percent of the workers in the coal industry, 75 percent of the workers in the extractive industries other than coal mining, and 57 percent of municipal workers in Britain were being paid less than this subsistence minimum.

Decline of Real Wages Under Capitalism

On the basis of his analysis of the capitalist mode of production, Marx established the following fundamental law relating to wages. "The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise but to sink the average standard of wages."[146]

Wages as the price of labor-power, like the price of any other commodity, are determined by the law of value. The prices of commodities vary in capitalist economy both above and below their value, under the influence of supply and demand. But unlike the prices of other commodities the price of labor-power, as a rule, *tends to fall below* its value.

This tendency of wages to fall below the value of labor-power is due above all to the existence of *unemployment*. The capitalist tries to buy labor-power as cheap as he can. When there is unemployment the supply of labor-power exceeds the demand for it. The commodity labor-power differs from others in that the proletarian cannot put off selling it. So as not to die of hunger, he is compelled to sell his labor-power on whatever terms the capitalist offers him. In periods of complete, or partial unemployment the worker is either entirely without wages or else their level falls sharply. When there is unemployment, this intensifies competition among the workers. Taking advantage of this, the capitalist pays the worker wages which are less than the value of his labor-power. In this way the wretched situation of the unemployed; who form part of the working class, has an effect on the material position of the workers in employment, reducing the level of their wages.

Furthermore, the use of machinery provides the capitalist with extensive opportunities of substituting *female and child labor* for men's labor. The value of labor-power is determined by the value of the means of subsistence which are needed by a worker and his family. When, therefore, the worker's wife and children are drawn into production, the worker's wages fall and the entire family now receives approximately the same amount as previously was received by the head of the family only. This by itself means that the working class as a whole is being exploited still more intensely. In capitalist countries women workers doing the same work as men are paid considerably less wages....

The Struggle of the Working Class to Raise Wages

In each country a certain level of wages is established on the basis of the law of the value of labor-power, as a result of a fierce class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The extent to which wages can diverge from the value of labor-power has its limits.

The *minimum* limit of wages under capitalism is fixed by purely *physical* conditions: the worker must have that quantity of means of subsistence which he needs absolutely in order to live and reproduce his labor-power. "If the price of labor-power falls to this minimum, it falls below its value, since under such circumstances it can be maintained and developed only in a crippled state."[147] When wages fall below this limit, there occurs an accelerated process of direct physical destruction of labor-power and dying-off of the working population. This finds expression in a shortening of the average expectation of life, a fall in the birth rate and an increase in the mortality rate among the working population, both in the developed countries and also and especially, in the colonial countries.

The *maximum* limit of wages under capitalism is the value of labor-power. The degree to which the average level of wages

approximates to this limit is determined by the relation of class forces as between proletariat and bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie endeavors, in its striving for greater profits, to reduce wages below the physical minimum limit. The working class fights against cuts in wages and for increased wages, for the establishment of a guaranteed minimum wage, for the introduction of social insurance, and for a shorter working day. In this struggle the working class is opposed by the capitalist class as a whole and by the bourgeois State.

The stubborn struggle waged by the working class to raise wages had its beginning along with the rise of industrial capitalism. It developed first in Britain, and later spread to the other capitalist countries and to the colonies.

As the proletariat takes shape as a class the workers come together in *trade unions* for the purpose of successfully conducting their economic struggle. The result of this is that the employer finds himself opposed no longer by individual proletarians but by an entire organization. With the development of the class struggle, besides local and national trade unions there came into being international associations of trade Unions. The trade unions provide a *school of class struggle* for the broad masses of the workers.

On their part, the capitalists come together in employers' associations. They bribe venal and reactionary trade union officials, organize strike-breaking, split the workers' organizations, and use the police, troops, courts and prisons to suppress the labor movement.

One of the effective methods of struggle used by the workers under capitalism to secure increased wages, shorter working hours and improved conditions of work is the *strike*. As class contradictions become more acute and the working-class movement becomes better organized in the capitalist and colonial countries, many millions of workers are drawn into strike struggles. When workers struggling against capital show

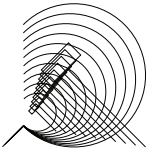
determination and stubbornness, economic strikes force the capitalists to accept the strikers' terms.

It is only as a result of the unremitting struggle of the working class for its vital interests that the bourgeois States are compelled to promulgate laws on minimum wages, on reduction of working hours and on restriction of child labor.

The economic struggle of the proletariat is of great importance: as a rule, trade unions under steadfast class leadership put up a successful resistance to the employers. The struggle of the working class is a factor which to a certain extent restricts the fall in wages. But the economic struggle of the working class cannot abolish the system of capitalist enslavement of the working people and deliver the workers from exploitation and want.

While recognizing the great importance of the economic struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie, Marxism-Leninism teaches that this struggle is directed merely against the consequences of capitalism and not against the root cause of the oppression and poverty of the proletariat. This root cause is the capitalist mode of production itself.

Only through revolutionary political struggle can the working class abolish the system of wage slavery, the source of its economic and political oppression....



CHAPTER 10

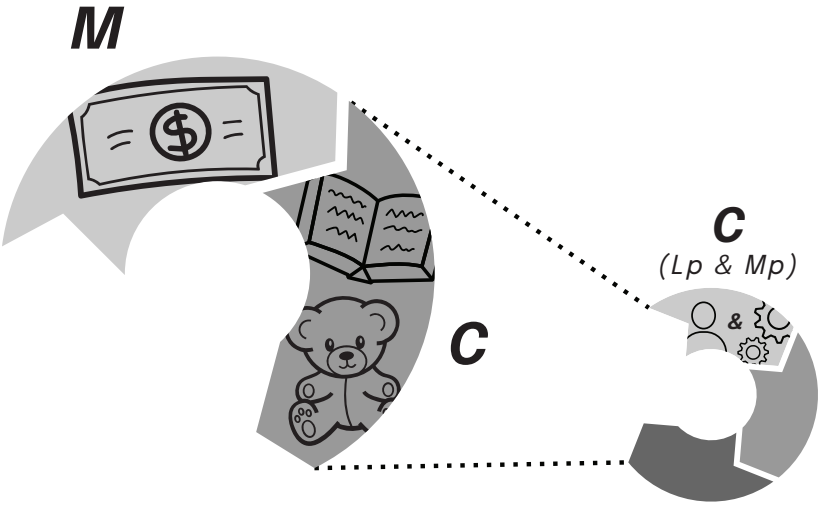
Rotation of Capital.
Three Forms of Industrial Capital

Rotation of Capital. Three Forms of Industrial Capital

One of the conditions of existence of the capitalist mode of production is developed commodity circulation, i.e., exchange of commodities through the medium of money. Capitalist production is inseparably connected with circulation.

Every individual capital begins its career as a certain sum of money—it appears as *money capital*. The capitalist uses money to buy commodities of certain kinds: 1) means of production, 2) labor-power. This act of circulation can be expressed like this [on the next page]:

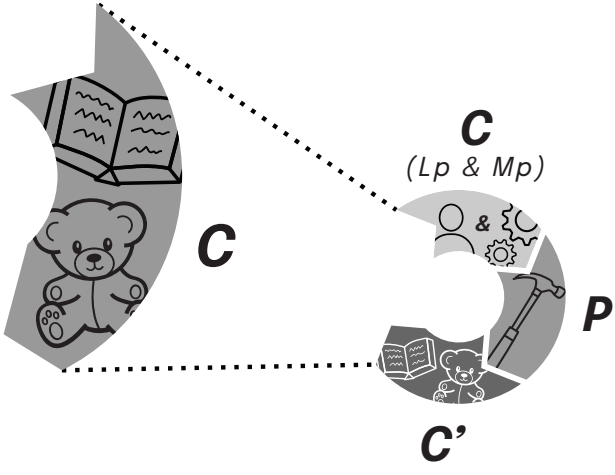
In this diagram *M* stands for money, *C* for the commodity, *Lp* for labor-power, and *Mp* for means of production. As a result of this change of form which his capital has undergone, its owner has at his disposal everything he needs for production. Whereas previously he owned capital in the form of money, he now owns capital to the same amount but in the form of *productive capital*.



So the *first phase* in the movement of capital is the transformation of money capital into productive capital.

Following this begins the process of production, in which there takes place the *productive consumption* of the commodities which the capitalist has bought. It is expressed in the fact of the workers expending their labor, the raw material being worked up, fuel being burnt and machinery wearing out. Capital changes its form once again: as a result of the production-process the capital invested appears embodied in a certain mass of commodities, it assumes the form of *commodity capital*. However, in the first: place, these are not the same commodities which the capitalist bought when he started up in business, and secondly, the value of this mass of commodities is greater than the original value of his capital, for in it is contained the surplus-value produced by the workers.

This stage in the movement of capital can be shown like this:



Here the letter *P* stands for production, representing that the process of circulation has been interrupted and the process of production is taking place, while *C'* stands for capital in the form of commodities, the value of which has grown as a result of the workers surplus labor.

Thus the *second phase* in the movement of capital consists of the transformation of productive capital into commodity capital.

Capital does not stop short with this movement. The commodities which have been produced have to be realized. In exchange for the commodities which he sells the capitalist receives a certain sum of money.

This act of circulation may be depicted like this [on the next page]:

Capital changes its shape a third time: it once more assumes the form of money capital. At the end of this process its owner has a larger sum of money than he had at the beginning. The aim of capitalist production, which is to extract surplus-value, has been attained.

Thus the *third stage* in the movement of capital consists in the transformation of commodity capital into money capital.



Having received money for the commodities he has sold, the capitalist spends it once again on buying the means of production and labor-power needed for further production, and the entire process starts anew.

These are the three phases through which capital passes successively in the course of its movement. In each of these phases, capital fulfills a corresponding function. The transformation of money capital into the elements of productive capital ensures the union of the means of production which belong to the capitalists with the labor-power of the wage-workers: unless such a union is effected the process of production cannot take place. The function of productive capital is to create, with the labor of the wage-workers, masses of commodities, new value, and consequently, surplus-value. The function of commodity capital is, through the sale of the mass of commodities which has been produced, first, to return to the capitalist in money form the capital which he invested in production and, second, to realize in money form the surplus-value created in the process of production.

Industrial capital passes through these three phases in the course of its movement. By industrial capital we mean, in this instance, all capital which is used for the production of

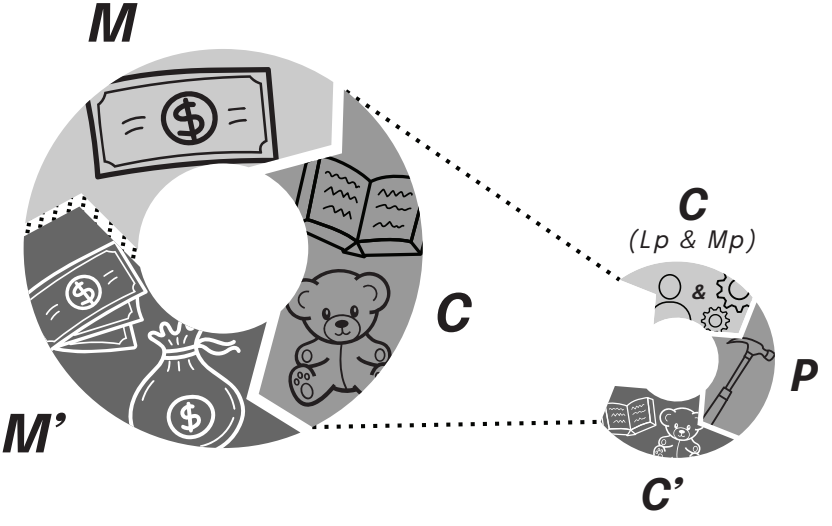
commodities, regardless of whether industry or agriculture is meant.

> "Industrial capital is the only mode of existence of capital in which not only the appropriation of surplus-value, or surplus product, but simultaneously its creation is a function of capital. Therefore with it the capitalist character of production is a necessity. Its existence implies the class antagonism between capitalists and wage-laborers."[148]

Consequently, all industrial capital performs a rotatory movement.

By the *rotation of capital* is meant the successive transformation of capital from one form into another, its movement, which includes three phases. Of these phases, the first and third take place in the sphere of circulation, while the second belongs to that of production. Without circulation, that is, without transformation of commodities into money and then of money back into commodities, capitalist reproduction, i.e., the constant renewal of the production-process, would be unthinkable.

The rotation of capital as a whole can be shown in the following form:



All three stages of the rotation of capital are very closely interconnected and mutually dependent. The rotation of capital proceeds normally only so long as its various phases flow uninterruptedly one into the other.

If capital stops short in its first phase, this means it drops into a barren existence as money capital. If the hold-up occurs in the second phase, this means that the means of production remain lifeless and labor-power remains unemployed. If capital stops short in its last phase, unsold commodities accumulate in the warehouses and clog the channels of circulation.

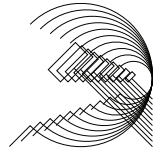
It is the second phase, when it is in the form of productive capital, that is of decisive importance in the rotation of industrial capital; in this phase takes place the production of commodities, value and surplus-value. In the other two phases value and surplus-value are not created; in them only a change in the form of capital takes place.

To the three phases of the rotation of capital correspond *three forms of industrial capital*: 1) money capital, 2) productive capital and 3) commodity capital.

Every capital exists simultaneously in all of these forms: at the same time as one part of it appears as money capital being transformed into productive capital, another part appears as productive capital being transformed into commodity capital, and a third part appears as commodity capital being transformed into money capital. Each part of it in turn assumes and discards, one after another, all three of these forms. This is true not only of each capital taken separately but also of all capitals taken together or, in other words, of the aggregate social capital. Therefore, Marx declares, capital can be understood only as a movement and not as a thing lying at rest.

This includes the possibility of *distinct existence* of the three forms of capital. Later on it will be shown how merchant capital and loan capital are separated off from capital employed in production. It is this distinction that provides the basis for the existence of the different groups of the bourgeoisie—

manufacturers, merchants, bankers—who share out the surplus-value among themselves....



CHAPTER 17

Economic Crises

...

Crises and the Sharpening of the Contradictions of Capitalism

... Economic crises vividly reveal the *predatory* character of capitalism. During every crisis, while millions of people are in extreme want, doomed to poverty and hunger, vast quantities of commodities are destroyed because they cannot find a market—wheat, potatoes, milk, cattle, cotton. Whole factories, shipyards, blast-furnaces are closed down or sold for scrap, grain crops and technical crops are destroyed and plantations of fruit trees are cut down.

During three years of the 1929-33 crisis 92 blast-furnaces were pulled down in the U.S.A., 72 in Britain, 28 in Germany and 10 in France. The tonnage of sea-going vessels destroyed in those years amounted to more than 6.5 million registered tons.

The destructive effect of agrarian crises is clear from the following figures. In the U.S.A. between 1926 and 1937 more

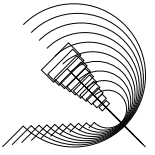
than two million farms were compulsorily sold for debt. The revenue from agriculture shrank from 6.8 billion dollars in 1929 to 2.4 billion dollars in 1932. During the same period sales of agricultural machinery and equipment were reduced from 458 million dollars a year to 65 million (one-seventh), and the demand for artificial fertilizers fell by nearly a half. The U.S. Government took all kinds of steps to reduce agricultural production. In 1933 10.4 million acres of cotton crop were destroyed by plowing over, 6.4 million pigs were bought and destroyed by the State, and wheat was burned in the fire-boxes of locomotives. In Brazil about 22 million sacks of coffee were destroyed, and in Denmark 117 thousand head of cattle.

Crises cause incalculable sufferings to the working class, the bulk of the peasantry and the working people as a whole. They bring about *mass unemployment,* which condemns hundreds of thousands and millions of people to enforced idleness, poverty and hunger. The capitalists make use of unemployment to intensify in every way the exploitation of the working class, and sharply to reduce the standard of living of all the working people.

The number of workers employed in manufacturing industry in the U.S.A. fell by 11.8 percent at the time of the 1907 crisis. During the 1929-33 crisis the number of workers in America's manufacturing industry decreased by 38.8 percent, and the total wages bill fell by 57.7 percent. According to American statisticians, 43 million man-years were lost between 1929 and 1938 as a result of unemployment.

Crises enormously increase the insecurity of the working people's lives, their fear of the morrow. Through spending years out of work, workers lose their skill, and after the crisis has ended many of them cannot return to industry any more. The housing conditions of the working people are greatly worsened; the number of homeless people wandering about the country in search of work increases. During crises the number of suicides

caused by desperation rises markedly, and destitution and crime increase....



CHAPTER 18

Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism. The Basic Economic Law of Monopoly Capitalism

The Transition to Imperialism

Pre-monopoly capitalism, with free competition predominating, attained the apex of its development in the 1860's and 1870's. During the last third of the nineteenth century there took place the transition from pre-monopoly to monopoly capitalism. Monopoly capitalism finally took shape towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Monopoly capitalism, or *imperialism,* is the highest and last stage of capitalism, with the replacement of free competition by the dominance of monopolies as its fundamental distinguishing feature.

The transition from pre-monopoly capitalism to monopoly capitalism (imperialism) was prepared by the entire process of development of the productive forces and relations of production in bourgeois society....

As the transition to imperialism took place the contradictions between the productive forces and the production relations of

capitalism came to assume ever more acute forms. The subjection of production to the capitalists' hunt for the highest possible profit created very many barriers to the development of the productive forces. Economic crises of overproduction began to recur more frequently, their destructive force increased, and the army of unemployed became more numerous. Alongside the growth of poverty and misery among the working masses of town and country there took place an unprecedented increase in the wealth concentrated in the hands of a small group of exploiters. The sharpening of the irreconcilable class contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat led to intensification of the economic and political struggle of the working class.

During the period of transition to imperialism the largest capitalist Powers of Europe and America made themselves masters of huge colonial possessions by force and fraud. The ruling circles of the capitalistically developed countries transformed the majority of the inhabitants of the globe into colonial slaves who hated their oppressors and struggled against them. Colonial conquests enormously extended the field for capitalist exploitation; at the same time the degree of exploitation of the working masses steadily grew. The extreme sharpening of the contradictions of capitalism found expression in devastating imperialist wars, which carried off a host of human lives and destroyed a vast quantity of material wealth....

In Lenin's classic definition, the fundamental economic features of imperialism are the following:

> "1. The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life;
>
> 2. The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a financial oligarchy;
>
> 3. The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance;
>
> 4. The formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves; and,

5. The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed."[149] ...

The Basic Economic Law of Monopoly Capitalism

... The main features and requirements of the basic economic law of monopoly capitalism are the following:

> "The securing of the maximum capitalist profit through the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country, through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries, and, lastly, through wars and militarization of the national economy, which are utilized for the obtaining of the highest profits."[150]

Thus, the basic economic law of capitalism, the law of surplus-value, is further developed and made concrete in the period of imperialism. In pre-monopoly capitalism free competition led to a leveling of the rate of profit of the individual capitalists, and the law of the average rate of profit prevailed. In the conditions of imperialism the monopolies secure for themselves high, monopolistic, maximum profits. It is precisely maximum profit that furnishes the driving force of monopoly capitalism. Outflow of capital from one branch to others also occurs in the monopoly stage of capitalism and the tendency to equalization of profits exists. This tendency clashes, however, with the operation of the basic economic law of monopoly capitalism, the law of maximum capitalist profit. In the epoch of imperialism commodities produced by monopolized branches of production are sold for the most part at monopoly prices, exceeding the price of production and ensuring high monopoly profits, but commodities produced by non-monopolized branches are often sold at prices below the price of production, so that the entrepreneurs concerned do not receive even the average profit.

NOTES



NOTES

The Principles of Communism

1. Engels' work *The Principles of Communism* reflects the next stage in the elaboration of the program of the Communist League following the "Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith." This new version of the program was worked out by Engels on the instructions of the Paris circle authority of the Communist League. The decision was adopted after Engels' sharp criticism at the committee meeting, on October 22, 1847, of the draft program drawn up by the "true socialist" M. Hess, which was then rejected.

Comparison of the text of *The Principles of Communism* with that of the "Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith" proves that this document written by Engels at the end of October 1847 is a revised version of the Draft discussed at the First Congress of the Communist League. The first six points of the Draft were completely revised. Engels had felt compelled at that time to make some concessions in them to the as yet immature views of the League of the Just leaders. Some of these points were omitted in *Principles*, others substantially changed and put in a different order. In the rest the arrangement of both documents coincides, though there are several new questions in *Principles*: 5, 6, 10-14, 19, 20 and 24-26. *The Principles of Communism* constituted the immediate basis for the preliminary version of *The Communist Manifesto*. In his letter of November 23-24, 1847 to Marx Engels wrote about the advisability of drafting the program in the form of a communist manifesto, rejecting the old form of a catechism. In writing the *Manifesto* the founders of Marxism used some propositions formulated in *The Principles of Communism*.

The Principles of Communism were published for the first time in English in *The Plebs-Magazine*, London, in July 1914-January 1915; a separate edition was put out in Chicago in 1925 by Daily Worker Publishing, in subsequent years they were published several times together with *The Communist Manifesto*.

2. By "civilized countries" Engels is referring to "that stage of development of society at which division of labor, the resulting exchange between individuals, and commodity production, which combines the two, reach their full development and revolutionize the whole of hitherto existing society"; the early stages of capitalist society. [Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," in *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 26, p. 272.]

3. The minimum required for the maintenance of life mentioned here is not the absolute minimum to keep a worker alive. The minimum cited here includes also such things that might be considered luxuries in developing countries but are understood necessities in developed countries. Thus, the value of labor-power varies in different countries.

4. Many readers initially interpret this as Engels saying "being a slave is preferable to being a proletarian." This is not the case, as Engels makes clear throughout the rest of point 7.

5. Bourgeois democracy came into existence with limited suffrage—voting was a privilege of the propertied classes. Since, bourgeois democracy has undergone a gradual change in appearance. With education, press, and religion under the bourgeoisie's absolute control, capitalism has "entrusted" the masses with the right to vote. Policies that inconvenience the bourgeoisie are often ignored through means of corruption. A system of checks and balances is in place as protection against any legal, yet undesirable, sudden political change. To crush any serious political revolt there always remains the police and military power of the state. Thus, it is not only the limitation of the suffrage which assures unrestricted and unqualified political control by the bourgeoisie.

However, at the time when Engels wrote this text the question of expanding suffrage was a revolutionary demand of large masses in France and England. It was for this reason that Engels emphasized the importance of limited suffrage for bourgeois control of the state.

6. Private property is often mistaken for personal property. For clarity let us define these two terms: *Private property*—property with the intent of generating capital; under capitalism this includes the means of production, i.e., a toothbrush factory. *Personal property*—property without the intent of generating capital, i.e., for personal use; this includes your personal items, e.g., your clothes, books, and toothbrush.

7. The following measures are not an exhaustive list or a check-list to be completed in order; the progression from Capitalism to Communism will have unique features in each time and country.

This list is also contains some milder demands than those found later in *The Communist Manifesto*. In *Principles*, it is suggested: limitation of inheritance, expropriation of land gradually and for compensation, and construction of great palaces for citizens. In the *Manifesto*: abolition of inheritance, immediate and complete expropriation of land without compensation, and the construction of great palaces not mentioned at all.

8. Engels' analysis here is limited by his place in history—the period of pre-monopoly capitalism. Since the writing of this text, the development of monopoly capitalism onto the global stage has caused an evolution in Marxist analysis, Marxism-Leninism, which has shown that proletarian revolution is most ripe in the weakest links of the global capitalist system, not the most developed capitalist countries.

9. At the time Engels wrote this text, there existed practically no proletarian parties anywhere in the world. The political action of the tiny groups of Communists had to connect with the activities of existing progressive political groups. Although these groups were more or less dominated by bourgeois ideology—even the most proletarian of them, the Chartist movement in England—these groups were revolutionary. Engels made it clear, the Communists carry on independent politics from these movements and accompany them only so long as their paths lay parallel.

10. *The Chartists* were the participants in the political movement of the British workers which lasted from the 1830s to the middle 1850s and had as its slogan the adoption of a People's Charter, demanding universal franchise and a series of conditions guaranteeing voting rights for all workers.

11. A reference to the National Reform Association, founded in 1844 by George H. Evans, which had for its motto, "Vote Yourself a Farm."

The Foundations of Leninism

12. J. V. Stalin's lectures, *The Foundations of Leninism*, were published in *Pravda* in April and May 1924. In May 1924, Stalin's pamphlet *On Lenin and Leninism* appeared, containing his reminiscences on *Lenin* and the lectures *The Foundations of Leninism*.

13. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Red Prints Publishing, 2022), p. 61.

14. V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (Red Prints Publishing, 2023), p. 46.

15. This refers to the statement by Karl Marx in his letter to Friedrich Engels of April 16, 1856 [*Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 40, pp. 37-41].

16. This refers to Friedrich Engels, "The Bakuninists at Work," in *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 23, pp. 581-610).

17. V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder," in *Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub Curriculum: Stage 4*, 3rd ed. (Red Prints Publishing, 2026), p. 62.

18. V. I. Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* (Red Prints Publishing, 2024), pp. 203-204.

19. V. I. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (Red Prints Publishing, 2024), p. 75.

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