

MLRH CURRICULUM

STAGE 4

MARXIST-LENINIST READING HUB CURRICULUM: STAGE 4

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Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub

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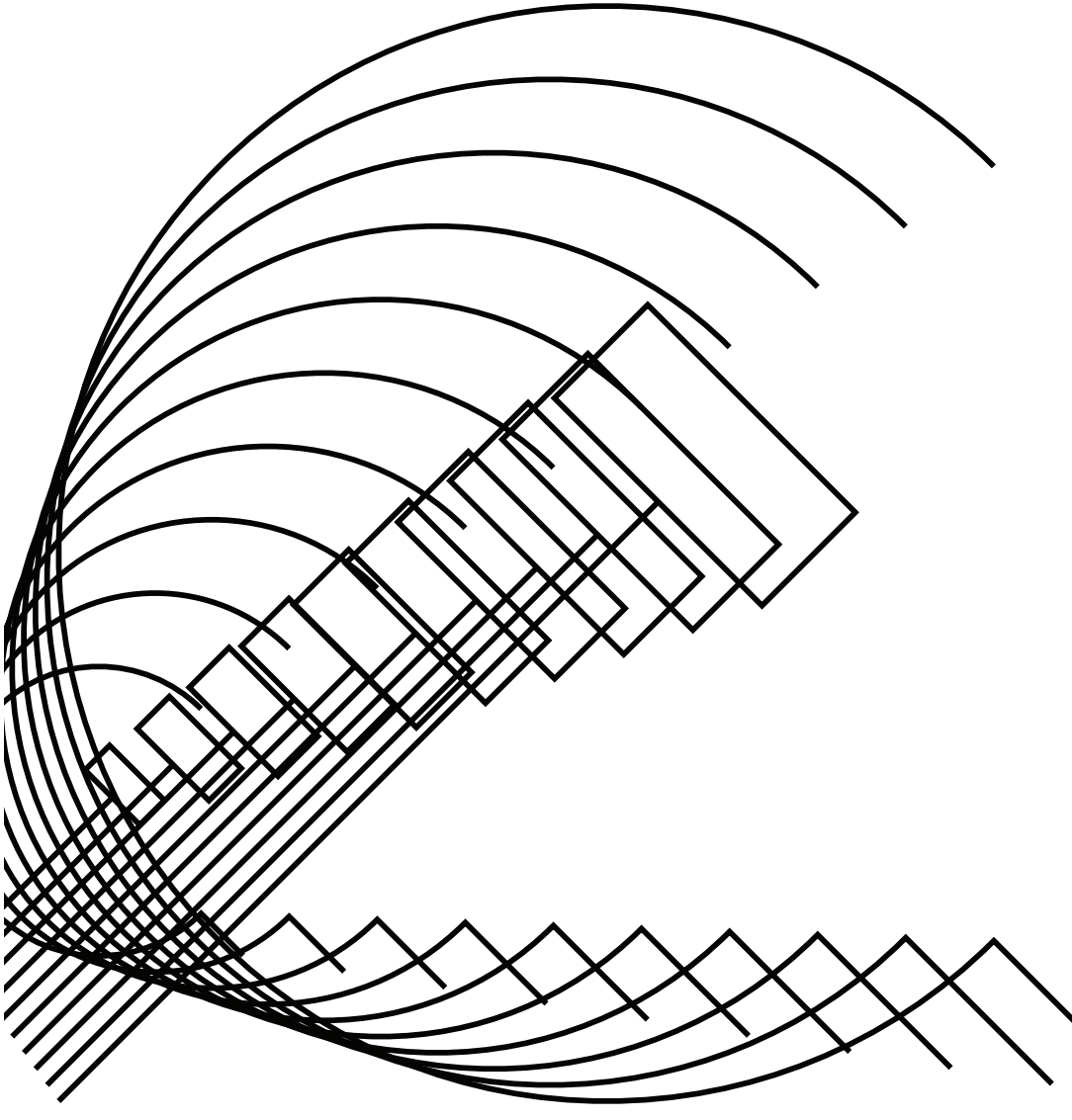
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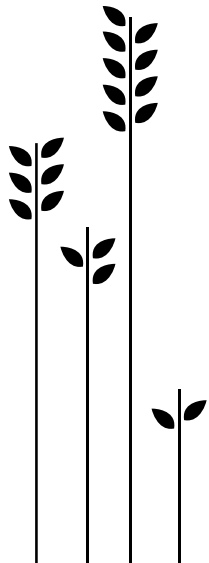
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GET ORGANIZED! & SERVE THE PEOPLE





GET ORGANIZED!

ON BEHALF OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF the Communist Party I would like to say a few words at this reception it is giving for the labor heroes and heroines and other model workers in production elected from the villages, the factories, the armed forces, the government and other organizations and the schools in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. What I want to say can be summed up in the words, "Get organized!" This year the peasant masses and the people in the army, the government and other organizations, the schools and the factories of the Border Region have been conducting a production campaign in accordance with the resolutions of the meeting of senior cadres convened last winter by the Northwest Bureau of the Central Committee. Great achievements and advances have been scored in every field of production this year and the Border Region has taken on a new look. Facts have fully borne out the correctness of the policy adopted by the conference of senior cadres. The gist of this policy is to organize the masses, to mobilize and organize into a great army of labor all the available forces

without exception—the people, the army, the government and other organizations and the schools—all men and women, young and old, who can contribute their labor power on a part-time or full-time basis. We have an army for fighting as well as an army for labor. For fighting we have the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies; but even they do a dual job, warfare and production. With these two kinds of armies, and with a fighting army skilled in these two tasks and in mass work, we can overcome our difficulties and defeat Japanese imperialism. If the achievements of our production campaign in the Border Region in recent years were not great or remarkable enough to prove this conclusively, our achievements this year have really done so, as we have all seen with our own eyes.

In all the armed units of the Border Region that have been allotted land this year, the soldiers have on the average cultivated eighteen *mou* per person; and they can produce or make practically everything—food (vegetables, meat and cooking oil), clothing (cotton-padded clothes, woolen knitwear and footwear), shelter (cave-dwellings, houses and meeting halls), articles of daily use (tables, chairs, benches and stationery), and fuel (firewood, charcoal and coal). By using our own hands we have attained the objective of "ample food and clothing". Every soldier needs to spend only three months of the year in production and can devote the remaining nine months to training and fighting. Our troops depend for their pay neither on the Kuomintang government, nor on the Border Region Government, nor on the people, but can fully provide for themselves. What a vitally important innovation for our cause of national liberation! During the last six-and-a-half years of the War of Resistance, the anti-Japanese base areas have been subjected to the enemy's policy of "burn all, kill all, loot all", the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region has been tightly blockaded by the Kuomintang and we were reduced to the direst straits financially and economically; if our troops had been able to do nothing except fight, we

would never have solved our problems. Now our troops in the Border Region have learned to produce, and so have some of the troops at the front, while others are learning. If every man in our heroic and combat-worthy Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies becomes able not only to fight and do mass work but also to produce, we need fear no difficulty and shall be "invincible under heaven,"[1] to use the words of Mencius. Our organizations and schools have also taken a big step forward this year. Only a small part of their expenditure has come from the government, most of it being covered by their own production; they have grown 100 percent of the vegetables they consume as compared with 50 percent last year, considerably increased their consumption of meat by raising pigs and sheep, and established many workshops for making simple necessities. As the army, the organizations and the schools now meet their own material needs fully or for the most part, less is taken in taxation from the people, who can therefore enjoy more of the fruits of their labor. As soldiers and civilians are alike increasing production, all have ample food and clothing and are happy. In our factories, too, production has been stepped up, secret agents have been combed out and productivity has risen greatly. Throughout the Border Region, labor heroes have come forward in great numbers in agriculture and industry, in the organizations and the schools, and also in the army; we can say that production in the Border Region has been set on the right path. All this comes from organizing the strength of the masses.

To organize the strength of the masses is one policy. Is there a contrary policy? Yes, there is. It is one that lacks the mass viewpoint, fails to rely on the masses or organize them, and gives exclusive attention to organizing the small number of people working in the financial, supply or trading organizations, while paying no attention to organizing the masses in the villages, the army, the government and other organizations, the schools and factories; it treats economic

work not as a broad movement or as an extensive front, but only as an expedient for meeting financial deficits. That is the other policy, the wrong policy. Such a policy formerly existed in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, but after the correct guidance given over these years, and especially after the senior cadres' conference last year and the mass movement this year, the number of people who still think this way is probably small. In the base areas in northern and central China, where fighting is intense and the leading bodies have not given it enough attention, the production campaign of the masses has not yet become widespread. However, since the Central Committee's directive of October 1 this year,[2] preparations are being made everywhere for a production campaign next year. Conditions at the front are more difficult than in the Border Region; not only is there heavy fighting, but natural disasters have occurred in some places. Nevertheless, we must mobilize the entire Party, the government and the army and the civilian population both to fight against the enemy and to engage in production, in order to support the war, to cope with the enemy's policy of "burn all, kill all, loot all" and to provide disaster relief. With the experience already gained in the last few years in production at the front, and with the ideological, organizational and material preparations this winter, an extensive campaign can be and must be launched next year. In the front-line areas where fighting is going on, it is not yet possible to have "ample food and clothing" but quite possible and, indeed, imperative to "use our own hands and overcome difficulties".

The cooperatives are now the most important form of mass organization in the economic field. Although it is unnecessary to insist on attaching the label cooperative to the productive activities of the masses in our army, our government and other organizations and our schools, these activities are of a cooperative nature, being carried on under centralized leadership to meet the material needs of various departments,

units and individuals through mutual help and joint labor. They are cooperatives of a sort.

Among the peasant masses a system of individual economy has prevailed for thousands of years, with each family or household forming a productive unit. This scattered, individual form of production is the economic foundation of feudal rule and keeps the peasants in perpetual poverty. The only way to change it is gradual collectivization, and the only way to bring about collectivization, according to Lenin, is through cooperatives.[3] We have already organized many peasant cooperatives in the Border Region, but at present they are only of a rudimentary type and must go through several stages of development before they can become cooperatives of the Soviet type known as collective farms. Ours is a new-democratic economy, and our cooperatives are still organizations for collective labor based on an individual economy (on private property). Furthermore, they are of several types. One type is the organization of agricultural labor for mutual aid, such as the "teams for the exchange of labor" and "teams for the exchange and hire of labor";[4] this kind of organization was known as the "mutual-aid working group" or "ploughing team"[5] in the Red areas in Jiangxi and is now called the "mutual-aid group" in some places at the front. So long as they are collective mutual-aid organizations which the people join voluntarily (compulsion must never be used), all of them are good, no matter how they are named, no matter whether they are each composed of a few, a few dozen or hundreds of people, or whether they are composed entirely or partly of people who can contribute full-time labor; no matter whether the members render each other mutual aid in terms of manpower, animal power or implements, or they live and eat together during the busy farming season; and no matter whether the organizations are temporary or permanent. These methods of collective mutual aid are the inventions of the masses themselves. In the past we summed up such

experience among the masses in Jiangxi, and now we are summing it up in northern Shaanxi. In the Border Region mutual aid in labor has become much more systematic and better developed, after being encouraged by the meeting of senior cadres last year and put into practice all through the current year. Many labor-exchange teams in the Border Region have done their ploughing, planting, weeding and reaping collectively, and the harvest this year is double that of last. Now that the masses have seen these substantial results, undoubtedly more and more people will adopt the practice next year. We do not expect to organize into cooperatives in one year all the hundreds of thousands of people in the Border Region who can contribute full-time or part-time labor, but this objective can be realized within a few years. All women, too, should be mobilized to do a certain amount of productive work. All loafers must be reformed into good citizens through participation in production. Such collective mutual-aid producers' cooperatives should be extensively and voluntarily organized in all the anti-Japanese base areas in northern and central China.

Besides the collective mutual-aid cooperative for agricultural production, there are three other varieties: the multi-purpose cooperative like the Southern District Cooperative of Yan'an; the transport cooperative (salt transport team); and the handicraft cooperative.

With these four kinds of cooperatives among the masses and the collective labor cooperatives in the army, the schools and the government and other organizations, we can organize all the forces of the people into a great army of labor. This is the only road to liberation for the people, the only road from poverty to prosperity and the only road to victory in the War of Resistance. Every Communist must learn to organize the labor of the masses. Communists with an intellectual background must also learn to do so; once they have set their minds on it, they can learn in six months or a year. They can help the

masses to organize production and to sum up experience. When our comrades have learned, among other skills, to organize the labor of the masses—to help the peasants draw up their household production plans, to set up labor-exchange teams, salt transport teams and multi-purpose cooperatives, to organize production in the army, the schools and the government and other organizations, to organize production in the factories, develop emulation in production, encourage and reward labor heroes, and arrange production exhibitions—when our comrades have learned to bring the creative power and initiative of the masses into play, we shall certainly be able to drive out the Japanese imperialists and, together with the whole people, build up a new China.

We Communists must be able to integrate ourselves with the masses in all things. If our Party members spend their whole lives sitting indoors and never go out to face the world and brave the storm, what good will they be to the Chinese people? None at all, and we do not need such people as Party members. We Communists ought to face the world and brave the storm, the great world of mass struggle and the mighty storm of mass struggle. "Three cobblers with their wits combined equal Zhuge Liang the master mind."[6] In other words, the masses have great creative power. In fact there are thousands upon thousands of Zhuge Liangs among the Chinese people; every village, every town has its own. We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles and methods into practice so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness. If our comrades doing local work are isolated from the masses, fail to understand their feelings and to help them organize their production and improve their livelihood, and if they confine themselves to collecting "public grain for national salvation" without realizing that 10 percent of their energy

is quite enough for this purpose provided they first devote 90 percent to helping the masses solve the problem of "private grain for the people's own salvation", then these comrades are contaminated with the Kuomintang style of work and covered with the dust of bureaucracy. The Kuomintang only demands things from the people and gives them nothing in return. If a member of our Party acts in this way, his style of work is that of the Kuomintang, and his face, caked with the dust of bureaucracy, needs a good wash in a basin of hot water. In my opinion, this bureaucratic style is to be found in local work in all our anti-Japanese base areas, and there are comrades who are isolated from the masses because they lack the mass viewpoint. We must firmly do away with this style of work before we can have close ties with the masses.

In addition, a kind of warlord style is to be found in our army work, a style also characteristic of the Kuomintang whose army is divorced from the masses. Our troops must observe the correct principles that govern relations between the army and the people, between the army and the government, between the army and the Party, between officers and men, and between military work and political work, and relations among the cadres, and must never commit the errors of warlordism. Officers must cherish their men and must not be indifferent to their well-being or resort to corporal punishment; the army must cherish the people and never encroach upon their interests; the army must respect the government and the Party and never "assert independence". Our Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies are the armed forces of the people; they have always been very good, and are indeed the best in the country. But it is true that in recent years errors of warlordism of a certain kind have arisen, and some comrades in the army have become arrogant and high-handed in their behavior towards the soldiers, the people, the government and the Party, always blaming the comrades doing local work but never themselves, always seeing their own achievements but never their own

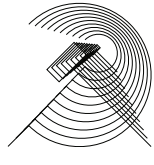
shortcomings, and always welcoming flattery but never criticism. Such phenomena are to be found, for example, in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. The tendency has been basically overcome as a result of the conference of senior cadres and the meeting of military and political cadres last year and of the campaigns to "support the government and cherish the people" and "support the army" during the Spring Festival[7] this year, but there is still a residue which we must make further efforts to eradicate. These faults are also to be found in the base areas in northern and central China, and the Party organizations and the army there must endeavor to eradicate them.

Whether it is the tendency towards bureaucracy in local work or towards warlordism in army work, the fault is of the same nature, namely, isolation from the masses. The overwhelming majority of our comrades are good comrades. Those who have this fault can correct it once they have been criticized and their mistakes pointed out. But self-criticism is imperative and wrong tendencies must be squarely faced and conscientiously corrected. If anyone fails to criticize the tendency towards bureaucracy in local work or towards warlordism in army work, it means that he wants to retain the Kuomintang style and keep the dust of bureaucracy or warlordism on his otherwise clean face, and he is not a good Communist. If these two tendencies are eliminated, all our work, including, of course, the production campaign, will proceed smoothly.

Our Border Region has taken on a totally different look because great results have been achieved here in production, whether among the peasant masses, or in the government and other organizations, the schools, the army or in the factories, and the relations between the army and the people have greatly improved. All this indicates that our comrades have a stronger mass viewpoint and have made great progress in becoming one with the masses. Nevertheless, we must not be complacent

but continue our self-criticism and strive for further progress. We must strive for further progress in production, too. As our faces are apt to get dirty, we must wash them every day; as the floor is apt to gather dust, we must sweep it every day. Even though the tendencies towards bureaucracy in local work and warlordism in army work have been basically overcome, these bad tendencies may arise again. We are surrounded by the serried forces of Japanese imperialism and Chinese reaction, and we live in the midst of the undisciplined petty bourgeoisie, and hence great gusts of dirt of bureaucracy and warlordism blow in our faces daily. Therefore, we must not become complacent over every success. We should check our complacency and constantly criticize our shortcomings, just as we should wash our faces or sweep the floor every day to remove the dirt and keep them dean.

Labor heroes and model workers in production! You are leaders of the people, you have been very successful in your work, and I hope you, too, will not grow complacent. I hope that when you get back to the counties in the sub-regions of Guanzhong, Longdong, Sanbian, Suide, and Yan'an,[8] when you get back to your organizations, schools, army units or factories, you will lead the people, lead the masses and work still better, and first of all get the masses organized on a voluntary basis into cooperatives, get them even better organized and in even greater numbers. I hope that, when you go back, you will do this work and propagate it, so that by next year's conference of labor heroes we shall have achieved still greater results.



SERVE THE PEOPLE

OUR COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE EIGHTH Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests. Comrade Zhang Side[9] was in the ranks of these battalions.

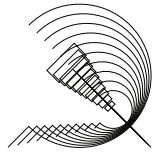
All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Sima Qian said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather."[10] To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather. Comrade Zhang Side died for the people, and his death is indeed weightier than Mount Tai.

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it. The idea of "better troops and

simpler administration" was put forward by Mr. Li Dingming,[11] who is not a Communist. He made a good suggestion which is of benefit to the people, and we have adopted it. If, in the interests of the people, we persist in doing what is right and correct what is wrong, our ranks will surely thrive.

We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective. And we need the vast majority of the people with us on the road to this objective. Today, we already lead base areas with a population of 91 million,[12] but this is not enough; to liberate the whole nation more are needed. In times of difficulty, we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage. The Chinese people are suffering; it is our duty to save them and we must exert ourselves in struggle. Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But we have the interests of the people and the sufferings of the great majority at heart, and when we die for the people, it is a worthy death. Nevertheless, we should do our best to avoid unnecessary sacrifices. Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.

From now on, when anyone in our ranks who has done some useful work dies, be he soldier or cook, we should have a funeral ceremony and a memorial meeting in his honor. This should become the rule. And it should be introduced among the people as well. When someone dies in a village, let a memorial meeting be held. In this way we express our mourning for the dead and unite all the people.

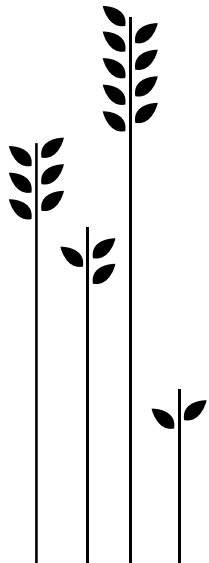


Ho Chi Minh

THE REVOLUTIONARY PATH

Chapters 1-4





INTRODUCTORY POEM

Characteristics of a Revolutionary

A revolutionary must:

Be thrifty.
Be in solidarity without selfishness.
Be resolute in correcting one's own mistakes.
Be careful but not timid.
Be inquisitive.
Be patient (and hard working).
Be diligent in research and examination.
Be selfless and prioritize the public good.
Be humble, never arrogant.
So said, so done.
Keep the ideology steady.
Sacrifice.
Have little interest in material possessions.
Be silent when needed.

When dealing with people, one must:

Accept and forgive the errors of others.
Present a serious attitude to the group.
Be willing to share and give advice to people.
Show integrity, not opportunism.
Evaluate people with care.

When working, we should:

Examine the situation carefully.
Be decisive.
Be brave.
Abide by the collective.



CHAPTER 1

Why Write This Book?

1 IT IS THE SAME FOR EVERYONE, WITH ANY BIG or small task, any easy or difficult job, if we don't make our best effort then we will probably not be successful. A Chinese proverb says, "A lion uses all its might in attacking a rabbit." How strong a lion is! It is so easy for him to catch a rabbit, but he still must use all his strength. It is the same for our work to liberate our people from enslavement. If we do not try our best, we will not succeed.

2. Many people find it easy to be dispirited when facing difficulties, not understanding that "constant dripping wears away the stone" and "practice makes perfect." No matter how hard it is, only determination can succeed. Sure, with only a few people we cannot do it, but many people working together will be able to make it. If this generation cannot achieve it, then the next generation will follow and get it done.

3. Wanting to join and work together, wanting to be focused, everyone must first question and understand: why we must fight? Why can't we fight? Why must everyone give a hand? Why should we do it right away and not stand still

watching and waiting for others? By doing this, we will have the same purpose, and we can march with the same will, with the same mind, with the same heart, and know how we will achieve the goal sooner.

4. Many books have been written about the theory and history of revolution. The French fear these, and thus have prohibited us from studying them, and prohibited us from seeing them, and consequently, our compatriots are still unclear about the meaning of revolution. Some writers make proposals but do little and this is a very vague way; or they incite our beloved people to violence but without being organized; or they encourage dependency and submission and forget resilience.

5. The purpose of this book is to help our people comprehend.

a) Why we must make a revolution if we want to live.
b) Why revolution is the common task of our oppressed people, not merely the duty of one or two.
c) How revolutionary history of other nations offers us lessons.
d) How we must bring the world movement to the attention of our people.
e) Who are our friends? Who are our enemies?
f) Our revolutionary strategy.

6. This book conveys meanings briefly, is easy to understand, and is easy to remember. Maybe someone will object that the writing style is too direct. Yes! What I say here is very simple, quick, sure, like two times two is four, I don't embellish it.

For more than sixty years, French imperialism had enslaved us; more than twenty million have succumbed to this circle of death. We must speak up, and do it quickly to save the race. There's no time to be fussy!

After reading this book, you will reflect, wake up, and stand up, uniting to carry out the revolution. Both in a literal and an aspirational sense, this book stresses the one term:

Revolution! Revolution!! REVOLUTION!!!

Revolution.

I. What is a Revolution?

Revolution is the destruction of the old and its replacement with the new, and it is the destruction of the bad, and its replacement with the good. For example, Galileo Galilei (1633) represents the scientific revolution. In the past, everyone thought that the earth was the center of everything; but thanks to the experience of research, Galileo found that the earth goes around the sun.

George Stephenson (1800) represents the mechanical revolution. In the past, people only walked or rode on horses; he invented the steam locomotive.

Charles Darwin (1859) is famous for the revolution in biology. In the old days, no one understood the origins of diverse species; but Darwin investigated evolution as nature's creativity.

Karl Marx stands for a revolution in economics. He studied capitalism, imperialism, and class struggles, clearly showing their origins, history, current manifestations and future possibilities.

II. How Many Kinds of Revolutions are There?

In the history of political thought, we have identified three kinds of revolution:

1. Capitalist revolution.
2. Nationalist revolution.
3. Class-based revolution.

Examples of the capitalist revolution are the French revolution in 1789, the American Revolution for independence

in 1776 (against the British), and the Japanese revolution in 1864 (the Meiji Restoration of 1868).

Nationalist revolutions include those such as when Italy evicted the powerful Austrian troops in 1859 or when China reclaimed Manchuria in 1911.

A class revolution is, for example, when the Russian workers and peasants evicted their capitalist exploiters and seized power in October 1917.

III. What was the Origin of the Capitalist Revolution?

1. The capitalists in the city means the bourgeoisie, with factories and manufactured goods. These factories must have skilled workers, manufacturing many goods. They must have people to buy and sell these goods, and they must have means of transportation for the goods.

2. The capitalists in the countryside are the landowners. They want to retain the old feudal property regime where sovereign power belongs to the wealthy. The peasants are treated as if they were buffalos or pigs, forced to stay in one place to plough the fields. Traders want to move goods without arbitrary taxes and without different tariffs in different currencies in each place. So, when they are traveling to-and-fro, traders have to ask permission from the feudal lords, who do everything they can to prevent new businesses and trades.

The landlords were obstructing the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie was opposed to the landlords, and the two sides were in conflict, which led to the capitalist revolution.

Never did the two of them fight against each other more intensively or conspicuously than in the American Civil War. From 1861 to 1865, the states in the North (bourgeoisie) sent soldiers to fight against the southern states (landlords, plantation owners) as if they were two hostile countries.

IV. What is the Origin of the National Revolution?

A powerful nation robs a weaker one and rules over its people with force, conquering both economic and political rights. The people of those nations have lost their freedom and independence, all they can produce will be claimed by their oppressors.

The bourgeois capitalist robs all the produce and the right of our people. Where there is an enemy, they force our people into the army to die on their behalf. As in the battle among the European powers in 1914-1918, the French forced us to join their army and then increased taxes and fees on our people. If we fight and win, they enjoy the benefit and authority; if we lose, we lose both our people and our property.

In short, the cruel and powerful enslave others, as France does to the Vietnamese people. When the enslaved masses cannot tolerate this anymore, they are awakened, are unified, and know that they would rather die than live on as slaves. They join forces to chase away their oppressors. This is the national revolution.

V. What is the Origin of the Class Revolution?

In the world, there are two classes:

1. Capitalist (not working but enjoying all the benefits).
2. Workers and farmers (hard-working but do not see the fruits of their labor).

Consider the Vietnamese workers who work at the Hon Gay coal mine in shifts of eleven hours per day. They work every day from the beginning to the end of the year and are paid only three cents a day. Three cents a day is not enough to pay for their food; it is not enough to clothe themselves; it will not pay for medicine when they are sick, and it is not even enough to buy a coffin when they die.

Whereas the owner of the mine never dirties his hands in work, enjoys sumptuous meals, travels to-and-fro

conveniently, and takes a profit of millions per year (in 1925, it was 17 million dong). So, let's ask who produces this 17 million dong, the mine owner or the mine workers? Peasants do not even own their plows, but the private plantations occupy all 122,000 acres of arable land in Central Việt Nam and 150,000 acres in the South.

In places where our people did not have enough to eat and sometimes were starving, the private landlords sold rice at profits of nearly 1 billion quan per year (in 1925, they sold 911,477,000 quan worth of rice).

It's like this in our country; the same goes for other countries. Workers and peasants cannot stand it anymore. We must unite together to drive away the capitalists, as happened in Russia; that is the class revolution. In short, the oppressed class makes a revolution to overthrow the oppressor class.

VI. How Many Stages Does the Revolution Have?

The revolution is divided into two stages:

1. As Việt Nam must drive away the French, India must drive away the English, Koreans must drive away the Japanese, the Filipinos must drive away the Unites States, and China must drive away the imperialists in order to regain, for their countries, the rights to equality and national freedom: *that* is the national revolution.
2. The farmers and workers of every country in the world uniting all races like brothers and sisters as one family, then destroy all the capitalists in the world, bring happiness to every country, and to every people, thus making an equal world for all humanity: *that* is the world revolution.

The two stages of revolution are different because the national revolution does not involve discriminating among classes, which means that scholars, peasants, workers, and

merchants are unified to fight against the foreign invaders. As for the class or world revolution, the proletariat marches in the front ranks. But the two kinds of revolution are closely related to each other. For example, if the Vietnamese people succeed in revolution, then the French capital is weakened, and weakened French capitalism will make it is easier for French workers and peasants to carry out their revolution. And if French workers and peasants succeed, then the Vietnamese people will more readily win their freedom.

The Vietnamese revolution and French revolution must rely upon each other.

VII. Who are the Revolutionaries?

Because revolution is born of oppression, whoever is most severely oppressed, the stronger their revolutionary spirit. Previously, the bourgeoisie was oppressed under feudalism, so they had their revolution. Now, capitalism is oppressing the workers and farmers in turn, so the workers and farmers are the leading force of the revolution.

1. Because the workers and farmers are more heavily oppressed.
2. Because the workers and farmers are a mass; therefore, they possess the greatest potential strength.
3. Because they are barefoot already, they have nothing, and so, if defeated, they would only lose one miserable life. If they win, they will have the whole world. For this reason, workers and farmers are the fearless heart of the revolution; while the students, small merchants, and the small landowners, though also oppressed, do not suffer as much as the workers and farmers, so these three classes are only the revolutionary friends of the workers and farmers.

VIII. Is the Revolution Difficult or Easy?

It is very difficult to reform an old society that has existed for thousands of years. But knowing how to do it, knowing how to work together can make it possible, and then it is not difficult. Being easy or difficult all depends upon each individual, and the very determined will make it for certain. But those who want to make a revolution must know how.

1. Capitalists and imperialists use religion and culture to fool the people. They use the law to bind our beloved people; they use power to scare the masses and take the wealth of our people, and they feed on greed. They make our people fear the word "revolutionary."

So, the revolutionary task is first to raise the people's consciousness.

2. The masses were miserable and violent; the Vietnamese refused to pay taxes like the Vietnamese in Trung Kỳ (central Việt Nam); in Hà Thành (Hanoi City), they tried poison; in the South, they escaped from jail; but without a plan, without ideology, they will forever fail.

So, the revolutionary path is to clarify theory and strategy, making it understandable to the masses.

3. People do not theorize about the situation in the world, do not know how to think strategically, do not have any tactics, want to do more, but do not know what to do.

So, the revolutionary path must understand the movement of the world, and the strategies to be presented to the people.

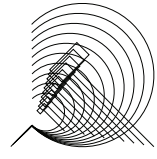
4. Ordinarily, people are divided into groups; our people in the South are suspicious of the people of the Center, while the Center despises the North. These divisions result in weaknesses; he who does not take part in any association is like a lonely chopstick, which can be broken easily. A collective is like a bundle of chopsticks, nobody can break them.

So, the power of the revolutionary path is our focus, and if we want to focus, we must have a united revolutionary party.

IX. What are the Priorities of a Revolution?

First of all, we must have a revolutionary party responsible for mobilizing our people at home and making contact with oppressed nations and proletarians abroad. Our revolution will owe its victory to a strong Party, just as a boat relies upon a captain. If the Party wants to be steady, there must be unity; every member of the Party must understand; every member must follow Marxist theory. Without ideology, the Party would be like a man without wisdom, a boat without a compass.

At present, there are many doctrines and theories, but Leninism is the most genuine, firmest, and most revolutionary.



CHAPTER 2

History of the American Revolution

I. What is America's History?

BEFORE THE 14TH CENTURY, AMERICA WAS unknown to the rest of the world. In 1492, a merchant named Christopher Columbus wanted to sail to India but got lost and was lucky to run into America. The native people of that land preferred to hunt rather than settle and trade.

Ever since Columbus stumbled upon America, people from Europe came to colonize it. White people wanted to enslave the natives, but they refused to submit, so the colonists killed them, and then took the Black people of Africa to America to slave for them.

Many Europeans came to the United States, but the largest was the British (3,000,000) people. So, Britain conquered America as a colony.

II. Why was There an American Revolution?

America is very rich in natural resources: agricultural land, iron, coal, cotton, rice, cattle, and other resources.

Britain wanted it all for themselves, so they promulgated the following three rules:

1. The American colonies must always give their resources to Britain; they were not allowed to sell them to other countries.
2. The colonies were not permitted to set up factories or trading associations.
3. Other countries were not permitted to trade with the colonies, only Britain could.

These three laws, which also added heavy taxes and duties, depressed the American economy; the laws angered the Americans, so they decided to "boycott" Britain in 1770.

III. How was the Movement?

The boycott movement against the British government lasted for five years. The British brought soldiers to suppress the uprising and arrest its leaders for their "crimes." Every time the British imposed one of their appointees, the people became angrier. In 1775, when the British army imposed a number of their officials upon the American colonists, the colonists pulled together to fight, and when the British army killed nine people, it was like a flame falling into gunpowder. The people were so angry that, live or die, they were determined to get rid of the British government. A year later, on 4 July 1776, the revolution took place, and the colonists declared their independence and became a republic. Now, the United States has 48 states and 110 million people.

IV. What is the Significance of the American Revolution for the Vietnamese Revolution?

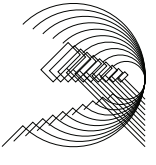
1. The French policy toward Việt Nam today is more shameful than British policy was toward the American colonies, because France has grabbed all our wealth and has imposed restrictions on our people. They forced us to smoke

opium and drink liquor. The British were only fond of the money from the colonies; the French wanted money, but they also wanted to do away with our race, leaving Việt Nam bereft. It is high time for the Vietnamese people to study how the American people made a revolution!

2. In America's Declaration of Independence, there are these lines "Under heaven, all people are created equal and are endowed with certain inalienable rights, among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness... whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government." But now, the American government does not want anyone to speak about revolution or have anyone threaten the government!

3. Although the American revolution was successful more than 150 years ago, American workers and peasants are still mired in poverty and thinking about a second revolution. Because the American Revolution was a revolution of the capitalists, the capitalist revolution cannot be our revolution.

We would lay down our lives for the revolution, but to make a complete or world revolution, we must work in such a way as to deliver rights for all the people rather than for a few. Only after many sacrifices could our people have a happy outcome.



CHAPTER 3

The Bourgeois Revolution in France

I. Why Was There a Revolution in France?

IN THE 18TH CENTURY, THE KING WAS ARROGANT and lustful; the aristocracy and the missionaries were manipulating everyone everywhere; the tax burden upon the people was very heavy, and the people were miserable.

Canada and India, originally French colonies, were now lost to the British.

Moreover, some scholars such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau propagated liberalism.

In addition, there was the British revolutionary movement (Cromwell executed the British king and establish a Republican Government in 1653), and there was the recent American democratic revolution (1776) as examples.

Especially because the new capitalists were blocked by feudalism, the people were oppressed by the king, aristocracy, and missionaries. So, the new capitalists allied with students, farmers, and workers to abolish feudalism.

II. When Did the French Revolution Start?

The King saw that the people were agitated, so they arrested those who were propagandizing and organizing. The people were very angry, and on 14 July 1789, they came together to riot and rescue prisoners from the Bastille. The King ordered soldiers to defend the capital; the people organized revolutionary forces to resist and fight the King, who then retreated to the Palace of Versailles.

On 5 October that year, the workers of Paris came to Versailles to arrest the King and demanded that he sign a declaration to:

1. Abolish the feudal regime and free the serfs.
2. Convert all church property into state property.
3. Allow for the freedom of the press, freedom to form organizations, etc.
4. Write a constitution, removing the King's autocratic power.

In 1792, because the King sought support abroad and was in collusion with the counter-revolutionaries, the people dismissed the King and formed a republic.

On 21 January 1793, the King, his wife, and children were sentenced as traitors to their country and were beheaded.

III. How Do European Countries Approach the French Revolution?

People of all countries were happy to applaud and approve. But the ruling aristocracies of the other nations were in fear of their own people imitating the French masses, so outside France, they allied against the revolution, and within France, they supported the counter-revolutionaries.

Although the French people had little food and few guns, thanks to their bravery and cleansing violence, they broke the aristocracy and the foreign powers. At that time, the revolutionary soldiers were called "soldiers without trousers."

Without a hat, without a shoe, a torn shirt, a thin and starving face,[13] but wherever these soldiers advanced, the foreign-backed forces fell away, unwilling to risk their lives.

This shows that a person without fear in their mind is worth more than a thousand people who are dispirited.

IV. How Many Revolutions Has France Carried Out?

From 1792 to 1804 was the 1st Republic. In 1804, Napoleon moved against the revolution to become emperor.

In 1814, the allied nations defeated Napoleon and restored the old king to the throne until 1848.

In 1848, there was the 2nd revolution.

In 1852, Napoleon's nephew rebelled against the revolution and declared himself Emperor.

In 1870, after their defeat by Germany, Napoleon III fled, and France established the 3rd Republic.

V. What Is the Paris Commune (Commune De Paris)?

In 1871, the French king was defeated and fled as the Germans surrounded the French capital, Paris. French capitalists offered two provinces to Germany for peace. The war caused many deaths, much damage, and huge losses. People had no food to eat, and the workers had no work. On 18 March, the Parisian workers rose up in a communist revolution (The Commune).

Because the workers were still inexperienced, they were not well-organized, and because Germany helped the French capitalists to fight against the workers, by the end of May, the revolution had been defeated.

VI. What Was the Purpose of the Commune?

As soon as Paris was theirs, the Commune declared a People's Government and declared that the commune would practice these things:

1. All private manufacturing workshops will be turned over to the public.
2. All children, both boys and girls, will go to school. Tuition will be paid for by the State.
3. Citizens have the right to freedom of organization, press, association, emigration, etc.
4. Any man or woman may enter politics, elections, and candidacies for office.
5. The Government is elected by the people, and the people have the right to change the Government.

VII. What Was the Outcome of the Commune?

French capitalism, at that time, was like a house burning on two sides (caught in a pincer maneuver). On one side, the Germans were forcing its surrender, and on the other side, it faced revolution. The French capitalists chose humiliation with Germany rather than any reconciliation with their fate. The Germans were also afraid of revolution, so they tried their best to help the French capitalists put down the revolution. When France had surrendered, Germany had already captured all its soldiers, leaving only 40,000 police. When the revolution began, Germany allowed French capitalists an additional 100,000 soldiers with the aim of eradicating the revolution.

So, we must understand: *Capitalism has no homeland*.

After wiping out the revolution, the capitalists took revenge. They killed 30,000 people, men, women, the elderly, and children. They deported 28,000 people. They arrested 650 children, 850 women, and 37,000 men.

VIII. How is the French Revolution Meaningful for the Vietnamese Revolution?

1. In all three revolutions, 1789, 1848, and 1870, the people were courageous, but the intellectuals were few, and so the capitalists were able to take advantage.

2. The Paris Commune failed because it was not well organized and did not communicate with the peasantry.

3. The capitalists used the words Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity to deceive the people and encourage them to overthrow feudalism. When the people overthrew feudalism, the bourgeoisie replaced the feudal lords as the new oppressors.

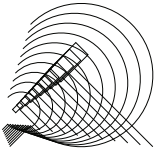
4. The French revolution was similar to the American revolution, which means it was also a bourgeois and incomplete revolution. France is formally a republic, but internally workers and peasants are deprived of their rights, and externally France oppresses and exploits its colonies. There have been three revolutions so far, but now the French workers and peasants must have one more if they are to escape oppression. The Vietnamese revolutionaries should keep those things in mind.

IX. What are Examples of What the French Revolution Teaches Us?

The French revolution teaches us that:

1. The workers and peasants are the root of the revolution, but the capitalists are opportunists; when their interests are threatened, they will actively work against the interests of the masses.
2. The revolution must have a sustainable organization to be successful.
3. Women and children will also take part in making revolution.
4. Where the people have great morale, no weapon can resist them.

5. The French revolution saw so many people sacrifice without fear. If we want to make a revolution too, then we must not be afraid of sacrifices.



CHAPTER 4

The History of the Russian Revolution

I. What are the Origins of the Russian Revolution?

RUSSIA IS A VERY LARGE COUNTRY WHOSE territory is half in Asia and half in Europe. More than 90% of Russians are peasants, less than 10% are working men. Previously, Russia was ruled under the serf system, which means all land and the peasants were under the control of the landlords. The landlord regarded the serf as an animal; whether to live or die are all under his control and whim. When they needed money, they took peasant slaves as if they were animals for sale. Peasants could not leave one region for another.

It was only in the second half of the 19th century that capitalism flourished in Russia; when they opened many factories and needed workers, they campaigned to abandon serfdom so that the peasants could work for them. In 1861, serfdom was abolished.

The bourgeois capitalists and feudal landlords *bear a grudge against* each other, and the workers and farmers' revolution also emerges from this contradiction.

II. What Did the Serfs Do After Their Liberation?

Being free, some of them went to the city to work, and some stayed to work in the fields.

Working long hours for what little wages they could earn, they were now slaves to the capitalists. If they stayed in the countryside, there was little land, the cattle were in short supply, and moreover, they had inferior resources compared to the wealthy landlords. Though people were nominally free, in fact, they have been enslaved: workers were miserable, peasants had never known better.

Those with a revolutionary outlook set up a party to unite the peasants but didn't pay attention to the workers.

In 1875, there was a revolutionary party called the "Narodniks." In 1878, there was a new party called the "Russian Workers Union."

But those two parties, with very few members, were persecuted, and their members were arrested by the Government. Later they turned into a terrorist party, focused only on assassinating the king and the officials.

III. What Was the Result of the Two Parties?

Assassination is risky, and the results are not long-lasting as there will always be another boss to replace the one who is killed. Revolution means uniting the oppressed masses and demolishing the entire oppressive class, not just the assassination of a few kings or government officials by a handful of people. Although the two parties sacrificed many people and assassinated important people from the ruling class, because they did not have revolutionary mass base, they were hounded by the Government until they were wiped out.

In 1883, Georgi Plekhanov established the *Emancipation Labor Group*.[14] This party was organized to popularize the theory of Karl Marx and to unite the peasantry and the workers in the practice and politics of revolution.

IV. How Does the Party Make a Revolution?

This party considered workers to be the base of the revolution, with the assistance of the peasantry.

They worked very secretly.

In Russia, there were too many spies, so the Party agency had to set themselves up abroad (in London).

In 1894, Lenin joined the Party.

In 1898, the Party held a Congress inside Russia; unfortunately, the Government discovered this and arrested many party members. Despite these arrests, the Party's declaration was spread throughout the nation, so that the revolutionary movement was increasing every day. Those who had not been arrested were extremely secretive in their efforts at propaganda and organization.

Not long after that, the party's name was changed to the *Social Democratic Party*, which later changed its name to *The Communist Party*.

Between 1904-1905, Russia and Japan were at war. Taking advantage of the people's agitation, the Party made its best effort to mobilize for revolution.

V. How Did the Party Mobilize the People to Its Cause?

1. Before fighting against Japan, the Tsar tricked the capitalists into spending money and cheated them by saying that if they could win, the economy would prosper, and the capitalists would benefit considerably. But after their loss, the capitalists had spent so much money for so little gain that they now resent the Tsar.

2. At the same time, the workers' resentment of and oppression by the Tsar meant they hated the Tsar more and more.

3. The peasants had hated the Tsar for so long. Forced to enter the army, many died in the war; they paid exorbitantly high taxes, and their hatred of the Tsar became greater and greater.

The three classes had different goals, but their hatred of the Tsar was the same. The Party knew there was broad support for a revolution to overthrow the Tsar.

VI. At That Time, How Did the Tsar Respond?

The Tsar knew that the workers were the most enthusiastic for revolution, so he sought to separate capitalists, peasants, and workers from each other. The Tsar appointed a missionary to organize a Labor Union in order to first corrupt the workers and second to detect and arrest those who were for revolution.

On 9 January 1905, the missionary (whose name was Georgy Apollonovich Gapon) brought some of the workers to the Tsar for advice. He forgot to tell the Tsar they were coming, and because the Tsar saw a crowd of people and was afraid of violence, the Tsar sent his soldiers out, who shot and killed many of the workers. Gapon escaped abroad. The workers of the provinces heard the news and went on strike, rioted, and began setting up worker congresses.

The revolutionary fight against the Tsar and the Government lasted from January to October. The Tsar, on the one hand, used soldiers against the revolution, and on the other hand, using the pretense of establishing a parliament of people's representatives for discussion of the country's affairs.

VII. Why Was the Revolution of 1905 Defeated?

1. While the capitalists wanted to take advantage of the workers to demolish the Tsar, when they saw the spirited

workers, they feared that the workers would first fight against the Tsar and then later turn on them. So, the capitalists betrayed the workers in favor of the Tsar.

2. The workers and peasants were not united. When the workers rose up, the mass of peasants did not immediately follow them into the fight. So, the workers were defeated. The peasants then rose up against the Tsar, but it was too late as the Tsar was able first to deal with the workers then turn his attention against the peasants.

3. The workers were not very experienced, nor well organized

4. Without the mobilization of the soldiers, the workers had too few weapons.

VIII. Did the Defeat in 1905 Set Back the Workers and the Party?

No, it did not. Experiencing that failure, the Party studied again, criticized where and what went wrong, and why they failed. Clearly understanding defects, then fixing them, is like forging a knife. First, you test the blade to know where it is sharp or where it is blunt; then, you work the blunt side by sharpening it to the point when you know the new knife is good.

After the failure in 1905, the workers understood that:

1. They must be well organized;
2. They must connect with the peasantry;
3. They must mobilize the soldiers;
4. They should not trust the false prophets of the franco-viet collaboration; and
5. Knowing that the capitalists and the Tsar are the same, to abolish the Tsar, they must abolish the capitalists.

The failure of the 1905 revolution set the example for the successful revolution in 1917.

IX. What is the History of the Revolution in 1917?

The revolution of 1917 resulted from following:

1. During World War I, the British and French imperialists took advantage of the Tsar to fight against Germany. But the Russian Tsar was disorganized, wasteful with money, and many Russian soldiers were killed by the Germans. The imperial powers were angry and thus helped the capitalist class to get rid of the Tsar.
2. The capitalists were angry that the Tsar had relied only upon the aristocratic ruling army as it was useless, losing every battle. Moreover, the capitalists in Russia were mostly aligned with the British and French imperialists. If Russia lost to Germany, then not only would the Russian capital be at risk, but also that of the British and French. It became clear to the British and French imperialists that they would lose if they allowed the Tsar to remain in power. So, the capitalists also wanted to remove the Tsar.
3. Obviously, the working men and the peasants considered the Tsar as their enemy.
4. The political opportunists took advantage of the situation, using the workers and peasants to help the Russian capitalists and British and French imperialism to remove the Tsar. Capitalism and imperialism took advantage of this opportunism in turn.

X. How Did the Opportunists Make It?

Taking advantage of so many soldiers' deaths, a starving population, mass unemployment, and the government disorganization, the opportunists told the people that the revolution would abolish the Tsar, the land and factories

would belong to the peasants, the people would have the right to form the government, and the war would turn to peace.

In February, unexpectedly, the Tsar abdicated, with their authority empowered by the capitalists, the opportunists went back on their words. They ordered the soldiers to continue to fight; the land remained in the hands of the landlords; the factories stayed in the hands of the rich, and the peasants and workers had no say in the Government.

XI. Why Didn't the Communist Party Take Power?

When this revolution evicted the Tsar, the Communist Party was still leading the masses. But at that time, there were few Party members, and it was not the right time, so they did not seize the government.

The revolution was over in February. From February to April, many people still thought that the new government had not yet done anything for the benefit of the people because the government had not had enough time.

In April, Lenin had many comrades from abroad returned. From April to November, the new government gradually showed their true color as counter-revolutionary. The communist members took part in propagandizing to the people the following: "You can see that the opportunists are like servants for capitalism and imperialism, no more no less. They did no better than the Tsar." This made everybody resent the new Government. They joined with the peasants, laborers, soldiers, and secret organizations to carry out the Communist revolution.

XII. When Did the Communist Revolution Succeed?

By the end of October, there were already organizations everywhere; everyone wanted action. But Lenin said: "Wait! Wait a few more days for everyone to oppose the

Government, then we will act." On 5 November [23 October], the Government opened a meeting to enact new laws that had benefits for the capitalists but were harmful to peasants and workers. Lenin told the party members that it would be too early to take action on 6 November [24 October] because the people would not yet know how bad the rules were and would not yet blame the government. On the other hand, 8 November [26 October] would be too late because, by then, the Government would know that the people were resentful, and they would be on guard.

With great anticipation, the Communist Party decided to carry out the revolution on 7 November [25 October]. The workers rushed to lay siege to the Government, and the peasants evicted their landlords. The government sent out soldiers, but the soldiers sided with the workers and returned to fight against the Government.

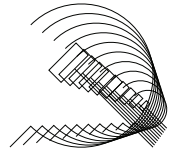
From that day forward, the Government opportunists withdrew, and the Communist Party seized authority and organized a government of workers, peasants, and soldiers. It distributed land to the tillers, conferred the management of factories upon the workers, no longer forced people to die for capitalism and imperialism, strove to organize a new economy, and practiced internationalism.

XIII. How is the Russian Revolution Meaningful to the Vietnamese Revolution?

In the world, at that time, only the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was a successful revolution, and it was thoroughly successful. This means people enjoyed real happiness, real freedom, real equality, not the false freedom and equality that the French imperialists boast about to the Vietnamese people. The Russian revolution had already abolished the Tsar, the capitalists, and the landlords, and also was striving to assist the international workers, peasants, and the oppressed

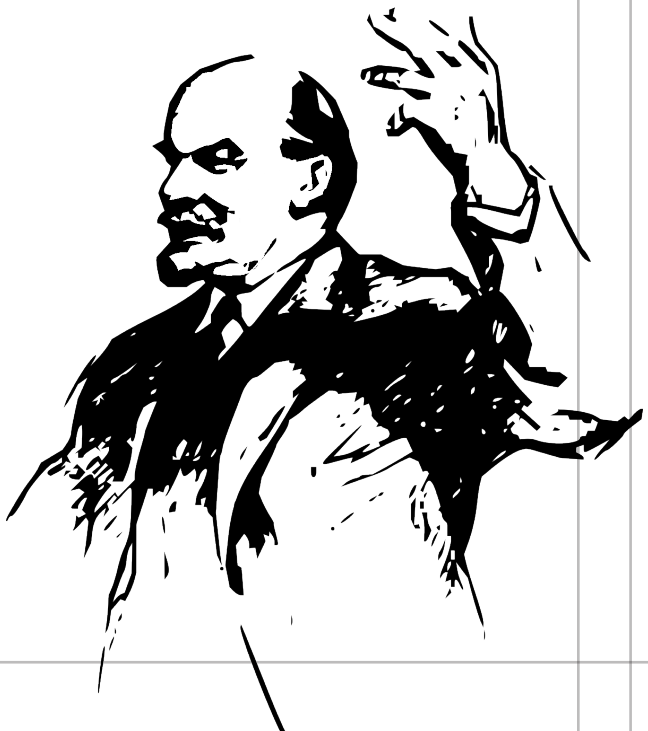
peoples in the colonies to make revolution, to demolish all the imperialists and capitalists in the world.

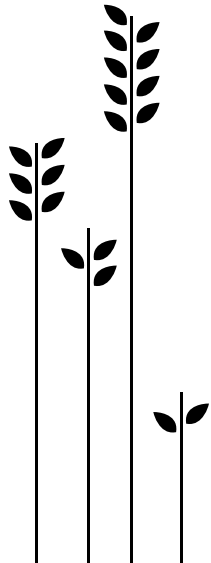
The Russian revolution teaches us that if the revolution is to be victorious, we must take the masses (workers and peasants) as foundational; we must have a solid party; we must be tenacious; we must be of the same mind, and we must be ready to lay down our lives for our cause. In brief, we must follow Marxism-Leninism.



V. I. Lenin

THE DUAL POWER





THE DUAL POWER

THE BASIC QUESTION OF EVERY REVOLUTION is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.

The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power.* This fact must be grasped first and foremost; unless it is understood, we cannot advance. We must know how to supplement and amend old "formulas", for example, those of Bolshevism; for while they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realization *has turned out to be* different. *Nobody* previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power.

What is this dual power? Alongside the Provisional Government, the government of the *bourgeoisie, another government* has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

What is the class composition of this other government? It consists of the proletariat and the peasants (in soldiers'

uniforms). What is the political nature of this government? It is a revolutionary dictatorship, i.e., a power directly based on revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the people from below, and *not on a law* enacted by a centralized state power. It is an entirely different kind of power from the one that generally exists in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance is often over looked, often is not given enough thought, yet it is the crux of the matter. *This* power is of *the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas—direct "seizure", to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves,* by the armed people *themselves*; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy, are either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the people's first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding "jobs" remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special "arm of the service", whose remuneration *does not exceed* the ordinary pay of a competent worker.

This, and this *alone*, constitutes the *essence* of the Paris Commune as a special type of state. This essence has been forgotten or perverted by the Plekhanovs (downright chauvinists who have betrayed Marxism), the Kautskys (the men of the "Centre", i.e., those who vacillate between chauvinism and Marxism), and generally by all those Social-

Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc., who now rule the roost.

They are trying to get away with empty phrases, evasions, subterfuges; they congratulate each other a thousand times upon the revolution, but refuse to *consider what* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies *are*. They refuse to recognize the obvious truth that in as much as these Soviets exist, *in as much as* they are a power, we have in Russia a state of the *type* of the Paris Commune.

I have emphasized the words "in as much as", for it is only an incipient power. By direct agreement with the bourgeois Provisional Government and by a series of actual concessions, it has itself *surrendered and is surrendering* its positions to the bourgeoisie.

Why? Is it because Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and Co. are making a "mistake"? Nonsense. Only a philistine can think so—not a Marxist. The reason is *insufficient class-consciousness* and organization of the proletarians and peasants. The "mistake" of the leaders I have named lies in their petty-bourgeois position, in the fact that instead of clarifying the minds of the workers, they are *befogging* them; instead of dispelling petty-bourgeois illusions, they are *instilling* them; instead of freeing the people from bourgeois influence, they are *strengthening* that influence.

It should be clear from this why our comrades, too, make so many mistakes when putting the question "simply": Should the Provisional Government be overthrown immediately?

My answer is: (1) it should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, bourgeois, and not a people's government, and *is unable* to provide peace, bread, or full freedom; (2) It cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by a direct and indirect, a formal and actual *agreement* with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and primarily with the chief Soviet, the Petrograd Soviet; (3) generally, it cannot be "overthrown" in the ordinary way, for it rests on the "*support*"

given to the bourgeoisie by the *second* government—the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and that government is the only possible revolutionary government, which directly expresses the mind and will of the majority of the workers and peasants. Humanity has not yet evolved and we do not as yet know a type of government superior to and better than the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Laborers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies.

To become a power the class-conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as no* violence is used against the people there is no other road to power. We are not Blancists, we do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority. We are Marxists, we stand for proletarian class struggle against petty-bourgeois intoxication, against chauvinism-defensism, phrase-mongering and dependence on the bourgeoisie.

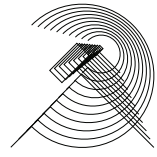
Let us create a proletarian Communist Party; its elements have already been created by the best adherents of Bolshevism; let us rally our ranks for proletarian class work; and larger and larger numbers from among the proletarians, from among the *poorest* peasants will range themselves on our side. For *actual experience* will from day to day shatter the petty-bourgeois illusions of those "Social-Democrats", the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis, Steklovs and others, the "Socialist Revolutionaries", the petty bourgeois of an even purer water, and so on and so forth.

The bourgeoisie stands for the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The class-conscious workers stand for the undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Laborers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies—for undivided power made possible not by adventurist acts, but by *clarifying* proletarian minds, by *emancipating* them from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie—"Social-Democrats", Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc.—vacillate and, thereby, *hinder* this clarification and emancipation.

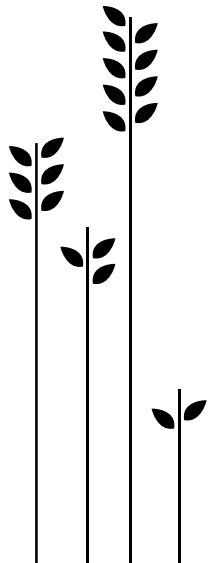
This is the actual, the *class* alignment of forces that determines our tasks.



V. I. Lenin

"LEFT-WING" COMMUNISM— AN INFANTILE DISORDER





CHAPTER 1

In What Sense We Can Speak of the International Significance of the Russian Revolution

AT THE PRESENT MOMENT IN HISTORY,[15] IT IS the Russian model that reveals to *all* countries something—and something highly significant—of their near and inevitable future. Advanced workers in all lands have long realized this; more often than not, they have grasped it with their revolutionary class instinct rather than realized it. Herein lies the international "significance" (in the narrow sense of the word) of Soviet power, and of the fundamentals of Bolshevik theory and tactics. The "revolutionary" leaders of the Second International,[16] such as Kautsky in Germany and Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler in Austria, have failed to understand this, which is why they have proved to be reactionaries and advocates of the worst kind of opportunism and social treachery. Incidentally, the anonymous pamphlet [by Otto Bauer—*Ed*.] entitled *The World Revolution* (*Weltrevolution*), which appeared in Vienna in 1919 (*Sozialistische Bücherei*, Heft 11; Ignaz Brand), very clearly reveals their entire thinking and their entire range of ideas, or, rather, the full extent of their stupidity, pedantry, baseness and betrayal of working-class

interests—and that, moreover, under the guise of "defending" the idea of "world revolution."

We shall, however, deal with this pamphlet in greater detail some other time. We shall here note only one more point: in bygone days, when he was still a Marxist and not a renegade, Kautsky, dealing with the question as an historian, foresaw the possibility of a situation arising in which the revolutionary spirit of the Russian proletariat would provide a model to Western Europe. This was in 1902, when Kautsky wrote an article for the revolutionary *Iskra*,[17] entitled "The Slavs and Revolution." Here is what he wrote in the article:

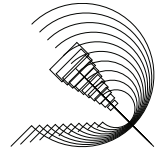
> "At the present time [in contrast with 1848]* it would seem that not only have the Slavs entered the ranks of the revolutionary nations, but that the center of revolutionary thought and revolutionary action is shifting more and more to the Slavs. The revolutionary center is shifting from the West to the East. In the first half of the nineteenth century, it was located in France, at times in England. In 1848 Germany too joined the ranks of the revolutionary nations... The new century has begun with events which suggest the idea that we are approaching a further shift of the revolutionary center, namely, to Russia... Russia, which has borrowed so much revolutionary initiative from the West, is now perhaps herself ready to serve the West as a source of revolutionary energy. The Russian revolutionary movement that is now flaring up will perhaps prove to be the most potent means of exorcising the spirit of flabby philistinism and coldly calculating politics that is beginning to spread in our midst, and it may cause the fighting spirit and the passionate devotion to our great ideals to flare up again. To Western Europe, Russia has long ceased to be a bulwark of reaction and absolutism. I think the reverse is true today. Western Europe is becoming Russia's bulwark of reaction and absolutism... The Russian revolutionaries might perhaps have coped with the tsar long ago had they not been compelled at the same time to fight his ally—European capital. Let us hope that this time they will succeed in coping with both enemies, and that the new 'Holy Alliance' will collapse more rapidly than its predecessors did. However, the present

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* Interjections in brackets within quotations are by Lenin unless otherwise indicated.—*Ed.*

struggle in Russia may end, the blood and suffering of the martyrs whom, unfortunately, it will produce in too great numbers, will not have been in vain. They will nourish the shoots of social revolution throughout the civilized world and make them grow more luxuriantly and rapidly. In 1848 the Slavs were a killing frost which blighted the flowers of the people's spring. Perhaps they are now destined to be the storm that will break the ice of reaction and irresistibly bring with it a new and happy spring for the nations."[18]

How well Karl Kautsky wrote eighteen years ago!



CHAPTER 2

An Essential Condition of the Bolshevik's Success

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.

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 (even if only in a single country), and whose power lies, not only in the strength of international capital, the strength and durability of their international connections, but also 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. All these reasons

make the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, and a single and inflexible will.

I repeat: the experience of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia has clearly shown even to those who are incapable of thinking or have had no occasion to give thought to the matter that absolute centralization and rigorous discipline of the proletariat are an essential condition of victory over the bourgeoisie.

This is often dwelt on. However, not nearly enough thought is given to what it means, and under what conditions it is possible. Would it not be better if the salutations addressed to the Soviets and the Bolsheviks were *more frequently* accompanied by a *profound analysis* of the reasons *why* the Bolsheviks have been able to build up the discipline needed by the revolutionary proletariat?

As a current of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *entire* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it has been able to build up and maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

The first questions to arise are: how is the discipline of the proletariat's revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian* masses of working people. Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, *from their own*

experience, that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party really capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end up in phrase mongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement.

The fact that, in 1917-20, Bolshevism was able, under unprecedentedly difficult conditions, to build up and successfully maintain the strictest centralization and iron discipline was due simply to a number of historical peculiarities of Russia.

On the one hand, Bolshevism arose in 1903 on a very firm foundation of Marxist theory. The correctness of this revolutionary theory, and of it alone, has been proved, not only by world experience throughout the nineteenth century, but especially by the experience of the seekings and vacillations, the errors and disappointments of revolutionary thought in Russia. For about half a century—approximately from the forties to the nineties of the last century—progressive thought in Russia, oppressed by a most brutal and reactionary tsarism, sought eagerly for a correct revolutionary theory, and followed with the utmost diligence and thoroughness each and every "last word" in this sphere in Europe and America. Russia achieved Marxism—the only correct revolutionary theory—through the *agony* she experienced in the course of half a century of unparalleled torment and sacrifice, of unparalleled revolutionary heroism, incredible energy, devoted searching, study, practical trial, disappointment, verification, and comparison with European experience. Thanks to the political

emigration caused by tsarism, revolutionary Russia, in the second half of the nineteenth century, acquired a wealth of international links and excellent information on the forms and theories of the world revolutionary movement, such as no other country possessed.

On the other hand, Bolshevism, which had arisen on this granite foundation of theory, went through fifteen years of practical history (1903-17) unequaled anywhere in the world in its wealth of experience. During those fifteen years, no other country knew anything even approximating to that revolutionary experience, that rapid and varied succession of different forms of the movement—legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, underground and open, local circles and mass movements, and parliamentary and terrorist forms. In no other country has there been concentrated, in so brief a period, such a wealth of forms, shades, and methods of struggle of *all* classes of modern society, a struggle which, owing to the backwardness of the country and the severity of the tsarist yoke, matured with exceptional rapidity, and assimilated most eagerly and successfully the appropriate "last word" of American and European political experience.



CHAPTER 3

The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism

The Years of Preparation for Revolution (1903-05)

THE APPROACH OF A GREAT STORM WAS sensed everywhere. All classes were in a state of ferment and preparation. Abroad, the press of the political exiles discussed the theoretical aspects of *all* the fundamental problems of the revolution. Representatives of the three main classes, of the three principal political trends—the liberal-bourgeois, the petty-bourgeois-democratic (concealed behind "social-democratic" and "social-revolutionary" labels[19]), and the proletarian-revolutionary—anticipated and prepared the impending open class struggle by waging a most bitter struggle on issues of program and tactics. *All* the issues on which the masses waged an armed struggle in 1905-07 and 1917-20 can (and should) be studied, in their embryonic form, in the press of the period. Among these three main trends there were, of course, a host of intermediate, transitional or half-hearted forms. It would be more correct to say that those political

and ideological trends which were genuinely of a class nature crystallized in the struggle of press organs, parties, factions and groups; the classes were forging the requisite political and ideological weapons for the impending battles.

The Years of Revolution (1905-07)

All classes came out into the open. All programmatic and tactical views were tested by the action of the masses. In its extent and acuteness, the strike struggle had no parallel anywhere in the world. The economic strike developed into a political strike, and the latter into insurrection. The relations between the proletariat, as the leader, and the vacillating and unstable peasantry, as the led, were tested in practice. The Soviet form of organization came into being in the spontaneous development of the struggle.[20] The controversies of that period over the significance of the Soviets anticipated the great struggle of 1917-20. The alternation of parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle, of the tactics of boycotting parliament and that of participating in parliament, of legal and illegal forms of struggle, and likewise their interrelations and connections—all this was marked by an extraordinary wealth of content. As for teaching the fundamentals of political science to masses and leaders, to classes and parties alike, each month of this period was equivalent to an entire year of "peaceful" and "constitutional" development. Without the "dress rehearsal" of 1905, the victory of the October Revolution in 1917 would have been impossible.

The Years of Reaction (1907-10)

Tsarism was victorious. All the revolutionary and opposition parties were smashed. Depression, demoralization, splits, discord, defection, and pornography took the place of politics. There was an ever-greater drift towards philosophical idealism; mysticism became the garb of counter-revolutionary

sentiments. At the same time, however, it was this great defeat that taught the revolutionary parties and the revolutionary class a real and very useful lesson, a lesson in historical dialectics, a lesson in an understanding of the political struggle, and in the art and science of waging that struggle. It is at moments of need that one learns who one's friends are. Defeated armies learn their lesson.

Victorious tsarism was compelled to speed up the destruction of the remnants of the pre-bourgeois, patriarchal mode of life in Russia. The country's development along bourgeois lines proceeded apace. Illusions that stood outside and above class distinctions, illusions concerning the possibility of avoiding capitalism, were scattered to the winds. The class struggle manifested itself in a quite new and more distinct way.

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. Of all the defeated opposition and revolutionary parties, the Bolsheviks affected the most orderly retreat, with the least loss to their "army," with its core best preserved, with the least significant splits (in point of depth and incurability), with the least demoralization, and in the best condition to resume work on the broadest scale and in the most correct and energetic manner. The Bolsheviks achieved this only because they ruthlessly exposed and expelled the revolutionary phrase-mongers, those who did not wish to understand that one had to retreat, that one had to know how to retreat, and that one had absolutely to learn how to work legally in the most reactionary of parliaments, in the most reactionary of trade unions, cooperative and insurance societies and similar organizations.

The Years of Revival (1910–14)

At first progress was incredibly slow, then, following the Lena events of 1912,[21] it became somewhat more rapid. Overcoming unprecedented difficulties, the Bolsheviks thrust back the Mensheviks, whose role as bourgeois agents in the working-class movement was clearly realized by the entire bourgeoisie after 1905, and whom the bourgeoisie therefore supported in a thousand ways against the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks would never have succeeded in doing this had they not followed the correct tactics of combining illegal work with the utilization of "legal opportunities," which they made a point of doing. In the elections to the arch-reactionary Duma,[22] the Bolsheviks won the full support of the worker curia.

The First Imperialist World War (1914–17)

Legal parliamentarism, with an extremely reactionary "parliament," rendered most useful service to the Bolsheviks, the party of the revolutionary proletariat. The Bolshevik deputies were exiled to Siberia.[23] All shades of social-imperialism, social-chauvinism, social-patriotism, inconsistent and consistent internationalism, pacifism, and the revolutionary repudiation of pacifist illusions found full expression in the Russian émigré press. The learned fools and the old women of the Second International, who had arrogantly and contemptuously turned up their noses at the abundance of "factions" in the Russian socialist movement and at the bitter struggle they were waging among themselves, were unable—when the war deprived them of their vaunted "legality" in *all* the advanced countries—to organize anything even approximating such a free (illegal) interchange of views and such a free (illegal) evolution of correct views as the Russian revolutionaries did in Switzerland and in a number of other countries. That was why both the avowed social-patriots

and the "Kautskyites" of all countries proved to be the worst traitors to the proletariat. One of the principal reasons why Bolshevism was able to achieve victory in 1917-20 was that, since the end of 1914, it has been ruthlessly exposing the baseness and vileness of social-chauvinism and "Kautskyism" (to which Longuetism[24] in France, the views of the Fabians[25] and the leaders of the Independent Labor Party[26] in Britain, of Turati in Italy, etc., correspond), the masses later becoming more and more convinced, from their own experience, of the correctness of the Bolshevik views.

The Second Revolution in Russia (February to October 1917)

Tsarism's senility and obsoleteness had (with the aid of the blows and hardships of a most agonizing war) created an incredibly destructive force directed against it. Within a few days Russia was transformed into a democratic bourgeois republic, freer—in war conditions—than any other country in the world. The leaders of the opposition and revolutionary parties began to set up a government, just as is done in the most "strictly parliamentary" republics; the fact that a man had been a leader of an opposition party in parliament—even in a most reactionary parliament—*facilitated* his subsequent role in the revolution.

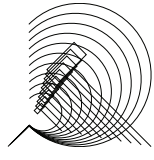
In a few weeks the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries thoroughly assimilated all the methods and manners, the arguments and sophistries of the European heroes of the Second International, of the ministerialists[27] and other opportunist riff-raff. Everything we now read about the Scheidemanns and Noskes, about Kautsky and Hilferding, Renner and Austerlitz, Otto Bauer and Fritz Adler, Turati and Longuet, about the Fabians and the leaders of the Independent Labor Party of Britain—all this seems to us (and indeed is) a dreary repetition, a reiteration, of an old and familiar refrain.

We have already witnessed all this in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the opportunists of a backward country became the forerunners of the opportunists in a number of advanced countries.

If the heroes of the Second International have all gone bankrupt and have disgraced themselves over the question of the significance and role of the Soviets and Soviet rule; if the leaders of the three very important parties which have now left the Second International (namely, the German Independent Social-Democratic Party,[28] the French Longuetists and the British Independent Labor Party) have disgraced themselves and become entangled in this question in a most "telling" fashion; if they have all shown themselves slaves to the prejudices of petty-bourgeois democracy (fully in the spirit of the petty-bourgeois of 1848 who called themselves "Social-Democrats")—then we can only say that we have *already* witnessed *all this* in the instance of the Mensheviks. As history would have it, the Soviets came into being in Russia in 1905; from February to October 1917, they were turned to a false use by the Mensheviks, who went bankrupt because of their inability to understand the role and significance of the Soviets; today the idea of Soviet power has emerged *throughout the world* and is spreading among the proletariat of all countries with extraordinary speed. Like our Mensheviks, the old heroes of the Second International are *everywhere* going bankrupt, because they are incapable of understanding the role and significance of the Soviets. Experience has proved that, on certain very important questions of the proletarian revolution, *all* countries will inevitably have to do what Russia has done.

Despite views that are today often to be met with in Europe and America, the Bolsheviks began their victorious struggle against the parliamentary and (in fact) bourgeois republic and against the Mensheviks in a very cautious manner, and the preparations they made for it were by no means simple. At the beginning of the period mentioned, we did *not* call for the

overthrow of the government but explained that it was impossible to overthrow it *without* first changing the composition and the temper of the Soviets. We did not proclaim a boycott of the bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, but said—and following the April (1917) Conference of our Party began to state officially in the name of the Party—that a bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly would be better than a bourgeois republic without a Constituent Assembly, but that a "workers' and peasants'" republic, a Soviet republic, would be better than any bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary republic. Without such thorough, circumspect and long preparations, we could not have achieved victory in October 1917, or have consolidated that victory.



CHAPTER 4

The Struggle Against Which Enemies Within the Working-Class Movement Helped Bolshevism Develop, Gain Strength, and Become Steeled

FIRST AND FOREMOST, THE STRUGGLE against opportunism which in 1914 definitely developed into social-chauvinism and definitely sided with the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. Naturally, this was Bolshevism's principal enemy within the working-class movement. It still remains the principal enemy on an international scale. The Bolsheviks have been devoting the greatest attention to this enemy. This aspect of Bolshevik activities is now fairly well known abroad too.

It was, however, different with Bolshevism's other enemy within the working-class movement. Little is known in other countries of the fact that Bolshevism took shape, developed and became steeled in the long years of struggle against *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*, which smacks of anarchism, or borrows something from the latter and, in all essential matters, does not measure up to the conditions and requirements of a consistently proletarian class struggle. Marxist theory has established—and the experience of all European revolutions and revolutionary movements has fully confirmed—that

the petty proprietor, the small master (a social type existing on a very extensive and even mass scale in many European countries), who, under capitalism, always suffers oppression and very frequently a most acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions of life, and even ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organization, discipline and steadfastness. A petty bourgeois driven to frenzy by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, and its tendency to turn rapidly into submission, apathy, phantasms, and even a frenzied infatuation with one bourgeois fad or another—all this is common knowledge. However, a theoretical or abstract recognition of these truths does not at all rid revolutionary parties of old errors, which always crop up at unexpected occasions, in somewhat new forms, in a hitherto unfamiliar garb or surroundings, in an unusual—a more or less unusual—situation.

Anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monstrosities complemented each other. And if in Russia—despite the more petty-bourgeois composition of her population as compared with the other European countries—anarchism's influence was negligible during the two revolutions (of 1905 and 1917) and the preparations for them, this should no doubt stand partly to the credit of Bolshevism, which has always waged a most ruthless and uncompromising struggle against opportunism. I say "partly," since of still greater importance in weakening anarchism's influence in Russia was the circumstance that in the past (the seventies of the nineteenth century) it was able to develop inordinately and to reveal its absolute erroneousness, its unfitness to serve the revolutionary class as a guiding theory.

When it came into being in 1903, Bolshevism took over the tradition of a ruthless struggle against petty-bourgeois,

semi-anarchist (or dilettante-anarchist) revolutionism, a tradition which had always existed in revolutionary Social-Democracy and had become particularly strong in our country during the years 1900-03, when the foundations for a mass party of the revolutionary proletariat were being laid in Russia. Bolshevism took over and carried on the struggle against a party which, more than any other, expressed the tendencies of petty-bourgeois revolutionism, namely, the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, and waged that struggle on three main issues. First, that party, which rejected Marxism, stubbornly refused (or, it might be more correct to say: was unable) to understand the need for a strictly objective appraisal of the class forces and their alignment, before taking any political action. Second, this party considered itself particularly "revolutionary," or "Left," because of its recognition of individual terrorism, assassination—something that we Marxists emphatically rejected. It was, of course, only on grounds of expediency that we rejected individual terrorism, whereas people who were capable of condemning "on principle" the terror of the Great French Revolution, or, in general, the terror employed by a victorious revolutionary party which is besieged by the bourgeoisie of the whole world, were ridiculed and laughed to scorn by Plekhanov in 1900-03, when he was a Marxist and a revolutionary. Third, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" thought it very "Left" to sneer at the comparatively insignificant opportunist sins of the German Social-Democratic Party, while they themselves imitated the extreme opportunists of that party, for example, on the agrarian question, or on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

History, incidentally, has now confirmed on a vast and worldwide scale the opinion we have always advocated, namely, that German *revolutionary* Social-Democracy (note that as far back as 1900-03 Plekhanov demanded Bernstein's expulsion from the Party, and in 1913 the Bolsheviks, always

continuing this tradition, exposed Legien's[29] baseness, vileness and treachery) *came closest* to being the party the revolutionary proletariat needs in order to achieve victory. Today, in 1920, after all the ignominious failures and crises of the war period and the early post-war years, it can be plainly seen that, of all the Western parties, the German revolutionary Social-Democrats produced the finest leaders, and recovered and gained new strength more rapidly than the others did. This may be seen in the instances both of the Spartacists[30] and the Left, proletarian wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which is waging an incessant struggle against the opportunism and spinelessness of the Kautskys, Hilferdings, Ledebours and Crispiens. If we now cast a glance to take in a complete historical period, namely, from the Paris Commune[31] to the first Socialist Soviet Republic, we shall find that Marxism's attitude to anarchism in general stands out most definitely and unmistakably. In the final analysis, Marxism proved to be correct, and although the anarchists rightly pointed to the opportunist views on the state prevalent among most of the socialist parties, it must be said, first, that this opportunism was connected with the distortion, and even deliberate suppression, of Marx's views on the state (in my book, *The State and Revolution*, I pointed out that for thirty-six years, from 1875 to 1911, Bebel withheld a letter by Engels,[32] which very clearly, vividly, bluntly and definitively exposed the opportunism of the current Social-Democratic views on the state); second, that the rectification of these opportunist views, and the recognition of Soviet power and its superiority to bourgeois parliamentary democracy proceeded most rapidly and extensively among those trends in the socialist parties of Europe and America that were most Marxist.

The struggle that Bolshevism waged against "Left" deviations within its own Party assumed particularly large proportions on two occasions: in 1908, on the question of whether or not to participate in a most reactionary

"parliament" and in the legal workers' societies, which were being restricted by most reactionary laws; and again in 1918 (the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk[33]), on the question of whether one "compromise" or another was permissible.

In 1908 the "Left" Bolsheviks were expelled from our Party for stubbornly refusing to understand the necessity of participating in a most reactionary "parliament."[34] The "Lefts"—among whom there were many splendid revolutionaries who subsequently were (and still are) commendable members of the Communist Party—based themselves particularly on the successful experience of the 1905 boycott. When, in August 1905, the tsar proclaimed the convocation of a consultative "parliament,"[35] the Bolsheviks called for its boycott, in the teeth of all the opposition parties and the Mensheviks, and the "parliament" was in fact swept away by the revolution of October 1905.[36] The boycott proved correct at the time, not because non-participation in reactionary parliaments is correct in general, but because we accurately appraised the objective situation, which was leading to the rapid development of the mass strikes first into a political strike, then into a revolutionary strike, and finally into an uprising. Moreover, the struggle centered at that time on the question of whether the convocation of the first representative assembly should be left to the tsar, or an attempt should be made to wrest its convocation from the old regime. When there was not, and could not be, any certainty that the objective situation was of a similar kind, and when there was no certainty of a similar trend and the same rate of development, the boycott was no longer correct.

The Bolsheviks' boycott of "parliament" in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience and showed that, when legal and illegal parliamentary and non-parliamentary forms of struggle are combined, it is sometimes useful and even essential to reject parliamentary forms. It would, however, be highly erroneous

to apply this experience blindly, imitatively and uncritically to *other* conditions and *other* situations. The Bolsheviks' boycott of the Duma in 1906 was a mistake, although a minor and easily remediable one.* The boycott of the Duma in 1907, 1908 and subsequent years was a most serious error and difficult to remedy, because, on the one hand, a very rapid rise of the revolutionary tide and its conversion into an uprising was not to be expected, and, on the other hand, the entire historical situation attendant upon the renovation of the bourgeois monarchy called for legal and illegal activities being combined. Today, when we look back at this fully completed historical period, whose connection with subsequent periods has now become quite clear, it becomes most obvious that in 1908-14 the Bolsheviks *could not have* preserved (let alone strengthened and developed) the core of the revolutionary party of the proletariat, had they not upheld, in a most strenuous struggle, the viewpoint that it was *obligatory* to combine legal and illegal forms of struggle, and that it was *obligatory* to participate even in a most reactionary parliament and in a number of other institutions hemmed in by reactionary laws (sick benefit societies, etc.).

In 1918 things did not reach a split. At that time the "Left" Communists formed only a separate group or "faction" within our Party, and that was not for long. In the same year, 1918, the most prominent representatives of "Left Communism,"[37] for example, Comrades Radek and Bukharin, openly acknowledged their error. It had seemed to them that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a compromise with the imperialists, which was inexcusable on principle and harmful to the party

* What applies to individuals also applies—with necessary modifications—to politics and parties. It is not he who makes no mistakes that is intelligent. There are no such men, nor can there be. It is he whose errors are not very grave and who is able to rectify them easily and quickly that is intelligent.

of the revolutionary proletariat. It was indeed a compromise with the imperialists, but it was a compromise which, under the circumstances, *had to be made*.

Today, when I hear our tactics in signing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty being attacked by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, for instance, or when I hear Comrade Lansbury say, in a conversation with me, "Our British trade union leaders say that if it was permissible for the Bolsheviks to compromise, it is permissible for them to compromise too," I usually reply by first of all giving a simple and "popular" example:

Imagine that your car is held up by armed bandits. You hand them over your money, passport, revolver and car. In return you are rid of the pleasant company of the bandits. That is unquestionably a compromise. "*Do ut des*" (I "give" you money, firearms and a car "so that you give" me the opportunity to get away from you with a whole skin). It would, however, be difficult to find a sane man who would declare such a compromise to be "inadmissible on principle," or who would call the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits might use the car and the firearms for further robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was just that kind of compromise.

But when, in 1914-18 and then in 1918-20, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia, the Scheidemannites (and to a large extent the Kautskyites) in Germany, Otto Bauer and Friedrich Adler (to say nothing of the Renners and Co.) in Austria, the Renaudels and Longuets and Co. in France, the Fabians, the Independents and the Laborites[38] in Britain entered into *compromises* with the bandits of their own bourgeoisie, and sometimes of the "Allied" bourgeoisie, and *against* the revolutionary proletariat of their own countries, all these gentlemen were actually acting as *accomplices in banditry*.

The conclusion is clear: to reject compromises "on principle," to reject the permissibility of compromises in

general, no matter of what kind, is childishness, which it is difficult even to consider seriously. A political leader who desires to be useful to the revolutionary proletariat must be able to distinguish *concrete* cases of compromises that are inexcusable and are an expression of opportunism and *treachery*; he must direct all the force of criticism, the full intensity of merciless exposure and relentless war, against *these concrete* compromises, and not allow the past masters of "practical" socialism and the parliamentary Jesuits to dodge and wriggle out of responsibility by means of disquisitions on "compromises in general." It is in this way that the "leaders" of the British trade unions, as well as of the Fabian society and the "Independent" Labor Party, dodge responsibility *for the treachery they have perpetrated*, for having made *a compromise* that is really tantamount to the worst kind of opportunism, treachery and betrayal.

There are different kinds of compromises. One must be able to analyze the situation and the concrete conditions of each compromise, or of each variety of compromise. One must learn to distinguish between a man who has given up his money and firearms to bandits so as to lessen the evil they can do and to facilitate their capture and execution, and a man who gives his money and firearms to bandits so as to share in the loot. In politics this is by no means always as elementary as it is in this childishly simple example. However, anyone who is out to think up for the workers some kind of recipe that will provide them with cut-and-dried solutions for all contingencies, or promises that the policy of the revolutionary proletariat will never come up against difficult or complex situations, is simply a charlatan.

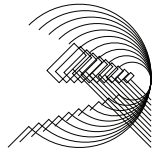
To leave no room for misinterpretation, I shall attempt to outline, if only very briefly, several fundamental rules for the analysis of concrete compromises.

The party which entered into a compromise with the German imperialists by signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

had been evolving its internationalism in practice ever since the end of 1914. It was not afraid to call for the defeat of the tsarist monarchy and to condemn "defense of country" in a war between two imperialist robbers. The parliamentary representatives of this party preferred exile in Siberia to taking a road leading to ministerial portfolios in a bourgeois government. The revolution that overthrew tsarism and established a democratic republic put this party to a new and tremendous test—it did not enter into any agreements with its "own" imperialists, but prepared and brought about their overthrow. When it had assumed political power, this party did not leave a vestige of either landed or capitalist ownership. After making public and repudiating the imperialists' secret treaties, this party proposed peace to *all* nations,[39] and yielded to the violence of the Brest-Litovsk robbers only after the Anglo-French imperialists had torpedoed the conclusion of a peace, and after the Bolsheviks had done everything humanly possible to hasten the revolution in Germany and other countries. The absolute correctness of this compromise, entered into by such a party in such a situation, is becoming ever clearer and more obvious with every day.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in Russia (like all the leaders of the Second International throughout the world, in 1914-20) began with treachery—by directly or indirectly justifying "defense of country," i.e., the defense of *their own* predatory bourgeoisie. They continued their treachery by entering into a coalition with the bourgeoisie of *their own* country, and fighting, together with *their own* bourgeoisie, against the revolutionary proletariat of their own country. Their bloc, first with Kerensky and the Cadets,[40] and then with Kolchak and Denikin in Russia—like the bloc of their *confrères* abroad with the bourgeoisie of *their* respective countries—was in fact desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. From beginning to end,

their compromise with the bandits of imperialism meant their becoming *accomplices* in imperialist banditry.



CHAPTER 5

"Left-Wing" Communism in Germany
The Leaders, the Party, the Class, the Masses

THE GERMAN COMMUNISTS WE MUST NOW speak of call themselves, not "Left-wingers" but, if I am not mistaken, an "opposition on principle."[41] From what follows below it will, however, be seen that they reveal all the symptoms of the "infantile disorder of Leftism."

Published by the "local group in Frankfurt am Main," a pamphlet reflecting the point of view of this opposition, and entitled *The Split in the Communist Party of Germany* (*The Spartacus League*) sets forth the substance of this opposition's views most saliently, and with the utmost clarity and concision. A few quotations will suffice to acquaint the reader with that substance:

> "The Communist Party is the party of the most determined class struggle..."
>
> "Politically, the transitional period [between capitalism and socialism] is one of the proletarian dictatorship..."
>
> "The question arises: who is to exercise this dictatorship: *the Communist Party or the proletarian class*?... *Fundamentally*,

should we strive for a dictatorship of the Communist Party, or for a dictatorship of the proletarian class?" (All italics as in the original)

The author of the pamphlet goes on to accuse the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany of seeking ways of achieving a *coalition with the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*, and of raising "*the question of recognizing*, *in principle*, *all political means*" of struggle, including parliamentarism, with the sole purpose of concealing its actual and main efforts to form a coalition with the Independents. The pamphlet goes on to say:

"The opposition have chosen another road. They are of the opinion that the question of the rule of the Communist Party and of the dictatorship of the Party is merely one of tactics. In any case, rule by the Communist Party is the ultimate form of any party rule. *Fundamentally*, we must work for the dictatorship of the proletarian class. And all the measures of the Party, its organizations, methods of struggle, strategy and tactics should be directed to that end. Accordingly, all compromise with other parties, all reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle which have become historically and politically obsolete, and any policy of maneuvering and compromise must be emphatically rejected."

"Specifically proletarian methods of revolutionary struggle must be strongly emphasized. New forms of organization must be created on the widest basis and with the widest scope in order to enlist the most extensive proletarian circles and strata to take part in the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party. A *Workers' Union*, based on factory organizations, should be the rallying point for all revolutionary elements. This should unite all workers who follow the slogan: 'Get out of the trade unions!' It is here that the militant proletariat musters its ranks for battle. Recognition of the class struggle, of the Soviet system and of the dictatorship should be sufficient for enrollment. All subsequent political education of the fighting masses and their political orientation in the struggle are the task of the Communist Party, which stands outside the Workers' Union..."

"Consequently, two Communist parties are now arrayed against each other:

> "*One is a party of leaders*, which is out to organize the revolutionary struggle and to direct it from *above*, accepting compromises and parliamentarism so as to create a situation enabling it to join a coalition government exercising a dictatorship.
>
> "*The other is a mass party*, which expects an upsurge of the revolutionary struggle from *below*, which knows and applies a single method in this struggle—a method which clearly leads to the goal—and rejects all parliamentary and opportunist methods. That single method is the unconditional *overthrow of the bourgeoisie*, so as then to set up the proletarian class dictatorship for the accomplishment of socialism...
>
> "There, the dictatorship of leaders; here, the dictatorship of the masses! That is our slogan."

Such are the main features characterizing the views of the opposition in the German Communist Party.

Any Bolshevik who has consciously participated in the development of Bolshevism since 1903 or has closely observed that development will at once say, after reading these arguments, "What old and familiar rubbish! What 'Left-wing' childishness!"

But let us examine these arguments a little more closely.

The mere presentation of the question—"dictatorship of the party *or* dictatorship of the class; dictatorship (party) of the leaders, *or* dictatorship (party) of the masses?"—testifies to most incredibly and hopelessly muddled thinking. These people want to *invent* something quite out of the ordinary, and, in their effort to be clever, make themselves ridiculous. It is common knowledge that the masses are divided into classes, that the masses can be contrasted with classes only by contrasting the vast majority in general, regardless of division according to status in the social system of production, with categories holding a definite status in the social system of production; that as a rule and in most cases—at least in present-day civilized countries—classes are led by political parties; that political parties, as a general rule, are run by more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative,

influential and experienced members, who are elected to the most responsible positions, and are called leaders. All this is elementary. All this is clear and simple. Why replace this with some kind of rigmarole, some new Volapük?* On the one hand, these people seem to have got muddled when they found themselves in a predicament, when the party's abrupt transition from legality to illegality upset the customary, normal and simple relations between leaders, parties and classes. In Germany, as in other European countries, people had become too accustomed to legality, to the free and proper election of "leaders" at regular party congresses, to the convenient method of testing the class composition of parties through parliamentary elections, mass meetings, the press, the sentiments of the trade unions and other associations, etc. When, instead of this customary procedure, it became necessary, because of the stormy development of the revolution and the development of the civil war, to go over rapidly from legality to illegality, to combine the two, and to adopt the "inconvenient" and "undemocratic" methods of selecting, or forming, or preserving "groups of leaders"—people lost their bearings and began to think up some unmitigated nonsense. Certain members of the Communist Party of Holland,[39] who were unlucky enough to be born in a small country with traditions and conditions of highly privileged and highly stable legality, and who had never seen a transition from legality to illegality, probably fell into confusion, lost their heads, and helped create these absurd inventions.

On the other hand, one can see simply a thoughtless and incoherent use of the now "fashionable" terms: "masses" and "leaders." These people have heard and memorized a great many attacks on "leaders," in which the latter have been

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* Volapük was a universal language invented in 1879 by Johan M. Schleyer of Constance, Baden.—*Ed*.

contrasted with the "masses"; however, they have proved unable to think matters out and gain a clear understanding of what it was all about.

The divergence between "leaders" and "masses" was brought out with particular clarity and sharpness in all countries at the end of the imperialist war and following it. The principal reason for this was explained many times by Marx and Engels between the years 1852 and 1892, from the example of Britain. That country's exclusive position led to the emergence, from the "masses," of a semi-petty-bourgeois, opportunist "labor aristocracy." The leaders of this labor aristocracy were constantly going over to the bourgeoisie, and were directly or indirectly on its payroll. Marx earned the honor of incurring the hatred of these disreputable persons by openly branding them as traitors. Present-day (twentieth-century) imperialism has given a few advanced countries an exceptionally privileged position, which, everywhere in the Second International, has produced a certain type of traitor, opportunist, and social-chauvinist leaders, who champion the interests of their own craft, their own section of the labor aristocracy. The opportunist parties have become separated from the "masses," i.e., from the broadest strata of the working people, their majority, the lowest-paid workers. The revolutionary proletariat cannot be victorious unless this evil is combated, unless the opportunist, social-traitor leaders are exposed, discredited and expelled. That is the policy the Third International has embarked on.[42]

To go so far, in this connection, as to contrast, *in general*, the dictatorship of the masses with a dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd, and stupid. What is particularly amusing is that, in fact, instead of the old leaders, who hold generally accepted views on simple matters, *new leaders* are brought forth (under cover of the slogan "Down with the leaders!"), who talk rank stuff and nonsense. Such are Laufenberg, Wolffheim, Horner,[43] Karl Schroder, Friedrich

Wendel and Karl Erler,[44] in Germany. Erler's attempts to give the question more "profundity" and to proclaim that in general political parties are unnecessary and "bourgeois" are so supremely absurd that one can only shrug one's shoulders. It all goes to drive home the truth that a minor error can always assume monstrous proportions if it is persisted in, if profound justifications are sought for it, and if it is carried to its logical conclusion.

Repudiation of the Party principle and of Party discipline—that is what the opposition has *arrived at*. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in *the interests of the bourgeoisie*. It all adds up to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness and instability, that incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organized action, which, if encouraged, must inevitably destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement. From the standpoint of communism, repudiation of the Party principle means attempting to leap from the eve of capitalism's collapse (in Germany), not to the lower or the intermediate phase of communism, but to the higher. We in Russia (in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie) are making the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism or the lower stage of communism. Classes still remain, and will remain everywhere *for years after* the proletariat's conquest of power. Perhaps in Britain, where there is no peasantry (but where petty proprietors exist), this period may be shorter. 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. They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness,

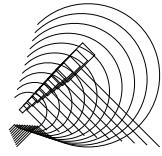
disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralization and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organizational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully and victoriously. 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. It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralized big bourgeoisie than to "vanquish" the millions upon millions of petty proprietors; however, through their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive and demoralizing activities, they produce the *very* results which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to *restore* the bourgeoisie. 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.

Parallel with the question of the leaders—the party—the class—the masses, we must pose the question of the "reactionary" trade unions. But first I shall take the liberty of making a few concluding remarks based on the experience of our Party. There *have always been* attacks on the "dictatorship of leaders" in our Party. The first time I heard such attacks, I recall, was in 1895, when, officially, no party yet existed, but a central group was taking shape in St. Petersburg, which was to assume the leadership of the district groups.[45] At the Ninth Congress of our Party (April 1920)[46] there was a small opposition, which also spoke against the "dictatorship

of leaders," against the "oligarchy," and so on. There is therefore nothing surprising, new, or terrible in the "infantile disorder" of "Left-wing communism" among the Germans. The ailment involves no danger, and after it the organism even becomes more robust. In our case, on the other hand, the rapid alternation of legal and illegal work, which made it necessary to keep the general staff—the leaders—under cover and cloak them in the greatest secrecy, sometimes gave rise to extremely dangerous consequences. The worst of these was that in 1912 the *agent provocateur* Malinovsky got into the Bolshevik Central Committee. He betrayed scores and scores of the best and most loyal comrades, caused them to be sentenced to penal servitude, and hastened the death of many of them. That he did not cause still greater harm was due to the correct balance between legal and illegal work. As member of the Party's Central Committee and Duma deputy, Malinovsky was forced, in order to gain our confidence, to help us establish legal daily papers, which even under tsarism were able to wage a struggle against the Menshevik opportunism and to spread the fundamentals of Bolshevism in a suitably disguised form. While, with one hand, Malinovsky sent scores and scores of the finest Bolsheviks to penal servitude and death, he was obliged, with the other, to assist in the education of scores and scores of thousands of new Bolsheviks through the medium of the legal press. Those German (and also British, American, French and Italian) comrades who are faced with the task of learning how to conduct revolutionary work within the reactionary trade unions would do well to give serious thought to this fact.*

* Malinovsky was a prisoner of war in Germany. On his return to Russia when the Bolsheviks were in power he was instantly put on trial and shot by our workers. The Mensheviks attacked us most bitterly for our mistake—the fact that an *agent provocateur* had become a member of the Central Committee of our Party. But when, under Kerensky, we

In many countries, including the most advanced, the bourgeoisie are undoubtedly sending *agents provocateurs* into the Communist parties and will continue to do so. A skillful combining of illegal and legal work is one of the ways to combat this danger.



demanded the arrest and trial of Rodzyanko, the Chairman of the Duma, because he had known, even before the war, that Malinovsky was an *agent provocateur* and *had not informed* the Trudoviks [a Duma group of petty-bourgeois democrats consisting of peasants and intellectuals of a Narodnik orientation.—*Ed*.] and the workers in the Duma, neither the Mensheviks nor the Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Kerensky government supported our demand, and Rodzyanko remained at large and made off unhindered to join Denikin.

CHAPTER 6

Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?

THE GERMAN "LEFTS" CONSIDER THAT, AS FAR as they are concerned, the reply to this question is an unqualified negative. In their opinion, declamations and angry outcries (such as uttered by K. Horner in a particularly "solid" and particularly stupid manner) against "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary" trade unions are sufficient "proof" that it is unnecessary and even inexcusable for revolutionaries and Communists to work in yellow, social-chauvinist, compromising and counter-revolutionary trade unions of the Legien type.

However firmly the German "Lefts" may be convinced of the revolutionism of such tactics, the latter are in fact fundamentally wrong, and contain nothing but empty phrases.

To make this clear, I shall begin with our own experience, in keeping with the general plan of the present pamphlet, which is aimed at applying to Western Europe whatever is universally practicable, significant and relevant in the history and the present-day tactics of Bolshevism.

In Russia today, the connection between leaders, party, class and masses, as well as the attitude of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its party to the trade unions, are concretely as follows: the dictatorship is exercised by the proletariat organized in the Soviets; the proletariat is guided by the Communist Party of Bolsheviks, which, according to the figures of the latest Party Congress (April 1920), has a membership of 611,000. The membership varied greatly both before and after the October Revolution, and used to be much smaller, even in 1918 and 1919.[47] We are apprehensive of an excessive growth of the Party, because careerists and charlatans, who deserve only to be shot, inevitably do all they can to insinuate themselves into the ranks of the ruling party. The last time we opened wide the doors of the Party—to workers and peasants only—was when (in the winter of 1919) Yudenich was within a few versts [a Russian length of measurement equal to about 1.1 kilometer—*Ed*.] of Petrograd, and Denikin was in Orel (about 350 versts from Moscow), i.e., when the Soviet Republic was in mortal danger, and when adventurers, careerists, charlatans and unreliable persons generally could not possibly count on making a profitable career (and had more reason to expect the gallows and torture) by joining the Communists.[48] The Party, which holds annual congresses (the most recent on the basis of one delegate per 1,000 members), is directed by a Central Committee of nineteen elected at the Congress, while the current work in Moscow has to be carried on by still smaller bodies, known as the Organizing Bureau and the Political Bureau, which are elected at plenary meetings of the Central Committee, five members of the Central Committee to each bureau. This, it would appear, is a full-fledged "oligarchy." No important political or organizational question is decided by any state institution in our republic without the guidance of the Party's Central Committee.

In its work, the Party relies directly on the *trade unions*, which, according to the data of the last congress (April 1920),

now have a membership of over 4 million and are formally *non-Party*. Actually, all the directing bodies of the vast majority of the unions, and primarily, of course, of the all-Russia general trade union center or bureau (the All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions), are made up of Communists and carry out all the directives of the Party. Thus, on the whole, we have a formally non-communist, flexible and relatively wide and very powerful proletarian apparatus, by means of which the Party is closely linked up with the *class* and the *masses*, and by means of which, under the leadership of the Party, the *class dictatorship* is exercised. Without close contacts with the trade unions, and without their energetic support and devoted efforts, not only in economic, *but also in military* affairs, it would of course have been impossible for us to govern the country and to maintain the dictatorship for two-and-a-half months, let alone two-and-a-half years. In practice, these very close contacts naturally call for highly complex and diversified work in the form of propaganda, agitation, timely and frequent conferences, not only with the leading trade union workers, but with influential trade union workers generally; they call for a determined struggle against the Mensheviks, who still have a certain though very small following to whom they teach all kinds of counter-revolutionary machinations, ranging from an ideological defense of (*bourgeois*) democracy and the preaching that the trade unions should be "independent" (independent of proletarian state power!) to sabotage of proletarian discipline, etc., etc.

We consider that contacts with the "masses" through the trade unions are not enough. In the course of our revolution, practical activities have given rise to such institutions as *non-Party workers' and peasants' conferences*, and we strive by every means to support, develop and extend this institution in order to be able to observe the temper of the masses, come closer to them, meet their requirements, promote the best among them to state posts, etc. Under a recent decree

on the transformation of the People's Commissariat of State Control into the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, non-Party conferences of this kind have been empowered to select members of the State Control to carry out various kinds of investigations, etc.

Then, of course, all the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets, which embrace the working masses irrespective of occupation. The district congresses of Soviets are *democratic* institutions, the like of which even the best of the democratic republics of the bourgeois world have never known; through these congresses (whose proceedings the Party endeavors to follow with the closest attention), as well as by continually appointing class-conscious workers to various posts in the rural districts, the proletariat exercises its role of leader of the peasantry, gives effect to the dictatorship of the urban proletariat and wages a systematic struggle against the rich, bourgeois, exploiting and profiteering peasantry, etc.

Such is the general mechanism of the proletarian state power viewed "from above," from the standpoint of the practical implementation of the dictatorship. We hope that the reader will understand why the Russian Bolshevik who has known this mechanism for twenty-five years and has seen it develop out of small, illegal and underground circles, cannot help regarding all this talk about "from above" *or* "from below," about the dictatorship of leaders *or* the dictatorship of the masses, etc., as ridiculous and childish nonsense, something like discussing whether a man's left leg or right arm is of greater use to him.

We cannot but regard as equally ridiculous and childish nonsense the pompous, very learned, and frightfully revolutionary disquisitions of the German Lefts to the effect that Communists cannot and should not work in reactionary trade unions, that it is permissible to turn down such work, that it is necessary to withdraw from the trade unions and create a brand-new and immaculate "Workers' Union" invented by

very pleasant (and, probably, for the most part very youthful) Communists, etc., etc.

Capitalism inevitably leaves socialism the legacy, on the one hand, of the old trade and craft distinctions among the workers, distinctions evolved in the course of centuries; on the other hand, trade unions, which only very slowly, in the course of years and years, can and will develop into broader industrial unions with less of the craft union about them (embracing entire industries, and not only crafts, trades and occupations), and later proceed, through these industrial unions, to eliminate the division of labor among people, to educate and school people, give them *all-round development and an all-round* training, so that they *are able to do everything*. Communism is advancing and must advance towards that goal, and *will reach* it, but only after very many years. To attempt in practice, today, to anticipate this future result of a fully developed, fully stabilized and constituted, fully comprehensive and mature communism would be like trying to teach higher mathematics to a child of four.

We can (and must) begin to build socialism, not with abstract human material, or with human material specially prepared by us, but with the human material bequeathed to us by capitalism. True, that is no easy matter, but no other approach to this task is serious enough to warrant discussion.

The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the *rudiments* of class organization. When the *revolutionary party of the proletariat*, the *highest* form of proletarian class organization, began to take shape (and the Party will not merit the name until it learns to weld the leaders into one indivisible whole with the class and the masses) the trade unions inevitably began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrow-mindedness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc.

However, the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class. The proletariat's conquest of political power is a gigantic step forward for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever and in a new way, not only in the old, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time bearing in mind that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of communism" and a preparatory school that trains proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organization of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the working people.

In the sense mentioned above, a *certain* "reactionism" in the trade unions is *inevitable* under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not to understand this means a complete failure to understand the fundamental conditions of the *transition* from capitalism to socialism. It would be egregious folly to fear *this* "reactionism" or to try to *evade* or leap over it, for it would mean fearing that function of the proletarian vanguard which consists in training, educating, enlightening and drawing into the new life the most backward strata and masses of the working class and the peasantry. On the other hand, it would be a still graver error to postpone the achievement of the dictatorship of the proletariat until a time when there will not be a single worker with a narrow-minded craft outlook, or with craft and craft-union prejudices. The art of politics (and the Communist's correct understanding of his tasks) consists in correctly gauging the conditions and the moment when the vanguard of the proletariat can successfully assume power, when it is able—during and after the seizure of power—to win adequate support from sufficiently broad strata of the working class and of the non-proletarian working masses, and when it is able thereafter to maintain, consolidate and extend its rule

by educating, training and attracting ever broader masses of the working people.

Further. In countries more advanced than Russia, a certain reactionism in the trade unions has been and was bound to be manifested in a far greater measure than in our country. Our Mensheviks found support in the trade unions (and to some extent still do so in a small number of unions), as a result of the latter's craft-narrow-mindedness, craft-selfishness and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer footing in the trade unions; there the *craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous, and petty-bourgeois "labor aristocracy," imperialist-minded, and imperialist-corrupted*, has developed into a much stronger section than in our country. That is incontestable. The struggle against the Gomperses, and against the Jouhaux, Hendersons, Merrheims, Legiens and Co. in Western Europe is much more difficult than the struggle against our Mensheviks, who are an *absolutely homogeneous* social and political type. This struggle must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unfailingly be brought—as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions. Political power cannot be captured (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until the struggle has reached a *certain* stage. This "certain stage" will be *different* in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful, experienced and knowledgeable political leaders of the proletariat in each particular country. (In Russia the elections to the Constituent Assembly[49] in November 1917, a few days after the proletarian revolution of October 25, 1917, were one of the criteria of the success of this struggle. In these elections the Mensheviks were utterly defeated; they received 700,000 votes—1,400,000 if the vote in Transcaucasia is added—as against 9,000,000 votes polled by the Bolsheviks.

See my article, "The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."[50])

We are waging a struggle against the "labor aristocracy" in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them over to our side; we are waging the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class over to our side. It would be absurd to forget this most elementary and most self-evident truth. Yet it is this very absurdity that the German "Left" Communists perpetrate when, *because* of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union *top leadership*, they jump to the conclusion that... we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and *artificial* forms of labor organization! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the bourgeoisie. Like all the opportunist, social-chauvinist, and Kautskyite trade union leaders, our Mensheviks are nothing but "agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement" (as we have always said the Mensheviks are), or "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class," to use the splendid and profoundly true expression of the followers of Daniel De Leon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labor aristocrats, or "workers who have become completely bourgeois."[51]

This ridiculous "theory" that Communists should not work in reactionary trade unions reveals with the utmost clarity the frivolous attitude of the "Left" Communists towards the question of influencing the "masses," and their misuse of clamor about the "masses." If you want to help the "masses" and win the sympathy and support of the "masses," you should not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the "leaders" (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly

connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must absolutely *work wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of any sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. The trade unions and the workers' cooperatives (the latter sometimes, at least) are the very organizations in which the masses are to be found. According to figures quoted in the Swedish paper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* of March 10, 1920, the trade union membership in Great Britain increased from 5,500,000 at the end of 1917 to 6,600,000 at the end of 1918, an increase of 19 percent. Towards the close of 1919, the membership was estimated at 7,500,000. I have not got the corresponding figures for France and Germany to hand, but absolutely incontestable and generally known facts testify to a rapid rise in the trade union membership in these countries too.

These facts make crystal clear something that is confirmed by thousands of other symptoms, namely, that class-consciousness and the desire for organization are growing among the proletarian masses, among the rank and file, among the backward elements. Millions of workers in Great Britain, France and Germany are *for the first time* passing from a complete lack of organization to the elementary, lowest, simplest, and (to those still thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices) most easily comprehensible form of organization, namely, the trade unions; yet the revolutionary but imprudent Left Communists stand by, crying out "the masses," "the masses!" but *refusing to work within the trade unions*, on the pretext that they are "reactionary," and invent a brand-new, immaculate little "Workers' Union," which is guiltless of bourgeois-democratic prejudices and innocent of craft or narrow-minded craft-union sins, a union which,

they claim, will be (!) a broad organization. "Recognition of the Soviet system and the dictatorship" will be the *only* (!) condition of membership.*

It would be hard to imagine any greater ineptitude or greater harm to the revolution than that caused by the "Left" revolutionaries! Why, if we in Russia today, after two-and-a-half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente,[52] were to make "recognition of the dictatorship" a condition of trade union membership, we would be doing a very foolish thing, damaging our influence among the masses, and helping the Mensheviks. The task devolving on Communists is to *convince* the backward elements, to work *among* them, and not to *fence themselves off* from them with artificial and childishly "Left" slogans.

There can be no doubt that the Gomperses, the Hendersons, the Jonhaux and the Legiens are very grateful to those "Left" revolutionaries who, like the German opposition "on principle" (heaven preserve us from such "principles"!), or like some of the revolutionaries in the American Industrial Workers of the World[53] advocate quitting the reactionary trade unions and refusing to work in them. These men, the "leaders" of opportunism, will no doubt resort to every device of bourgeois diplomacy and to the aid of bourgeois governments, the clergy, the police and the courts, to keep Communists out of the trade unions, oust them by every means, make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, and insult, bait and persecute them. We must be able to stand up to all this, agree to make any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to various stratagems, artifices and illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, as long as we get into the trade unions, remain in them, and carry on communist work within them at all costs. Under tsarism we had no "legal opportunities"

* See pp. 82-83.—*Ed.*

whatsoever until 1905. However, when Zubatov, agent of the secret police, organized Black-Hundred[54] workers' assemblies and workingmen's societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies and into these societies (I personally remember one of them, Comrade Babushkin, a leading St. Petersburg factory worker, shot by order of the tsar's generals in 1906). They established contacts with the masses, were able to carry on their agitation, and succeeded in wresting workers from the influence of Zubatov's agents.* Of course, in Western Europe, which is imbued with most deep-rooted legalistic, constitutionalist and bourgeois-democratic prejudices, this is more difficult to achieve. However, it can and must be carried out, and systematically at that.

The Executive Committee of the Third International must, in my opinion, positively condemn, and call upon the next congress of the Communist International to condemn both the policy of refusing to work in reactionary trade unions in general (explaining in detail why such refusal is unwise, and what extreme harm it does to the cause of the proletarian revolution) and, in particular, the line of conduct of some members of the Communist Party of Holland, who—whether directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, wholly or partly, it does not matter—have supported this erroneous policy. The Third International must break with the tactics of the Second International, it must not evade or play down points at issue, but must pose them in a straightforward fashion. The whole truth has been put squarely to the "Independents" (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany); the whole truth must likewise be put squarely to the "Left" Communists.

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* The Gomperses, Hendersons, Jouhaux and Legiens are nothing but Zubatovs, differing from our Zubatov only in their European garb and polish, and the civilized, refined and democratically suave manner of conducting their despicable policy.

CHAPTER 7

Should We Participate in Bourgeois Parliaments?

IT IS WITH THE UTMOST CONTEMPT—AND THE utmost levity—that the German "Left" Communists reply to this question in the negative. Their arguments? In the passage quoted above we read, "All reversion to parliamentary forms of struggle, which have become historically and politically obsolete, must be emphatically rejected..." This is said with ridiculous pretentiousness, and is patently wrong. "Reversion" to parliamentarism, forsooth! Perhaps there is already a Soviet republic in Germany? It does not look like it! How, then, can one speak of "reversion"? Is this not an empty phrase?

Parliamentarism has become "historically obsolete." That is true in the propaganda sense. However, everybody knows that this is still a far cry from overcoming it in *practice*. Capitalism could have been declared—and with full justice—to be "historically obsolete" many decades ago, but that does not at all remove the need for a very long and very persistent struggle *on the basis* of capitalism. Parliamentarism is "historically obsolete" from the standpoint of *world history*, i.e., the *era* of bourgeois parliamentarism is over, and the *era*

of the proletarian dictatorship has *begun*. That is incontestable. But world history is counted in decades. Ten or twenty years earlier or later makes no difference when measured with the yardstick of world history; from the standpoint of world history, it is a trifle that cannot be considered even approximately. But for that very reason, it is a glaring theoretical error to apply the yardstick of world history to practical politics.

Is parliamentarism "politically obsolete"? That is quite a different matter. If that were true, the position of the "Lefts" would be a strong one. But it has to be proved by a most searching analysis, and the "Lefts" do not even know how to approach the matter. In the "Theses on Parliamentarism," published in the *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau in Amsterdam of the Communist International* No. 1, February 1920, and obviously expressing the Dutch-Left or Left-Dutch strivings, the analysis, as we shall see, is also hopelessly poor.

In the first place, contrary to the opinion of such outstanding political leaders as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht,[55] the German "Lefts," as we know, considered parliamentarism "politically obsolete" even in January 1919. We know that the "Lefts" were mistaken. This fact alone utterly destroys, at a single stroke, the proposition that parliamentarism is "politically obsolete." It is for the "Lefts" to prove why their error, indisputable at that time, is no longer an error. They do not and cannot produce even a shred of proof. 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*. By failing to fulfill this duty and give the utmost attention and consideration to the study of

their patent error, the "Lefts" in Germany (and in Holland) have proved that they are not a *party of a class*, but a circle, not a *party of the masses*, but a group of intellectualists and of a few workers who are the worst features of intellectualism.

Second, in the same pamphlet of the Frankfurt group of "Lefts," which we have already cited in detail, we read:

> "The millions of workers who still follow the policy of the Centre [the Catholic 'Centre' Party] are counter-revolutionary. The rural proletarians provide the legions of counter-revolutionary troops." (Page 3 of the pamphlet.)

Everything goes to show that this statement is far too sweeping and exaggerated. But the basic fact set forth here is incontrovertible, and its acknowledgment by the "Lefts" is particularly clear evidence of their mistake. How can one say that "parliamentarism is politically obsolete," when "millions" and "legions" of *proletarians* are not only still in favor of parliamentarism in general, but are downright "counter-revolutionary"!? It is obvious that parliamentarism in Germany is *not yet* politically obsolete. It is obvious that the "Lefts" in Germany have mistaken *their desire*, their politico-ideological attitude, for objective reality. That is a most dangerous mistake for revolutionaries to make. In Russia—where, over a particularly long period and in particularly varied forms, the most brutal and savage yoke of tsarism produced revolutionaries of diverse shades, revolutionaries who displayed amazing devotion, enthusiasm, heroism and willpower—we have observed this mistake of the revolutionaries at very close quarters; we have studied it very attentively and have a firsthand knowledge of it; that is why we can also see it especially clearly in others. Parliamentarism is of course "politically obsolete" to the Communists in Germany; but—and that is the whole point—we must *not* regard what is obsolete *to us* as something obsolete *to a class*, *to the masses*. Here again we find that the "Lefts" do not

know how to reason, do not know how to act as the party of a *class*, as the party of the *masses*. You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You are duty bound to call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices what they are—prejudices. But at the same time, you must *soberly* follow the *actual* state of the class-consciousness and preparedness of the entire class (not only of its communist vanguard), and of all the *working people* (not only of their advanced elements).

Even if only a fairly large *minority* of the industrial workers, and not "millions" and "legions," follow the lead of the Catholic clergy—and a similar minority of rural workers follow the landowners and kulaks (Grossbauern)—it *undoubtedly* signifies that parliamentarism in Germany has not *yet* politically outlived itself, that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle on the parliamentary rostrum is *obligatory* on the party of the revolutionary proletariat *specifically* for the purpose of educating the backward strata of *its own class*, and for the purpose of awakening and enlightening the undeveloped, downtrodden and ignorant rural *masses*. Whilst you lack the strength to do away with bourgeois parliaments and every other type of reactionary institution, you *must* work within them because *it is there* that you will still find workers who are duped by the priests and stultified by the conditions of rural life; otherwise, you risk turning into nothing but windbags.

Third, the "Left" Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks. One sometimes feels like telling them to praise us less and to try to get a better knowledge of the Bolsheviks' tactics. We took part in the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the Russian bourgeois parliament in September-November 1917. Were our tactics correct or not? If not, then this should be clearly stated and proved, for it is necessary in evolving the correct tactics for international

communism. If they were correct, then certain conclusions must be drawn. Of course, there can be no question of placing conditions in Russia on a par with conditions in Western Europe. But as regards the particular question of the meaning of the concept that "parliamentarism has become politically obsolete," due consideration should be taken of our experience, for unless concrete experience is taken into account such concepts very easily turn into empty phrases. In September-November 1917, did we, the Russian Bolsheviks, not have *more* right than any Western Communists to consider that parliamentarism was politically obsolete in Russia? Of course we did, for the point is not whether bourgeois parliaments have existed for a long time or a short time, but how far the masses of the working people are *prepared* (ideologically, politically and practically) to accept the Soviet system and to dissolve the bourgeois-democratic parliament (or allow it to be dissolved). It is an absolutely incontestable and fully established historical fact that, in September-November 1917, the urban working class and the soldiers and peasants of Russia were, because of a number of special conditions, exceptionally well prepared to accept the Soviet system and to disband the most democratic of bourgeois parliaments. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks did *not* boycott the Constituent Assembly, but took part in the elections both before *and after* the proletariat conquered political power. That these elections yielded exceedingly valuable (and to the proletariat, highly useful) political results has, I make bold to hope, been proved by me in the above-mentioned article, which analyses in detail the returns of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia.

The conclusion which follows from this is absolutely incontrovertible: it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet republic and even *after* such a victory,

actually helps that proletariat to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it *facilitates* their successful dissolution, and *helps* to make bourgeois parliamentarism "politically obsolete." To ignore this experience, while at the same time claiming affiliation to the Communist *International*, which must work out its tactics internationally (not as narrow or exclusively national tactics, but as international tactics), means committing a gross error and actually abandoning internationalism in deed, while recognizing it in word.

Now let us examine the "Dutch-Left" arguments in favor of non-participation in parliaments. The following is the text of Thesis No. 4, the most important of the above-mentioned "Dutch" theses:

> "When the capitalist system of production has broken down, and society is in a state of revolution, parliamentary action gradually loses importance as compared with the action of the masses themselves. When, in these conditions, parliament becomes the center and organ of the counter-revolution, whilst, on the other hand, the laboring class builds up the instruments of its power in the Soviets, it may even prove necessary to abstain from all and any participation in parliamentary action."

The first sentence is obviously wrong, since action by the masses, a big strike, for instance, is more important than parliamentary activity at *all* times, and not only during a revolution or in a revolutionary situation. This obviously untenable and historically and politically incorrect argument merely shows very clearly that the authors completely ignore both the general European experience (the French experience before the revolutions of 1848 and 1870; the German experience of 1878-90, etc.) and the Russian experience* of the importance of *combining* legal and illegal struggle. This

* See "The Years of Preparation for Revolution (1903-05)" on p. 64.—*Ed.*

question is of immense importance both in general and in particular, because in *all* civilized and advanced countries the time is rapidly approaching when such a combination will more and more become—and has already partly become—mandatory on the party of the revolutionary proletariat, inasmuch as civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is maturing and is imminent, and because of savage persecution of the Communists by republican governments and bourgeois governments generally, which resort to any violation of legality (the example of America* is edifying enough), etc. The Dutch, and the Lefts in general, have utterly failed to understand this highly important question.

The second sentence is, in the first place, historically wrong. We Bolsheviks participated in the most counterrevolutionary parliaments, and experience has shown that this participation was not only useful but indispensable to the party of the revolutionary proletariat, after the first bourgeois revolution in Russia (1905), so as to pave the way for the second bourgeois revolution (February 1917), and then for the socialist revolution (October 1917). In the second place, this sentence is amazingly illogical. If a parliament becomes an organ and a "center" (in reality it never has been and never can be a "center," but that is by the way) of counter-revolution, while the workers are building up the instruments of their power in the form of the Soviets, then it follows that the workers must prepare—ideologically, politically and technically—for the struggle of the Soviets against parliament, for the dispersal of parliament by the Soviets. But it does not at all follow that this dispersal is hindered, or is not facilitated, by the presence of a Soviet opposition *within* the counter-revolutionary parliament.

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* The raids upon Communist organizations and their persecution conducted on a national scale early in 1920 under the direction of Attorney-General Palmer of the Wilson administration, usually referred to as the Palmer raids.—*Ed*.

In the course of our victorious struggle against Denikin and Kolchak, we never found that the existence of a Soviet and proletarian opposition in their camp was immaterial to our victories. We know perfectly well that the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918 was not hampered but was actually facilitated by the fact that, within the counter-revolutionary Constituent Assembly which was about to be dispersed, there was a consistent Bolshevik, as well as an inconsistent, Left Socialist-Revolutionary Soviet opposition. The authors of the theses are engaged in muddled thinking; they have forgotten the experience of many, if not all, revolutions, which shows the great usefulness, during a revolution, of a *combination* of mass action outside a reactionary parliament with an opposition sympathetic to (or, better still, directly supporting) the revolution within it. The Dutch, and the "Lefts" in general, argue in this respect like doctrinaires of the revolution, who have never taken part in a real revolution, have never given thought to the history of revolutions, or have naïvely mistaken subjective "rejection" of a reactionary institution for its actual destruction by the combined operation of a number of objective factors. The surest way of discrediting and damaging a new political (and not only political) idea is to reduce it to absurdity on the plea of defending it. For any truth, if "overdone" (as Dietzgen Senior put it), if exaggerated, or if carried beyond the limits of its actual applicability, can be reduced to an absurdity, and is even bound to become an absurdity under these conditions. That is just the kind of disservice the Dutch and German Lefts are rendering to the new truth of the Soviet form of government being superior to bourgeois-democratic parliaments. Of course, anyone would be in error who voiced the outmoded viewpoint or in general considered it impermissible, in all and any circumstances, to reject participation in bourgeois parliaments. I cannot attempt here to formulate the conditions under which a boycott is useful, since the object of this pamphlet is far more modest,

namely, to study Russian experience in connection with certain topical questions of international communist tactics. Russian experience has provided us with one successful and correct instance (1905), and another that was incorrect (1906), of the use of a boycott by the Bolsheviks. Analyzing the first case, we, see that we succeeded in *preventing* a reactionary government from *convening* a reactionary parliament in a situation in which extra-parliamentary revolutionary mass action (strikes in particular) was developing at great speed, when not a single section of the proletariat and the peasantry could support the reactionary government in any way, and when the revolutionary proletariat was gaining influence over the backward masses through the strike struggle and through the agrarian movement. It is quite obvious that *this* experience is not applicable to present-day European conditions. It is likewise quite obvious—and the foregoing arguments bear this out—that the advocacy, even if with reservations, by the Dutch and the other "Lefts" of refusal to participate in parliaments is fundamentally wrong and detrimental to the cause of the revolutionary proletariat.

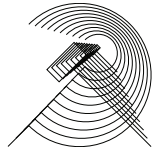
In Western Europe and America, parliament has become most odious to the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. That cannot be denied. It can readily be understood, for it is difficult to imagine anything more infamous, vile or treacherous than the behavior of the vast majority of socialist and Social-Democratic parliamentary deputies during and after the war. It would, however, be not only unreasonable but actually criminal to yield to this mood when deciding *how* this generally recognized evil should be fought. In many countries of Western Europe, the revolutionary mood, we might say, is at present a "novelty," or a "rarity," which has all too long been vainly and impatiently awaited; perhaps that is why people so easily yield to that mood. Certainly, without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions facilitating the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics

will never develop into action. In Russia, however, lengthy, painful and sanguinary experience has taught us the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements. It is very easy to show one's "revolutionary" temper merely by hurling abuse at parliamentary opportunism, or merely by repudiating participation in parliaments; its very ease, however, cannot turn this into a solution of a difficult, a very difficult, problem. It is far more difficult to create a really revolutionary parliamentary group in a European parliament than it was in Russia. That stands to reason. But it is only a particular expression of the general truth that it was easy for Russia, in the specific and historically unique situation of 1917, to *start* the socialist revolution, but it will be more difficult for Russia than for the European countries to *continue* the revolution and bring it to its consummation. I had occasion to point this out already at the beginning of 1918, and our experience of the past two years has entirely confirmed the correctness of this view. Certain specific conditions, viz., 1) the possibility of linking up the Soviet revolution with the ending, as a consequence of this revolution, of the imperialist war, which had exhausted the workers and peasants to an incredible degree; 2) the possibility of taking temporary advantage of the mortal conflict between the world's two most powerful groups of imperialist robbers, who were unable to unite against their Soviet enemy; 3) the possibility of enduring a comparatively lengthy civil war, partly owing to the enormous size of the country and to the poor means of communication; 4) the existence of such a profound bourgeois-democratic revolutionary movement among the peasantry that the party of the proletariat was able to adopt the revolutionary demands of the peasant party (the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the majority of whose members were

definitely hostile to Bolshevism) and realize them at once, thanks to the conquest of political power by the proletariat[56]—all these specific conditions do not at present exist in Western Europe, and a repetition of such or similar conditions will not occur so easily. Incidentally, apart from a number of other causes, that is why it is more difficult for Western Europe to *start* a socialist revolution than it was for us. To attempt to "circumvent" this difficulty by "skipping" the arduous job of utilizing reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is absolutely childish. You want to create a new society, yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced, devoted and heroic Communists, in a reactionary parliament! Is that not childish? If Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Z. Höglund in Sweden were able, even without mass support from below, to set examples of the truly revolutionary utilization of reactionary parliaments, why should a rapidly growing revolutionary mass party, in the midst of the post-war disillusionment and embitterment of the masses, be unable to *forge* a communist group in the worst of parliaments? It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and—to an even greater degree—of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia; because of that, it is *only* from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that Communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices.

The German "Lefts" complain of bad "leaders" in their party, give way to despair, and even arrive at a ridiculous "negation" of "leaders." But in conditions in which it is often necessary to hide "leaders" underground, the *evolution* of good "leaders," reliable, tested and authoritative, is a very difficult matter; these difficulties *cannot* be successfully overcome without combining legal and illegal work, and *without*

testing the "leaders," among other ways, in parliaments. Criticism—the most keen, ruthless and uncompromising criticism—should be directed, not against parliamentarism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are *unwilling*—to utilize parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and communist manner. Only such criticism—combined, of course, with the dismissal of incapable leaders and their replacement by capable ones—will constitute useful and fruitful revolutionary work that will simultaneously train the "leaders" to be worthy of the working class and of all working people, and train the masses to be able properly to understand the political situation and the often very complicated and intricate tasks that spring from that situation.[57]



CHAPTER 8

No Compromises?

IN THE QUOTATION FROM THE FRANKFURT pamphlet, we have seen how emphatically the "Lefts" have advanced this slogan. It is sad to see people who no doubt consider themselves Marxists, and want to be Marxists, forget the fundamental truths of Marxism. This is what Engels—who, like Marx, was one of those rarest of authors whose every sentence in every one of their fundamental works contains a remarkably profound content—wrote in 1874, against the manifesto of the thirty-three Blanquist Communards:[58]

> "'We are Communists [the Blanquist Communards wrote in their manifesto—*Lenin*], because we want to arrive at our aim without stop-overs at intermediate stations, without entering into compromises, which only put off victory and prolong slavery.'
>
> "The German Communists are Communists because, through all the intermediate stations and compromises, created not by them but by historical development, they clearly perceive the ultimate aim: the abolition of classes, the establishment of a society in which there will be no private ownership of land and means of production. The thirty-three are Communists because they imagine that, as soon as *they* have only the good will to jump over intermediate stations and

> compromises, everything is assured, and if, as they firmly believe, it 'begins' in a day or two, and they take the helm, 'communism will be introduced' the day after tomorrow. And they are not Communists if this cannot be done immediately. What childish naïveté to advance impatience as a convincing theoretical argument!"[59]

In the same article, Engels expresses his profound esteem for Vaillant, and speaks of the "unquestionable merit" of the latter (who, like Guesde, was one of the most prominent leaders of international socialism until their betrayal of socialism in August 1914). But Engels does not fail to give a detailed analysis of an obvious error. Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of even very respectable age and great experience, it seems extremely "dangerous," incomprehensible and wrong to "permit compromises." Many sophists (being unusually or excessively "experienced" politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: "If the Bolsheviks are permitted a certain compromise, why should we not be permitted any kind of compromise?" However, proletarians schooled in numerous strikes (to take only this manifestation of the class struggle) usually assimilate in admirable fashion the very profound truth (philosophical, historical, political and psychological) expounded by Engels. Every proletarian has been through strikes and has experienced "compromises" with the hated oppressors and exploiters, when the workers have had to return to work either without having achieved anything or else agreeing to only a partial satisfaction of their demands. Every proletarian—as a result of the conditions of the mass struggle and the acute intensification of class antagonisms he lives among—sees the difference between a compromise enforced by objective conditions (such as lack of strike funds, no outside support, starvation and exhaustion)—a compromise which in no way minimizes the revolutionary devotion and readiness to carry on the struggle on the part of

the workers who have agreed to such a compromise—and, on the other hand, a compromise by traitors who try to ascribe to objective causes their self-interest (strike-breakers also enter into "compromises"!), their cowardice, desire to toady to the capitalists, and readiness to yield to intimidation, sometimes to persuasion, sometimes to sops, and sometimes to flattery from the capitalists. (The history of the British labor movement provides a very large number of instances of such treacherous compromises by British trade union leaders, but, in one form or another, almost all workers in all countries have witnessed the same sort of thing.)

Naturally, there are individual cases of exceptional difficulty and complexity, when the greatest efforts are necessary for a proper assessment of the actual character of this or that "compromise," just as there are cases of homicide when it is by no means easy to establish whether the homicide was fully justified and even necessary (as, for example, legitimate self-defense), or due to unpardonable negligence, or even to a cunningly executed perfidious plan. Of course, in politics, where it is sometimes a matter of extremely complex relations—national and international—between classes and parties, very many cases will arise that will be much more difficult than the question of a legitimate "compromise" in a strike or a treacherous "compromise" by a strike-breaker, treacherous leader, etc. It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule ("No compromises!") to suit all cases. One must use one's own brains and be able to find one's bearings in each particular instance. It is, in fact, one of the functions of a party organization and of party leaders worthy of the name, to acquire, through the prolonged, persistent, variegated and comprehensive efforts of all thinking representatives of a given class,* the knowledge, experience and—in addition to

* Within every class, even in the conditions prevailing in the most

knowledge and experience—the political flair necessary for the speedy and correct solution of complex political problems.

Naïve and quite inexperienced people imagine that the permissibility of compromise *in general* is sufficient to obliterate any distinction between opportunism, against which we are waging, and must wage, an unremitting struggle, and revolutionary Marxism, or communism. But if such people do not yet know that in nature and in society *all* distinctions are fluid and up to a certain point conventional, nothing can help them but lengthy training, education, enlightenment, and political and everyday experience. In the practical questions that arise in the politics of any particular or specific historical moment, it is important to single out those which display the principal type of intolerable and treacherous compromises, such as embody an opportunism that is fatal to the revolutionary class, and to exert all efforts to explain them and combat them. During the 1914-18 imperialist war between two groups of equally predatory countries, social-chauvinism was the principal and fundamental type of opportunism, i.e., support of "defense of country," which in *such* a war was really equivalent to defense of the predatory interests of one's "own" bourgeoisie. After the war, defense of the robber League of Nations,[60] defense of direct or indirect alliances with the bourgeoisie of one's own country against the revolutionary proletariat and the "Soviet" movement, and defense of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism against "Soviet power" became the

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enlightened countries, even within the most advanced class, and even when the circumstances of the moment have aroused all its spiritual forces to an exceptional degree, there always are—and inevitably *will be* as long as classes exist, as long as a classless society has not fully consolidated itself, and has not developed on its own foundations—representatives of the class who do *not* think, and are incapable of thinking, for themselves. Capitalism would not be the Oppressor of the masses that it actually is, if things were otherwise.

principal manifestations of those intolerable and treacherous compromises, whose sum total constituted an opportunism fatal to the revolutionary proletariat and its cause.

"All compromise with other parties... any policy of maneuvering and compromise must be emphatically rejected," the German Lefts write in the Frankfurt pamphlet. It is surprising that, with such views, these Lefts do not emphatically condemn Bolshevism! After all, the German Lefts cannot but know that the entire history of Bolshevism, both before and after the October Revolution, is *full* of instances of changes of tack, conciliatory tactics and compromises with other parties, including bourgeois parties!

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? And yet people so immature and inexperienced (if youth were the explanation, it would not be so bad; young people are preordained to talk such nonsense for a certain period) have met with support—whether direct or indirect, open or covert, whole or partial, it does not matter—from some members of the Communist Party of Holland.

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

continuous restoration and regeneration of capitalism and the bourgeoisie by the small commodity producers of the country which has overthrown the bourgeoisie. The more powerful enemy can be vanquished only by exerting the utmost effort, and by the most thorough, careful, attentive, skillful and *obligatory* use of any, even the smallest, rift between the enemies, any conflict of interests among the bourgeoisie of the various countries and among the various groups or types of bourgeoisie within the various countries, and also by taking advantage of any, even the smallest, opportunity of winning a mass ally, even though this ally is temporary, vacillating, unstable, unreliable and conditional. Those who do not understand this reveal a failure to understand even the smallest grain of Marxism, of modern scientific socialism *in general*. Those who have not proved *in practice*, over a fairly considerable period of time and in fairly varied political situations, their ability to apply this truth in practice have not yet learned to help the revolutionary class in its struggle to emancipate all toiling humanity from the exploiters. And this applies equally to the period *before* and *after* the proletariat has won political power.

Our theory is not a dogma, but a *guide to action*, said Marx and Engels.[61] The greatest blunder, the greatest crime, committed by such "out-and-out" Marxists as Karl Kautsky, Otto Bauer, etc., is that they have not understood this and have been unable to apply it at crucial moments of the proletarian revolution. "Political activity is not like the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt" (the well-kept, broad and level pavement of the perfectly straight principal thoroughfare of St. Petersburg), N. G. Chernyshevsky,[62] the great Russian socialist of the pre-Marxist period, used to say. Since Chernyshevsky's time, disregard or forgetfulness of this truth has cost Russian revolutionaries countless sacrifices. We must strive at all costs to *prevent* the Left Communists and West-European and American revolutionaries that are devoted to the working

class from paying *as dearly* as the backward Russians did to learn this truth.

Prior to the downfall of tsarism, the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats made repeated use of the services of the bourgeois liberals, i.e., they concluded numerous practical compromises with the latter. In 1901-02, even prior to the appearance of Bolshevism, the old editorial board of *Iskra* (consisting of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zasulich, Martov, Potresov and myself) concluded (not for long, it is true) a formal political alliance with Struve, the political leader of bourgeois liberalism, while at the same time being able to wage an unremitting and most merciless ideological and political struggle against bourgeois liberalism and against the slightest manifestation of its influence in the working-class movement. The Bolsheviks have always adhered to this policy. Since 1905 they have systematically advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, against the liberal bourgeoisie and tsarism, never, however, refusing to support the bourgeoisie against tsarism (for instance, during second rounds of elections, or during second ballots) and never ceasing their relentless ideological and political struggle against the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the bourgeois-revolutionary peasant party, exposing them as petty-bourgeois democrats who have falsely described themselves as socialists. During the Duma elections of 1907, the Bolsheviks entered briefly into a formal political bloc with the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Between 1903 and 1912, there were periods of several years in which we were formally united with the Mensheviks in a single Social-Democratic Party, but we *never stopped* our ideological and political struggle against them as opportunists and vehicles of bourgeois influence on the proletariat. During the war, we concluded certain compromises with the Kautskyites, with the Left Mensheviks (Martov), and with a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries (Chernov and Natanson); we were together with them at Zimmerwald and

Kienthal,[63] and issued joint manifestos. However, we never ceased and never relaxed our ideological and political struggle against the Kautskyites, Martov and Chernov (when Natanson died in 1919, a "Revolutionary-Communist" Narodnik,[64] he was very close to and almost in agreement with us). At the very moment of the October Revolution, we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the *Socialist-Revolutionary* agrarian program *in its entirety*, without a single alteration—i.e., we effected an undeniable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we wanted, not to "steam-roller" them but to reach agreement with them. At the same time, we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries,[65] who dissolved this bloc after the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and then, in July 1918, went to the length of armed rebellion, and subsequently of an armed struggle, against us.

It is therefore understandable why the attacks made by the German Lefts against the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany for entertaining the idea of a bloc with the Independents (the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany—the Kautskyites) are absolutely insane, in our opinion, and clear proof that the "Lefts" are in the *wrong*. In Russia, too, there were Right Mensheviks (participants in the Kerensky government), who corresponded to the German Scheidemanns, and Left Mensheviks (Martov), corresponding to the German Kautskyites and standing in opposition to the Right Mensheviks. A gradual shift of the worker masses from the Mensheviks over to the Bolsheviks was to be clearly seen in 1917. At the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held in June 1917, we had only 13 percent of the votes; the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks had a majority. At the Second Congress of Soviets (October 25, 1917, old style) we had 51 percent of the votes. Why is it that in Germany the

same and absolutely *identical* shift of the workers from Right to Left did not immediately strengthen the Communists, but first strengthened the midway Independent Party, although the latter never had independent political ideas or an independent policy, but merely wavered between the Scheidemanns and the Communists?

One of the evident reasons was the *erroneous* tactics of the German Communists, who must fearlessly and honestly admit this error and learn to rectify it. The error consisted in their denial of the need to take part in the reactionary bourgeois parliaments and in the reactionary trade unions; the error consisted in numerous manifestations of that "Left-wing" infantile disorder which has now come to the surface and will consequently be cured the more thoroughly, the more rapidly and with greater advantage to the organism.

The German Independent Social-Democratic Party is obviously not a homogeneous body. Alongside the old opportunist leaders (Kautsky, Hilferding and apparently, to a considerable extent, Crispien, Ledebour and others)—these have revealed their inability to understand the significance of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and their inability to lead the proletariat's revolutionary struggle—there has emerged in this party a Left and proletarian wing, which is growing most rapidly. Hundreds of thousands of members of this party (which has, I think, a membership of some three-quarters of a million) are proletarians who are abandoning Scheidemann and are rapidly going over to communism. This proletarian wing has already proposed—at the Leipzig Congress of the Independents (1919)—immediate and unconditional affiliation to the Third International. To fear a "compromise" with this wing of the party is positively ridiculous. On the contrary, it is the *duty* of Communists to seek *and find* a suitable form of compromise with them, a compromise which, on the one hand, will facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing and,

on the other, will in no way hamper the Communists in their ideological and political struggle against the opportunist Right wing of the Independents. It will probably be no easy matter to devise a suitable form of compromise—but only a charlatan could promise the German workers and the German Communists an "easy" road to victory.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the proletariat *pur sang* were not surrounded by a large number of exceedingly motley types intermediate between the proletarian and the semi-proletarian (who earns his livelihood in part by the sale of his labor-power), between the semi-proletarian and the small peasant (and petty artisan, handicraft worker and small master in general), between the small peasant and the middle peasant, and so on, and if the proletariat itself were not divided into more developed and less developed strata, if it were not divided according to territorial origin, trade, sometimes according to religion, and so on. From all this follows the necessity, the absolute necessity, for the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, its class-conscious section, to resort to changes of tack, to conciliation and compromises with the various groups of proletarians, with the various parties of the workers and small masters. It is entirely a matter of *knowing how* to apply these tactics in order to *raise*—not lower—the *general* level of proletarian class-consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and win. Incidentally, it should be noted that the Bolsheviks' victory over the Mensheviks called for the application of tactics of changes of tack, conciliation and compromises, not only before *but also after* the October Revolution of 1917, but the changes of tack and compromises were, of course, such as assisted, boosted and consolidated the Bolsheviks at the expense of the Mensheviks. The petty-bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love for the workers

and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc. The Communists' proper tactics should consist in *utilizing* these vacillations, not ignoring them; utilizing them calls for concessions to elements that are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and in the measure that they turn towards the proletariat—in addition to fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie. As a result of the application of the correct tactics, Menshevism began to disintegrate, and has been disintegrating more and more in our country; the stubbornly opportunist leaders are being isolated, and the best of the workers and the best elements among the petty-bourgeois democrats are being brought into our camp. This is a lengthy process, and the hasty "decision"—"No compromises, no maneuvers"—can only prejudice the strengthening of the revolutionary proletariat's influence and the enlargement of its forces.

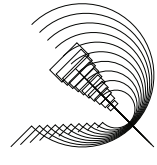
Lastly, one of the undoubted errors of the German "Lefts" lies in their downright refusal to recognize the Treaty of Versailles.[66] The more "weightily" and "pompously," the more "emphatically" and peremptorily this viewpoint is formulated (by K. Horner, for instance), the less sense it seems to make. It is not enough, under the present conditions of the international proletarian revolution, to repudiate the preposterous absurdities of "National Bolshevism" (Laufenberg and others), which has gone to the length of advocating a bloc with the German bourgeoisie for a war against the Entente. One must realize that it is utterly false tactics to refuse to admit that a Soviet Germany (if a German Soviet republic were soon to arise) would have to recognize the Treaty of Versailles for a time, and to submit to it. From this it does not follow that the Independents—at a time when the Scheidemanns were in the government, when the Soviet government in Hungary had not yet been overthrown, and when it was still possible that a Soviet revolution in Vienna would support Soviet Hungary—were right, *under the circumstances*, in putting forward the demand that the Treaty of Versailles should be

signed. At that time the Independents tacked and maneuvered very clumsily, for they more or less accepted responsibility for the Scheidemann traitors, and more or less backslid from advocacy of a ruthless (and most calmly conducted) class war against the Scheidemanns, to advocacy of a "classless" or "above-class" standpoint.

In the present situation, however, the German Communists should obviously not deprive themselves of freedom of action by giving a positive and categorical promise to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles in the event of communism's victory. That would be absurd. They should say: the Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have committed a number of acts of treachery hindering (and in part quite ruining) the chances of an alliance with Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary. We Communists will do all we can to *facilitate* and *pave the way* for such an alliance. However, we are in no way obligated to repudiate the Treaty of Versailles, come what may, or to do so at once. The possibility of its successful repudiation will depend, not only on the German, but also on the international successes of the Soviet movement. The Scheidemanns and the Kautskyites have hampered this movement; we are helping it. That is the gist of the matter; therein lies the fundamental difference. And if our class enemies, the exploiters and their Scheidemann and Kautskyite lackeys, have missed many an opportunity of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet movement, of strengthening both the German and the international Soviet revolution, the blame lies with them. The Soviet revolution in Germany will strengthen the international Soviet movement, which is the strongest bulwark (and the only reliable, invincible and worldwide bulwark) against the Treaty of Versailles and against international imperialism in general. To give absolute, categorical and immediate precedence to liberation from the Treaty of Versailles and to give it *precedence over the question* of liberating *other* countries oppressed by imperialism, from the yoke of

imperialism, is philistine nationalism (worthy of the Kautskys, the Hilferdings, the Otto Bauers and Co.), not revolutionary internationalism. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie in any of the large European countries, including Germany, would be such a gain for the international revolution that, for its sake, one can, and if necessary, should tolerate a *more prolonged existence of the Treaty of Versailles*. If Russia, standing alone, could endure the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk for several months, to the advantage of the revolution, there is nothing impossible in a Soviet Germany, allied with Soviet Russia, enduring the existence of the Treaty of Versailles for a longer period, to the advantage of the revolution.

The imperialists of France, Britain, etc., are trying to provoke and ensnare the German Communists: "Say you will not sign the Treaty of Versailles!" they urge. Like babes, the Left Communists fall into the trap laid for them, instead of skillfully maneuvering against the crafty and, *at present*, stronger enemy, and instead of telling him, "We shall sign the Treaty of Versailles now." It is folly, not revolutionism, to deprive ourselves in advance of any freedom of action, openly to inform an enemy who is at present better armed than we are whether we shall fight him, and when. To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy, but not to us, is criminal; political leaders of the revolutionary class are absolutely useless if they are incapable of "changing tack, or offering conciliation and compromise" in order to take evasive action in a patently disadvantageous battle.



CHAPTER 9

"Left-Wing" Communism in Great Britain

THERE IS NO COMMUNIST PARTY IN GREAT Britain as yet, but there is a fresh, broad, powerful and rapidly growing communist movement among the workers, which justifies the best hopes. There are several political parties and organizations (the British Socialist Party,[67] the Socialist Labor Party, the South Wales Socialist Society, the Workers' Socialist Federation[68]), which desire to form a Communist Party and are already negotiating among themselves to this end. In its issue of February 21, 1920, Vol. VI, No. 48, *The Workers' Dreadnought*,[69] weekly organ of the last of the organizations mentioned, carried an article by the editor, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, entitled "Towards a Communist Party." The article outlines the progress of the negotiations between the four organizations mentioned, for the formation of a united Communist Party, on the basis of affiliation to the Third International, the recognition of the Soviet system instead of parliamentarism, and the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It appears that one of the greatest obstacles to the immediate formation of a united

Communist Party is presented by the disagreement on the questions of participation in Parliament and on whether the new Communist Party should affiliate to the old, trade-unionist, opportunist and social-chauvinist Labor Party, which is mostly made up of trade unions. The Workers' Socialist Federation and the Socialist Labor Party* are opposed to taking part in parliamentary elections and in Parliament, and they are opposed to affiliation to the Labor Party; in this they disagree with all or with most of the members of the British Socialist Party, which they regard as the "Right wing of the Communist parties" in Great Britain. (Page 5, Sylvia Pankhurst's article.)

Thus, the main division is the same as in Germany, notwithstanding the enormous difference in the forms in which the disagreements manifest themselves (in Germany the form is far closer to the "Russian" than it is in Great Britain), and in a number of other things. Let us examine the arguments of the "Lefts."

On the question of participation in Parliament, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst refers to an article in the same issue, by Comrade Gallacher, who writes in the name of the Scottish Workers' Council in Glasgow.

He writes:

> "The above council is definitely anti-parliamentarian, and has behind it the Left wing of the various political bodies. We represent the revolutionary movement in Scotland, striving continually to build up a revolutionary organization within the industries [in various branches of production], and a Communist Party, based on social committees, throughout the country. For a considerable time, we have been sparring with the official parliamentarians. We have not considered it necessary to declare open warfare on them, and they are *afraid* to open an attack on us.
>
> "But this state of affairs cannot long continue. We are winning all along the line.

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* I believe this party is opposed to affiliation to the Labor Party but not all its members are opposed to participation in Parliament.

> "The rank and file of the I.L.P. in Scotland is becoming more and more disgusted with the thought of Parliament, and the Soviets [the Russian word transliterated into English is used] or Workers' Councils are being supported by almost every branch. This is very serious, of course, for the gentlemen who look to politics for a profession, and they are using any and every means to persuade their members to come back into the parliamentary fold. Revolutionary comrades *must not* [all italics are the author's] give any support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose personal ambition is a more impelling force than their regard for the revolution. Any support given to parliamentarism is simply assisting to put power into the hands of our British Scheidemanns and Noskes. Henderson, Clynes and Co. are hopelessly reactionary. The official I.L.P. is more and more coming under the control of middle-class Liberals, who... have found their 'spiritual home' in the camp of Messrs. MacDonald, Snowden and Co. The official I.L.P. is bitterly hostile to the Third International, the rank and file is for it. Any support to the parliamentary opportunists is simply playing into the hands of the former. The B.S.P. doesn't count at all here... What is wanted here is a sound revolutionary industrial organization, and a Communist Party working along clear, well-defined, scientific lines. If our comrades can assist us in building these, we will gladly take their help gladly; if they cannot, for God's sake let them keep out altogether, lest they betray the revolution by lending their support to the reactionaries, who are so eagerly clamoring for parliamentary 'honors' (?) [the query mark is the author's] and who are so anxious to prove that they *can rule* as effectively as the 'boss' class politicians themselves."

In my opinion, this letter to the editor expresses excellently the temper and point of view of the young Communists, or of rank-and-file workers who are only just beginning to accept communism. This temper is highly gratifying and valuable; we must learn to appreciate and support it for, in its absence, it would be hopeless to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter. People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, and are able to evoke such a temper (which is very often dormant, unconscious and latent) among the masses, should be appreciated and given every assistance. At the same

time, we must tell them openly and frankly that a state of mind is *by itself* insufficient for leadership of the masses in a great revolutionary struggle, and that the cause of the revolution may well be harmed by certain errors that people who are most devoted to the cause of the revolution are about to commit, or are committing. Comrade Gallacher's letter undoubtedly reveals the rudiments of *all* the mistakes that are being made by the German "Left" Communists and were made by the Russian "Left" Bolsheviks in 1908 and 1918.

The writer of the letter is full of a noble and working-class hatred for the bourgeois "class politicians" (a hatred understood and shared, however, not only by proletarians but by all working people, by all *Kleinen Leuten* [small folk, little people—*Ed.*] to use the German expression). In a representation of the oppressed and exploited masses, this hatred is truly the "beginning of all wisdom," the basis of any socialist and communist movement and of its success. The writer, however, has apparently lost sight of the fact that politics is a science and an art that does not fall from the skies or come gratis, and that, if it wants to overcome the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must train its *own* proletarian "class politicians," of a kind in no way inferior to bourgeois politicians.

The writer of the letter fully realizes that only workers' Soviets, not parliament, can be the instrument enabling the proletariat to achieve its aims; those who have failed to understand this are, of course, out-and-out reactionaries, even if they are most highly educated people, most experienced politicians, most sincere socialists, most erudite Marxists, and most honest citizens and fathers of families. But the writer of the letter does not even ask—it does not occur to him to ask—whether it is possible to bring about the Soviets' victory over parliament without getting pro-Soviet politicians *into* parliament, without disintegrating parliamentarism from *within*, without working within parliament for the success of the Soviets in their forthcoming task of dispersing parliament.

Yet the writer of the letter expresses the absolutely correct idea that the Communist Party in Great Britain must act on *scientific* principles. Science demands, first, that the experience of other countries be taken into account, especially if these other countries, which are also capitalist, are undergoing, or have recently undergone, a very similar experience; second, it demands that account be taken of *all* the forces, groups, parties, classes and masses operating in a given country, and also that policy should not be determined only by the desires and views, by the degree of class-consciousness and the militancy of one group or party alone.

It is true that the Hendersons, the Clyneses, the MacDonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary. It is equally true that they want to assume power (though they would prefer a coalition with the bourgeoisie), that they want to "rule" along the old bourgeois lines, and that when they are in power, they will certainly behave like the Scheidemanns and Noskes. All that is true. But it does not at all follow that to support them means treachery to the revolution; what does follow is that, in the interests of the revolution, working-class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support. To explain this idea, I shall take two contemporary British political documents: 1) the speech delivered by Prime Minister Lloyd George on March 18, 1920 (as reported in *The Manchester Guardian* of March 19, 1920), and 2) the arguments of a "Left" Communist, Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, in the article mentioned above.

In his speech, Lloyd George entered into a polemic with Asquith (who had been especially invited to this meeting but declined to attend) and with those Liberals who want, not a coalition with the Conservatives, but closer relations with the Labor Party. (In the above-quoted letter, Comrade Gallacher also points to the fact that Liberals are joining the Independent Labor Party.) Lloyd George argued that a coalition—and a *close* coalition at that—between the Liberals

and the Conservatives was essential, otherwise there might be a victory for the Labor Party, which Lloyd George prefers to call "Socialist" and which is working for the "common ownership" of the means of production. "It is... known as communism in France," the leader of the British bourgeoisie said, putting it popularly for his audience, Liberal M.P.s who probably never knew it before. In Germany it was called socialism, and in Russia it is called Bolshevism, he went on to say. To Liberals this is unacceptable on principle, Lloyd George explained, because they stand in principle for private property. The speaker declared:

> "Civilization is in jeopardy [and consequently Liberals and Conservatives must unite...] If you go to the agricultural areas, I agree you have the old party divisions as strong as ever. They are removed from the danger. It does not walk their lanes. But when they see it, they will be as strong as some of these industrial constituencies are now. Four-fifths of this country is industrial and commercial; hardly one-fifth is agricultural. It is one of the things I have constantly in my mind when I think of the dangers of the future here. In France the population is agricultural, and you have a solid body of opinion which does not move very rapidly, and which is not very easily excited by revolutionary movements. That is not the case here. This country is more top-heavy than any country in the world, and if it begins to rock, the crash here, for that reason, will be greater than in any land."

From this the reader will see that Mr. Lloyd George is not only a very intelligent man, but one who has also learned a great deal from the Marxists. We too have something to learn from Lloyd George.

Of definite interest is the following episode, which occurred in the course of the discussion after Lloyd George's speech:

> "*Mr. Wallace, M.P.*: I should like to ask what the Prime Minister considers the effect might be in the industrial constituencies upon the industrial workers, so many of whom are Liberals at the present time and from whom we get so much support. Would not a possible result

be to cause an immediate overwhelming accession of strength to the Labor Party from men who at present are our cordial supporters?

"*The Prime Minister*: I take a totally different view. The fact that Liberals are fighting among themselves undoubtedly drives a very considerable number of Liberals in despair to the Labor Party, where you get a considerable body of Liberals, very able men, whose business it is to discredit the Government. The result is undoubtedly to bring a good accession of public sentiment to the Labor Party. It does not go to the Liberals who are outside, it goes to the Labor Party, the by-elections show that."

It may be said, in passing, that this argument shows in particular how muddled even the most intelligent members of the bourgeoisie have become and how they cannot help committing irreparable blunders. That, in fact, is what will bring about the downfall of the bourgeoisie. Our people, however, may commit blunders (provided, of course, that they are not too serious and are rectified in time) and yet in the long run, will prove the victors.

The second political document is the following argument advanced by Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst, a "Left" Communist:

"Comrade Inkpin [the General Secretary of the British Socialist Party] refers to the Labor Party as 'the main body of the working-class movement'. Another comrade of the British Socialist Party, at the Third International, just held, put the British Socialist Party position more strongly. He said: 'We regard the Labor Party as the organized working class.'

"We do not take this view of the Labor Party. The Labor Party is very large numerically though its membership is to a great extent quiescent and apathetic, consisting of men and women who have joined the trade unions because their workmates are trade unionists, and to share the friendly benefits.

"But we recognize that the great size of the Labor Party is also due to the fact that it is the creation of a school of thought beyond which the majority of the British working class has not yet emerged, though great changes are at work in the mind of the people which will presently alter this state of affairs...

"The British Labor Party, like the social-patriotic organizations of other countries, will, in the natural development of society, inevitably

> come into power. It is for the Communists to build up the forces that will overthrow the social patriots, and in this country, we must not delay or falter in that work.
>
> "We must not dissipate our energy in adding to the strength of the Labor Party; its rise to power is inevitable. We must concentrate on making a communist movement that will vanquish it. The Labor Party will soon be forming a government, the revolutionary opposition must make ready to attack it..."

Thus, the liberal bourgeoisie are abandoning the historical system of "two parties" (of exploiters), which has been hallowed by centuries of experience and has been extremely advantageous to the exploiters, and consider it necessary for these two parties to join forces against the Labor Party. A number of Liberals are deserting to the Labor Party like rats from a sinking ship. The Left Communists believe that the transfer of power to the Labor Party is inevitable and admit that it now has the backing of most workers. From this they draw the strange conclusion which Comrade Sylvia Pankhurst formulates as follows:

> "The Communist Party must not compromise... The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate, its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the communist revolution."

On the contrary, the fact that most British workers still follow the lead of the British Kerenskys or Scheidemanns and have not yet had experience of a government composed of these people—an experience which was necessary in Russia and Germany so as to secure the mass transition of the workers to communism—undoubtedly indicates that the British Communists *should* participate in parliamentary action, that they should, from *within* parliament, help the masses of the workers see the results of a Henderson and Snowden government in practice, and that they should help the Hendersons and Snowdens defeat the united forces of Lloyd George and Churchill. To act otherwise would mean

hampering the cause of the revolution, since revolution is impossible without a change in the views of the majority of the working class, a change brought about by the political experience of the masses, never by propaganda alone. "To lead the way without compromises, without turning," this slogan is obviously wrong if it comes from a patently impotent minority of the workers who know (or at all events should know) that given a Henderson and Snowden victory over Lloyd George and Churchill, the majority will soon become disappointed in their leaders and will begin to support communism (or at all events will adopt an attitude of neutrality, and, in the main, of sympathetic neutrality, towards the Communists). It is as though 10,000 soldiers were to hurl themselves into battle against an enemy force of 50,000, when it would be proper to "halt," "take evasive action," or even effect a "compromise" so as to gain time until the arrival of the 100,000 reinforcements that are on their way but cannot go into action immediately. That is intellectualist childishness, not the serious tactics of a revolutionary class.

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 (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses—hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it.

Incidentally, as can also be seen from Lloyd George's speech, both conditions for a successful proletarian revolution are clearly maturing in Great Britain. The errors of the Left Communists are particularly dangerous at present, because certain revolutionaries are not displaying a sufficiently thoughtful, sufficiently attentive, sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently shrewd attitude toward each of these conditions. If we are the party of the revolutionary *class*, and not merely a revolutionary group, and if we want the *masses* to follow us (and unless we achieve that, we stand the risk of remaining mere windbags), we must, first, help Henderson or Snowden to beat Lloyd George and Churchill (or, rather, compel the former to beat the latter, because the former *are afraid of their victory!*); second, we must help the majority of the working class to be convinced by their own experience that we are right, i.e., that the Hendersons and Snowdens are absolutely good for nothing, that they are petty-bourgeois and treacherous by nature, and that their bankruptcy is inevitable; third, we must bring nearer the moment when, *on the basis* of the disappointment of most of the workers in the Hendersons, it will be possible, with serious chances of success, to overthrow the government of the Hendersons at once; because if the most astute and solid Lloyd George, that big, not petty, bourgeois, is displaying consternation and is more and more weakening himself (and the bourgeoisie as a whole) by his "friction"

with Churchill today and with Asquith tomorrow, how much greater will be the consternation of a Henderson government!

I will put it more concretely. In my opinion, the British Communists should unite their four parties and groups (all very weak, and some of them very, very weak) into a single Communist Party on the basis of the principles of the Third International and of *obligatory* participation in parliament. The Communist Party should propose the following "compromise" election agreement to the Hendersons and Snowdens: let us jointly fight against the alliance between Lloyd George and the Conservatives; let us share parliamentary seats in proportion to the number of workers' votes polled for the Labor Party and for the Communist Party (not in elections, but in a special ballot), and let us retain *complete freedom* of agitation, propaganda and political activity. Of course, without this latter condition, we cannot agree to a bloc, for that would be treachery; the British Communists must demand and get complete freedom to expose the Hendersons and the Snowdens in the same way as (*for fifteen years*—1903-17) the Russian Bolsheviks demanded and got it in respect of the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens, i.e., the Mensheviks.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens accept a bloc on these terms, we shall be the gainers, because the number of parliamentary seats is of no importance to us; we are not out for seats. We shall yield on this point (whilst the Hendersons and especially their new friends—or new masters—the Liberals who have joined the Independent Labor Party are most eager to get seats). We shall be the gainers, because we shall carry *our* agitation among the *masses* at a time when Lloyd George *himself* has "incensed" them, and we shall not only be helping the Labor Party to establish its government sooner, but shall also be helping the masses sooner to understand the communist propaganda that we shall carry on against the Hendersons, without any reticence or omission.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with us on these terms, we shall gain still more, for we shall at once have shown the *masses* (note that, even in the purely Menshevik and completely opportunist Independent Labor Party, the *rank and file* are in favor of Soviets) that the Hendersons prefer *their* close relations with the capitalists to the unity of all the workers. We shall immediately gain in the eyes of the *masses*, who, particularly after the brilliant, highly correct and highly useful (to communism) explanations given by Lloyd George, will be sympathetic to the idea of uniting all the workers against the Lloyd George-Conservative alliance. We shall gain immediately, because we shall have demonstrated to the masses that the Hendersons and the Snowdens are afraid to beat Lloyd George, afraid to assume power alone, and are striving to secure the *secret* support of Lloyd George, who is *openly* extending a hand to the Conservatives, against the Labor Party. It should be noted that in Russia, after the revolution of February 27, 1917 (old style), the Bolsheviks' propaganda against the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (i.e., the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens) derived benefit precisely from a circumstance of this kind. We said to the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries: assume full power without the bourgeoisie, because you have a majority in the Soviets (at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in June 1917, the Bolsheviks had only 13 percent of the votes). But the Russian Hendersons and Snowdens were afraid to assume power without the bourgeoisie, and when the bourgeoisie held up the elections to the Constituent Assembly, knowing full well that the elections would give a majority to the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks* (who formed a close political bloc and in fact

* The results of the November 1917 elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia, based on returns embracing over 36,000,000 voters,

represented *only* petty-bourgeois democracy), the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks were unable energetically and consistently to oppose these delays.

If the Hendersons and the Snowdens reject a bloc with the Communists, the latter will immediately gain by winning the sympathy of the masses and discrediting the Hendersons and Snowdens; if, as a result, we do lose a few parliamentary seats, it is a matter of no significance to us. We would put up our candidates in a very few but absolutely safe constituencies, namely, constituencies where our candidatures would not give any seats to the Liberals at the expense of the Labor candidates. We would take part in the election campaign, distribute leaflets agitating for communism, and, in *all* constituencies where we have no candidates, we would urge the electors *to vote for the Labor candidate and against the bourgeois candidate*. Comrades Sylvia Pankhurst and Gallacher are mistaken in thinking that this is a betrayal of communism, or a renunciation of the struggle against the social-traitors. On the contrary, the cause of communist revolution would undoubtedly gain thereby.

At present, British Communists very often find it hard even to approach the masses, and even to get a hearing from them. If I come out as a Communist and call upon them to vote for Henderson and against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner, not only why the Soviets are better than a parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised with the signboard of bourgeois "democracy"), but also that, with my vote, I want to support Henderson in the same way as the rope

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were as follows: the Bolsheviks obtained 25 percent of the votes; the various parties of the landowners and the bourgeoisie obtained 13 percent, and the petty-bourgeois-democratic parties, i.e., the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and a number of similar small groups obtained 62 percent.

supports a hanged man—that the impending establishment of a government of the Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their kindred spirits in Russia and Germany.

If the objection is raised that these tactics are too "subtle" or too complex for the masses to understand, that these tactics will split and scatter our forces, will prevent us from concentrating them on Soviet revolution, etc., I will reply to the "Left" objectors: don't ascribe your doctrinairism to the masses! The masses in Russia are no doubt no better educated than the masses in Britain; if anything, they are less so. Yet the masses understood the Bolsheviks, and the fact that, in September 1917, *on the eve* of the Soviet revolution, the Bolsheviks put up their candidates for a bourgeois parliament (the Constituent Assembly) and *on the day after* the Soviet revolution, in November 1917, took part in the elections to this Constituent Assembly, which they got rid of on January 5, 1918—this did not hamper the Bolsheviks, but, on the contrary, helped them.

I cannot deal here with the second point of disagreement among the British Communists—the question of affiliation or non-affiliation to the Labor Party. I have too little material at my disposal on this question, which is highly complex because of the unique character of the British Labor Party, whose very structure is so unlike that of the political parties usual in the European continent. It is beyond doubt, however, first, that in this question, too, those who try to deduce the tactics of the revolutionary proletariat from principles such as: "The Communist Party must keep its doctrine pure, and its independence of reformism inviolate; its mission is to lead the way, without stopping or turning, by the direct road to the communist revolution," will inevitably fall into error. Such principles are merely a repetition of the mistake made by the French Blanquist Communards, who, in 1874, "repudiated"

all compromises and all intermediate stages. Second, it is beyond doubt that, in this question too, as always, the task consists in learning to apply the general and basic principles of communism to the *specific relations* between classes and parties, to the *specific features* in the objective development towards communism, which are different in each country and which we must be able to discover, study, and predict.

This, however, should be discussed, not in connection with British communism alone, but in connection with the general conclusions concerning the development of communism in all capitalist countries. We shall now proceed to deal with this.



CHAPTER 10

Several Conclusions

THE RUSSIAN BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION OF 1905 revealed a highly original turn in world history: in one of the most backward capitalist countries, the strike movement attained a scope and power unprecedented anywhere in the world. In the *first month* of 1905 *alone*, the number of strikers was ten times the *annual* average for the previous decade (1895-1904); from January to October 1905, strikes grew all the time and reached enormous proportions. Under the influence of a number of unique historical conditions, backward Russia was the first to show the world, not only the growth, by leaps and bounds, of the independent activity of the oppressed masses in time of revolution (this had occurred in all great revolutions), but also that the significance of the proletariat is infinitely greater than its proportion in the total population; it showed a combination of the economic strike and the political strike, with the latter developing into an armed uprising, and the birth of the Soviets, a new form of mass struggle and mass organization of the classes oppressed by capitalism.

The revolutions of February and October 1917 led to the all-round development of the Soviets on a nationwide scale and to their victory in the proletarian socialist revolution. In less than two years, the international character of the Soviets, the spread of this form of struggle and organization to the world working-class movement and the historical mission of the Soviets as the grave-digger, heir and successor of bourgeois parliamentarism and of bourgeois democracy in general, all became clear.

But that is not all. The history of the working-class movement now shows that, in all countries, it is about to go through (and is already going through) a struggle waged by communism—emergent, gaining strength and advancing towards victory—against, primarily, Menshevism, i.e., opportunism and social-chauvinism (the home brand in each particular country), and then as a complement, so to say, Left-wing communism. The former struggle has developed in all countries, apparently without any exception, as a duel between the Second International (already virtually dead) and the Third International. The latter struggle is to be seen in Germany, Great Britain, Italy, America (at any rate, a certain *section* of the Industrial Workers of the World and of the anarcho-syndicalist trends uphold the errors of Left-wing communism alongside of an almost universal and almost unreserved acceptance of the Soviet system), and in France (the attitude of a section of the former syndicalists towards the political party and parliamentarism, also alongside of the acceptance of the Soviet system); in other words, the struggle is undoubtedly being waged, not only on an international, but even on a worldwide scale.

But while the working-class movement is everywhere going through what is actually the same kind of preparatory school for victory over the bourgeoisie, it is achieving that development in its *own way* in each country. The big and advanced capitalist countries are traveling this road *far more*

rapidly than did Bolshevism, to which history granted fifteen years to prepare itself for victory, as an organized political trend. In the brief space of a year, the Third International has already scored a decisive victory; it has defeated the yellow, social-chauvinist Second International, which only a few months ago was incomparably stronger than the Third International, seemed stable and powerful, and enjoyed every possible support—direct and indirect, material (Cabinet posts, passports, the press) and ideological—from the world bourgeoisie.

It is now essential that Communists of every country should quite consciously take into account both the fundamental objectives of the struggle against opportunism and "Left" doctrinairism, and the *concrete features* which this struggle assumes and must inevitably assume in each country, in conformity with the specific character of its economics, politics, culture, and national composition (Ireland, etc.), its colonies, religious divisions, and so on and so forth. Dissatisfaction with the Second International is felt everywhere and is spreading and growing, both because of its opportunism and because of its inability or incapacity to create a really centralized and really leading center capable of directing the international tactics of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for a world Soviet republic. It should be clearly realized that such a leading center can never be built up on stereotyped, mechanically equated, and identical tactical rules of struggle. As long as national and state distinctions exist among peoples and countries—and these will continue to exist for a very long time to come, even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a worldwide scale—the unity of the international tactics of the communist working-class movement in all countries demands, not the elimination of variety or the suppression of national distinctions (which is a pipe dream at present), but an application of the *fundamental* principles of communism (Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat), which

will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions. To seek out, investigate, predict, and grasp that which is nationally specific and nationally distinctive, in the *concrete manner* in which each country should tackle a *single* international task: victory over opportunism and Left doctrinairism within the working-class movement; the overthrow of the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Soviet republic and a proletarian dictatorship—such is the basic task in the historical period that all the advanced countries (and not they alone) are going through. The chief thing—though, of course, far from everything—the chief thing, has already been achieved: the vanguard of the working class has been won over, has ranged itself on the side of Soviet government and against parliamentarism, on the side of the dictatorship of the proletariat and against bourgeois democracy. All efforts and all attention should now be concentrated on the *next* step, which may seem—and from a certain viewpoint actually is—less fundamental, but, on the other hand, is actually closer to a practical accomplishment of the task. That step is: the search after forms of the *transition* or the *approach* to the proletarian revolution.

The proletarian vanguard has been won over ideologically. That is the main thing. Without this, not even the first step towards victory can be made. But that is still quite a long way from victory. 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 and of precluded support for the enemy, 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[70] in Russia; Kapp[71] and Co. in Germany) is inevitably the only alternative to a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The immediate objective of the class-conscious vanguard of the international working-class movement, i.e., the Communist parties, groups and trends, is to be able to *lead* the broad masses (who are still, for the most part, apathetic, inert, dormant and convention-ridden) to their new position, or, rather, to be able to lead, *not only* their own party but also these masses in their advance and transition to the new position. While the first historical objective (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to the side of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not have been reached without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social-chauvinism, the second and immediate objective, which consists in being able to lead the *masses* to a new position ensuring the victory of the vanguard in the revolution, cannot be reached without the liquidation of Left doctrinairism, and without a full elimination of its errors.

As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work; even propaganda circles, with all their parochial limitations, are useful under these conditions, and produce good results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses,

of the disposition, if one may so put it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces in a given society *for the final and decisive battle*, then propagandist methods alone, the mere repetition of the truths of "pure" communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances, one must not count in thousands, like the propagandist belonging to a small group that has not yet given leadership to the masses; in these circumstances one must count in millions and tens of millions. In these circumstances, we must ask ourselves, not only whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes in a given society, without exception—are arrayed in such a way that the decisive battle is at hand—in such a way that: 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.

The differences between the Churchills and the Lloyd Georges—with insignificant national distinctions, these political types exist in *all* countries—on the one hand, and between the Hendersons and the Lloyd Georges on the other, are quite minor and unimportant from the standpoint of pure (i.e., abstract) communism, i.e., communism that has not yet matured to the stage of practical political action by

the masses. However, from the standpoint of this practical action by the masses, these differences are most important. To take due account of these differences, and to determine the moment when the inevitable conflicts between these "friends," which weaken and enfeeble *all the* "*friends*" *taken together*, will have come to a head—that is the concern, the task, of a Communist who wants to be, not merely a class-conscious and convinced propagandist of ideas, but a practical leader of the *masses* in the revolution. It is necessary to link the strictest devotion to the ideas of communism with the ability to effect all the necessary practical compromises, tacks, conciliatory maneuvers, zigzags, retreats and so on, in order to speed up the achievement and then loss of political power by the Hendersons (the heroes of the Second International, if we are not to name individual representatives of petty-bourgeois democracy who call themselves socialists); to accelerate their inevitable bankruptcy in practice, which will enlighten the masses in the spirit of our ideas, in the direction of communism; to accelerate the inevitable friction, quarrels, conflicts and complete disintegration among the Hendersons, the Lloyd Georges and the Churchills (the Mensheviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Constitutional-Democrats, the monarchists; the Scheidemanns, the bourgeoisie and the Kappists, etc.); to select the proper moment when the discord among these "pillars of sacrosanct private property" is at its height, so that, through a decisive offensive, the proletariat will defeat them all and capture political power.

History as a whole, and the history of revolutions in particular, is always richer in content, more varied, more multiform, more lively and ingenious than is imagined by even the best parties, the most class-conscious vanguards of the most advanced classes. This can readily be understood, because even the finest of vanguards express the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of thousands, whereas at moments of great upsurge and the

exertion of all human capacities, revolutions are made by the class-consciousness, will, passion and imagination of tens of millions, spurred on by a most acute struggle of classes. Two very important practical conclusions follow from this: first, that in order to accomplish its task the revolutionary class must be able to master *all* forms or aspects of social activity without exception (completing after the capture of political power—sometimes at great risk and with very great danger—what it did not complete before the capture of power); second, that the revolutionary class must be prepared for the most rapid and brusque replacement of one form by another.

One will readily agree that any army which does not train to use all the weapons, all the means and methods of warfare that the enemy possesses, or may possess, is behaving in an unwise or even criminal manner. This applies to politics even more than it does to the art of war. In politics it is even harder to know in advance which methods of struggle will be applicable and to our advantage in certain future conditions. Unless we learn to apply all the methods of struggle, we may suffer grave and sometimes even decisive defeat, if changes beyond our control in the position of the other classes bring to the forefront a form of activity in which we are especially weak. If, however, we learn to use all the methods of struggle, victory will be certain, because we represent the interests of the really foremost and really revolutionary class, even if circumstances do not permit us to make use of weapons that are most dangerous to the enemy, weapons that deal the swiftest mortal blows. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal methods of struggle are opportunist because, in this field, the bourgeoisie has most frequently deceived and duped the workers (particularly in "peaceful" and non-revolutionary times), while illegal methods of struggle are revolutionary. That, however, is wrong. The truth is that those parties and leaders are opportunists and traitors to the working class that are unable or unwilling (do not say, "I can't"; say, "I

shan't") to use illegal methods of struggle in conditions such as those which prevailed, for example, during the imperialist war of 1914-18, when the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries most brazenly and brutally deceived the workers, and smothered the truth about the predatory character of the war. But revolutionaries who are incapable of combining illegal forms of struggle with *every* form of legal struggle are poor revolutionaries indeed. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when revolution has already broken out and is in spate, when all people are joining the revolution just because they are carried away, because it is the vogue, and sometimes even from careerist motives. After its victory, the proletariat has to make strenuous efforts, even the most painful, so as to "liberate" itself from such pseudo-revolutionaries. It is far more difficult—and far more precious—to be a revolutionary when the conditions for direct, open, really mass and really revolutionary struggle *do not yet exist*, to be able to champion the interests of the revolution (by propaganda, agitation and organization) in non-revolutionary bodies, and quite often in downright reactionary bodies, in a non-revolutionary situation, among the masses who are incapable of immediately appreciating the need for revolutionary methods of action. To be able to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will *lead* the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle—such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America today.

Britain is an example. We cannot tell—no one can tell in advance—how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what immediate cause* will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses, who are still dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be "well shod on all four feet" (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the breach

will be forced, the ice broken, by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising from colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. We are not discussing the kind of struggle that will *determine* the fate of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain (no Communist has any doubt on that score; for all of us this is a foregone conclusion): what we are discussing is the *immediate cause* that will bring into motion the now dormant proletarian masses, and lead them right up to revolution. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which, from both the international and the national viewpoints, was a hundred times less revolutionary than it is today, such an "unexpected" and "petty" cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent machinations of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus[72] case) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war!

In Great Britain the Communists should constantly, unremittingly and unswervingly utilize parliamentary elections and all the vicissitudes of the Irish, colonial and world-imperialist policy of the British Government, and all other fields, spheres and aspects of public life, and work in all of them in a new way, in a communist way, in the spirit of the Third, not the Second, International. I have neither the time nor the space here to describe the "Russian" "Bolshevik" methods of participation in parliamentary elections and in the parliamentary struggle; I can, however, assure foreign Communists that they were quite unlike the usual West-European parliamentary campaigns. From this the conclusion is often drawn: "Well, that was in Russia, in our country parliamentarism is different." This is a false conclusion. Communists, adherents of the Third International in all countries, exist for the purpose of *changing*—all along the line, in all spheres of life—the old socialist, trade unionist, syndicalist, and parliamentary type of work into a

new type of work, the communist. In Russia, too, there was always an abundance of opportunism, purely bourgeois sharp practices and capitalist rigging in the elections. In Western Europe and in America, the Communist must learn to create a new, uncustomary, non-opportunist, and non-careerist parliamentarism; the Communist parties must issue their slogans; true proletarians, with the help of the unorganized and downtrodden poor, should distribute leaflets, canvas workers' houses and cottages of the rural proletarians and peasants in the remote villages (fortunately there are many times fewer remote villages in Europe than in Russia, and in Britain the number is very small); they should go into the public houses, penetrate into unions, societies and chance gatherings of the common people, and speak to the people, not in learned (or very parliamentary) language, they should not at all strive to "get seats" in parliament, but should everywhere try to get people to think, and draw the masses into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at its word and utilize the machinery it has set up, the elections it has appointed, and the appeals it has made to the people; they should try to explain to the people what Bolshevism is, in a way that was never possible (under bourgeois rule) outside of election times (exclusive, of course, of times of big strikes, when in Russia a *similar* apparatus for widespread popular agitation worked even more intensively). It is very difficult to do this in Western Europe and extremely difficult in America, but it can and must be done, for the objectives of communism cannot be achieved without effort. We must work to accomplish *practical* tasks, ever more varied and ever more closely connected with all branches of social life, winning branch after branch, and sphere after sphere *from the bourgeoisie*.

In Great Britain, further, the work of propaganda, agitation and organization among the armed forces and among the oppressed and underprivileged nationalities in their "own" state (Ireland, the colonies) must also be tackled

in a new fashion (one that is not socialist, but communist; not reformist, but revolutionary). That is because, in the era of imperialism in general and especially today after a war that was a sore trial to the peoples and has quickly opened their eyes to the truth (i.e., the fact that tens of millions were killed and maimed for the sole purpose of deciding whether the British or the German robbers should plunder the largest number of countries), all these spheres of social life are heavily charged with inflammable material and are creating numerous causes of conflicts, crises and an intensification of the class struggle. We do not and cannot know which spark—of the innumerable sparks that are flying about in all countries as a result of the world economic and political crisis—will kindle the conflagration, in the sense of raising up the masses; we must, therefore, with our new and communist principles, set to work to stir up all and sundry, even the oldest, mustiest and seemingly hopeless spheres, for otherwise we shall not be able to cope with our tasks, shall not be comprehensively prepared, shall not be in possession of all the weapons and shall not prepare ourselves either to gain victory over the bourgeoisie (which arranged all aspects of social life—and has now disarranged them—in its bourgeois fashion), or to bring about the impending communist reorganization of every sphere of life, following that victory.

Since the proletarian revolution in Russia and its victories on an international scale, expected neither by the bourgeoisie nor the philistines, the entire world has become different, and the bourgeoisie everywhere has become different too. It is terrified of "Bolshevism," exasperated by it almost to the point of frenzy, and for that very reason it is, on the one hand, precipitating the progress of events and, on the other, concentrating on the forcible suppression of Bolshevism, thereby weakening its own position in a number of other fields. In their tactics the Communists in all the advanced countries must take both these circumstances into account.

When the Russian Cadets and Kerensky began furiously to hound the Bolsheviks—especially since April 1917, and more particularly in June and July 1917—they overdid things. Millions of copies of bourgeois papers, clamoring in every key against the Bolsheviks, helped the masses to make an appraisal of Bolshevism; apart from the newspapers, all public life was full of discussions about Bolshevism, as a result of the bourgeoisie's "zeal." Today the millionaires of all countries are behaving on an international scale in a way that deserves our heartiest thanks. They are hounding Bolshevism with the same zeal as Kerensky and Co. did; they, too, are overdoing things and *helping* us just as Kerensky did. When the French bourgeoisie makes Bolshevism the central issue in the elections, and accuses the comparatively moderate or vacillating socialists of being Bolsheviks; when the American bourgeoisie, which has completely lost its head, seizes thousands and thousands of people on suspicion of Bolshevism, creates an atmosphere of panic, and broadcasts stories of Bolshevik plots; when, despite all its wisdom and experience, the British bourgeoisie—the most "solid" in the world—makes incredible blunders, founds richly endowed "anti-Bolshevik societies," creates a special literature on Bolshevism, and recruits an extra number of scientists, agitators and clergymen to combat it, we must salute and thank the capitalists. They are working for us. They are helping us to get the masses interested in the essence and significance of Bolshevism, and they cannot do otherwise, for they have *already* failed to ignore Bolshevism and stifle it.

But at the same time, the bourgeoisie sees practically only one aspect of Bolshevism—insurrection, violence, and terror; it therefore strives to prepare itself for resistance and opposition primarily in *this* field. It is possible that, in certain instances, in certain countries, and for certain brief periods, it will succeed in this. We must reckon with such an eventuality, and we have absolutely nothing to fear if it does

succeed. Communism is emerging in positively every sphere of public life; its beginnings are to be seen literally on all sides. The "contagion" (to use the favorite metaphor of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois police, the one mostly to their liking) has very thoroughly penetrated the organism and has completely permeated it. If special efforts are made to block one of the channels, the "contagion" will find another one, sometimes very unexpectedly. Life will assert itself. Let the bourgeoisie rave, work itself into a frenzy, go to extremes, commit follies, take vengeance on the Bolsheviks in advance, and endeavor to kill off (as in India, Hungary, Germany, etc.) more hundreds, thousands, and hundreds of thousands of yesterday's and tomorrow's Bolsheviks. In acting thus, the bourgeoisie is acting as all historically doomed classes have done. Communists should know that, in any case, the future belongs to them; therefore, we can (and must) combine the most intense passion in the great revolutionary struggle, with the coolest and most sober appraisal of the frenzied ravings of the bourgeoisie. The Russian revolution was cruelly defeated in 1905; the Russian Bolsheviks were defeated in July 1917; over 15,000 German Communists were killed[73] as a result of the wily provocation and cunning maneuvers of Scheidemann and Noske, who were working hand in glove with the bourgeoisie and the monarchist generals; White terror is raging in Finland and Hungary. But in all cases in all countries, communism is becoming steeled and is growing; its roots are so deep that persecution does not weaken or debilitate it but only strengthens it. Only one thing is lacking to enable us to march forward more confidently and firmly to victory, namely, the universal and thorough awareness of all Communists in all countries of the necessity to display the utmost *flexibility* in their tactics. The communist movement, which is developing magnificently, now lacks, especially in the advanced countries, this awareness and the ability to apply it in practice.

That which happened to such leaders of the Second International, such highly erudite Marxists devoted to socialism as Kautsky, Otto Bauer and others, could (and should) provide a useful lesson. They fully appreciated the need for flexible tactics; they themselves learned Marxist dialectic and taught it to others (and much of what they have done in this field will always remain a valuable contribution to socialist literature); however, *in the application* of this dialectic they committed such an error, or proved to be so *un*dialectical in practice, so incapable of taking into account the rapid change of forms and the rapid acquisition of new content by the old forms, that their fate is not much more enviable than that of Hyndman, Guesde and Plekhanov. The principal reason for their bankruptcy was that they were hypnotized by a definite form of growth of the working-class movement and socialism, forgot all about the one-sidedness of that form, were afraid to see the break-up which objective conditions made inevitable, and continued to repeat simple and, at first glance, incontestable axioms that had been learned by rote, like: "three is more than two." But politics is more like algebra than like arithmetic, and still more like higher than elementary mathematics. In reality, all the old forms of the socialist movement have acquired a new content, and, consequently, a new symbol, the "minus" sign, has appeared in front of all the figures; our wiseacres, however, have stubbornly continued (and still continue) to persuade themselves and others that "minus three" is more than "minus two."

We must see to it that Communists do not make a similar mistake, only in the opposite sense, or rather, we must see to it that a *similar mistake*, only made in the opposite sense by the "Left" Communists, is corrected as soon as possible and eliminated as rapidly and painlessly as possible. It is not only Right doctrinairism that is erroneous; Left doctrinairism is erroneous too. Of course, the mistake of Left doctrinairism in communism is at present a thousand times less dangerous and

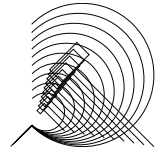
less significant than that of Right doctrinairism (i.e., social-chauvinism and Kautskyism); but, after all, that is only due to the fact that Left communism is a very young trend, is only just coming into being. It is only for this reason that, under certain conditions, the disease can be easily eradicated, and we must set to work with the utmost energy to eradicate it.

The old forms burst asunder, for it turned out that their new content—anti-proletarian and reactionary—had attained an inordinate development. From the standpoint of the development of international communism, our work today has such a durable and powerful content (for Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat) that it can *and must* manifest itself in any form, both new and old; it can and must regenerate, conquer and subjugate all forms, not only the new, but also the old—not for the purpose of reconciling itself with the old, but for the purpose of making all and every form, new and old, a weapon for the complete and irrevocable victory of communism.

The Communists must exert every effort to direct the working-class movement and social development in general along the straightest and shortest road to the victory of Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat on a worldwide scale. That is an incontestable truth. But it is enough to take one little step farther—a step that might seem to be in the same direction—and truth turns into error. We have only to say, as the German and British Left Communists do, that we recognize only one road, only the direct road, and that we will not permit tacking, conciliatory maneuvers, or compromising—and it will be a mistake which may cause, and in part has already caused and is causing, very grave prejudices to communism. Right doctrinairism persisted in recognizing only the old forms, and became utterly bankrupt, for it did not notice the new content. Left doctrinairism persists in the unconditional repudiation of certain old forms, failing to see that the new content is forcing its way through all and sundry forms, that it

is our duty as Communists to master all forms, to learn how, with the maximum rapidity, to supplement one form with another, to substitute one for another, and to adapt our tactics to any such change that does not come from our class or from our efforts.

World revolution has been so powerfully stimulated and accelerated by the horrors, vileness and abominations of the world imperialist war and by the hopelessness of the situation created by it, this revolution is developing in scope and depth with such splendid rapidity, with such a wonderful variety of changing forms, with such an instructive practical refutation of all doctrinairism, that there is every reason to hope for a rapid and complete recovery of the international communist movement from the infantile disorder of "Left-wing" communism.



APPENDIX

BEFORE PUBLISHING HOUSES IN OUR country—which has been plundered by the imperialists of the whole world in revenge for the proletarian revolution, and which is still being plundered and blockaded by them regardless of all promises they made to their workers—were able to bring out my pamphlet, additional material arrived from abroad. Without claiming to present in my pamphlet anything more than the cursory notes of a publicist, I shall dwell briefly upon a few points.

1. The Split Among the German Communists

The split among the Communists in Germany is an accomplished fact. The "Lefts," or the "opposition on principle," have formed a separate Communist Workers' Party, as distinct from the Communist Party. A split also seems imminent in Italy—I say "seems," as I have only two additional issues (Nos. 7 and 8) of the Left newspaper, *Il Soviet*, in which the possibility of and necessity for a split is

openly discussed, and mention is also made of a congress of the "Abstentionist" group (or the boycottists, i.e., opponents of participation in parliament), which group is still part of the Italian Socialist Party.

There is reason to fear that the split with the "Lefts," the anti-parliamentarians (in part anti-politicals too, who are opposed to any political party and to work in the trade unions), will become an international phenomenon, like the split with the "Centrists" (i.e., Kautskyites, Longuetists, Independents, etc.). Let that be so. At all events, a split is better than confusion, which hampers the ideological, theoretical and revolutionary growth and maturing of the party, and its harmonious, really organized practical work which actually paves the way for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Let the "Lefts" put themselves to a practical test on a national and international scale. Let them try to prepare for (and then implement) the dictatorship of the proletariat, without a rigorously centralized party with iron discipline, without the ability to become masters of every sphere, every branch, and every variety of political and cultural work. Practical experience will soon teach them.

Only, every effort should be made to prevent the split with the "Lefts" from impeding—or to see that it impedes as little as possible—the necessary amalgamation into a single party, inevitable in the near future, of all participants in the working-class movement who sincerely and conscientiously stand for Soviet government and the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was the exceptional good fortune of the Bolsheviks in Russia to have had fifteen years for a systematic and consummated struggle both against the Mensheviks (i.e., the opportunists and "Centrists") and against the "Lefts," long before the masses began direct action for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Europe and America, the same work has now to be done by forced marches, so to say. Certain individuals, especially among unsuccessful aspirants to leadership, may (if they lack

proletarian discipline and are not honest towards themselves) persist in their mistakes for a long time; however, when the time is ripe, the masses of the workers will themselves unite easily and rapidly and unite all sincere Communists to form a single party capable of establishing the Soviet system and the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

2. The Communists and the Independents in Germany

In this pamphlet I have expressed the opinion that a compromise between the Communists and the Left wing of the Independents is necessary and useful to communism, but will not be easy to bring about. Newspapers which I

* With regard to the question of future amalgamation of the "Left" Communists, the anti-parliamentarians, with the Communists in general, I would make the following additional remarks. In the measure in which I have been able to familiarize myself with the newspapers of the "Left" Communists and the Communists in general in Germany, I find that the former have the advantage of being better able than the latter to carry on agitation among the masses. I have repeatedly observed something similar to this in the history of the Bolshevik Party, though on a smaller scale, in individual local organizations, and not on a national scale. For instance, in 1907-08 the "Left" Bolsheviks, on certain occasions and in certain places, carried on more successful agitation among the masses than we did. This may partly have been due to the fact that a revolutionary moment, or at a time when revolutionary recollections are still fresh, it is easier to approach the masses with tactics of sheer negation. This, however, is not an argument to prove the correctness of such tactics. At all events, there is not the least doubt that a Communist *party* that wishes to be the real vanguard, the advanced detachment, of the revolutionary *class*, of the proletariat—and which, in addition wishes to learn to lead the *masses*, not only the proletarian, but also the *non*-proletarian masses of working and exploited people—must know how to conduct propaganda, how to organize, and how to carry on agitation in a manner most simple and comprehensible, most clear and vivid, both to the urban, factory masses and to the rural masses.

have subsequently received have confirmed this opinion on both points. No. 32 of *The Red Flag*, organ of the Central Committee, the Communist Party of Germany (*Die Rote Fahne*, Zentralorgan der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands, Spartakusbund, of March 26, 1920) published a "statement" by this Central Committee regarding the Kapp-Lüttwitz military *putsch* and on the "socialist government." This statement is quite correct both in its basic premise and its practical conclusions. The basic premise is that at present there is no "objective basis" for the dictatorship of the proletariat because the "majority of the urban workers" support the Independents. The conclusion is: a promise to be a "loyal opposition" (i.e., renunciation of preparations for a "forcible overthrow") to a "socialist government if it excludes bourgeois-capitalist parties."

In the main, this tactic is undoubtedly correct. Yet, even if minor inaccuracies of formulation should not be dwelt on, it is impossible to pass over in silence the fact that a government consisting of social-traitors should not (in an official statement by the Communist Party) be called "socialist"; that one should not speak of the exclusion of "bourgeois-capitalist parties," when the parties both of the Scheidemanns and of the Kautskys and Crispiens are petty-bourgeois-democratic parties; that things should never be written that are contained in §4 of the statement, which reads:

> "A state of affairs in which political freedom can be enjoyed without restriction, and bourgeois democracy cannot operate as the dictatorship of capital is, from the viewpoint of the development of the proletarian dictatorship, of the utmost importance in further winning the proletarian masses over to the side of communism."

Such a state of affairs is impossible. Petty-bourgeois leaders, the German Hendersons (Scheidemanns) and Snowdens (Crispiens), do not and cannot go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy, which, in its turn, cannot but

be a dictatorship of capital. To achieve the practical results that the Central Committee of the Communist Party had been quite rightly working for, there was no need to write such things, which are wrong in principle and politically harmful. It would have been sufficient to say (if one wished to observe parliamentary amenities):

> "As long as the majority of the urban workers follow the Independents, we Communists must do nothing to prevent those workers from getting rid of their last philistine-democratic (i.e., 'bourgeois-capitalist') illusions by going through the experience of having a government of their 'own.'"

That is sufficient ground for a compromise, which is really necessary and should consist in renouncing, for a certain period, all attempts at the forcible overthrow of a government which enjoys the confidence of a majority of the urban workers. But in everyday mass agitation, in which one is not bound by official parliamentary amenities, one might, of course, add:

> "Let scoundrels like the Scheidemanns, and philistines like the Kautskys and Crispiens reveal by their deeds how they have been fooled themselves and how they are fooling the workers; their 'clean' government will itself do the 'cleanest' job of all in 'cleansing' the Augean stables of socialism, Social-Democracy and other forms of social treachery."

The real nature of the present leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (leaders of whom it has been wrongly said that they have already lost all influence, whereas in reality they are even more dangerous to the proletariat than the Hungarian Social-Democrats who styled themselves Communists and promised to "support" the dictatorship of the proletariat) was once again revealed during the German equivalent of the Kornilov revolt, i.e., the Kapp-

Lüttwitz *putsch*.* A small but striking illustration is provided by two brief articles—one by Karl Kautsky entitled "Decisive Hours" ("Entscheidende Stunden") in *Freiheit* (*Freedom*), organ of the Independents, of March 30, 1920, and the other by Arthur Crispien entitled "On the Political Situation" (in the same newspaper, issue of April 14, 1920). These gentlemen are absolutely incapable of thinking and reasoning like revolutionaries. They are sniveling philistine democrats, who become a thousand times more dangerous to the proletariat when they claim to be supporters of Soviet government and of the dictatorship of the proletariat because, in fact, whenever a difficult and dangerous situation arises, they are sure to commit treachery... while "sincerely" believing that they are helping the proletariat! Did not the Hungarian Social-Democrats, after rechristening themselves Communists, also want to "help" the proletariat when, because of their cowardice and spinelessness, they considered the position of Soviet power in Hungary hopeless and went sniveling to the agents of the Entente capitalists and the Entente hangmen?

3. Turati and Co. in Italy

The issues of the Italian newspaper *Il Soviet* referred to above fully confirm what I have said in the pamphlet about the Italian Socialist Party's error in tolerating such members and even such a group of parliamentarians in their ranks. It is still further confirmed by an outside observer like the Rome correspondent of *The Manchester Guardian*, organ of the British liberal bourgeoisie, whose interview with Turati is

* Incidentally, this has been dealt with in an exceptionally clear, concise, precise and Marxist way in the excellent organ of the Austrian Communist Party, *The Red Banner*, of March 28 and 30, 1920. (*Die Rote Fahne*, Wien, 1920, Nos. 266 and 267; L.L.: "*Ein neuer Abschnitt der deutschen Revolution*").

published in its issue of March 12, 1920. The correspondent writes:

> "Signor Turati's opinion is that the revolutionary peril is not such as to cause undue anxiety in Italy. The Maximalists are fanning the fire of Soviet theories only to keep the masses awake and excited. These theories are, however, merely legendary notions, unripe programs, incapable of being put to practical use. They are likely only to maintain the working classes in a state of expectation. The very men who use them as a lure to dazzle proletarian eyes find themselves compelled to fight a daily battle for the extortion of some often trifling economic advantages so as to delay the moment when the working classes will lose their illusions and faith in their cherished myths. Hence a long string of strikes of all sizes and with all pretexts up to the very latest ones in the mail and railway services—strikes which make the already hard conditions of the country still worse. The country is irritated owing to the difficulties connected with its Adriatic problem, is weighed down by its foreign debt and by its inflated paper circulation, and yet it is still far from realizing the necessity of adopting that discipline of work which alone can restore order and prosperity."

It is clear as daylight that this British correspondent has blurted out the truth, which is probably being concealed and glossed over both by Turati himself, and his bourgeois defenders, accomplices and inspirers in Italy. That truth is that the ideas and political activities of Turati, Trèves, Modigliani, Dugoni and Co. are really and precisely of the kind that the British correspondent has described. It is downright social treachery. Just look at this advocacy of order and discipline among the workers, who are wage-slaves toiling to enrich the capitalists! And how familiar to us Russians are all these Menshevik speeches! What a valuable admission it is that the masses are *in favor of the Soviet* government! How stupid and vulgarly bourgeois is the failure to understand the revolutionary role of strikes which are spreading spontaneously! Indeed, the correspondent of the British bourgeois-liberal newspaper has rendered Turati and Co. a disservice and has excellently confirmed the correctness of the demand by Comrade

Bordiga and his friends on *Il Soviet*, who are insisting that the Italian Socialist Party, if it really wants to be *for* the Third International, should drum Turati and Co. out of its ranks and become a Communist Party both in name and in deed.

4. False Conclusions from Correct Premises

However, Comrade Bordiga and his "Left" friends draw from their correct criticism of Turati and Co. the wrong conclusion that any participation in parliament is harmful in principle. The Italian "Lefts" cannot advance even a shadow of a serious argument in support of this view. They simply do not know (or try to forget) the international examples of really revolutionary and communist utilization of bourgeois parliaments, which has been of unquestionable value in preparing for the proletarian revolution. They simply cannot conceive of any "new" ways of that utilization, and keep on repeatedly and endlessly vociferating about the "old" non-Bolshevik way.

Herein lies their fundamental error. In *all* fields of activity, and not in the parliamentary sphere alone, communism must *introduce* (and without long and persistent effort it will be *unable* to introduce) something new in principle that will represent a radical break with the traditions of the Second International (while retaining and developing what was good in the latter).

Let us take, say, journalistic work. Newspapers, pamphlets and leaflets perform the indispensable work of propaganda, agitation and organization. No mass movement in any country at all civilized can get along without a journalistic apparatus. No outcries against "leaders" or solemn vows to keep the masses uncontaminated by the influence of leaders will relieve us of the necessity of using, for this work, people from a bourgeois-intellectual environment or will rid us of the bourgeois-democratic, "private property" atmosphere and environment

in which this work is carried out under capitalism. Even two-and-a-half years after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, after the conquest of political power by the proletariat, we still have this atmosphere around us, this environment of mass (peasant, artisan) bourgeois-democratic private property relations.

Parliamentarism is one form of activity; journalism is another. The content of both can and should be communist if those engaged in these two spheres are genuine Communists, really members of a proletarian mass party. Yet, in neither sphere—and *in no other sphere of activity* under capitalism and during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism—is it possible to avoid those difficulties which the proletariat must overcome, those special problems which the proletariat must solve so as to use, for its own purposes, the services of people from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, eradicate bourgeois-intellectualist prejudices and influences, and weaken the resistance of (and, ultimately, completely transform) the petty-bourgeois environment.

Did we not, before the war of 1914-18, witness in all countries innumerable cases of extreme "Left" anarchists, syndicalists and others fulminating against parliamentarism, deriding bourgeois-vulgarized parliamentary socialists, castigating their careerism, and so on and so forth, and yet themselves pursuing the *same kind* of bourgeois career *through* journalism and *through* work in the syndicates (trade unions)? Is not the example of Jouhaux and Merrheim, to limit oneself to France, typical in this respect?

The childishness of those who "repudiate" participation in parliament consists in their thinking it possible to "*solve*" the difficult problem of combating bourgeois-democratic influences *within* the working-class movement in such a "simple," "easy," allegedly revolutionary manner, whereas they are actually merely running away from their own shadows, only closing their eyes to difficulties and trying to shrug them off with mere words. The most shameless careerism,

the bourgeois utilization of parliamentary seats, glaringly reformist perversion of parliamentary activity, and vulgar petty-bourgeois conservatism are all unquestionably common and prevalent features engendered everywhere by capitalism, not only outside but also within the working-class movement. But the selfsame capitalism and the bourgeois environment it creates (which disappears very slowly even after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, since the peasantry constantly regenerates the bourgeoisie) give rise to what is essentially the same bourgeois careerism, national chauvinism, petty-bourgeois vulgarity, etc.—merely varying insignificantly in form—in positively every sphere of activity and life.

You think, my dear boycottists and anti-parliamentarians, that you are "terribly revolutionary," but in reality, *you are frightened* by the comparatively minor difficulties of the struggle against bourgeois influences within the working-class movement, whereas your victory—i.e., the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the conquest of political power by the proletariat—will create *these very same* difficulties on a still larger, an infinitely larger scale. Like children, you are frightened by a minor difficulty which confronts you today, but you do not understand that tomorrow, and the day after, you will still have to learn, and learn thoroughly, to overcome the selfsame difficulties, only on an immeasurably greater scale.

Under Soviet rule, your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. They will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration, since communism cannot be built otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be won over, remolded, assimilated and re-educated, 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. Under Soviet rule, these same problems, which the anti-parliamentarians now so proudly, so haughtily, so lightly and so childishly brush aside with a wave of the hand—*these selfsame* problems are arising anew *within* the Soviets, within the Soviet administration among the Soviet "pleaders" (in Russia we have abolished, and have rightly abolished, the bourgeois legal bar, but it is reviving again under the cover of the "Soviet pleaders"[74]). Among Soviet engineers, Soviet school teachers and the privileged, i.e., the most highly skilled and best situated, *workers* at Soviet factories, we observe a constant revival of absolutely *all* the negative traits peculiar to bourgeois parliamentarism, and we are conquering this evil gradually—only by a tireless, prolonged and persistent struggle based on proletarian organization and discipline.

Of course, under the rule of the bourgeoisie it is very "difficult" to eradicate bourgeois habits from our own, i.e., the workers', party; it is "difficult" to expel from the party the familiar parliamentary leaders who have been hopelessly corrupted by bourgeois prejudices; it is "difficult" to subject to proletarian discipline the absolutely essential (even if very limited) number of people coming from the ranks of the bourgeoisie; it is "difficult" to form, in a bourgeois parliament, a communist group fully worthy of the working class; it is "difficult" to ensure that the communist parliamentarians do not engage in bourgeois parliamentary inanities, but concern themselves with the very urgent work of propaganda, agitation and organization among the masses. All this is "difficult," to be sure; it was difficult in Russia, and it is vastly more difficult in Western Europe and in America, where the bourgeoisie is far stronger, where bourgeois-democratic traditions are stronger, and so on.

Yet all these "difficulties" are mere child's play compared with the *same sort* of problems which, in any event, the proletariat will most certainly have to solve in order to achieve victory, both during the proletarian revolution and after the seizure of power by the proletariat. Compared with *these* truly gigantic problems of re-educating, 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—compared with these gigantic problems it is childishly easy to create, under the rule of the bourgeoisie, and in a bourgeois parliament, a really communist group of a real proletarian party.

If our "Left" and anti-parliamentarian comrades do not learn to overcome even such a small difficulty now, we may safely assert that either they will prove incapable of achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, and will be unable to subordinate and remold the bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois institutions on a wide scale, or they will have to *hastily complete their education*, and, by that haste, will do a great deal of harm to the cause of the proletariat, will commit more errors than usual, will manifest more than average weakness and inefficiency, and so on and so forth.

Until the bourgeoisie has been overthrown and, after that, until small-scale economy and small commodity production have entirely disappeared, the bourgeois atmosphere, proprietary habits and petty-bourgeois traditions will hamper proletarian work both outside and within the working-class movement, not only in a single field of activity—the parliamentary—but, inevitably, in every field of social activity, in all cultural and political spheres without exception. The attempt to brush aside, to fence oneself off from *one* of the "unpleasant" problems or difficulties in some one sphere of activity is a profound mistake, which will later most certainly

have to be paid for. We must learn how to master every sphere of work and activity without exception, to overcome all difficulties and eradicate all bourgeois habits, customs and traditions everywhere. Any other way of presenting the question is just trifling, mere childishness.

May 12, 1920

V.

In the Russian edition of this book, I somewhat incorrectly described the conduct of the Communist Party of Holland as a whole, in the sphere of international revolutionary policy. I therefore avail myself of the present opportunity to publish a letter from our Dutch comrades on this question and to correct the expression "Dutch Tribunists," which I used in the Russian text, and for which I now substitute the words "certain members of the Communist Party of Holland."[75]

V. I. Lenin

Letter From D. J. Wijnkoop

Dear Comrade Lenin,

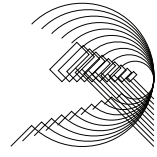
Thanks to your kindness, we members of the Dutch delegation to the Second Congress of the Communist International were able to read your *"Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder* prior to its publication in the European languages. In several places in the book you emphasize your disapproval of the part played by some members of the Communist Party of Holland in international politics.

We feel, nevertheless, that we must protest against your laying the responsibility for their actions on the Communist Party. This is highly inaccurate. Moreover, it is unjust, because

these members of the Communist Party of Holland take little or no part in the Party's current activities and are endeavoring, directly or indirectly, to give effect, in the Communist Party of Holland, to opposition slogans against which the Party and all its organs have waged, and continue to wage to this day, a most energetic struggle.

Fraternally Yours,

D. J. Wijnkoop
(on behalf of the Dutch delegation)
Moscow, June 30, 1920

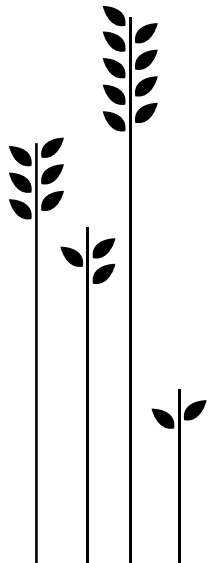


Liu Shaoqi

ON THE PARTY

Selected Sections





CONCERNING THE MASS LINE OF OUR PARTY

ANOTHER FEATURE OF THE PRESENT REVISED Constitution is that particular stress has been laid on the Party's mass line in the General Program and in the detailed provisions of the Party Constitution, because the mass line is the fundamental political and organizational line of our Party. This means that all our Party organizations and Party work must be closely linked with the masses.

Comrade Mao Zedong has repeatedly pointed out to us that the mass line should be applied in all our work. In his report to this Congress, he again urged us in most sincere terms to carry out our work in accordance with the mass line. He said that one hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties was that we have very close ties with the broadest masses of the people. He asked us "to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from the interests of individual groups".

He wanted our comrades to understand that "the supreme test of the words and deeds of a Communist is whether they

conform with the highest interests and enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the people". He further told us that we would be invincible "as long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them". He pointed out that "commandism is wrong in any type of work, because in overstepping the level of political consciousness of the masses and violating the principle of voluntary mass action it reflects the disease of impetuosity". And he added, "Tailism in any type of work is also wrong, because it is falling below the level of political consciousness of the masses and violating the principle of leading the masses forward it reflects the disease of dilatoriness." All these teachings of Comrade Mao Zedong are extremely important, and every Party member should carefully study and grasp them and earnestly carry them out.

This mass line of ours is possible only in a proletarian party. It is a class line—the mass line of the proletariat. Our view of the masses and our relationship with them are diametrically opposed to those of the exploiting classes.

We fully understand the decisive role which the vanguard of the masses can play throughout the people's struggle for emancipation. The complete emancipation of the people is possible only when they have a vanguard of their own, such as our Party. Otherwise they would be without revolutionary leadership, and the people's revolution would consequently meet with failure. Only under the firm and correct leadership of our Party and only by carrying on the struggle along the political orientation given by our Party can the Chinese people achieve their complete emancipation.

This is one aspect of the question.

The other aspect is that the vanguard of the masses must establish proper and close relations with the masses. It must stand for the people's interests in all fields, above all in the political field and it must adopt a correct attitude towards the people and lead them by correct methods before it can forge

close links with them. Otherwise, it is fully possible for the vanguard to become divorced form the people. In that case, it will no longer be the vanguard of the people, and it will not only fail to perform the task of emancipating the people, but will also face the danger of outright destruction by the enemy. This means that the vanguard of the masses must follow a thorough-going and clear-cut mass line in all its work.

Under what conditions will the vanguard become divorced form the masses?

First of all, the vanguard will divorce itself from the masses when it fails to perform its obligations as the vanguard of the people, when it fails to represent at all times and in all circumstances the maximum interests of the broadest possible sections of the people, when it fails to define correct tasks, policies and methods of work at the right time and when it fails to stick to the truth and correct its mistakes in good time. In other words, tailism and negligence will lead to our estrangement from the masses.

In our Party, there has not been any open advocacy or spontaneity nor has any tailist "theory" been put forward advocating following at the heels of the spontaneous mass movements or dispensing with the leadership of the proletarian party. But Chen Duxiuism in the latter period of the 1924-27 Revolution and capitulationism in the early period of the War of Resistance Against Japan were both a kind of tailism since their protagonists lagged far behind the mass revolutionary movement of the time. They were incapable of setting forth correct tasks, policies of methods of work to represent the people or inspire them to go forward. Thus they alienated themselves from the people and brought damage or defeat to the revolution. In addition, some comrades have committed errors of a tailist nature in various fields of our work.

For instance, in their practical work some regarded the Party an appendage to the army, to the leading Party groups in the government, or to the trade unions, instead of the

highest form of class organization. Others were lackadaisical, complacent or so bogged down that they just let things drift along and had no desire at all to make improvements. They failed to set forth, based on the prevailing local conditions, correct tasks, policies and methods of work with which to lead the people forward thereby violating the principle of leading the masses step by step. They yielded to the backward ideas of the masses and reduced themselves to the level of ordinary workers, peasant or even backward elements, thus abandoning their vanguard role. At times they gave way to the erroneous ideas of the masses, followed at the tail of spontaneous mass movements and, as a result, failed to give the masses correct and far-sighted leadership. This kind of tendency necessarily isolates us from the broad masses; they do not need such people to lead them.

Secondly, the vanguard divorces itself from the masses when it fails to adopt a correct attitude and correct methods to lead them, when it fails to help them recognize in their own experience the correctness of the Party's slogans and act accordingly, when the slogans it adopts are too radical and the policies ultra-Left, or when the forms of struggle and organization it advocated are impossible to carry out at the time or unacceptable to the masses. In other words, commandism, adventurism and closed-doorism will lead to isolation from the masses.

Some Comrades made the mistake of engaging in commandism, adventurism and closed-doorism. Some of them, for instance, were not responsible to the masses in their work. They did not believe that the masses must emancipate themselves through their own efforts. Instead, they stood above and ordered the masses about in order to fight in their stead and to bestow emancipation upon them. Such comrades were impetuous so that while they appeared active, in fact they did not know how to transform the Party's slogans and tasks into those of the people. Nor did they know how to enlighten the

masses or patiently await their awakening, nor did they know how to take steps to help the masses become revolutionary of their own accord. Rather, they tried to compel the masses to accept the Party's slogans and tasks simply by issuing arbitrary orders and forcing the masses into action. Thus they violated the principal of volition on the part of the masses. And, especially when the masses harbored misgivings about their radical slogans and ultra-Left policies and felt dissatisfied, they pushed all the harder for their implementation by issuing orders, by coercion or even by threat of punishment. An extreme example of this is the way some of them attempted to frighten the people and cadres into getting the work done by finding mistakes, shortcomings and bad examples wherever they went and by criticizing, condemning and punishing those involved. They did not try to find the strong points or to hold up the good examples, in order to study, develop and systematize them. They did not try to inspire the Party members and the people to go forward and help to overcome the mistakes and shortcomings by commending heroes and model workers or disseminating useful experience. Lashing out in all directions, they tried to get things done by simply issuing orders. Instead of learning from the masses and benefitting from the peoples' new ideas and suggestions, they tried to force everyone to do things their way. This tendency led to serious isolation from the masses and aroused resentment not only against the individual comrades but against the Party as well.

In addition to the two tendencies mentioned above, bureaucratism and warlordism have been found among some of our comrades. These tendencies also lead to serious isolation from the masses.

The tendency to bureaucratism is manifested in the fact that some comrades lack the spirit to serve the people and to be responsible to the people and the Party. Some typical examples are the way they loaf about all day long, never using their brains; issue orders without investigation and study, or

learning from the masses; reject criticism from the masses, ignore their rights or even demand that the people serve them; seek their own benefit at the expense of the interests of the people, not scrupling to waste public money and manpower; and become corrupt and degenerate and lord it over the people.

The tendency to warlordism is manifested in the fact that some comrades, failing to understand that our army—as the armed force of the people—is a most important instrument of the people for defeating their enemies and winning their liberation, look on the army as a special force standing beyond or above the people, or even as the means of building up their personal influence or position. Consequently, they resort to bureaucratism and commandism in the people's army.

They are most conspicuously manifested in the relations between officers and men and between superiors and subordinates. The troops and subordinates are commanded merely through the issuing of orders and the threat of punishment, not through relying on their initiative and consciousness. Secondly, these tendencies are manifested in the relations between the army and the people. In relations with the people some comrades do not try to enforce strict discipline among their subordinates and, instead of cherishing the people, coerce, beat and swear at them. As a result the troops become alienated from the people. Thirdly, these tendencies are manifested in the purely military approach to the relationship between the revolutionary army and the revolutionary government; that is, it places the army above the government and puts the government under army control as the warlords used to do.

Obviously, this tendency is incompatible with the character of a people's army.

These erroneous tendencies in our Party, which alienate us from the masses, arise from the low educational level of the working people and the influence of the exploiting classes of the old society. The petty-bourgeois elements and the

other elements in our Party who have long been disengaged from production have generally been susceptible to such influences and tend to divorce themselves from the masses. These tendencies are deep-rooted in society, and we have felt necessary to mention them in the General Program of our Party Constitution. The more the revolution develops and the more onerous our work becomes, the more likely it is that such tendencies among us will grow. We must, therefore, wage a constant struggle against them in order to maintain and cement our ties with the broad masses of the people. As comrade Mao Zedong puts it, we must constantly "sweep the floor and wash our faces" so as to prevent political dust and germs from clouding the minds of our comrades and decaying the body of our Party.

The masses must have their own staunch vanguard which, for its part, must maintain close ties with the widest possible section of the masses. Only thus will the emancipation of the people be possible. Our Party, the vanguard of the Chinese people, must constantly try to eradicate tendencies such as those described above which estrange it from the masses, so that we can follow a line of close unity with them. This is the mass line of our Party—the mass line set forth by Comrade Mao Zedong. It is a line designed to enable our Party to establish a correct relationship with the people and to adopt a correct attitude and correct methods for leading them. This line will enable our Party's leading organs and individuals to establish a correct relationship with their followers.

According to Comrade Mao Zedong, our Party's policies and methods of work must be "from the masses and to the masses". That is to say, the organizational as well as the political line of our Party should stem genuinely from the masses and be genuinely relayed back to them. Our Party's correct political line cannot be separated from its correct organizational line. Although partial, temporary disharmony may occur between these two, it is impossible to imagine a correct political line

existing alongside an incorrect organizational line or vice versa The one cannot be isolated from the other. By a correct organizational line we mean the Party's mass line, which calls for closely linking the Party's leading cadres with the rank and file inside and outside the Party, for the principle of "from the masses and to the masses" and for supplementing the general call with specific guidance through leadership.

For the implementation of the mass line of our Party and of Comrade Mao Zedong, the General Program and provisions of the Party Constitution has laid emphasis on certain viewpoints concerning the masses. Those viewpoints, which every Party member should bear in mind, are as follows:

The first is the viewpoint of doing everything in the interests of the people and of serving them whole-heartedly. From the outset, our Party was founded to serve the people. All the sacrifices, efforts and struggles of our Party members have been made for no other purpose than the welfare and emancipation of the people. Here lies our greatest glory as Communists, the thing we are most proud of. Therefore any viewpoint that stands for personal interests or the interests of small groups at the expense of those of the people is wrong. So long as they are devoted to their duty and have some achievements to their credit, all our Party members and all those who have joined our ranks are serving the people and putting themselves at their disposal no matter whether they are aware of it or not, or whether they occupy important, leading positions or are ordinary fighters, cooks or grooms. They are all directly or indirectly serving the people at their different posts. Therefore, they are all equal and honorable. We must enhance the political consciousness of all our Party members and personnel so that they may serve the people and hold themselves responsible to the people.

The second is the viewpoint of holding oneself fully responsible to the people. In serving the people, we must we must hold ourselves responsible to them so that they will

benefit by our effort and win emancipation. We must try our best to avoid mistakes or reduce them to a minimum in order not to harm the people or cause them losses. To benefit the people, the tasks, policies and methods of work we adopt must all be correct. If they are not correct, they will adversely affect the peoples' interests. Should this happen, we must make earnest self-criticism and ensure prompt rectification. This means that we must know how to serve the people and that we must serve them well and not otherwise. Under no circumstances should we adopt a reckless attitude towards the people; we must adopt a serious and responsible attitude.

It is also necessary to understand that being responsible to the people is identical with being responsible to the leading bodies of the Party. This means that although our Party members will be responsible to a leading organ or an individual leader in carrying out its instructions, they will err if they separate responsibility to the Party leadership from that to the people. Only by holding oneself responsible to the people can one be considered to have done one's best and utmost. It must be understood that the interests of the Party are identical with those of the people. That which benefits the people benefits the Party, and every Party member must work for all such things with might and main. Likewise, whatever harms the people harms the Party and must be opposed or avoided by every Party member. The interests of the people are the interests of the Party. Apart from the interests of the people, the Party has no special interests of its own. The ultimate interests of the greatest number of people is the highest criterion of truth, and consequently, the highest criterion of all the activities of our Party members. A Party member who is responsible to the people is responsible to the Party. It must be understood that responsibility to the Party and responsibility to the people are identical. They should be integrated and must not be separated or set against each other.

When shortcomings or mistakes are found in the directives of leading organs or individual leaders with regard to tasks, policies or methods of work, suggestions for their correction should be made with a sense of responsibility to the people. We must not be indifferent about what is right and what is wrong; to be so means acting irresponsibly both to the people and to the Party.

The basic interests of the Chinese people demand that Party discipline be observed and Party unity maintained. Party discipline and unity must not be undermined on the pretext of being responsible to the people. Nevertheless, any shortcoming or mistake made by a leading body or individual must be corrected. It is the duty as well as the right of every Party member to help in this respect, for any such shortcomings or mistakes are harmful to the people and so also to the Party. Sincere criticism of one's own mistakes and those of the leadership and observance of Party discipline constitute the spirit of responsibility to the people.

The third is the viewpoint of believing in the self-emancipation of the people. Comrade Mao Zedong has pointed out more than once that the people are truly great, that their creative power is inexhaustible, that we are invincible only when we rely on them, that the people alone are the true makers of history and that genuine history is the history of the people. Marx pointed out long ago that the toilers will emancipate themselves, and *The Internationale* states that their salvation depends not upon emperors, gods, or heroes but upon themselves. This means that only through their own struggles and efforts can the people win their emancipation, maintain it and consolidate it. It cannot be bestowed or granted, nor can it be fought for or secured by anybody on their behalf. Hence, any attitude of gratuitously bestowing emancipation on the masses or carrying out their fight for them is wrong.

The people make their own history. Their emancipation must be based on their own consciousness and willingness.

They select their vanguard, and under its leadership they get themselves organized and fight for their own emancipation. Only thus can they make conscious efforts to secure, retain and consolidate the fruits of their struggles. The enemies of the people can be overthrown only by the people themselves. It cannot be done in any other way. Without their own genuine consciousness and mobilization, the efforts of their vanguard alone will not suffice for the people to win emancipation, to make progress or to accomplish anything. Even tasks which concern the immediate interests of the people such as the reduction of rent and interest, mutual aid teams, and cooperatives will result in pseudo-reduction or formal, empty things, unless, instead of being bestowed on them or organized for them by other people, these tasks are taken up voluntarily and consciously by the masses themselves.

The cause of the Communists is the cause of the people. No matter how correct our program and policies may be, they cannot be put into effect without the direct support and sustained struggle of the people.

With us, therefore, unless everything is dependent on and determined by the people's political consciousness and willingness to act, we can accomplish nothing and all our efforts will be to no avail. With our reliance upon their political consciousness and willingness to act, with their genuine awakening and mobilization and with the Party's correct leadership, we will assuredly win final victory in all aspects of the great cause of our Party. Hence, when the masses are not fully awakened, the duty of Communists, the vanguard of the people, in carrying out any kind of work is to develop their consciousness by every effective and suitable means. This is the first step in our work and it must be done well however difficult and time-consuming it may be.

Only when the first step has been taken can we start on the second step. In other words, when the masses have reached the necessary level of consciousness, it is our duty to guide

them in their actions—to guide them to organize and to fight. When this has been accomplished, we may, in the course of their actions try to enhance their consciousness a step further. This is how we lead the masses step by step to fight for their basic slogans as put forward by our Party. We Communists and the advanced elements and outstanding figures among the masses can do no more than this for the people's cause and nothing more than this can be expected. Whoever attempts to go beyond this point is liable to commit all kinds of errors, including individualist heroism, commandism monopolization of affairs and the favor-bestowing viewpoint.

In the struggle for the emancipation of the people, a Communist should act and, indeed, can only act as a leader or guide to them. He should not and cannot possibly act as a "hero" taking for himself the role of conquering the world. In their revolutionary struggle the people are in dire need of far-sighted and staunch leaders and guides and such persons are in fact a prerequisite for the people's success. But the people do not need "heroes" to conquer the world for them, because such "heroes", isolated as they are from the masses, can achieve nothing for the cause of emancipating the people.

The fourth is the viewpoint of learning from the people. In order to serve the people well, to kindle their consciousness and to guide their actions, we Communists must first of all possess certain qualifications such as foresight and the ability to anticipate various problems. This means we must be harbingers, for only such people are capable of helping to enlighten others. In addition to our whole-hearted devotion to the cause of the people's emancipation, our inexhaustible enthusiasm and our sprit of sacrifice, we must acquire adequate knowledge, experience and vigilance before we can successfully raise the people's consciousness, guide their actions and serve them well. Study is indispensable if we are to acquire knowledge, experience and foresight.

We can enrich our knowledge by studying Marxist-Leninist theories, our own history and the lessons of the people's struggles in foreign lands. We can also expand our knowledge by learning from our enemies. Most importantly, however, we must learn from the masses, because their knowledge and experience are the most abundant and practical and their creative power is the greatest. This is why Comrade Mao Zedong has time and time again asked us to learn from the masses before we attempt to educate them.

Only when our comrades have learned from the masses with an open mind and have crystallized the knowledge and experience of the people into a system of knowledge of a higher order, will they be able to take specific steps to develop the consciousness of the people and give guidance to their activities. If, instead of learning from the masses, we think ourselves clever and try to develop the consciousness of the masses and guide them by devising a set of schemes out of our own imagination or mechanically introducing a set of schemes based on historical or foreign experiences, the attempt will certainly prove futile. In order to keep on learning from the masses, we must not stand apart from them for a single moment. If we isolate ourselves from them, our knowledge will be extremely limited and we will certainly not be clever, well-informed, capable or competent enough to give them leadership.

> "Simple people sometimes prove to be much nearer to the truth than some high institutions.
>
> "I could quote scores and hundreds of similar examples. Thus you see that our experience alone, the experience of the leaders, is far from enough for the leadership of our cause. In order to lead properly the experience of the leaders must be supplemented by the experience of the Party membership, the experience of the working class, the experience of the toilers, the experience of the so-called 'little people.'
>
> "But when is it possible to do that?
>
> "It is possible to do that only when the leaders are most closely connected with the masses, when they are connected with the Party

> membership, with the working class, with the peasantry, with the working intelligentsia.
>
> "Connection with the masses, strengthening this connection, readiness to heed the voice of the masses—herein lies the strength and invincibility of the Bolshevik leadership."[76]

Such is Stalin's advice to the Communists of the Soviet Union. It is a universal truth.

The task of the leaders and the leading bodies is to exercise correct leadership, size up the situation correctly, grasp its essence, set forth the tasks, make decisions, mobilize and organize the masses to implement these decisions and supervise the work of implementation. To do this well it is essential to learn from the masses and to follow the line of "from the masses to the masses"; otherwise no leadership can be satisfactorily exercised.

This is what the viewpoint of learning from the masses means.

The viewpoints of doing everything in the interests of the people, of holding oneself fully responsible to them, of believing in their self-emancipation and of learning from them to constitute our mass viewpoints, which are the viewpoints of the vanguard of the people. Only with such viewpoints, the firm and unequivocal mass viewpoints, can our comrades follow a clear-cut mass line in their work and exercise correct leadership.

Some comrades consider mass work to be, to the exclusion of other kinds, only the work of such mass organizations as trade unions or peasant associations. This is wrong. All Party activities and all activities under the Party leadership are mass activities and, therefore, should be carried out without exception, through the masses, from a mass viewpoint and on the basis of the mass line. The mass line and mass viewpoints cannot be dispensed with in any work.

Because our Party itself is a part of the people and, moreover, is dedicated to serving the people, our work in the

Party is also a kind of mass work and should follow the mass line.

Because the army is also a part of the people and is likewise dedicated to serving the people, our work in the army is also a kind of mass work and should follow the mass line.

Of course, different kinds of work call for different procedure and these should not be confused with one another. For instance, forms of work in trade unions and peasant associations should be distinguished from those within the Party and the army. Nevertheless, all of these are kinds of mass work.

Naturally, the masses of the people are not all alike and our work is therefore varied and intricate. In his respective field, each comrade must directly serve a specific section of the people, such as the workers of a factory, the peasants in a village, the staff members of an office, the soldiers of an army unit, or just a few individuals. All the various kinds of work add up to the common objective of serving the Chinese people as a whole.

Our comrades, therefore, must correctly grasp the relationship between the part and the whole, realizing that being directly engaged in limited activities and serving a section of the people, they are indirectly promoting and fostering the revolutionary work as a whole and serving the entire people. They must take both the part and the whole into consideration. It is wrong to keep an eye only on the part to the neglect of the whole or vice versa. The part must be integrated with the whole.

When the partial, temporary interests of the people conflict with their total, long-range interests, the former must be subordinated to the latter. This means that less significant issues must be subordinated to greater issues, and minor principles to major ones. Though this is a very complicated question, our comrades will be able to follow a thoroughgoing mass line, provided they know how to use their brains to correctly

distinguish and coordinate the limited with the basic interests of the people under all circumstances. Otherwise they may wittingly or unwittingly stand for the temporary interests of a section of the people in opposition to the long-range interests of the majority, thereby isolating themselves from the masses.

The people are generally composed of relatively active elements, intermediate elements and backward elements. In the initial stage of an undertaking the active elements are usually in the minority, while the intermediate and backward elements make up the majority. Our mass line demands consideration for the majority, that is, the intermediate and backward elements; otherwise the advanced section will become isolated and nothing can then be accomplished. The slogans for action and the forms of struggle and organization that we propose to the masses must be acceptable to the intermediate and backward elements. To foster the people's own consciousness and initiative means chiefly fostering the consciousness and initiative of these elements. A mass movement is possible only when these people are awakened and inspired into action.

We must pay particular attention to educating, uniting and organizing the active elements so that they may become the nucleus of leadership among the masses. However, it is definitely not our intention to organize the active elements merely for their own sake, and under no circumstances must they become isolated from the intermediate and backward masses. Our aim is to draw over the intermediate and backward elements and encourage them to go into action with the help of the active elements. In other words, it is to rally the masses on a broadest possible scale. When the intermediate and backward masses are not yet awakened, we should know how to enlighten them and to patiently wait for their awakening. If, unwilling and leading just a small number of active elements, we recklessly rush forward, we shall isolate ourselves and end in failure.

Looking at the nation as a whole we see that the peasantry constitutes 80 percent of China's population, and so consideration of the majority of the people chiefly means considering the peasantry. Our mass viewpoint is closely connected with our rural viewpoint. Under the present conditions, the Chinese working class would certainly not be able to fulfill its own tasks if it ignored China's peasantry or if it did not focus on the emancipation of the countryside.

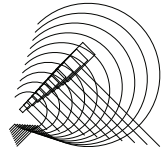
In view of the low cultural level of the Chinese peasants and other sections of the Chinese people (with the exception of the intelligentsia), it is all the more necessary for us to combine our general call with specific guidance in our work to set things in motion by making a breakthrough at one point. The general call alone will definitely not succeed in guiding the masses who have a low cultural level. This is due to the fact that the masses, especially the peasantry, accept things only on the strength of their own personal experience instead of on the strength of our general propaganda and slogans. Therefore, in our work we should try to break through at a single point in order to set up a model, which the masses can see for themselves. Only through examples can we help the masses, particularly the intermediate and backward elements, to understand things, become confident and courageous and respond to the call of the Party in the form of a vigorous mass movement.

Our combat heroes, our labor heroes and model workers have played an outstanding role in various places and have become the best propagandists and organizers among the masses because, through such personalities, examples and experience, the masses have come to understand things and thus enhance their consciousness and self-confidence. Similarly, revolutionary reconstruction in Chinas revolutionary base areas has played an educational and enlightening role for the whole people and has helped heighten their confidence and self-confidence. The same approach is at work whenever the

leadership breaks through at one point in order to provide concrete experience for the reinforcement of the general call. It is difficult for the masses to understand a call without familiar, concrete experience to substantiate it.

Hence, we must give consideration to the whole and to the majority and reject closed-doorism and sectarianism. We must maintain close ties with the masses and reject bureaucratism and warlordism.

We want to lead the masses forward but without commandism. We want to keep close ties with them, but without tailism. We should raise the consciousness of the masses and lead them forward from where there are now. In our work we must adhere to the highest principles while at the same time maintaining the closest possible ties with the masses. Such is our mass line. And while it is, of course, no easy job to carry it out, only by doing so can we become Marxists, worthy of the name Communist.



DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM WITHIN THE PARTY

OUR PARTY IS NOT SIMPLY AN AGGREGATE OF individual members. It is a unified, organic body established according to a definite principle. It is a composite of its leaders and its rank and file. It is a unified body consisting of a headquarters (the Central Committee), Party organizations at all levels and the broad body of the membership, and it has been established in accordance with a definite principle, that is, democratic centralism in the Party.

Three individual Party members in a factory or village do not constitute a Party organization until they are organized according to the principle of democratic centralism. Under normal conditions, one of the three should be the leader of the group and the other two its members. In this way, in all activities there will be a leader and two followers. and only when this happens does such a group become the kind of Party organization which generates new strength. The strength of the proletariat lies in organization.

As laid down in the Party Constitution, democratic centralism means centralism on the basis of democracy and

democracy under central guidance. It is both democratic and centralized. It embodies the relationship between the leader and the led, between higher and lower Party organizations, between individual Party members and the Party as a whole and among the Party's Central Committee. Party organizations at all levels and rank-and-file Party members.

What does it mean when we say that Party centralism is centralism based on democracy? It means that the leading bodies of the Party are elected by the membership on a democratic basis and enjoy their confidence. It means that the resolutions and policies of the Party are the crystallization of the ideas of the rank and file as expressed on a democratic basis, that they are decided on by the rank and file as expressed on a democratic basis, that they are decided upon by the rank and file or its representatives and that they are then adhered to and carried out by the leadership in conjunction with the rank and file. The authority of leading bodies of the Party is conferred by the Party membership. Therefore, these bodies are empowered to exercise centralized leadership in the management of all Party affairs on behalf of the membership and to command obedience from the organization at lower levels and from Party members. Order within the Party is built on the principle that the individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority to the majority, the lower level to the higher level and all the constituent organizations to the Central Committee. In other words, the Party's centralism is based on, and not separated from democracy. It is not absolutism.

Why do we say the Party's democracy is democracy under centralized guidance? This means that every Party meeting is convened by a leading body and carried through under proper leadership. The adoption of every resolution or ruling is preceded by a full preparation and careful deliberation. Every election is based on a carefully prepared list of candidates. The Party as a whole has a unified Party Constitution and unified

discipline for its membership to observe, and there is a unified leading body which the entire membership must observe. In other words, inner-Party democracy is not a democracy devoid of leadership, nor is it ultra-democracy, nor is it anarchy in the Party.

Democratic centralism is a discipline which unites the Party's backbone leaders with the rank and file of the Party membership. It is a system through which to crystallize the ideas of the rank and file and to have the crystallized ideas carried out by them. It is the expression of the mass line within the Party.

Some members do not understand that centralism in the Party is based on democracy. Consequently, they separate their leadership from inner-Party democracy and from the rank and file of the Party membership and call this "centralism". They think that their authority as leaders need not be conferred by the Party membership but can be arrogated by themselves. They think that they need not gain leading positions through election, nor need confidence of the Party membership and the lower Party organizations, but that they can simply proclaim themselves leaders. They think that they can arbitrarily adopt guidelines and resolutions without going through the process of pooling the ideas of the rank and file. Instead of identifying themselves with the rank and file of the Party membership, they stand above it. Instead of acting within the organization of the Party and obeying and submitting to its control, they command and control the Party and lord it over the Party organizations. With respect to their superiors, they assert independence on the pretext of preserving inner-Party democracy, while with respect to their subordinates and Party members, they suppress their democratic rights on the pretext of exercising inner-Party centralism. In fact, they neither practice democracy in dealing with their subordinates nor accept centralism in relations with their superiors.

While others are obliged to adhere to resolutions adopted by the majority and observe Party discipline, they, as leaders, feel entitled to do otherwise. They observe none of such basic organizational principles as the subordination of the individual to the organization, of the minority to the majority and of the lower level to the higher level. Party rules and resolutions, in their opinion, are written for rank-and-file Party members but not for leaders. This is an anti-democratic, autocratic tendency in the Party and a reflection of the ideology characteristic of a privileged social class. It has nothing in common with our Party's centralism. It is a derivation which does, however, exist in our Party and ought to be done away with completely.

There are other comrades who, failing to understand that democracy in the Party is democracy under centralized guidance, divorce their actions from the Party's centralized leadership and from the Party as a whole. They act as they like, guided solely by their own whims and views, and they disregard the overall situation and the long-range interests of the Party as a whole. They neither strictly abide by Party discipline nor carry out the decisions of the Party's leading bodies. They make all kinds of apolitical, unprincipled remarks and spread their views in disregard of organizational principles. They exaggerate things in order to sow dissention within the Party, and they indulge in endless empty talk or wrangling even during perilous emergencies. They go so far as to take advantage of the temporary confusion of some Party members who are caught unprepared, to press for votes for their own proposals in order to have their own designs carried out in the name of the "majority".

These are manifestations of ultra-democracy which have nothing in common with our Party democracy. As Comrade Mao Zedong has pointed out:

> "[The danger of ultra-democracy,] lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity... [It stems

> from] the petty bourgeoisie's individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought into the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat."[77]

Though the tendencies towards anti-democratic absolutism and ultra-democracy found in the Party are two extremes of inner-Party life, the latter often comes into being as a kind of penalty for the former. Thus wherever there is a serious tendency to absolutism, ultra-democracy is bound to rise. Both are erroneous tendencies detrimental to and destructive of genuine Party unity and solidarity. The whole Party must maintain stern vigilance against their occurrence.

We must now fully extend democracy within the Party and bring about a high degree of inner-Party democracy. At the same time, we must affect a high degree of centralism in Party leadership on the basis of this highly developed democracy.

In his report to the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Party, Comrade Mao Zedong said:

> "Ours is a country in which small-scale production and the patriarchal system prevail, and taking the country as a whole there is as yet no democratic life; consequently this state of affairs is reflected in our Party by insufficient democracy in Party life. This phenomenon hinders the entire party from exercising its initiative to the full. Similarly, it has led to insufficient democracy in the united front and in the mass movements."[78]

Things are somewhat different now. Considerable progress has been made both in the democratic movement in China's liberated areas and in inner-Party democracy, especially through the rectification movement and the review of our work. The free and penetrating discussion of Party history and the Party line by cadres prior to the present Seventh National Congress represents a vigorous flourishing of inner-Party democracy and has provided adequate preparations for the Congress. However, democracy in the Party as a whole and in the local Party organizations is still inadequate and needs

to be further fostered. This is why many provisions for the extension of inner-Party democracy are included in the Party Constitution.

Our Party is still waging a war and a protracted war at that. Until there are changes in our technical conditions and in the situation of our enemy, this war remains basically a kind of guerrilla war. Therefore, meetings and elections must be held where the guerrilla war permits. There should be no unwarranted curtailment of inner-Party democracy on the pretext of war.

In the Liberated Areas, Party congresses at all levels and general membership meetings must be called, wherever possible, according to the provisions of the Constitution in order to elect the various levels of the Party's leading bodies.

The Party Constitution provides that, in the election of a leading body in the Party, in addition to the presidium of the Congress having the rights to submit a list of candidates, every delegation and every delegate is ensured the right to nominate candidates and every elector, of the right to criticize any candidates or propose alternative ones. The candidate list must be fully discussed, and the list must serve as the basis of elections conducted either by secret ballot or by open vote.

The Party Constitution provides that local Party congresses shall be convened once every two years. This means that new leading-bodies of the local Party organizations must be elected once every two years. Between congresses, however, the convocation of conferences of representatives to deliberate and decide on immediate tasks is both necessary and feasible. In the past we held cadres' meetings of various sizes to review and decide on our work; in the future we should hold congresses and conferences of representatives. Elections should be conducted no more than once every two years, because too many elections are unnecessary and handicap our work. Therefore, in addition to Party congresses, conferences of representatives are needed to review and plan our work.

Such conferences may be held once or twice a year according to local Party needs, with representatives selected by the lower Party committees. Such a conference has the power to remove or replace members of Party committees or to add further members through by-elections, but its resolutions and the removal, replacement or addition of Party committee members must be approved by the Party committee in question. The reason for this is that the conference is subordinate to the Party committee, although its power is greater than that of the cadres' meetings of the past.

Party congresses and conferences at the provincial or border region, regional, county or district levels may be held in rotation. For instance this year, congresses at the provincial or border region and county levels may be held at the same time as conferences at the regional and district levels are held. This should then be reversed the next year.

The Party committees at various levels should be broadened to include people in charge of various fields of work as well as cadres who maintain close ties with the masses. According to the Constitution, a standing committee should be formed in each Party committee to take charge of the day-to-day work. Similarly, the standing committee should include leading cadres in various fields of work so that it may function as a regular leading nucleus of each of the different kinds of work in the locality. A Party committee may, when necessary, avail itself of one or two assistant secretaries to help the secretary and to ensure that nothing is neglected. The committee is not designed to just do inner-Party organizational work but should serve as the body which directs all the activities in its locality. (Inner-Party organizational work is only part of its activities and should be specially assigned to its organizational department.) Therefore, decisions and plans of a general character should be made only after being discussed at committee meetings. And after decisions are reached, individuals should be assigned to put them into effect.

The effort to encourage criticism and self-criticism among Party members and cadres is a crucial factor in extending inner-Party democracy. Comrade Mao Zedong stresses the importance of self-criticism in his report by pointing out that the conscientious practice of self-criticism is a hallmark distinguishing our Party from other political parties. We must develop a positive sense of responsibility among our Party members and cadres with regard to our Party's policies and work, and we must encourage them to use their brains to raise questions boldly and express their views to the point. To this end, those in charge of the leading bodies at all levels must be the first to make detailed self-criticism of the shortcomings and mistakes found in the work under their leadership. They must set an example to the Party membership and the cadres by being fully prepared in their minds to accept criticism from others, without being upset or impatient and without resorting to repressing or punishing their critics. This is the only way to foster inner-Party democracy with success. Without such an approach, Party congresses and conferences, even if regularly convened, must be lifeless, undemocratic gatherings filled with dull and repetitious speeches and purely routine voting.

Many of our comrades, including some in responsible positions, still do not know how to conduct a successful meeting. As a result, many meetings have ended in failure or produced poor results, and sometimes meetings become a heavy burden on Party membership and the masses. Clearly, holding meetings does not in itself constitute democracy. They must be well conducted so that they are permeated with democracy, criticism and self-criticism. For guidance in this area we must observe Comrade Mao Zedong's directive in the "Resolution of the Gutian Meeting", which deals with the question of how to kindle the Party members' interest in attending meetings.

Experience proves that whenever a leading comrade undertakes sincere and necessary self-criticism in public,

the Party members and the people will develop their own criticism and self-criticism, have greater initiative and better unity, overcome their shortcomings and improve their work. At the same time the comrade's prestige is augmented instead of being impaired. This has been borne out by a great deal of experience both in the Party and among the masses. On the other hand, whenever a leading comrade, lacking the spirit of self-criticism, refuses or fears to criticize or reveal his own shortcomings or mistakes and tries to cover them up or, failing to be pleased, to learn from his mistakes or to express gratitude for the criticism, becomes flushed with anger, makes acrimonious retorts and looks for chances to take revenge on his critics. In that place, the Party members and the people are unable to foster democracy or self-criticism, they lack initiative and unity and they are unable to overcome their shortcomings and improve their work. This, of course, causes the leading comrades to lose prestige. Therefore the leading personnel of all local Party organizations have a tremendous responsibility for the promotion and broadening of democracy within the Party.

The Party Constitution provides that the leading bodies and the personnel of the Party organizations at all levels should regularly report on their work to the Party members and lower Party organizations that have elected them. In every such report they should not only discuss the current situation and the successes but also the shortcomings, weaknesses and mistakes, and they should request comments and criticisms from the electors and the lower Party organizations. Experience shows that the responsibility for errors and shortcomings in the work of many lower Party organizations or cadres rest not with them but with the higher leading bodies. Many such errors and shortcomings are due to the failure of the higher leading bodies to assign tasks and clarify policies at the right moment. Even when they have done this, errors are still caused by their failure to be systematic and thorough with

the pertinent problems, or by the fact that the very tasks and policies that they worked out are erroneous. In such cases, it is not permissible to shift the responsibility onto, or lay blame on, the lower Party organizations or Party members and cadres, because such action destroys their confidence and crushes their initiative. Of course, lower Party committees, Party members and cadres must, on their part, show a similar spirit of self-criticism towards their own shortcomings and mistakes.

The essential aim of inner-Party democracy is to promote the initiative and activity of the Party members, raise their sense of responsibility towards the cause of the Party and encourage them and their representatives to voice their views fully, within the framework of the Party Constitution. In this way they can take an active part in the Party's leadership of the people's cause and help strengthen the unity and discipline of the Party. Only through a genuine extension of inner-Party democracy can voluntary Party discipline be strengthened, inner-Party centralism established and consolidated and correct leadership given by the leading bodies. Therefore, the Party Constitution provides that the leading bodies of the Party at all levels shall carry on their work in accordance with the principle of inner-Party democracy.

Giving reign to a high degree of democracy within the Party does not mean weakening inner-Party centralism in any way. On the contrary, we intend to bring about a high degree of centralism on the basis of a high degree of democracy. The two should be combined and not be counterposed. Centralized leadership cannot be attained without the latter which can prevail only under a democratically based and highly centralized leadership. It is wrong to hold that centralized leadership will be weakened by a high degree of democracy. Thus, the Constitution provides that, in performing their functions in accordance with the principle of inner-Party democracy, the leading bodies at all levels should not hamper

inner-Party centralism or misconstrue as anarchistic tendencies (such as assertations of "independence" or ultra-democracy) any inner-Party democracy legitimate and beneficial to centralized action.

We must see to it that inner-Party democracy contributes to the cause of the Party, which is the cause of the people, and that it neither weakens the fighting will and unity of the Party nor becomes a tool for saboteurs, anti-Party elements, splitters, time-servers and careerists. Thus the Constitution provides that a thorough review of, and debate on, the policy and line of the whole Party or of a local Party organization may be conducted only under proper guidance and when time permits, that is to say, not in times of emergency. It must be based on the resolutions of the Central Committee of the Party or of the local leading bodies as the case may be. Such a review can be conducted based on a proposal by more than one half of the members of the lower Party organizations or a proposal by a higher organization.

Inner-Party democracy must be broadened, but Party resolutions must be put into effect unconditionally. The subordination of the individual to the organization, of the lower level to the higher level, of the minority to the majority and of all the constituent Party organizations to the Central Committee—this principle laid down in the Constitution must be observed unconditionally.

Some comrades might impose such conditions as refusing to adhere to the resolutions or instructions unless they consider them correct, unless they think that their superior is qualified in terms of ability, rank, length of Party membership or cultural level, or unless the leader has treated them well or belongs to the same group. It must be pointed out that such conditions are unjustifiable. A Communist expresses how keen his sense of discipline is and how strictly he observes discipline precisely when he is in danger or when serious differences arise between him and the Party organization over issues of principle or

relations among comrades. It is only when he unconditionally carries out organizational principles from a minority position that he can be considered a Party member with a keen sense of discipline and principle, who looks at the total situation and knows that local interests should be subordinate to overall interests, less significant issues to greater issues, and that specific differences of principle and differences over relations among comrades should be subordinate to the supreme interests of Party unity and Party discipline.

Under no circumstances should we Communists encourage blind obedience. Since we are now in the midst of guerrilla warfare conducted over vast rural areas and since the conditions differ widely inside and outside these areas, we should pursue a policy of "decentralized operations under centralized leadership" in our work. Policies which either over-centralize operations or put decentralized operations and centralized leadership on an equal footing are erroneous. By decentralized operations, we do not mean assertions of "independence"; we mean independent actions and the ability to operate independently. Rather than being separated from centralized leadership, decentralized operations must be put under it.

Conditions being what they are, it often happens that the decisions and instructions of a leading body are necessarily of a general character and so fail to cover the conditions in all places. Consequently, while applicable to ordinary areas, such decisions and instructions suit certain special areas, and it also often happens that they contain mistakes and are impracticable. In such cases, we should not advocate blind implementation or obedience. Instead, we should encourage intelligent and conscientious action which calls for serious study of the circumstances, the decisions and instructions. When we find that they contain mistakes or are at variance with the local situation, we should have the courage to bring the matter to the attention of a higher body with a request

for their withdrawal or an amendment. We should not enforce them blindly and obstinately, for this will lead to a waste of money and manpower and isolate us from the masses. By pointing to mistakes, a subordinate is by no means being disobedient to his superior, nor is he asserting "independence", but is conscientiously carrying out decisions and instructions. Such Party members are the best Party members, for they are capable not merely of independent deliberation but of also helping to correct the errors and shortcomings of the higher body. They should be especially commended.

There are three possible approaches towards the decisions and instructions of the higher bodies. The first is to carry out those decisions and instructions which appeal to you and ignore those which do not. This is an assertion of "independence" pure and simple, whatever the pretext, and must not be permitted. The second is to carry them out blindly and mechanically, without taking the trouble to study them or the specific circumstances. This is a blind rather than a careful implementation of the decisions and instructions of a higher body and is consequently also impermissible. And the third is to study both the circumstances and the decisions and instructions, to resolutely carry out what is practicable and to report what is impracticable to the higher body, giving detailed reasons and requesting amendments. This is the way to carry out decisions and instructions intelligently and conscientiously, and it is the only correct approach. Not only do we not oppose, but we should by every means encourage this initiative and activity on the part of every Party member. While opposing any disregard for discipline or assertion of "independence", the Party encourages the initiative of every member in tackling problems and doing work independently under the guidance of the Party line.

A leading body should allow its lower organizations and members to make suggestions, raise questions and propose revisions with regard to its decisions and instructions

which, when the existence of shortcomings or mistakes is substantiated, should be corrected accordingly. If the lower ranks are wrong, a satisfactory explanation should be given to straighten out their ideas, and no harsh measures should be taken against them. If the higher body insists on the execution of a decision or instruction despite the appeals for revision, then it should be carried out and the lower ranks must not persist in their own stand or resist the decision.

The discipline of the Communist Party is based on voluntary subordination. It should not be turned into something mechanical, which restricts the activity and initiative of the membership. The sense of discipline and the initiative of the membership should go hand in hand.

The Party Constitution provides that a Party organization at every level shall ensure that the publications under its guidance disseminate the decisions and policies of higher organizations and of the central organs. This is necessitated by the Party's unified and national character. Decisions and policies should be disseminated in all places, while conflicting ideas should not be publicized at all. Marxist ideology should be disseminated while ideologies contrary to it should not. This task is not being satisfactorily performed by some of our lower Party organizations. Some papers have failed to give sufficient publicity to the decisions and policies of the Central Committee and have sometimes even carried articles at variance with them. Party organizations at all levels must check up on this and make corrections.

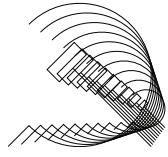
Regarding national issues, the Party Constitution provides that prior to a statement or decision by the Central Committee, no lower Party organizations or their leading personnel shall take the liberty of making public their views or decisions on such issues, although they may hold discussions among themselves and put forward their proposals to the Central Committee. This is necessary to ensure the Party's unified and national character. The Party as a whole can have but one line

to follow, not several. Lower Party organizations should not exceed their powers by making their views public in place of, or prior to the Central Committee on those issues which the Committee should and must decide upon and make public. No leading comrade in the Party, including members of the Central Committee, should publicize their views on issues of a national character without the Central Committee's approval. While they may discuss their views at the meetings of local Party committees and make suggestions to the Central Committee, it is impermissible for them to make public, inside or outside the Party, views not yet made known by the Central Committee, or to dispatch circular messages among other local Party committees for the dissemination of these views. The reason for this is that, should such views or decisions conflict with those of the Central Committee, this would adversely affect the Party and the people and aid our enemies. When we lacked radio facilities, we didn't stress this point. But now that such facilities are in general use, it must be emphasized. The Central Committee has called attention to this a number of times during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

Concerning local questions, the Constitution authorizes lower Party organizations to make independent decisions, provided these decisions do not conflict with those of the Central Committee or of other higher organizations. In this connection, higher organizations should, on their part, avoid interfering in the affairs of lower organizations and refrain from making decisions for them. While it is necessary for a higher body to make suggestions to a lower organization in order to help it to resolve questions correctly, the power of decision must rest with the latter.

Our Party organizations are still working underground in many areas. In such circumstances they must adopt special forms to carry out their tasks. Hence the Constitution provides that those organizational forms and methods of work which are suited to overt Party organizations but not to the covert ones

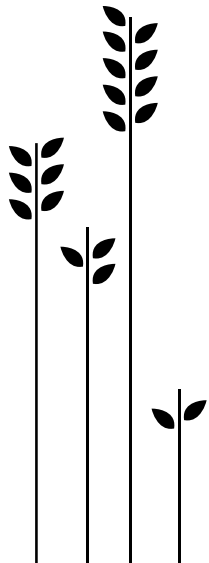
may be modified. This provision is necessary. Organizational principles provided in the Constitution must be carried out by the whole Party, but the organizational forms and methods of work should be changed according to changing circumstances and conditions. This point has been already dealt with.



Zhou Enlai

HOW TO BE A GOOD LEADER





HOW TO BE A GOOD LEADER

I. The Definition of a Leader

Any cadre may at some time have to take up the work of leadership, and very likely he is already doing such work. Therefore, the work of leadership concerns leading cadre at all levels, whether the lower, middle or upper.

Among the staff members at Hongyan and Zengjiayan[79] there is only a difference in the kind of work each does, but no distinction is drawn between the leaders and the led, still less between cadres and non-cadres. Although some comrades working in Hongyan and Zengjiayan and in the office of *New China Daily* are not directly shouldering the responsibilities of leadership, they are in fact leaders.

II. The Stand a Leader Should Take

A leading cadre must proceed from the standpoint of the Party in everything he does. But this is only a general statement. More specifically, a leading cadre should have the following qualities:

1. A firm Marxist-Leninist world outlook and a revolutionary outlook on life;
2. Devotion to principle;
3. Faith in the strength of the people;
4. Dedication to study;
5. A tenacious fighting spirit; and
6. A high sense of discipline.

III. The Leaders and the Leading Organizations

1. Collective leadership and leadership of each level by the next higher level; unified leadership, centralization and democracy (discussion and division of labor).

2. Individual responsibility and individual leadership; this is especially needed in the Great Rear Area and is by no means negated by collective leadership.

3. Direct personal intervention and decision from above; this is not the usual practice but one employed under special circumstances, or to set an example.

IV. What is Correct Leadership

I shall now elaborate on the three points Stalin once made:[80]

1. Decisions made must be correct. First, leaders should evaluate the situation and anticipate possible changes, seeking out the characteristics of a given place at a given time. Second, they should relate all this to the general task of the Party and determine the tasks and policy for a given period. Third, in line with this policy, they should formulate slogans and tactics appropriate to the current situation. Fourth, they should then work out realistic plans and instructions. They should do all this through in-depth investigation and study of actual conditions, linking up the results with Party tenets and principles.

2. Correct decisions must be implemented. First, leaders should organize discussions of ways to implement the plan

and carry out instructions. Second, they should carefully select capable persons and put them in charge of the plan's implementation. Third, they should organize efforts to realize the Party's plan. Fourth, they should personally take part in the implementation so as to set an example. By so doing, they can discover through practice whether the Party's line and tactics are correct or whether they should be modified.

3. There must be review of the actual implementation of the decisions. Methods of making such reviews:

a) we must note tangible results of work rather than promises;
b) we must not merely look at plans on paper, but inquire whether tasks are being performed conscientiously or only perfunctorily;
c) we must pay attention to content rather than to form and examine whether a decision is really being correctly carried out or is being distorted;
d) reviews should not only be conducted from top to bottom, but also from bottom to top;
e) reviews should be systematic and regular; and
f) leaders should personally participate in reviews.

As Stalin has said, leaders must maintain close ties with the masses, and the experience gained by both leaders and masses must be synthesized. Only thus can there be correct leadership.

V. The Tasks of Leaders

Comrade Mao Zedong says that the tasks of leaders consist in using cadres well and implementing policies. This is true. Breaking them down, I think, they are as follows:

1. Leading cadres should pay close attention to ideological and political leadership. This requires that they constantly raise their own ideological level and strengthen their own

political training. We ask our comrades to concentrate on the following:

a) placing emphasis on important matters;
b) sharpening political vigilance;
c) raising their theoretical level;
d) intensifying ideological struggle both inside and outside the Party; and
e) actively publicizing the policies and achievements of the Party.

2. Leading cadres should give careful thought to organizational leadership. Once the political line is laid down, organizational work decides everything. We draw our comrades' attention to the following points:

a) organizational leadership should be raised to the level of political leadership; in other words, all kinds of work should be put on a principled basis and connected with political tasks;
b) all organizational and day-to-day work should serve to guarantee the fulfilment of the Party's political tasks and the realization of its work plans;
c) importance should be attached to the Party's day-to-day leadership, so that Party organizations stay close to the grass roots and their work becomes even more concrete;
d) Party organizations and the masses must be mobilized to strive to surmount all difficulties; and
e) we should combat all forms of opportunism (such as perfunctoriness, empty talk, arrogance, bureaucracy, formalism, and red-taped routinism), corruption, degeneration, etc.

3. Prudence should be exercised in selecting cadres and assigning work. This is also part of organizational work, but it can be taken separately. Both political qualifications and work competence are indispensable criteria for selecting cadres, but political trustworthiness takes precedence. Stalin

once pointed out the harm done to the Party when people made appointments not in accordance with principle. He said that such persons were followed by a large "entourage" wherever they went and that they employed only those whom they regarded as their "own" men.[81] In one of his reports on the rectification movement,[82] Comrade Mao Zedong, too, criticized such persons for being "dishonest". That was the failing of those "imperial envoys who rushed everywhere". Given a cadre's political trustworthiness, it is still important to use him properly (in the light of time, place and circumstances).

4. Work should be reviewed. The performance of working personnel and the implementation of the work plan must be reviewed. As Stalin has said, the objectives of the review are: first, to get to know the qualifications of the cadres; second, to determine the virtues and defects of the executive apparatus; and third, to determine the virtues and defects of the tasks or instructions that are set.[83] Some leaders think reviews of this sort are likely to expose their own weaknesses, marring their prestige or shaking their self-confidence. This is incorrect. Leaders enhance their prestige by correcting their mistakes, not by covering them up, and by immersing themselves in hard work, not by bragging or boasting. Confidence will only be strengthened and not weakened through the correction of mistakes. It is only those who are vain and concerned with face-saving who fear the exposure of mistakes.

5. Go among the masses. The leaders should not only educate the masses but should also learn from them. The reason is that the leaders' own knowledge is incomplete and their experience insufficient. Leading positions in themselves cannot bestow knowledge and experience, so it is essential to go to the people and draw experience from them. We ask that comrades:

a) get close to the people, maintain contact with them, and to some extent become one with them;
b) heed the voice of the people;

c) learn from them; and
d) educate them instead of tailing behind them.

VI. Leading the Masses and Befriending Them

1. The masses are not lead in the same way as Party members. The way we lead the masses and the attitude we take towards them should not make them feel that we are exercising leadership.

2. The basic method of leading masses is persuasion, and definitely not command. Only in situations when it is necessary and when the majority agree while a minority still do not, may we compel the minority to carry out the decisions of the majority.

3. The leaders themselves should play an exemplary role in giving leadership to the masses and befriending them.

4. When necessary, leaders should ignore insults hurled at them.

5. Leaders must never underestimate the role they play or the influence they exert, and must work prudently and cautiously.

VII. The Art of Leadership

According to the art of leadership as expounded by Lenin and Stalin, leaders should not run too far ahead of a movement, nor should they lag behind. Rather, they should grasp the key task and push the movement forward.

According to the art of leadership as expounded by Comrade Mao Zedong, they should take into account the overall situation, think in terms of the majority and work together with our allies.

VIII. Work Methods

1. Examine theoretical tenets and principles in the course of struggle;

2. Determine and review policies in the course of concrete work;

3. Improve work in a revolutionary spirit;

4. Promote democracy and encourage criticism and self-criticism;

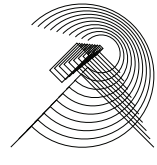
5. Employ mainly persuasion and not administrative fiat. Resort to orders only in emergency situations.

IX. Work Style

1. Lenin's style of work consisted of: Russian revolutionary sweep; and American efficiency

2. Comrade Mao Zedong's style of work consists of: The modesty and realism of the Chinese people; the simplicity and industriousness of the Chinese peasants; the love of study and deep thought of the intellectual; the flexibility and cool-headedness of the revolutionary soldier; and the tenacity and staunchness of a Bolshevik.

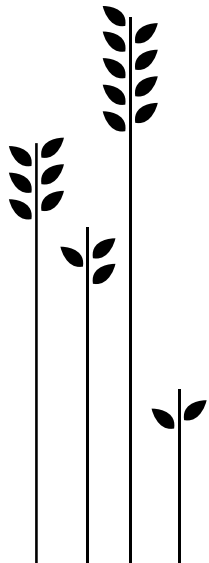
3. Combat all forms of opportunism manifested in day-to-day work. At present, we must especially combat perfunctoriness, empty talk, arrogance, formalism, routinism and all acts which sabotage the fine traditions of the Party and army.



Mao Zedong

ON CORRECTING MISTAKEN IDEAS IN THE PARTY





ON CORRECTING MISTAKEN IDEAS IN THE PARTY

THERE ARE VARIOUS NON-PROLETARIAN ideas in the Communist Party organization in the Fourth Red Army which greatly hinder the application of the Party's correct line. Unless these ideas are thoroughly corrected, the Fourth Army cannot possibly shoulder the tasks assigned to it in China's great revolutionary struggle. The source of such incorrect ideas in this Party organization lies, of course, in the fact that its basic units are composed largely of peasants and other elements of petty-bourgeois origin; yet the failure of the Party's leading bodies to wage a concerted and determined struggle against these incorrect ideas and to educate the members in the Party's correct line is also an important cause of their existence and growth. In accordance with the spirit of the September letter of the Central Committee, this congress hereby points out the manifestations of various non-proletarian ideas in the Party organization in the Fourth Army, their sources, and the methods of correcting them, and calls upon all comrades to eliminate them thoroughly.

On the Purely Military Viewpoint

The purely military viewpoint is very highly developed among a number of comrades in the Red Army. It manifests itself as follows:

1. These comrades regard military affairs and politics as opposed to each other and refuse to recognize that military affairs are only one means of accomplishing political tasks. Some even say, "If you are good militarily, naturally you are good politically; if you are not good militarily, you cannot be any good politically"—this is to go a step further and give military affairs a leading position over politics.

2. They think that the task of the Red Army, like that of the White army, is merely to fight. They do not understand that the Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution. Especially at present, the Red Army should certainly not confine itself to fighting; besides fighting to destroy the enemy's military strength, it should shoulder such important tasks as doing propaganda among the masses, organizing the masses, arming them, helping them to establish revolutionary political power and setting up Party organizations. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence.

3. Hence, organizationally, these comrades subordinate the departments of the Red Army doing political work to those doing military work, and put forward the slogan, "Let Army Headquarters handle outside matters." If allowed to develop, this idea would involve the danger of estrangement from the masses, control of the government by the army and departure from proletarian leadership—it would be to take the path of warlordism like the Kuomintang army.

4. At the same time, in propaganda work they overlook the importance of propaganda teams. On the question of mass organization, they neglect the organizing of soldiers' committees in the army and the organizing of the local workers

and peasants. As a result, both propaganda and organizational work are abandoned.

5. They become conceited when a battle is won and dispirited when a battle is lost.

6. Selfish departmentalism—they think only of the Fourth Army and do not realize that it is an important task of the Red Army to arm the local masses. This is cliquism in a magnified form.

7. Unable to see beyond their limited environment in the Fourth Army, a few comrades believe that no other revolutionary forces exist. Hence their extreme addiction to the idea of conserving strength and avoiding action. This is a remnant of opportunism.

8. Some comrades, disregarding the subjective and objective conditions, suffer from the malady of revolutionary impetuosity; they will not take pains to do minute and detailed work among the masses, but, riddled with illusions, want only to do big things. This is a remnant of putschism.[84]

The sources of the purely military viewpoint are:

1. A low political level. From this flows the failure to recognize the role of political leadership in the army and to recognize that the Red Army and the White army are fundamentally different.

2. The mentality of mercenaries. Many prisoners captured in past battles have joined the Red Army, and such elements bring with them a markedly mercenary outlook, thereby providing a basis in the lower ranks for the purely military viewpoint.

3. From the two preceding causes there arises a third, overconfidence in military strength and absence of confidence in the strength of the masses of the people.

4. The Party's failure actively to attend to and discuss military work is also a reason for the emergence of the purely military viewpoint among a number of comrades.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Raise the political level in the Party by means of education, destroy the theoretical roots of the purely military viewpoint, and be clear on the fundamental difference between the Red Army and the White army. At the same time, eliminate the remnants of opportunism and putschism and break down the selfish departmentalism of the Fourth Army.

2. Intensify the political training of officers and men and especially the education of ex-prisoners. At the same time, as far as possible let the local governments select workers and peasants experienced in struggle to join the Red Army, thus organizationally weakening or even eradicating the purely military viewpoint.

3. Arouse the local Party organizations to criticize the Party organizations in the Red Army, and the organs of mass political power to criticize the Red Army itself, in order to influence the Party organizations and the officers and men of the Red Army.

4. The Party must actively attend to and discuss military work. All the work must be discussed and decided upon by the Party before being carried out by the rank and file.

5. Draw up Red Army rules and regulations which clearly define its tasks, the relationship between its military and its political apparatus, the relationship between the Red Army and the masses of the people, and the powers and functions of the soldiers' committees and their relationship with the military and political organizations.

On Ultra-Democracy

Since the Fourth Army of the Red Army accepted the directives of the Central Committee, there has been a great decrease in the manifestations of ultra-democracy. For example, Party decisions are now carried out fairly well; and no longer does anyone bring up such erroneous demands as that the Red Army should apply "democratic centralism from

the bottom to the top" or should "let the lower levels discuss all problems first, and then let the higher levels decide". Actually, however, this decrease is only temporary and superficial and does not mean that ultra-democratic ideas have already been eliminated. In other words, ultra-democracy is still deep-rooted in the minds of many comrades. Witness the various expressions of reluctance to carry out Party decisions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. In the sphere of theory, destroy the roots of ultra-democracy. First, it should be pointed out that the danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution. Next, it should be pointed out that the source of ultra-democracy consists in the petty bourgeoisie's individualistic aversion to discipline. When this characteristic is brought into the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat.

2. In the sphere of organization, ensure democracy under centralized guidance. It should be done on the following lines:

a) The leading bodies of the Party must give a correct line of guidance and kind solutions when problems arise, in order to establish themselves as centers of leadership.
b) The higher bodies must be familiar with the life of the masses and with the situation in the lower bodies so as to have an objective basis for correct guidance.
c) No Party organization at any level should make casual decisions in solving problems. Once a decision is reached, it must be firmly carried out.
d) All decisions of any importance made by the Party's higher bodies must be promptly transmitted to

the lower bodies and the Party rank and file. The method is to call meetings of activists or general membership meetings of the Party branches or even of the columns[85] (when circumstances permit) and to assign people to make reports at such meetings.

e) The lower bodies of the Party and the Party rank and file must discuss the higher bodies' directives in detail in order to understand their meaning thoroughly and decide on the methods of carrying them out.

On the Disregard of Organizational Discipline

Disregard of organizational discipline in the Party organization in the Fourth Army manifests itself as follows:

A. Failure of the minority to submit to the majority. For example, when a minority finds its motion voted down, it does not sincerely carry out the Party decisions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. At meetings, all participants should be encouraged to voice their opinions as fully as possible. The rights and wrongs in any controversy should be clarified without compromise or glossing over. In order to reach a clear-cut conclusion, what cannot be settled at one meeting should be discussed at another, provided there is no interference with the work.

2. One requirement of Party discipline is that the minority should submit to the majority. If the view of the minority has been rejected, it must support the decision passed by the majority. If necessary, it can bring up the matter for reconsideration at the next meeting, but apart from that it must not act against the decision in any way.

B. Criticism made without regard to organizational discipline:

1. Inner-Party criticism is a weapon for strengthening the Party organization and increasing its fighting capacity. In the Party organization of the Red Army, however, criticism is not

always of this character, and sometimes turns into personal attack. As a result, it damages the Party organization as well as individuals. This is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois individualism. The method of correction is to help Party members understand that the purpose of criticism is to increase the Party's fighting capacity in order to achieve victory in the class struggle and that it should not be used as a means of personal attack.

2. Many Party members make their criticisms not inside, but outside, the Party. The reason is that the general membership has not yet grasped the importance of the Party organization (its meetings and so forth), and sees no difference between criticism inside and outside the organization. The method of correction is to educate Party members so that they understand the importance of Party organization and make their criticisms of Party committees or comrades at Party meetings.

On Absolute Equalitarianism

Absolute equalitarianism became quite serious in the Red Army at one time. Here are some examples. On the matter of allowances to wounded soldiers, there were objections to differentiating between light and serious cases, and the demand was raised for equal allowances for all. When officers rode on horseback, it was regarded not as something necessary for performing their duties but as a sign of inequality. Absolutely equal distribution of supplies was demanded, and there was objection to somewhat larger allotments in special cases. In the hauling of rice, the demand was made that all should carry the same load on their backs, irrespective of age or physical condition. Equality was demanded in the allotment of billets, and the Headquarters would be abused for occupying larger rooms. Equality was demanded in the assignment of fatigue duties, and there was unwillingness to do a little more than the next man. It even went so far that when there were two

wounded men but only one stretcher, neither could be carried away because each refused to yield priority to the other. Absolute equalitarianism, as shown in these examples, is still very serious among officers and soldiers of the Red Army.

Absolute equalitarianism, like ultra-democracy in political matters, is the product of a handicraft and small peasant economy—the only difference being that the one manifests itself in material affairs, while the other manifests itself in political affairs.

The method of correction: We should point out that, before the abolition of capitalism, absolute equalitarianism is a mere illusion of peasants and small proprietors, and that even under socialism there can be no absolute equality, for material things will then be distributed on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work" as well as on that of meeting the needs of the work. The distribution of material things in the Red Army must be more or less equal, as in the case of equal pay for officers and men, because this is required by the present circumstances of the struggle. But absolute equalitarianism beyond reason must be opposed because it is not required by the struggle; on the contrary, it hinders the struggle.

On Subjectivism

Subjectivism exists to a serious degree among some Party members, causing great harm to the analysis of the political situation and the guidance of the work. The reason is that subjective analysis of a political situation and subjective guidance of work inevitably result either in opportunism or in putschism. As for subjective criticism, loose and groundless talk or suspiciousness, such practices inside the Party often breed unprincipled disputes and undermine the Party organization.

Another point that should be mentioned in connection with inner-Party criticism is that some comrades ignore the major issues and confine their attention to minor points when they make their criticism. They do not understand that the main task of criticism is to point out political and organizational mistakes. As to personal shortcomings, unless they are related to political and organizational mistakes, there is no need to be overcritical and to embarrass the comrades concerned. Moreover, once such criticism develops, there is the great danger that the Party members will concentrate entirely on minor faults, and everyone will become timid and overcautious and forget the Party's political tasks.

The main method of correction is to educate Party members so that a political and scientific spirit pervades their thinking and their Party life. To this end we must:

1. Teach Party members to apply the Marxist-Leninist method in analyzing a political situation and appraising the class forces, instead of making a subjective analysis and appraisal;

2. Direct the attention of Party members to social and economic investigation and study, so as to determine the tactics of struggle and methods of work, and help comrades to understand that without investigation of actual conditions they will fall into the pit of fantasy and putschism; and

3. In inner-Party criticism, guard against subjectivism, arbitrariness and the vulgarization of criticism; statements should be based on facts and criticism should center on politics.

On Individualism

The tendency towards individualism in the Red Army Party organization manifests itself as follows:

1. Retaliation. Some comrades, after being criticized inside the Party by a soldier comrade, look for opportunities

to retaliate outside the Party, and one way is to beat or abuse the comrade in question. They also seek to retaliate within the Party. "You have criticized me at this meeting, so I'll find some way to pay you back at the next." Such retaliation arises from purely personal considerations, to the neglect of the interests of the class and of the Party as a whole. Its target is not the enemy class, but individuals in our own ranks. It is a corrosive which weakens the organization and its fighting capacity.

2. "Small group" mentality. Some comrades consider only the interests of their own small group and ignore the general interest. Although on the surface this does not seem to be the pursuit of personal interests, in reality it exemplifies the narrowest individualism and has a strong corrosive and centrifugal effect. "Small group" mentality used to be rife in the Red Army, and although there has been some improvement as a result of criticism, there are still survivals and further effort is needed to overcome it.

3. The "employee" mentality. Some comrades do not understand that the Party and the Red Army, of which they are members, are both instruments for carrying out the tasks of the revolution. They do not realize that they themselves are makers of the revolution, but think that their responsibility is merely to their individual superiors and not to the revolution. This passive mentality of an "employee" of the revolution is also a manifestation of individualism. It explains why there are not very many activists who work unconditionally for the revolution. Unless it is eliminated, the number of activists will not grow and the heavy burden of the revolution will remain on the shoulders of a small number of people, much to the detriment of the struggle.

4. Pleasure-seeking. In the Red Army there are also quite a few people whose individualism finds expression in pleasure-seeking. They always hope that their unit will march into big cities. They want to go there not to work but to enjoy

themselves. The last thing they want is to work in the Red areas where life is hard.

5. Passivity. Some comrades become passive and stop working whenever anything goes against their wishes. This is mainly due to lack of education, though sometimes it is also due to the leadership's improper conduct of affairs, assignment of work or enforcement of discipline.

6. The desire to leave the army. The number of people who ask for transfers from the Red Army to local work is on the increase. The reason for this does not lie entirely with the individuals but also with:

a) the material hardships of life in the Red Army,
b) exhaustion after long struggle, and
c) the leadership's improper conduct of affairs, assignment of work or enforcement of discipline.

The method of correction is primarily to strengthen education so as to rectify individualism ideologically. Next, it is to conduct affairs, make assignments and enforce discipline in a proper way. In addition, ways must be found to improve the material life of the Red Army, and every available opportunity must be utilized for rest and rehabilitation in order to improve material conditions. In our educational work we must explain that in its social origin individualism is a reflection within the Party of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideas.

On the Ideology of Roving Rebel Bands

The political ideology of roving rebel bands has emerged in the Red Army because the proportion of vagabond elements is large and because there are great masses of vagabonds in China, especially in the southern provinces. This ideology manifests itself as follows:

1. Some people want to increase our political influence only by means of roving guerrilla actions, but are unwilling to

increase it by undertaking the arduous task of building up base areas and establishing the people's political power.

2. In expanding the Red Army, some people follow the line of "hiring men and buying horses" and "recruiting deserters and accepting mutineers",[86] rather than the line of expanding the local Red Guards and the local troops and thus developing the main forces of the Red Army.

3. Some people lack the patience to carry on arduous struggles together with the masses, and only want to go to the big cities to eat and drink to their hearts' content. All these manifestations of the ideology of roving rebels seriously hamper the Red Army in performing its proper tasks; consequently, its eradication is an important objective in the ideological struggle within the Red Army Party organization. It must be understood that the ways of roving rebels of the Huang Chao[87] or Li Chuang[88] type are not permissible under present-day conditions.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Intensify education, criticize incorrect ideas, and eradicate the ideology of roving rebel bands.

2. Intensify education among the basic sections of the Red Army and among recently recruited captives to counter the vagabond outlook.

3. Draw active workers and peasants experienced in struggle into the ranks of the Red Army so as to change its composition.

4. Create new units of the Red Army from among the masses of militant workers and peasants.

On the Remnants of Putschism

The Party organization in the Red Army has already waged struggles against putschism, but not yet to a sufficient extent. Therefore, remnants of this ideology still exist in the Red Army. Their manifestations are:

1. Blind action regardless of subjective and objective conditions;

2. Inadequate and irresolute application of the Party's policies for the cities;

3. Slack military discipline, especially in moments of defeat;

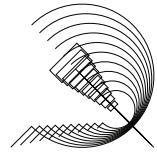
4. Acts of house-burning by some units; and

5. The practices of shooting deserters and of inflicting corporal punishment, both of which smack of putschism. In its social origins, putschism is a combination of *lumpen*-proletarian and petty-bourgeois ideology.

The methods of correction are as follows:

1. Eradicate putschism ideologically.

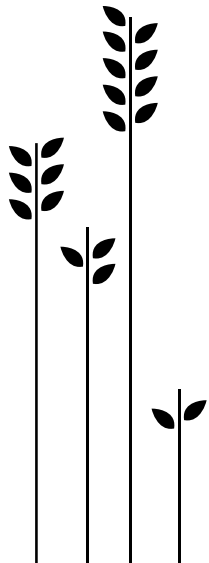
2. Correct putschist behavior through rules, regulations and policies.



Mao Zedong

REFORM OUR STUDY & COMBAT LIBERALISM





REFORM OUR STUDY

I PROPOSE THAT WE SHOULD REFORM THE method and the system of study throughout the Party. The reasons are as follows:

I

The twenty years of the Communist Party of China have been twenty years in which the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism has become more and more integrated with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. If we recall how superficial and meagre our understanding of Marxism-Leninism and of the Chinese revolution was during our Party's infancy, we can see how much deeper and richer it is now. For a hundred years, the finest sons and daughters of the disaster-ridden Chinese nation fought and sacrificed their lives, one stepping into the breach as another fell, in quest of the truth that would save the country and the people. This moves us to song and tears. But it was only after World War I and the October Revolution in Russia that we found Marxism-Leninism, the

best of truths, the best of weapons for liberating our nation. And the Communist Party of China has been the initiator, propagandist and organizer in the wielding of this weapon. As soon as it was linked with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, the universal truth of Marxism Leninism gave an entirely new complexion to the Chinese revolution. Since the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, our Party, basing itself on the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, has taken a further step in its study of the concrete practice of this war and in its study of China and the world today, and has also made a beginning in the study of Chinese history. These are all very good signs.

II

However, we still have shortcomings, and very big ones too. Unless we correct these shortcomings, we shall not, in my opinion, be able to take another step forward in our work and in our great cause of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution.

First, take the study of current conditions. We have achieved some success in our study of present domestic and international conditions, but for such a large political party as ours, the material we have collected is fragmentary and our research work unsystematic on each and every aspect of these subjects, whether it be the political, military, economic or cultural aspect. Generally speaking, in the last twenty years we have not done systematic and thorough work in collecting and studying material on these aspects, and we are lacking in a climate of investigation and study of objective reality. To behave like "a blindfolded man catching sparrows", or "a blind man groping for fish", to be crude and careless, to indulge in verbiage, to rest content with a smattering of knowledge, such is the extremely bad style of work that still exists among

many comrades in our Party; a style utterly opposed to the fundamental spirit of Marxism-Leninism. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us that it is necessary to study conditions conscientiously and to proceed from objective reality and not from subjective wishes; but many of our comrades act in direct violation of this truth.

Second, take the study of history. Although a few Party members and sympathizers have undertaken this work, it has not been done in an organized way. Many Party members are still in a fog about Chinese history, whether of the last hundred years or of ancient times. There are many Marxist-Leninist scholars who cannot open their mouths without citing ancient Greece; but as for their own ancestors, sorry, they have been forgotten. There is no climate of serious study either of current conditions or of past history.

Third, take the study of international revolutionary experience, the study of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Many comrades seem to study Marxism-Leninism not to meet the needs of revolutionary practice, but purely for the sake of study. Consequently, though they read, they cannot digest. They can only cite odd quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in a one-sided manner, but are unable to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the concrete study of China's present conditions and her history or to the concrete analysis and solution of the problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude towards Marxism-Leninism does a great deal of harm, particularly among cadres of the middle and higher ranks.

The three aspects I have just mentioned, neglect of the study of current conditions, neglect of the study of history and neglect of the application of Marxism-Leninism, all constitute an extremely bad style of work. Its spread has harmed many of our comrades.

There are indeed many comrades in our ranks who have been led astray by this style of work. Unwilling to carry on

systematic and thorough investigation and study of the specific conditions inside and outside the country, the province, county or district, they issue orders on no other basis than their scanty knowledge and "It must be so because it seems so to me". Does not this subjectivist style still exist among a great many comrades?

There are some who are proud, instead of ashamed, of knowing nothing or very little of our own history. What is particularly significant is that very few really know the history of the Communist Party of China and the history of China in the hundred years since the Opium War. Hardly anyone has seriously taken up the study of the economic, political, military and cultural history of the last hundred years. Ignorant of their own country, some people can only relate tales of ancient Greece and other foreign lands, and even this knowledge is quite pathetic, consisting of odds and ends from old foreign books.

For several decades, many of the returned students from abroad have suffered from this malady. Coming home from Europe, America or Japan, they can only parrot things foreign. They become gramophones and forget their duty to understand and create new things. This malady has also infected the Communist Party.

Although we are studying Marxism, the way many of our people study it runs directly counter to Marxism. That is to say, they violate the fundamental principle earnestly enjoined on us by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the unity of theory and practice. Having violated this principle, they invent an opposite principle of their own, the separation of theory from practice. In the schools and in the education of cadres at work, teachers of philosophy do not guide students to study the logic of the Chinese revolution; teachers of economics do not guide them to study the characteristics of the Chinese economy; teachers of political science do not guide them to study the tactics of the Chinese revolution; teachers of

military science do not guide them to study the strategy and tactics adapted to China's special features; and so on and so forth. Consequently, error is disseminated, doing people great harm. A person does not know how to apply in Fuxian[89] what he has learned in Yan'an. Professors of economics cannot explain the relationship between the Border Region currency and the Kuomintang currency,[90] so naturally the students cannot explain it either. Thus a perverse mentality has been created among many students; instead of showing an interest in China's problems and taking the Party's directives seriously, they give all their hearts to the supposedly eternal and immutable dogmas learned from their teachers.

Of course, what I have just said refers to the worst type in our Party, and I am not saying that it is the general case. However, people of this type do exist; what is more, there are quite a few of them and they cause a great deal of harm. This matter should not be treated lightly.

III

In order to explain this idea further, I should like to contrast two opposite attitudes.

First, there is the subjectivist attitude.

With this attitude, a person does not make a systematic and thorough study of the environment, but works by sheer subjective enthusiasm and has a blurred picture of the face of China today. With this attitude, he chops up history, knows only ancient Greece but not China and is in a fog about the China of yesterday and the day before yesterday. With this attitude, a person studies Marxist-Leninist theory in the abstract and without any aim. He goes to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not to seek the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution but to study theory purely for theory's sake. He does not shoot the arrow at the target but shoots at random. Marx, Engels,

Lenin and Stalin have taught us that we should proceed from objective realities and that we should derive laws from them to serve as our guide to action. For this purpose, we should, as Marx has said, appropriate the material in detail and subject it to scientific analysis and synthesis.[91] Many of our people do not act in this way but do the opposite. A good number of them are doing research work but have no interest in studying either the China of today or the China of yesterday and confine their interest to the study of empty "theories" divorced from reality. Many others are doing practical work, but they too pay no attention to the study of objective conditions, often rely on sheer enthusiasm and substitute their personal feelings for policy. Both kinds of people, relying on the subjective, ignore the existence of objective realities. When making speeches, they indulge in a long string of headings, A, B, C, D, 1, 2, 3, 4, and when writing articles, they turn out a lot of verbiage. They have no intention of seeking truth from facts, but only a desire to curry favor by claptrap. They are flashy without substance, brittle without solidity. They are always right, they are the Number One authority under Heaven, "imperial envoys" who rush everywhere. Such is the style of work of some comrades in our ranks. To govern one's own conduct by this style is to harm oneself, to teach it to others is to harm others, and to use it to direct the revolution is to harm the revolution. To sum up, this subjectivist method which is contrary to science and Marxism-Leninism is a formidable enemy of the Communist Party, the working class, the people and the nation; it is a manifestation of impurity in Party spirit. A formidable enemy stands before us, and we must overthrow him. Only when subjectivism is overthrown can the truth of Marxism-Leninism prevail, can Party spirit be strengthened, can the revolution be victorious. We must assert that the absence of a scientific attitude, that is, the absence of the Marxist-Leninist approach of uniting theory and practice, means that Party spirit is either absent or deficient.

There is a couplet which portrays this type of person. It runs:

The reed growing on the wall –
top-heavy, thin-stemmed and shallow of root;
The bamboo shoot in the hills –
sharp-tongued, thick-skinned and hollow inside.

Is this not an apt description of those who do not have a scientific attitude, who can only recite words and phrases from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and who enjoy a reputation unwarranted by any real learning? If anyone really wishes to cure himself of his malady, I advise him to commit this couplet to memory or to show still more courage and paste it on the wall of his room. Marxism-Leninism is a science, and science means honest, solid knowledge; there is no room for playing tricks. Let us, then, be honest.

Secondly, there is the Marxist-Leninist attitude.

With this attitude, a person applies the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism to the systematic and thorough investigation and study of the environment. He does not work by enthusiasm alone but, as Stalin says, combines revolutionary sweep with practicalness.[92] With this attitude he will not chop up history. It is not enough for him to know ancient Greece, he must know China; he must know the revolutionary history not only of foreign countries but also of China, not only the China of today but also the China of yesterday and of the day before yesterday. With this attitude, one studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism with a purpose, that is, to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the actual movement of the Chinese revolution and to seek from this theory the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude is one of shooting the arrow at the target. The "target" is the Chinese revolution, the "arrow" is Marxism-Leninism. We Chinese Communists have

been seeking this arrow because we want to hit the target of the Chinese revolution and of the revolution of the East. To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. "Facts" are all the things that exist objectively, "truth" means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and "to seek" means to study. We should proceed from the actual conditions inside and outside the country, the province, county or district, and derive from them, as our guide to action, laws which are inherent in them and not imaginary; that is, we should find the internal relations of the events occurring around us. And in order to do that we must rely not on subjective imagination, not on momentary enthusiasm, not on lifeless books, but on facts that exist objectively; we must appropriate the material in detail and, guided by the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, draw correct conclusions from it. Such conclusions are not mere lists of phenomena in A, B, C, D order or writings full of platitudes, but are scientific conclusions. Such an attitude is one of seeking truth from facts and not of currying favor by claptrap. It is the manifestation of Party spirit, the Marxist-Leninist style of uniting theory and practice. It is the attitude every Communist Party member should have at the very least. He who adopts this attitude will be neither "top-heavy, thin-stemmed and shallow of root" nor "sharp-tongued, thick-skinned and hollow inside".

IV

In accordance with the above views, I would like to make the following proposals:

1. We should place before the whole Party the task of making a systematic and thorough study of the situation around us. On the basis of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism, we should make a detailed investigation and study of developments in the economic, financial, political, military, cultural and party activities of our enemies, our friends and

ourselves, and then draw the proper and necessary conclusions. To this end, we should direct our comrades' attention to the investigation and study of these practical matters. We should get our comrades to understand that the twofold basic task of the leading bodies of the Communist Party is to know conditions and to master policy; the former means knowing the world and the latter changing the world. We should get our comrades to understand that without investigation there is no right to speak, and that bombastic twaddle and a mere list of phenomena in 1, 2, 3, 4 order are of no use. Take propaganda work, for instance; if we do not know the situation with regard to the propaganda of our enemies, our friends and ourselves, we shall be unable to decide on a correct propaganda policy. In the work of any department, it is necessary to know the situation first and only then can the work be well handled. The fundamental link in changing the Party's style of work is to carry out plans for investigation and study throughout the Party.

2. As for China's history in the last hundred years, we should assemble qualified persons to study it, in cooperation and with a proper division of labor, and so overcome the present disorganized state of affairs. First it is necessary to make analytical studies in the several fields of economic history, political history, military history and cultural history, and only then will it be possible to make synthetical studies.

3. As for education for cadres whether at work or in schools for cadres, a policy should be established of focusing such education on the study of the practical problems of the Chinese revolution and using the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism as the guide, and the method of studying Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation should be discarded. Moreover, in studying Marxism-Leninism, we should use the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* as the principal material. It is the best synthesis and summing-up of the world communist movement of the

past hundred years, a model of the integration of theory and practice, and so far, the only comprehensive model in the whole world. When we see how Lenin and Stalin integrated the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Soviet revolution and thereby developed Marxism, we shall know how we should work in China.

We have made many detours. But error is often the precursor of what is correct. I am confident that in the context of the Chinese revolution and the world revolution, which is so intensely alive and so richly varied, this reform of our study will certainly yield good results.



COMBAT LIBERALISM

WE STAND FOR ACTIVE IDEOLOGICAL struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon.

But liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, Philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations.

Liberalism manifests itself in various ways.

To let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly gone wrong, and refrain from principled argument because he is an old acquaintance, a fellow townsman, a schoolmate, a close friend, a loved one, an old colleague or old subordinate. Or to touch on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms. The result is that both the organization and the individual are harmed. This is one type of liberalism.

To indulge in irresponsible criticism in private instead of actively putting forward one's suggestions to the organization. To say nothing to people to their faces but to gossip behind their backs, or to say nothing at a meeting but to gossip afterwards. To show no regard at all for the principles of collective life but to follow one's own inclination. This is a second type.

To let things drift if they do not affect one personally; to say as little as possible while knowing perfectly well what is wrong, to be worldly wise and play safe and seek only to avoid blame. This is a third type.

Not to obey orders but to give pride of place to one's own opinions. To demand special consideration from the organization but to reject its discipline. This is a fourth type.

To indulge in personal attacks, pick quarrels, vent personal spite or seek revenge instead of entering into an argument and struggling against incorrect views for the sake of unity or progress or getting the work done properly. This is a fifth type.

To hear incorrect views without rebutting them and even to hear counter-revolutionary remarks without reporting them, but instead to take them calmly as if nothing had happened. This is a sixth type.

To be among the masses and fail to conduct propaganda and agitation or speak at meetings or conduct investigations and inquiries among them, and instead to be indifferent to them and show no concern for their well-being, forgetting that one is a Communist and behaving as if one were an ordinary non-Communist. This is a seventh type.

To see someone harming the interests of the masses and yet not feel indignant, or dissuade or stop him or reason with him, but to allow him to continue. This is an eighth type.

To work half-heartedly without a definite plan or direction; to work perfunctorily and muddle along—"So long as one remains a monk, one goes on tolling the bell." This is a ninth type.

To regard oneself as having rendered great service to the revolution, to pride oneself on being a veteran, to disdain minor assignments while being quite unequal to major tasks, to be slipshod in work and slack in study. This is a tenth type.

To be aware of one's own mistakes and yet make no attempt to correct them, taking a liberal attitude towards oneself. This is an eleventh type.

We could name more. But these eleven are the principal types. They are all manifestations of liberalism.

Liberalism is extremely harmful in a revolutionary collective. It is a corrosive which eats away unity, undermines cohesion, causes apathy and creates dissension. It robs the revolutionary ranks of compact organization and strict discipline, prevents policies from being carried through and alienates the Party organizations from the masses which the Party leads. It is an extremely bad tendency.

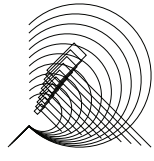
Liberalism stems from petty-bourgeois selfishness, it places personal interests first and the interests of the revolution second, and this gives rise to ideological, political and organizational liberalism.

People who are liberals look upon the principles of Marxism as abstract dogma. They approve of Marxism, but are not prepared to practice it or to practice it in full; they are not prepared to replace their liberalism with Marxism. These people have their Marxism, but they have their liberalism as well—they talk Marxism but practice liberalism; they apply Marxism to others but liberalism to themselves. They keep both kinds of goods in stock and find a use for each. This is how the minds of certain people work.

Liberalism is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism. It is negative and objectively has the effect of helping the enemy; that is why the enemy welcomes its preservation in our midst. Such being its nature, there should be no place for it in the ranks of the revolution.

We must use Marxism, which is positive in spirit, to overcome liberalism, which is negative. A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any private person, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist.

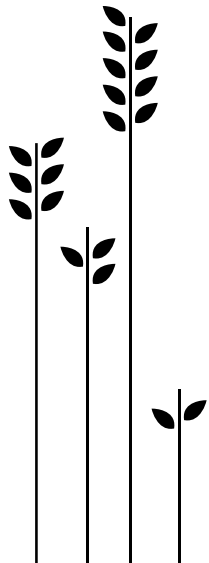
All loyal, honest, active and upright Communists must unite to oppose the liberal tendencies shown by certain people among us, and set them on the right path. This is one of the tasks on our ideological front.



Mao Zedong

ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE





ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE

Our general subject is the correct handling of contradictions among the people. For convenience, let us discuss it under twelve sub-headings. Although reference will be made to contradictions between ourselves and the enemy, this discussion will center on contradictions among the people.

I. Two Types of Contradictions Differing in Nature

Never before has our country been as united as it is today. The victories of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and of the socialist revolution and our achievements in socialist construction have rapidly changed the face of the old China. A still brighter future lies ahead for our motherland. The days of national disunity and chaos which the people detested are gone, never to return. Led by the working class and the Communist Party, our 600 million people, united as one, are engaged in the great task of building socialism. The unification of our country, the unity of our people and the unity of our

various nationalities—these are the basic guarantees for the sure triumph of our cause. However, this does not mean that contradictions no longer exist in our society. To imagine that none exist is a naive idea which is at variance with objective reality. We are confronted with two types of social contradictions—those between ourselves and the enemy, and those among the people. The two are totally different in nature.

To understand these two different types of contradictions correctly, we must first be clear on what is meant by "the people" and what is meant by "the enemy". The concept of "the people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in a given country. Take our own country for example. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, all those classes, strata and social groups opposing Japanese aggression came within the category of the people, while the Japanese imperialists, their Chinese collaborators and the pro-Japanese elements were all enemies of the people. During the War of Liberation, the U.S. imperialists and their running dogs—the bureaucrat-capitalists, the landlords and the Kuomintang reactionaries who represented these two classes—were the enemies of the people, while the other classes, strata and social groups, which opposed them, all came within the category of the people. At the present stage, the period of building socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favor, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people.

The contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic as well as an antagonistic aspect. There have always been contradictions among the people, but

they are different in content in each period of the revolution and in the period of building socialism. In the conditions prevailing in China today, the contradictions among the people comprise the contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of the working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on. Our People's Government is one that genuinely represents the people's interests, it is a government that serves the people. Nevertheless, there are still certain contradictions between this government and the people. These include the contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the other, between democracy and centralism, between the leadership and the led, and the contradictions arising from the bureaucratic style of work of some of the state personnel in their relations with the masses. All these are also contradictions among the people. Generally speaking, the fundamental identity of the people's interests underlies the contradictions among the people.

In our country, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie comes under the category of contradictions among the people. By and large, the class struggle between the two is a class struggle within the ranks of the people, because the Chinese national bourgeoisie has a dual character. In the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it had both a revolutionary and a conciliationist side to its character. In the period of the socialist revolution, exploitation of the working class for profit constitutes one side of the character of the national bourgeoisie, while its support of the Constitution and its willingness to accept

socialist transformation constitute the other. The national bourgeoisie differs from the imperialists, the landlords and the bureaucrat-capitalists. The contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class is one between exploiter and exploited, and is by nature antagonistic. But in the concrete conditions of China, this antagonistic contradiction between the two classes, if properly handled, can be transformed into a non-antagonistic one and be resolved by peaceful methods. However, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie will change into a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy if we do not handle it properly and do not follow the policy of uniting with, criticizing and educating the national bourgeoisie, or if the national bourgeoisie does not accept this policy of ours.

Since they are different in nature, the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and the contradictions among the people must be resolved by different methods. To put it briefly, the former entail drawing a clear distinction between ourselves and the enemy, and the latter entail drawing a clear distinction between right and wrong. It is of course true that the distinction between ourselves and the enemy is also one of right and wrong. For example, the question of who is in the right, we or the domestic and foreign reactionaries, the imperialists, the feudalists and bureaucrat-capitalists, is also one of right and wrong, but it is in a different category from questions of right and wrong among the people.

Our state is a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. What is this dictatorship for? Its first function is internal, namely, to suppress the reactionary classes and elements and those exploiters who resist the socialist revolution, to suppress those who try to wreck our socialist construction, or in other words, to resolve the contradictions between ourselves and the internal enemy. For instance, to arrest, try and sentence certain counter-revolutionaries, and to deprive landlords and

bureaucrat-capitalists of their right to vote and their freedom of speech for a certain period of time; all this comes within the scope of our dictatorship. To maintain public order and safeguard the interests of the people, it is necessary to exercise dictatorship as well over thieves, swindlers, murderers, arsonists, criminal gangs and other scoundrels who seriously disrupt public order. The second function of this dictatorship is to protect our country from subversion and possible aggression by external enemies. In such contingencies, it is the task of this dictatorship to resolve the contradiction between ourselves and the external enemy. The aim of this dictatorship is to protect all our people so that they can devote themselves to peaceful labor and make China a socialist country with modern industry, modern agriculture**,** and modern science and culture. Who is to exercise this dictatorship? Naturally, the working class and the entire people under its leadership. Dictatorship does not apply within the ranks of the people. The people cannot exercise dictatorship over themselves, nor must one section of the people oppress another. Law-breakers among the people will be punished according to law, but this is different in principle from the exercise of dictatorship to suppress enemies of the people. What applies among the people is democratic centralism. Our Constitution lays it down that citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession, demonstration, religious belief, and so on. Our Constitution also provides that the organs of state must practice democratic centralism, that they must rely on the masses and that their personnel must serve the people. Our socialist democracy is the broadest kind of democracy, such as is not to be found in any bourgeois state. Our dictatorship is the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. That is to say, democracy operates within the ranks of the people, while the working class, uniting with all others enjoying civil rights, and in the first place with the

peasantry, enforces dictatorship over the reactionary classes and elements and all those who resist socialist transformation and oppose socialist construction. By civil rights, we mean, politically, the rights of freedom and democracy.

But this freedom is freedom with leadership and this democracy is democracy under centralized guidance, not anarchy. Anarchy does not accord with the interests or wishes of the people.

Certain people in our country were delighted by the Hungarian incident. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would take to the streets to demonstrate against the People's Government. Their hopes ran counter to the interests of the masses and therefore could not possibly win their support. Deceived by domestic and foreign counter-revolutionaries, a section of the people in Hungary made the mistake of resorting to violence against the people's government, with the result that both the state and the people suffered. The damage done to the country's economy in a few weeks of rioting will take a long time to repair. In our country there were some others who wavered on the question of the Hungarian incident because they were ignorant of the real state of affairs in the world. They think that there is too little freedom under our people's democracy and that there is more freedom under Western parliamentary democracy. They ask for a two-party system as in the West, with one party in office and the other in opposition. But this so-called two-party system is nothing but a device for maintaining the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; it can never guarantee freedoms to the working people. As a matter of fact, freedom and democracy exist not in the abstract, but only in the concrete. In a society where class struggle exists, if there is freedom for the exploiting classes to exploit the working people, there is no freedom for the working people not to be exploited. If there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there is no democracy for the proletariat and other working people.

The legal existence of the Communist Party is tolerated in some capitalist countries, but only to the extent that it does not endanger the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie; it is not tolerated beyond that. Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not as a means. Democracy as such sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. Marxism teaches us that democracy is part of the superstructure and belongs to the realm of politics. That is to say, in the last analysis, it serves the economic base. The same is true of freedom. Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute**,** and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the exclusion of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy broad democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline. All this is well understood by the masses.

In advocating freedom with leadership and democracy under centralized guidance, we in no way mean that coercive measures should be taken to settle ideological questions or questions involving the distinction between right and wrong among the people. All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful. We cannot abolish religion by administrative order or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to embrace Marxism. The only way to settle questions of an ideological

nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, criticism, persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression. To be able to carry on their production and studies effectively and to lead their lives in peace and order, the people want their government and those in charge of production and of cultural and educational organizations to issue appropriate administrative regulations of an obligatory nature. It is common sense that without them the maintenance of public order would be impossible. Administrative regulations and the method of persuasion and education complement each other in resolving contradictions among the people. In fact, administrative regulations for the maintenance of public order must be accompanied by persuasion and education, for in many cases regulations alone will not work.

This democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people was epitomized in 1942 in the formula "unity-criticism-unity". To elaborate, that means starting from the desire for unity, resolving contradictions through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. In our experience this is the correct method of resolving contradictions among the people. In 1942 we used it to resolve contradictions inside the Communist Party, namely, the contradictions between the dogmatists and the great majority of the membership, and between dogmatism and Marxism. The "Left" dogmatists had resorted to the method of "ruthless struggle and merciless blows" in inner-Party struggle. It was the wrong method. In criticizing "Left" dogmatism, we did not use this old method but adopted a new one, that is, one of starting from the desire for unity, distinguishing between right and wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. This was the method used in the rectification movement of 1942. Within a few years, by the time the Chinese Communist Party held its Seventh National Congress in 1945, unity was achieved throughout the Party

as anticipated, and consequently the people's revolution triumphed. Here, the essential thing is to start from the desire for unity. For without this desire for unity, the struggle, once begun, is certain to throw things into confusion and get out of hand. Wouldn't this be the same as "ruthless struggle and merciless blows"? And what Party unity would there be left? It was precisely this experience that led us to the formula "unity-criticism-unity". Or, in other words, "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient". We extended this method beyond our Party. We applied it with great success in the anti-Japanese base areas in dealing with the relations between the leadership and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, between the different units of the army, and between the different groups of cadres. The use of this method can be traced back to still earlier times in our Party's history. Ever since 1927 when we built our revolutionary armed forces and base areas in the south, this method had been used to deal with the relations between the Party and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, and with other relations among the people. The only difference was that during the anti-Japanese war we employed this method much more consciously. And since the liberation of the whole country, we have employed this same method of "unity-criticism-unity" in our relations with the democratic parties and with industrial and commercial circles. Our task now is to continue to extend and make still better use of this method throughout the ranks of the people; we want all our factories, cooperatives, shops, schools, offices and people's organizations, in a word, all our 600 million people, to use it in resolving contradictions among themselves.

In ordinary circumstances, contradictions among the people are not antagonistic. But if they are not handled properly, or if we relax our vigilance and lower our guard, antagonism may arise. In a socialist country, a development

of this kind is usually only a localized and temporary phenomenon. The reason is that the system of exploitation of man by man has been abolished and the interests of the people are fundamentally identical. The antagonistic actions which took place on a fairly wide scale during the Hungarian incident were the result of the operations of both domestic and foreign counter-revolutionary elements. This was a particular as well as a temporary phenomenon. It was a case of the reactionaries inside a socialist country, in league with the imperialists, attempting to achieve their conspiratorial aims by taking advantage of contradictions among the people to foment dissension and stir up disorder. The lesson of the Hungarian incident merits attention.

Many people seem to think that the use of the democratic method to resolve contradictions among the people is something new. Actually, it is not. Marxists have always held that the cause of the proletariat must depend on the masses of the people and that Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education when working among the laboring people and must on no account resort to commandism or coercion. The Chinese Communist Party faithfully adheres to this Marxist-Leninist principle. It has been our consistent view that under the people's democratic dictatorship two different methods, one dictatorial and the other democratic, should be used to resolve the two types of contradictions which differ in nature—those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. This idea has been explained again and again in many Party documents and in speeches by many leading comrades of our Party. In my article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", written in 1949, I said, "The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship." I also pointed out that in order to settle problems within the ranks of the people "the method we employ is democratic, the method of persuasion,

not of compulsion". Again, in addressing the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference in June 1950, I said:

The people's democratic dictatorship uses two methods. Towards the enemy, it uses the method of dictatorship, that is, for as long a period of time as is necessary it does not permit them to take part in political activity and compels them to obey the law of the People's Government, to engage in labor and, through such labor, be transformed into new men. Towards the people; on the contrary, it uses the method of democracy and not of compulsion, that is, it must necessarily let them take part in political activity and does not compel them to do this or that but uses the method of democracy to educate and persuade. Such education is self-education for the people, and its basic method is criticism and self-criticism.

Thus, on many occasions we have discussed the use of the democratic method for resolving contradictions among the people; furthermore, we have in the main applied it in our work, and many cadres and many other people are familiar with it in practice. Why then do some people now feel that it is a new issue? Because, in the past, the struggle between ourselves and the enemy, both internal and external, was most acute, and contradictions among the people therefore did not attract as much attention as they do today.

Quite a few people fail to make a clear distinction between these two different types of contradictions—those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people—and are prone to confuse the two. It must be admitted that it is sometimes quite easy to do so. We have had instances of such confusion in our work in the past; In the course of cleaning out counter-revolutionaries, good people were sometimes mistaken for bad, and such things still happen today. We are able to keep mistakes within bounds because it has been our policy to draw a sharp line between ourselves and the enemy and to rectify mistakes whenever discovered.

Marxist philosophy holds that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the universe. This law operates universally, whether in the natural world, in human society, or in man's thinking. Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change. Contradictions exist everywhere, but their nature differs in accordance with the different nature of different things. In any given thing, the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitory, and hence relative, whereas the struggle of opposites is absolute. Lenin gave a very clear exposition of this law. It has come to be understood by a growing number of people in our country. But for many people it is one thing to accept this law and quite another to apply it in examining and dealing with problems. Many dare not openly admit that contradictions still exist among the people of our country, while it is precisely these contradictions that are pushing our society forward. Many do not admit that contradictions still exist in socialist society, with the result that they become irresolute and passive when confronted with social contradictions; they do not understand that socialist society grows more united and consolidated through the ceaseless process of correctly handling and resolving contradictions. For this reason, we need to explain things to our people, and to our cadres in the first place, in order to help them understand the contradictions in socialist society and learn to use correct methods for handling them.

Contradictions in socialist society are fundamentally different from those in the old societies, such as capitalist society. In capitalist society contradictions find expression in acute antagonisms and conflicts, in sharp class struggle; they cannot be resolved by the capitalist system itself and can only be resolved by socialist revolution. The case is quite different with contradictions in socialist society; on the contrary, they are not antagonistic and can be ceaselessly resolved by the socialist system itself.

In socialist society the basic contradictions are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base. However, they are fundamentally different in character and have different features from the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base in the old societies. The present social system of our country is far superior to that of the old days. If it were not so, the old system would not have been overthrown and the new system could not have been established. In saying that the socialist relations of production correspond better to the character of the productive forces than did the old relations of production, we mean that they allow the productive forces to develop at a speed unattainable in the old society, so that production can expand steadily and increasingly meet the constantly growing needs of the people. Under the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, the productive forces of the old China grew very slowly. For more than fifty years before liberation, China produced only a few tens of thousands of tons of steel a year, not counting the output of the northeastern provinces. If these provinces are included, the peak annual steel output only amounted to a little over 900,000 tons. In 1949, the national steel output was a little over 100,000 tons. Yet now, a mere seven years after the liberation of our country, steel output already exceeds 4,000,000 tons. In the old China, there was hardly any machine-building industry, to say nothing of the automobile and aircraft industries; now we have all three. When the people overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, many were not clear as to which way China should head—towards capitalism or towards socialism. Facts have now provided the answer: Only socialism can save China. The socialist system has promoted the rapid development of the productive forces of our country, a fact even our enemies abroad have had to acknowledge.

But our socialist system has only just been set up; it is not yet fully established or fully consolidated. In joint state-private industrial and commercial enterprises, capitalists still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital, that is to say, exploitation still exists. So far as ownership is concerned, these enterprises are not yet completely socialist in nature. A number of our agricultural and handicraft producers' cooperatives are still semi-socialist, while even in the fully socialist cooperatives certain specific problems of ownership remain to be solved. Relations between production and exchange in accordance with socialist principles are being gradually established within and between all branches of our economy, and more and more appropriate forms are being sought. The problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption within each of the two sectors of the socialist economy—the one where the means of production are owned by the whole people and the other where the means of production are owned by the collective—and the problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption between the two sectors themselves are complicated problems for which it is not easy to work out a perfectly rational solution all at once. To sum up, socialist relations of production have been established and are in correspondence with the growth of the productive forces, but these relations are still far from perfect, and this imperfection stands in contradiction to the growth of the productive forces. Apart from correspondence as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the growth of the productive forces, there is correspondence as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base. The superstructure, comprising the state system and laws of the people's democratic dictatorship and the socialist ideology guided by Marxism-Leninism, plays a positive role in facilitating the victory of socialist transformation and the socialist way of organizing labor; it is in correspondence with the socialist economic base, that is, with socialist relations of production. But the existence of

bourgeois ideology, a certain bureaucratic style of work in our state organs and defects in some of the links in our state institutions are in contradiction with the socialist economic base. We must continue to resolve all such contradictions in the light of our specific conditions. Of course, new problems will emerge as these contradictions are resolved. And further efforts will be required to resolve the new contradictions. For instance, a constant process of readjustment through state planning is needed to deal with the contradiction between production and the needs of society, which will long remain an objective reality. Every year our country draws up an economic plan in order to establish a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption and achieve an equilibrium between production and needs. Equilibrium is nothing but a temporary, relative, unity of opposites. By the end of each year, this equilibrium, taken as a whole, is upset by the struggle of opposites; the unity undergoes a change, equilibrium becomes disequilibrium, unity becomes disunity, and once again it is necessary to work out an equilibrium and unity for the next year. Herein lies the superiority of our planned economy. As a matter of fact, this equilibrium, this unity, is partially upset every month or every quarter, and partial readjustments are called for. Sometimes, contradictions arise and the equilibrium is upset because our subjective arrangements do not conform to objective reality; this is what we call making a mistake. The ceaseless emergence and ceaseless resolution of contradictions constitute the dialectical law of the development of things.

Today, matters stand as follows. The large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, but class struggle is by no means entirely over. While welcoming the new system, the masses are not yet quite accustomed to it. Government personnel are not sufficiently experienced and have to undertake further study and investigation of specific policies. In other words, time is needed for our socialist system

to become established and consolidated, for the masses to become accustomed to the new system, and for government personnel to learn and acquire experience. It is therefore imperative for us at this juncture to raise the question of distinguishing contradictions among the people from those between ourselves and the enemy, as well as the question of the correct handling of contradictions among the people, in order to unite the people of all nationalities in our country for the new battle, the battle against nature, develop our economy and culture, help the whole nation to traverse this period of transition relatively smoothly, consolidate our new system and build up our new state.

II. The Question of Eliminating Counter-Revolutionaries

The elimination of counter-revolutionaries is a struggle of opposites as between ourselves and the enemy. Among the people, there are some who see this question in a somewhat different light. Two kinds of people hold views differing from ours. Those with a Right deviation in their thinking make no distinction between ourselves and the enemy and take the enemy for our own people. They regard as friends the very persons whom the masses regard as enemies. Those with a "Left" deviation in their thinking magnify contradictions between ourselves and the enemy to such an extent that they take certain contradictions among the people for contradictions with the enemy and regard as counter-revolutionaries persons who are actually not. Both these views are wrong. Neither makes possible the correctly handling of the problem of eliminating counter-revolutionaries or a correct assessment of this work.

To form a correct evaluation of our work in eliminating counter-revolutionaries, let us see what repercussions the Hungarian incident has had in China. After its occurrence

there was some unrest among a section of our intellectuals, but there were no squalls. Why? One reason, it must be said, was our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries fairly thoroughly.

Of course, the consolidation of our state is not due primarily to the elimination of counter-revolutionaries. It is due primarily to the fact that we have a Communist Party and a Liberation Army both tempered in decades of revolutionary struggle, and a working people likewise so tempered. Our Party and our armed forces are rooted in the masses, have been tempered in the flames of a protracted revolution and have the capacity to fight. Our People's Republic was not built overnight, but developed step by step out of the revolutionary base areas. A number of democratic personages have also been tempered in the struggle in varying degrees, and they have gone through troubled times together with us. Some intellectuals were tempered in the struggles against imperialism and reaction; since liberation many have gone through a process of ideological remolding aimed at enabling them to distinguish clearly between ourselves and the enemy. In addition, the consolidation of our state is due to the fact that our economic measures are basically sound, that the people's life is secure and steadily improving, that our policies towards the national bourgeoisie and other classes are correct, and so on. Nevertheless, our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries is undoubtedly an important reason for the consolidation of our state. For all these reasons, with few exceptions, our college students are patriotic and support socialism and did not give way to unrest during the Hungarian incident, even though many of them come from families of non-working people. The same was true of the national bourgeoisie, to say nothing of the basic masses—the workers and peasants.

After liberation, we rooted out a number of counter-revolutionaries. Some were sentenced to death for major

crimes. This was absolutely necessary, it was the demand of the masses, and it was done to free them from long years of oppression by the counter-revolutionaries and all kinds of local tyrants, in other words, to liberate the productive forces. If we had not done so, the masses would not have been able to lift their heads. Since 1956, however, there has been a radical change in the situation. In the country as a whole, the bulk of the counter-revolutionaries have been cleared out. Our basic task has changed from unfettering the productive forces to protecting and expanding them in the context of the new relations of production. Because of failure to understand that our present policy fits the present situation and our past policy fit the past situation, some people want to make use of the present policy to reverse past decisions and to negate the tremendous success we achieved in eliminating counter-revolutionaries. This is completely wrong, and the masses will not permit it.

In our work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries, successes were the main thing, but there were also mistakes. In some cases there were excesses, and in others counter-revolutionaries slipped through our net. Our policy is: "Counter-revolutionaries must be eliminated wherever found; mistakes must be corrected whenever discovered." Our line in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries is the mass line. Of course, even with the mass line mistakes may still occur, but they will be fewer and easier to correct. The masses gain experience through struggle. From the things done correctly they gain the experience of how things are done correctly. From the mistakes made they gain the experience of how mistakes are made.

Wherever mistakes have been discovered in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries, steps have been or are being taken to correct them. Those not yet discovered will be corrected as soon as they come to light. Exoneration or rehabilitation should be made known as widely as were the

original wrong decisions. I propose that a comprehensive review of the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries be made this year or next to sum up experience, promote justice and counter unjust attacks. Nationally, this review should be in the charge of the Standing Committees of the National People's Congress and of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and, locally, in the charge of the people's councils and the committees of the Political Consultative Conference in the provinces and municipalities. In this review, we must help the large numbers of cadres and activists involved in the work, and not pour cold water on them. It would not be right to dampen their spirits. Nonetheless, wrongs must be righted when discovered. This must be the attitude of all the public security organs, the procurators' offices and the judicial departments, prisons and agencies charged with the reform of criminals through labor. We hope that wherever possible members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, members of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and people's deputies will take part in this review. This will be of help in perfecting our legal system and in dealing correctly with counter-revolutionaries and other criminals.

The present situation with regard to counter-revolutionaries can be described in these words: There still are counter-revolutionaries, but not many. In the first place, there still are counter-revolutionaries. Some people say that there aren't any more left and all is well and that we can therefore lay our heads on our pillows and just drop off to sleep. But this is not the way things are. The fact is, there still are counter-revolutionaries (of course, that is not to say you'll find them everywhere and in every organization), and we must continue to fight them. It must be understood that the hidden counter-revolutionaries still at large will not take things lying down, but will certainly seize every opportunity to make trouble. The U.S. imperialists and the Chiang Kai-shek clique are constantly sending in

secret agents to carry on disruptive activities. Even after all the existing counter-revolutionaries have been combed out, new ones are likely to emerge. If we drop our guard, we shall be badly fooled and shall suffer severely. Counter-revolutionaries must be rooted out with a firm hand wherever they are found making trouble. But, taking the country as a whole, there are certainly not many counter-revolutionaries. It would be wrong to say that there are still large numbers of counter-revolutionaries in China. Acceptance of that view would likewise result in a mess.

III. The Question of the Cooperative Transformation of Agriculture

We have a rural population of over 500 million, so how our peasants fare has a most important bearing on the development of our economy and the consolidation of our state power. In my view, the situation is basically sound. The cooperative transformation of agriculture has been successfully accomplished, and this has resolved the great contradiction in our country between socialist industrialization and the individual peasant economy. As the cooperative transformation of agriculture was completed so rapidly, some people were worried and wondered whether something untoward might occur. There are indeed some faults, but fortunately they are not serious and on the whole the movement is healthy. The peasants are working with a will, and last year there was an increase in the country's grain output despite the worst floods, droughts and gales in years. Now there are people who are stirring up a miniature typhoon, they are saying that cooperation is no good, that there is nothing superior about it. Is cooperation superior or not? Among the documents distributed at today's meeting there is one about the Wang Kuo-fan Cooperative in Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, which I suggest you read. This cooperative is situated in a

hilly region which was very poor in the past and which for a number of years depended on relief grain from the People's Government. When the cooperative was first set up in 1953, people called it the "paupers' co-op". But it has become better off year by year, and now, after four years of hard struggle, most of its households have reserves of grain. What was possible for this cooperative should also be possible for others to achieve under normal conditions in the same length of time or a little longer. Clearly there are no grounds for saying that something has gone wrong with agricultural cooperation.

It is also clear that it takes hard struggle to build cooperatives. New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, with no difficulties and setbacks, or without the exertion of tremendous efforts.

Who are the active supporters of the cooperatives? The overwhelming majority of the poor and lower-middle peasants who constitute more than 70 percent of the rural population. Most of the other peasants are also placing their hopes on the cooperatives. Only a very small minority are really dissatisfied. Quite a number of persons have failed to analyze this situation and to make an overall examination of the achievements and shortcomings of the cooperatives and the causes of these shortcomings; instead, they have taken part of the picture or one side of the matter for the whole, and consequently a miniature typhoon has been stirred up among some people, who are saying that the cooperatives are not superior.

How long will it take to consolidate the cooperatives and for this talk about their not being superior to wind up? Judging from the experience of the growth of many cooperatives, it will probably take five years or a little longer. As most of our cooperatives are only a little over a year old, it would be unreasonable to ask too much of them. In my view, we will be doing well enough if the cooperatives can be consolidated

during the Second Five-Year Plan after being established in the First.

The cooperatives are now in the process of gradual consolidation. There are certain contradictions that remain to be resolved, such as those between the state and the cooperatives and those in and between the cooperatives themselves.

To resolve these contradictions, we must pay constant attention to the problems of production and distribution. On the question of production, the cooperative economy must be subject to the unified economic planning of the state, while retaining a certain flexibility and independence that do not run counter to the state's unified plan or its policies, laws and regulations. At the same time, every household in a cooperative must comply with the overall plan of the cooperative or production team to which it belongs, though it may make its own appropriate plans in regard to land allotted for personal needs and to other individually operated economic undertakings. On the question of distribution, we must take the interests of the state, the collective and the individual into account. We must properly handle the three-way relationship between the state agricultural tax, the cooperative's accumulation fund and the peasants' personal income, and take constant care to make readjustments so as to resolve contradictions between them. Accumulation is essential for both the state and the cooperative, but in neither case should it be excessive. We should do everything possible to enable the peasants in normal years to raise their personal incomes annually through increased production.

Many people say that the peasants lead a hard life. Is this true? In one sense it is. That is to say, because the imperialists and their agents oppressed and exploited us for over a century, ours is an impoverished country and the standard of living not only of our peasants but of our workers and intellectuals is still low. We will need several decades of strenuous effort gradually to raise the standard of living of our people as a

whole. In this context, it is right to say that the peasants lead a "hard life". But in another sense, it is not true. We refer to the allegation that in the seven years since liberation it is only the life of the workers that has been improved and not that of the peasants. As a matter of fact, with very few exceptions, there has been some improvement in the life of both the peasants and the workers. Since liberation, the peasants have been free from landlord exploitation and their production has increased annually. Take grain crops. In 1949, the country's output was only something over 210 billion catties. By 1956, it had risen to more than 360 billion catties, an increase of nearly 150 billion catties. The state agricultural tax is not heavy, only amounting to something over 30 billion catties a year. State purchases of grain from the peasants at standard prices only amount to a little over 50 billion catties a year. These two items together total over 80 billion catties. Furthermore, more than half this grain is sold back to the villages and nearby towns. Obviously, no one can say that there has been no improvement in the life of the peasants. In order to help agriculture to develop and the cooperatives to become consolidated, we are planning to stabilize the total annual amount of the grain tax plus the grain purchased by the state at somewhat more than 80 billion catties within a few years. In this way, the small number of grain-deficient households still found in the countryside will stop being short, all peasant households, except some raising industrial crops, will either have grain reserves or at least become self-sufficient, there will no longer be poor peasants in the countryside, and the standard of living of the entire peasantry will reach or surpass the middle peasants' level. It is not right simply to compare a peasant's average annual income with a worker's and jump to the conclusion that one is too low and the other too high. Since the labor productivity of the workers is much higher than that of the peasants and the latter's cost of living is much lower than that of workers in the cities, the workers cannot be said to have received

special favors from the state**.** The wages of a small number of workers and some state personnel are in fact a little too high, the peasants have reason to be dissatisfied with this, and it is necessary to make certain appropriate adjustments according to specific circumstances.

IV. The Question of the Industrialists and Businessmen

With regard to the transformation of our social system, the year 1956 saw the conversion of privately owned industrial and commercial enterprises into joint state-private enterprises as well as the cooperative transformation of agriculture and handicrafts. The speed and smoothness of this conversion were closely bound up with our treating the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie as a contradiction among the people. Has this class contradiction been completely resolved? No, not yet. That will take a considerable period of time. However, some people say the capitalists have been so remolded that they are now not very different from the workers and that further remolding is unnecessary. Others go so far as to say that the capitalists are even better than the workers. Still others ask, if remolding is necessary, why isn't it necessary for the working class? Are these opinions correct? Of course not.

In the building of a socialist society, everybody needs remolding—the exploiters and also the working people. Who says it isn't necessary for the working class? Of course, the remolding of the exploiters is essentially different from that of the working people, and the two must not be confused. The working class remolds the whole of society in class struggle and in the struggle against nature, and in the process, it remolds itself. It must ceaselessly learn in the course of work, gradually overcome its shortcomings and never stop doing so. Take for example those of us present here. Many of us

make some progress each year, that is to say, we are remolding ourselves each year. For myself, I used to have all sorts of non-Marxist ideas, and it was only later that I embraced Marxism. I learned a little Marxism from books and took the first steps in remolding my ideology, but it was mainly through taking part in class struggle over the years that I came to be remolded. And if I am to make further progress, I must continue to learn, otherwise I shall lag behind. Can the capitalists be so good that they need no more remolding?

Some people contend that the Chinese bourgeoisie no longer has two sides to its character, but only one side. Is this true? No. While members of the bourgeoisie have become administrative personnel in joint state-private enterprises and are being transformed from exploiters into working people living by their own labor, they still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital in the joint enterprises, that is, they have not yet cut themselves loose from the roots of exploitation. Between them and the working class there is still a considerable gap in ideology, sentiments and habits of life. How can it be said that they no longer have two sides to their character? Even when they stop receiving their fixed interest payments and the "bourgeois" label is removed, they will still need ideological remolding for quite some time. If, as is alleged, the bourgeoisie no longer has a dual character, then the capitalists will no longer have the task of studying and of remolding themselves.

It must be said that this view does not tally either with the actual situation of our industrialists and businessmen or with what most of them want. During the past few years, most of them have been willing to study and have made marked progress. As their thorough remolding can be achieved only in the course of work, they should engage in labor together with the staff and workers in the enterprises and regard these enterprises as the chief places in which to remold themselves. But it is also important for them to change some of their old views through study. Such study should be on a voluntary

basis. When they return to the enterprises after being in study groups for some weeks, many industrialists and businessmen find that they have more of a common language with the workers and the representatives of state ownership, and so there are better possibilities for working together. They know from personal experience that it is good for them to keep on studying and remolding themselves. The idea mentioned above that study and remolding are not necessary reflects the views not of the majority of industrialists and businessmen but of only a small number.

V. The Question of the Intellectuals

The contradictions within the ranks of the people in our country also find expression among the intellectuals. The several million intellectuals who worked for the old society have come to serve the new society, and the question that now arises is how they can fit in with the needs of the new society and how we can help them to do so. This, too, is a contradiction among the people.

Most of our intellectuals have made marked progress during the last seven years. They have shown they are in favor of the socialist system. Many are diligently studying Marxism, and some have become communists. The latter, though at present small in number, are steadily increasing. Of course, there are still some intellectuals who are skeptical about socialism or do not approve of it, but they are a minority.

China needs the services of as many intellectuals as possible for the colossal task of building socialism. We should trust those who are really willing to serve the cause of socialism and should radically improve our relations with them and help them solve the problems requiring solution, so that they can give full play to their talents. Many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work

and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted. We must do away with all such shortcomings.

Although large numbers of intellectuals have made progress, they should not be complacent. They must continue to remold themselves, gradually shed their bourgeois world outlook and acquire the proletarian, communist world outlook so that they can fully fit in with the needs of the new society and unite with the workers and peasants. The change in world outlook is fundamental, and up to now most of our intellectuals cannot be said to have accomplished it. We hope that they will continue to make progress and that in the course of work and study they will gradually acquire the communist world outlook, grasp Marxism-Leninism and become integrated with the workers and peasants. We hope they will not stop halfway, or, what is worse, slide back, for there will be no future for them in going backwards. Since our country's social system has changed and the economic base of bourgeois ideology has in the main been destroyed, not only is it imperative for large numbers of our intellectuals to change their world outlook, but it is also possible for them to do so. But a thorough change in world outlook takes a very long time, and we should spare no pains in helping them and must not be impatient. Actually, there are bound to be some who ideologically will always be reluctant to accept Marxism-Leninism and communism. We should not be too exacting in what we demand of them; as long as they comply with the requirements laid down by the state and engage in legitimate pursuits, we should let them have opportunities for suitable work.

Among students and intellectuals there has recently been a falling off in ideological and political work, and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern themselves with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism, once all the

rage, is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress ideologically and politically, which means they should study Marxism, current events and politics. Not to have a correct political orientation is like not having a soul. The ideological remolding in the past was necessary and has yielded positive results. But it was carried on in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion and the feelings of some people were hurt—this was not good. We must avoid such shortcomings in future. All departments and organizations should shoulder their responsibilities for ideological and political work. This applies to the Communist Party, the Youth League, government departments in charge of this work, and especially to heads of educational institutions and teachers. Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture. We must spread the idea of building our country through diligence and thrift. We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically in a short time, and that only through decades of united effort by our younger generation and all our people, working with their own hands, can China be made prosperous and strong. The establishment of our socialist system has opened the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to translate this ideal into reality needs hard work. Some of our young people think that everything ought to be perfect once a socialist society is established and that they should be able to enjoy a happy life ready-made, without working for it. This is unrealistic.

VI. The Question of the Minority Nationalities

The minority nationalities in our country number more than thirty million. Although they constitute only 6 percent of the total population, they inhabit extensive regions which comprise 50 to 60 percent of China's total area. It is thus imperative to foster good relation between the Han people and the minority nationalities. The key to this question lies in overcoming Han chauvinism. At the same time, efforts should also be made to overcome local-nationality chauvinism, wherever it exists among the minority nationalities. Both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism are harmful to the unity of the nationalities; they represent one kind of contradiction among the people which should be resolved. We have already done some work to this end. In most of the areas inhabited by minority nationalities there has been considerable improvement in the relations between the nationalities, but a number of problems remain to be solved. In some areas, both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism still exit to a serious degree, and this demands full attention. As a result of the efforts of the people of all nationalities over the last few years, democratic reforms and socialist transformation have in the main been completed in most of the minority nationality areas. Democratic reforms have not yet been carried out in Tibet because conditions are not ripe. According to the seventeen-article agreement reached between the Central People's Government and the local government of Tibet the reform of the social system must be carried out, but the timing can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and the local leading public figures consider it opportune, and one should not be impatient. It has now been decided not to proceed with democratic reforms in Tibet during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan. Whether to proceed with them in the period of the Third Five-Year Plan can only be decided in the light of the situation at the time.

VII. Overall Consideration and Proper Arrangement

By overall consideration we mean consideration that embraces the 600 million people of our country. In drawing up plans, handling affairs or thinking over problems, we must proceed from the fact that China has a population of 600 million, and we must never forget this fact. Why do we make a point of this? Is it possible that there are people who are still unaware that we have a population of 600 million? Of course, everyone knows this, but when it comes to actual practice, some people forget all about it and act as though the fewer the people, the smaller the circle, the better. Those who have this "small circle" mentality abhor the idea of bringing every positive factor into play, of uniting with everyone who can be united with, and of doing everything possible to turn negative factors into positive ones so as to serve the great cause of building a socialist society. I hope these people will take a wider view and fully recognize that we have a population of 600 million, that this is an objective fact, and that it is an asset for us. Our large population is a good thing, but of course it also involves certain difficulties. Construction is going ahead vigorously on all fronts and very successfully too, but in the present transition period of tremendous social change there are still many difficult problems. Progress and at the same time difficulties—this is a contradiction. However, not only should all such contradictions be resolved, but they definitely can be. Our guiding principle is overall consideration and proper arrangement. Whatever the problem—whether it concerns food, natural calamities, employment, education, the intellectuals, the united front of all patriotic forces, the minority nationalities, or anything else—we must always proceed from the standpoint of overall consideration, which embraces the whole people, and must make the proper arrangement, after consultation with all the circles concerned, in the light of what

is feasible at a particular time and place. On no account should we complain that there are too many people, that others are backward, that things are troublesome and hard to handle, and close the door on them. Do I mean to say that the government alone must take care of everyone and everything? Of course not. In many cases, they can be left to the direct care of the public organizations or the masses; both are quite capable of devising many good ways of handling them. This also comes within the scope of the principle of overall consideration and proper arrangement. We should give guidance on this to the public organizations and the people everywhere.

VIII. On "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend" and "Long-Term Coexistence and Mutual Supervision"

"Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend" and "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision", how did these slogans come to be put forward? They were put forward in the light of China's specific conditions, in recognition of the continued existence of various kinds of contradictions in socialist society and in response to the country's urgent need to speed up its economic and cultural development. Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land. Different forms and styles in art should develop freely and different schools in science should contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and science should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not

be settled in an over-simple manner. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. Throughout history at the outset new and correct things often failed to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns through struggle. Often, correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win out over bitter opposition. Chinese history offers many similar examples. In a socialist society, the conditions for the growth of the new are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that such an attitude will help ensure a relatively smooth development of the arts and sciences.

Marxism, too, has developed through struggle. At the beginning, Marxism was subjected to all kinds of attack and regarded as a poisonous weed. This is still the case in many parts of the world. In the socialist countries, it enjoys a different position. But non-Marxist and, what is more, anti-Marxist ideologies exist even in these countries. In China, although socialist transformation has in the main been completed as regards the system of ownership, and although the large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remolding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political

forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet. Marxists remain a minority among the entire population as well as among the intellectuals. Therefore, Marxism must continue to develop through struggle. Marxism can develop only through struggle, and this is not only true of the past and the present, it is necessarily true of the future as well. What is correct invariably develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist by contrast with the false, the evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with them. As soon as something erroneous is rejected and a particular truth accepted by mankind, new truths begin to struggle with new errors. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and, naturally, of Marxism.

It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society, the very influence which constitutes their class ideology, will persist in our country for a long time. If this is not understood at all or is insufficiently understood, the gravest of mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging struggle in the ideological field will be ignored. Ideological struggle differs from other forms of struggle, since the only method used is painstaking reasoning, and not crude coercion. Today, socialism is in an advantageous position in the ideological struggle. The basic power of the state is in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party is strong and its prestige high. Although there are defects and mistakes in our work, every fair-minded person can see that we are loyal to the people, that we are both determined and able to build up

our motherland together with them, and that we have already achieved great successes and will achieve still greater ones. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who come from the old society are patriotic and are willing to serve their flourishing socialist motherland; they know they will have nothing to fall back on and their future cannot possibly be bright if they turn away from the socialist cause and from the working people led by the Communist Party.

People may ask, since Marxism is accepted as the guiding ideology by the majority of the people in our country, can it be criticized? Certainly it can. Marxism is scientific truth and fears no criticism. If it did, and if it could be overthrown by criticism, it would be worthless. In fact, aren't the idealists criticizing Marxism every day and in every way? And those who harbor bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and do not wish to change, aren't they also criticizing Marxism in every way? Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated; a man develops greater immunity from disease as a result of vaccination. Plants raised in hothouses are unlikely to be hardy. Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken, but strengthen the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy, we simply deprive them of their freedom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use crude methods in dealing with ideological questions among the people, with questions about man's mental world. You

may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, if correct ideas are pampered in hothouses and never exposed to the elements and immunized against disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues.

It is inevitable that the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will give expression to their own ideologies. It is inevitable that they will stubbornly assert themselves on political and ideological questions by every possible means. You cannot expect them to do otherwise. We should not use the method of suppression and prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct appropriate criticism at them. Undoubtedly, we must criticize wrong ideas of every description. It certainly would not be right to refrain from criticism, look on while wrong ideas spread unchecked and allow them to dominate the field. Mistakes must be criticized and poisonous weeds fought wherever they crop up. However, such criticism should not be dogmatic, and the metaphysical method should not be used, but instead the effort should be made to apply the dialectical method. What is needed is scientific analysis and convincing argument. Dogmatic criticism settles nothing. We are against poisonous weeds of whatever kind, but ever must carefully distinguish between what is really a poisonous weed and what is really a fragrant flower. Together with the masses of the people, we must learn to differentiate carefully between the two and use correct methods to fight the poisonous weeds.

At the same time as we criticize dogmatism, we must direct our attention to criticizing revisionism. Revisionism, or Right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more dangerous than dogmatism. The revisionists, the Right opportunists, pay lip-service to Marxism; they too attack "dogmatism". But what they are really attacking is the

quintessence of Marxism. They oppose or distort materialism and dialectics, oppose or try to weaken the people's democratic dictatorship and the leading role of the Communist Party, and oppose or try to weaken socialist transformation and socialist construction. Even after the basic victory of our socialist revolution, there will still be a number of people in our society who vainly hope to restore the capitalist system and are sure to fight the working class on every front, including the ideological one. And their righthand men in this struggle are the revisionists.

Literally the two slogans: "let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend", and "have no class character"; the proletariat can turn them to account, and so can the bourgeoisie or others. Different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds. Then, from the point of view of the masses, what should be the criteria today for distinguishing fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds? In their political activities, how should our people judge whether a person's words and deeds are right or wrong? On the basis of the principles of our Constitution, the will of the overwhelming majority of our people and the common political positions which have been proclaimed on various occasions by our political parties, we consider that, broadly speaking, the criteria should be as follows:

1. Words and deeds should help to unite, and not divide, the people of all our nationalities.
2. They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.
3. They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship.
4. They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.
5. They should help to strengthen, and not shake off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.

6. They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world.

Of these six criteria, the most important are the two about the socialist path and the leadership of the Party. These criteria are put forward not to hinder but to foster the free discussion of questions among the people. Those who disapprove of these criteria can still state their own views and argue their case. However, so long as the majority of the people have clear-cut criteria to go by, criticism and self-criticism can be conducted along proper lines, and these criteria can be applied to people's words and deeds to determine whether they are right or wrong, whether they are fragrant flowers or poisonous weeds. These are political criteria. Naturally, to judge the validity of scientific theories or assess the aesthetic value of works of art, other relevant criteria are needed. But these six political criteria are applicable to all activities in the arts and sciences. In a socialist country like ours, can there possibly be any useful scientific or artistic activity which runs counter to these political criteria?

The views set out above are based on China's specific historical conditions. Conditions vary in different socialist countries and with different Communist Parties. Therefore, we do not maintain that they should or must adopt the Chinese way.

The slogan "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" is also a product of China's specific historical conditions. It was not put forward all of a sudden, but had been in the making for several years. The idea of long-term coexistence had been there for a long time. When the socialist system was in the main established last year, the slogan was formulated in explicit terms. Why should the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic parties be allowed to exist side by side with the party of the working class over a long period of time? Because we have no reason for not adopting the policy

of long-term coexistence with all those political parties which are truly devoted to the task of uniting the people for the cause of socialism and which enjoy the trust of the people. As early as June 1950, at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference, I put the matter in this way:

> "The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway."

What I was discussing here was the political basis for the long-term coexistence of the various parties. It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people. Mutual supervision among the various parties is also a long-established fact, in the sense that they have long been advising and criticizing each other. Mutual supervision is obviously not a one-sided matter; it means that the Communist Party can exercise supervision over the democratic parties, and vice versa. Why should the democratic parties be allowed to exercise supervision over the Communist Party? Because a party as much as an individual has great need to hear opinions different from its own. We all know that supervision over the Communist Party is mainly exercised by the working people and the Party membership. But it augments the benefit to us to have supervision by the democratic parties too. Of course, the advice and criticism exchanged by the Communist Party and the democratic parties will play a positive supervisory role only when they conform

to the six political criteria given above. Thus, we hope that in order to fit in with the needs of the new society, all the democratic parties will pay attention to ideological remolding and strive for long-term coexistence with the Communist Party and mutual supervision.

IX. On the Question of Disturbances Created by Small Numbers of People

In 1956, small numbers of workers or students in certain places went on strike. The immediate cause of these disturbances was the failure to satisfy some of their demands for material benefits, of which some should and could have been met, while others were out of place or excessive and therefore could not be met for the time being. But a more important cause was bureaucracy on the part of the leadership. In some cases, the responsibility for such bureaucratic mistakes fell on the higher authorities, and those at the lower levels were not to blame. Another cause of these disturbances was lack of ideological and political education among the workers and students. The same year, in some agricultural cooperatives there were also disturbances created by a few of their members, and here too the main causes were bureaucracy on the part of the leadership and lack of educational work among the masses.

It should be admitted that among the masses some are prone to pay attention to immediate, partial and personal interests and do not understand, or do not sufficiently understand, long-range, national and collective interests. Because of lack of political and social experience, quite a number of young people cannot readily see the contrast between the old China and the new, and it is not easy for them thoroughly to comprehend the hardships our people went through in the struggle to free themselves from the oppression of the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, or the long years of hard work needed before a fine socialist society can

be established. That is why we must constantly carry on lively and effective political education among the masses and should always tell them the truth about the difficulties that crop up and discuss with them how to surmount these difficulties.

We do not approve of disturbances, because contradictions among the people can be resolved through the method of "unity-criticism-unity", while disturbances are bound to cause some losses and are not conducive to the advance of socialism. We believe that the masses of the people support socialism, conscientiously observe discipline and are reasonable, and will certainly not take part in disturbances without cause. But this does not mean that the possibility of disturbances by the masses no longer exists in our country. On this question, we should pay attention to the following. (1) In order to root out the causes of disturbances, we must resolutely overcome bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education, and deal with all contradictions properly. If this is done, generally speaking there will be no disturbances. (2) When disturbances do occur as a result of poor work on our part, then we should guide those involved onto the correct path, use the disturbances as a special means for improving our work and educating the cadres and the masses, and find solutions to those problems which were previously left unsolved. In handling any disturbance, we should take pains and not use over-simple methods, or hastily declare the matter closed. The ringleaders in disturbances should not be summarily expelled, except for those who have committed criminal offences or are active counter-revolutionaries and have to be punished by law. In a large country like ours, there is nothing to get alarmed about if small numbers of people create disturbances; on the contrary, such disturbances will help us get rid of bureaucracy.

There are also a small number of individuals in our society who, flouting the public interest, willfully break the law and commit crimes. They are apt to take advantage of our policies and distort them, and deliberately put forward unreasonable

demands in order to incite the masses, or deliberately spread rumors to create trouble and disrupt public order. We do not propose to let these individuals have their way. On the contrary, proper legal action must be taken against them. Punishing them is the demand of the masses, and it would run counter to the popular will if they were not punished.

X. Can Bad Things Be Turned Into Good Things?

In our society, as I have said, disturbances by the masses are bad, and we do not approve of them. But when disturbances do occur, they enable us to learn lessons, to overcome bureaucracy and to educate the cadres and the masses. In this sense, bad things can be turned into good things. Disturbances thus have a dual character. Every disturbance can be regarded in this way.

Everybody knows that the Hungarian incident was not a good thing. But it too had a dual character. Because our Hungarian comrades took proper action in the course of the incident, what was a bad thing has eventually turned into a good one. Hungary is now more consolidated than ever, and all other countries in the socialist camp have also learned a lesson.

Similarly, the worldwide campaign against communism and the people which took place in the latter half of 1956 was of course a bad thing. But it served to educate and temper the Communist Parties and the working class in all countries, and thus it has turned into a good thing. In the storm and stress of this period, a number of people in many countries withdrew from the Communist Party. Withdrawal from the Party reduces its membership and is, of course, a bad thing, But there is a good side to it, too. Vacillating elements who are unwilling to carry on have withdrawn, and the vast majority who are staunch Party members can be the better united for struggle. Why isn't this a good thing?

To sum up, we must learn to look at problems from all sides, seeing the reverse as well as the obverse side of things. In given conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results and a good thing to bad results. More than two thousand years ago Laozi said: "Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good." When the Japanese shot their way into China, they called this a victory. Huge parts of China's territory were seized, and the Chinese called this a defeat. But victory was conceived in China's defeat, while defeat was conceived in Japan's victory. Hasn't history proved this true?

People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will completely collapse.

In given conditions, each of the two opposing aspects of a contradiction invariably transforms itself into its opposite as a result of the struggle between them. Here, it is the conditions which are essential. Without the given conditions, neither of the two contradictory aspects can transform itself into its opposite. Of all the classes in the world the proletariat is the one which is most eager to change its position, and next comes the semi-proletariat, for the former possesses nothing at all while the latter is hardly any better off. The United States now

controls a majority in the United Nations and dominates many parts of the world—this state of affairs is temporary and will be changed one of these days. China's position as a poor country denied its rights in international affairs will also be changed—the poor country will change into a rich one, the country denied its rights into one enjoying them—a transformation of things into their opposites. Here, the decisive conditions are the socialist system and the concerted efforts of a united people.

XI. On Practicing Economy

Here I wish to speak briefly on practicing economy. We want to carry on large-scale construction, but our country is still very poor—herein lies a contradiction. One way of resolving it is to make a sustained effort to practice strict economy in every field.

During the movement against the "three evils" in 1952, we fought against corruption, waste and bureaucracy, with the emphasis on combating corruption. In 1955 we advocated the practice of economy with great success, our emphasis then being on combating the unduly high standards for non-productive projects in capital construction and economizing on raw materials in industrial production. But at that time economy was not yet applied in earnest as a guiding principle in all branches of the national economy, or in government offices, army units, schools and people's organizations in general. This year we are calling for economy and the elimination of waste in every sphere throughout the country. We still lack experience in the work of construction. During the last few years, great successes have been achieved, but there has also been waste. We must build up a number of large-scale modern enterprises step by step to form the mainstay of our industry, without which we shall not be able to turn China into a powerful modern industrial country within the coming

decades. But the majority of our enterprises should not be built on such a scale; we should set up more small and medium enterprises and make full use of the industrial base inherited from the old society, so as to effect the greatest economy and do more with less money. Good results have begun to appear in the few months since the principle of practicing strict economy and combating waste was put forward, in more emphatic terms than before, by the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in November 1956. The present campaign for economy must be conducted in a thorough and sustained way. Like the criticism of any other fault or mistake, the fight against waste may be compared to washing one's face. Don't people wash their faces every day? The Chinese Communist Party, the democratic parties, the democrats with no party affiliation, the intellectuals, industrialists and businessmen, workers, peasants and handicraftsmen—in short, all our 600 million people—must strive for increased production and economy, and against extravagance and waste. This is of prime importance not only economically, but politically as well. A dangerous tendency has shown itself of late among many of our personnel—an unwillingness to share weal and woe with the masses, a concern for personal fame and gain. This is very bad. One way of overcoming it is to streamline our organizations in the course of our campaign to increase production and practice economy, and to transfer cadres to lower levels so that a considerable number will return to productive work. We must see to it that all our cadres and all our people constantly bear in mind that ours is a large socialist country but an economically backward and poor one, and that this is a very big contradiction. To make China prosperous and strong needs several decades of hard struggle, which means, among other things, pursuing the policy of building up our country through diligence and thrift, that is, practicing strict economy and fighting waste.

XII. China's Path to Industrialization

In discussing our path to industrialization, we are here concerned principally with the relationship between the growth of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture. It must be affirmed that heavy industry is the core of China's economic construction. At the same time, full attention must be paid to the development of agriculture and light industry.

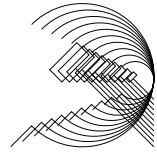
As China is a large agricultural country, with over 80 percent of its population in the rural areas, agriculture must develop along with industry, for only thus can industry secure raw materials and a market, and only thus is it possible to accumulate more funds for building a powerful heavy industry. Everyone knows that light industry is closely tied up with agriculture. Without agriculture there can be no light industry. But it is not yet so clearly understood that agriculture provides heavy industry with an important market. This fact, however, will be more readily appreciated as gradual progress in the technical transformation and modernization of agriculture calls for more and more machinery, fertilizer, water conservancy and electric power projects and transport facilities for the farms, as well as fuel and building materials for the rural consumers. During the period of the Second and Third Five-Year Plans, the entire national economy will benefit if we can achieve an even greater growth in our agriculture and thus induce a correspondingly greater development of light industry. As agriculture and light industry develop, heavy industry, assured of its market and funds, will grow faster. Hence what may seem to be a slower pace of industrialization will actually not be so slow, and indeed may even be faster. In three five-year plans or perhaps a little longer, China's annual steel output can be raised to 20,000,000 tons or more, as compared with the peak pre-liberation output of something over 900,000 tons in 1943. This will gladden the people in both town and country.

I do not propose to dwell on economic questions today. With barely seven years of economic construction behind us, we still lack experience and need to accumulate it. Neither had we any experience in revolution when we first started, and it was only after we had taken a number of tumbles and acquired experience that we won nationwide victory. What we must now demand of ourselves is to gain experience in economic construction in a shorter period of time than it took us to gain experience in revolution, and not to pay as high a price for it. Some price we will have to pay, but we hope it will not be as high as that paid during the period of revolution. We must realize that there is a contradiction here—the contradiction between the objective laws of economic development of a socialist society and our subjective cognition of them—which needs to be resolved in the course of practice. This contradiction also manifests itself as a contradiction between different people, that is, a contradiction between those in whom the reflection of these objective laws is relatively accurate and those in whom the reflection is relatively inaccurate; this, too, is a contradiction among the people. Every contradiction is an objective reality, and it is our task to reflect it and resolve it in as nearly correct a fashion as we can.

In order to turn China into an industrial country, we must learn conscientiously from the advanced experience of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has been building socialism for forty years, and its experience is very valuable to us. Let us ask: Who designed and equipped so many important factories for us? Was it the United States? Or Britain? No, neither the one nor the other. Only the Soviet Union was willing to do so, because it is a socialist country and our ally. In addition to the Soviet Union, the fraternal countries in East Europe have also given us some assistance. It is perfectly true that we should learn from the good experience of all countries, socialist or capitalist, about this there is no argument. But the main thing is still to learn from the Soviet Union. Now there

are two different attitudes towards learning from others. One is the dogmatic attitude of transplanting everything, whether or not it is suited to our conditions. This is no good. The other attitude is to use our heads and learn those things which suit our conditions, that is, to absorb whatever experience is useful to us. That is the attitude we should adopt.

To strengthen our solidarity with the Soviet Union, to strengthen our solidarity with all the socialist countries—this is our fundamental policy, this is where our basic interests lie. Then there are the Asian and African countries and all the peace-loving countries and peoples—we must strengthen and develop our solidarity with them. United with these two forces, we shall not stand alone. As for the imperialist countries, we should unite with their people and strive to coexist peacefully with those countries, do business with them and prevent a possible war, but under no circumstances should we harbor any unrealistic notions about them.



NOTES



NOTES

Get Organized!

1. From *Mencius*, Book III, ”Gongsun Chaou,” Part I, Chapter 5.

2. The Central Committee's directive of October 1 was “Spread the Campaigns to Reduce Rent, Increase Production and 'Support the Government and Cherish the People' in the Base Areas”.

3. See V. I. Lenin, “On Co-operation,” in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1974), vol. 33, pp. 468-475.

4. “Teams for the exchange of labor” and “teams for the exchange and hire of labor” were both labor organizations for collective mutual aid in agriculture in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. Labor-exchange is a means by which the peasants adjust labor power among themselves. Man-workdays were exchanged for man-workdays, ox-workdays for ox-workdays, man-workdays for ox-workdays etc. Peasants who joined labor-exchange teams contributed their labor power or animal power to cultivate the land of each member-family collectively and in rotation. In settling accounts, the workday was taken as the unit of exchange; those who contributed more man-workdays or animal-workdays were paid for the difference by those who contributed less. “Teams for the exchange and hire of labor” were usually formed by peasants with insufficient land. Besides exchanging work among themselves for mutual aid, their members also hired themselves out collectively to families which were short of labor power.

5. Mutual-aid working groups and ploughing teams, based on individual farming, were formed by peasants in the Red areas to facilitate production through a better organization of labor power. On the principle of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, the members did an equal amount of work for each other, or if one could not give another as much help as he received he made up the difference in cash. Apart from helping each other, the teams gave preferential treatment to the families of Red Army soldiers and worked for bereaved old folk without any pay except for meals during the work. As these measures of mutual aid were of great help to production and were carried out on a reasonable basis they won the warm support of the masses.

6. Zhuge Liang was a statesman and strategist in the period of the Three Kingdoms (221-265), who became a symbol of resourcefulness and wisdom in Chinese folklore.

7. The Spring Festival is New Year's Day in the Chinese lunar calendar.

8. The Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region was divided into these five sub-regions.

Serve the People

9. Comrade Zhang Side was a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. A member of the Communist Party who loyally served the interests of the people, he joined the revolution in 1933, took part in the Long March and was wounded in service. On September 5, 1944, when making charcoal in the mountains of Ansai County, northern Shaanxi, he was killed by the sudden collapse of a kiln.

10. Sima Qian, the famous Chinese historian of the 2nd century B.C., was the author of the *Historical Records*. The quotation comes from his "Reply to Ren Shaoqing's Letter".

11. Li Dingming, an enlightened landlord of northern Shaanxi Province, was at one time elected Vice-Chairman of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region Government.

12. This was the total population of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and all other Liberated Areas in northern, central and southern China.

The Revolutionary Path

13. Farmers and craftsmen who were not equipped with uniforms like those of the aristocracy's army.

14. Though Plekhanov later joined the Mensheviks, Lenin said the Emancipation Labor Group laid the foundations for a Marxist political party.

"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder

15. *"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* was written by Lenin in April, and the appendix—on May 12, 1920. It came out on June

8-10, in Russian and almost simultaneously in July in German, English and French. Lenin gave personal attention to the book's type-setting and printing schedule so that it should be published before the opening of the Second Congress of the Communist International, each delegate receiving a copy. Between July and November 1920, the book was re-published in Leipzig, Paris and London, in the German, French and English languages respectively.

The manuscript of the book is subtitled: "An Attempt to Conduct a Popular Discussion on Marxist Strategy and Tactics." This subtitle was deleted in all editions published in Lenin's lifetime. In the fourth (Russian) edition of Lenin's Works, *"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder* is published according to the first edition, the proofs of which were read by Lenin himself.

16. *The Second International*—an international association of socialist parties founded in 1889. When the First World War of 1914-1918 broke out, the leaders of the Second International betrayed the cause of socialism, went over to the side of their imperialist governments and the Second International was dissolved. The Left-wing parties and groups previously affiliated with the Second International joined the Communist (Third) International, founded in Moscow in 1919. The Second International was restored at the conference in Berne that same year, 1919, and included only the parties of the Right, opportunist wing in the socialist movement.

17. The old *Iskra*—the first illegal Marxist newspaper in Russia. It was founded by V. I. Lenin in 1900, and played a decisive role in the formation of revolutionary Marxist party of the working class in Russia. *Iskra*'s first issue appeared in Leipzig in December 1900, the following issues being brought out in Munich, and then beginning with July 1902—in London, and after the spring of 1903—in Geneva.

On Lenin's initiative and with his participation, the editorial staff drew up a draft of the Party's Program (published in *Iskra* No. 21), and prepared the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., at which the Russian revolutionary Marxist party was actually founded.

Soon after the Second Congress, the Mensheviks, supported by Plekhanov, won control of *Iskra*. Beginning with issue No. 52, *Iskra* ceased to be an organ of the revolutionary Marxists.

18. Karl Kautsky, "The Slavs and Revolution," in *Iskra*, Russian Social-Democratic revolutionary newspaper, no. 18 (March 1902).

19. The reference is to the Mensheviks (who formed the Right and opportunist wing of Social-Democracy in the R.S.D.L.P.), and to the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

20. The Soviets of Workers' Deputies appeared during the 1905-1907 revolution in many cities of Russia. At first they were set up to give leadership to economic and political strikes, but as the struggle developed the Soviets headed by the Bolsheviks became organs for the preparation of the armed uprising and an embryo of the new power. After the defeat of the 1905-1917 revolution, the Soviets ceased to exist but reappeared during the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution.

21. The shooting of the striking miners in the Lena goldfields (Siberia) in April 1912, which gave rise to a wave of protest strikes all over Russia and stimulated the revival of the revolutionary movement.

22. *The State Duma*—a representative institution which the tsarist government was compelled to convene as a result of revolutionary developments in 1905. Formally a legislative body, the Duma had no real power.

The elections to the Duma were neither direct, nor equal or universal. The electoral rights of the working classes and the non-Russian population were strongly curtailed, and a considerable portion of the workers and peasants had no voting rights.

The First (April-July 1906) and the Second (February-June 1907) Dumas were dissolved by the tsarist government.

After the June 3, 1907 coup d'état the government promulgated a new electoral law which further curtailed the rights of the workers, peasants and urban petty-bourgeoisie and secured the complete domination of the Black Hundred bloc of landowners and big capitalists in the Third (1907-1912) and the Fourth (1912-1917) Duma.

23. The reference is to the Bolshevik deputies to the Fourth Duma, namely, A. Y. Badayev, M. K. Muranov, G. I. Petrovsky, F. N. Samoilov and N. R. Shagov. At the Duma's session of July 26 (August 8), 1914, at which the representatives of all the bourgeois-landowner Duma groups approved tsarist Russia's entry into the imperialist war, the Bolshevik Duma group declared firm protest: they refused to vote for war credits and launched revolutionary propaganda among the people. In November 1914 the Bolshevik deputies were arrested, in February 1915 they were brought to trial, and exiled for life to Turukhansk Territory in Eastern Siberia. The courageous speeches made by the Bolshevik deputies at their trial,

exposing the autocracy, played an important part in anti-war propaganda and in revolutionizing the toiling masses.

24. *Longuetism*—the Centrist trend within the French Socialist Party, headed by Jean Longuet. During the First World War of 1914-18, the Longuetists conducted a policy of conciliation with the social-chauvinists. They rejected the revolutionary struggle and came out for "defense of country" in the imperialist war. Lenin called them petty-bourgeois nationalists. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Longuetists called themselves supporters of the proletarian dictatorship, but in fact they remained opposed to it. In December 1920 the Longuetists, together with the avowed reformists, broke away from the Party and joined the so-called Two-and-a-Half International.

25. *Fabians*—members of the Fabian Society, a British reformist organization founded in 1884. The membership consisted, in the main, of bourgeois intellectuals. The Fabians denied the necessity of the proletariat's class struggle and the socialist revolution, and contended that the transition from capitalism to socialism was possible only through petty reforms and the gradual reorganization of society. In 1900 the Fabian Society joined the Labor Party. The Fabians are characterized by Lenin in "British Pacifism and British Dislike of Theory" and elsewhere.

26. The *Independent Labor Party of Britain* (*I.L.P.*)—a reformist organization founded in 1893 by leaders of the "new trade unions," in conditions of a revival of the strike struggle and the mounting movement for British working-class independence of the bourgeois parties. The I.L.P. included members of the "new trade unions" and those of a number of the old trade unions, as well as intellectuals and Petty bourgeoisie who were under the influence of the Fabians. The I.L.P. was headed by James Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald. From its very inception, the I.L.P. took a bourgeois-reformist stand, laying particular stress on parliamentary forms of struggle and parliamentary deals with the Liberals. Lenin wrote of the I.L.P. that "in reality it is an opportunist party always dependent on the bourgeoisie."

27. *Ministerialism* (or "ministerial socialism," or else Millerandism)—the opportunist tactic of socialists' participation in reactionary bourgeois governments. The term appeared when in 1899, the French socialist Millerand joined the bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau.

28. The *Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany*—a Centrist party founded in April 1917.

A split took place at the Congress of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, held in Halls in October 1920, the majority joining the Communist Party of Germany in December 1920. The Right wing formed a separate party, retaining the old name of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. In 1922 the "Independents" rejoined the German Social-Democratic Party.

29. Lenin is referring probably to his article "What Should Not Be Copied from the German Labor Movement," published in the Bolshevik magazine *Prosveshcheniye* in April 1914. Here Lenin exposed the treacherous behavior of Karl Legien, the German Social-Democrat who in 1912, in addressing the Congress of the U.S.A., praised U.S. official circles and bourgeois parties.

30. *Spartacists*—members of the Spartacus League founded in January 1916, during the First World War, under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin. The Spartacists conducted revolutionary anti-war propaganda among the masses, and exposed the expansionist policy of German imperialism and the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders. However, the Spartacists—the German Left wing—did not get rid of their semi-Menshevik errors on the most important questions of theory and tactics. A criticism of the German Left-wing's mistakes is given in Lenin's works "On Junius's Pamphlet," "A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism" and elsewhere.

In April 1917, the Spartacists joined the Centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, preserving their organizational independence. After the November 1918 revolution in Germany, the Spartacists broke away from the "Independents," and in December of the same year founded the Communist Party of Germany.

31. *The Paris Commune*—a revolutionary Worker's Government proclaimed by a proletarian revolution in Paris in 1871. It was the first time in history that a dictatorship of the proletariat was established. The Paris Commune existed 72 days—from March 18-May 28, 1871.

32. The reference is to Engels's letter to August Bebel, written on March 18-28, 1875 [see *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 45, pp. 60-66].

33. The *Treaty of Brest-Litovsk* was signed between Soviet Russia and the powers of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey) on March 3, 1918, at Brest-Litovsk and ratified on March 15 by the Fourth (Extraordinary) All-Russia Congress of Soviets. The peace terms were very harsh for Soviet Russia. According to the treaty, Poland, almost all the Baltic states, and part of Byelorussia were placed under

the control of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Ukraine was separated from Soviet Russia, becoming a state dependent on Germany. Turkey gained control of the cities of Kars, Batum and Ardagan. In August 1918, Germany imposed on Soviet Russia a supplementary treaty and a financial agreement containing new and exorbitant demands.

The signing of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk was linked with a persistent struggle against Trotsky and the anti-Party group of "Left-wing Communists." It was only through great efforts on the part of Lenin that the peace treaty with Germany was signed. The Peace of Brest-Litovsk was a splendid instance of the wisdom and flexibility of Lenin's tactics and skill in working out the only correct policy in an extremely complex situation.

The treaty was a reasonable political compromise. It gave the Soviet state a breathing-space, an opportunity to disband the old decaying army and create the new Red Army, develop socialist construction, and muster strength for the struggle against the counter-revolution at home and military intervention by other countries. The signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk promoted the struggle for peace among the broad masses of all the warring nations. On November 13, 1918, following the November revolution in Germany, which overthrew the monarchist regime, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee annulled the predatory Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

34. The reference is to the otzovists [The term *otzorist* derives from the Russian verb "otozvat," meaning "to re-call"] and ultimatumists, the struggle against whom developed in 1908, and in 1909 resulted in the expulsion of A. Bogdanov, the otzovist leader, from the Bolshevik Party. Behind a screen of revolutionary phrases, the otzovists demanded the recall of the Social-Democrat deputies from the Third Duma and the cessation of activities in legal organisations such as the trade unions, the co-operatives, etc. Ultimatumism was a variety of otzovism. The ultimatumists did not realize the necessity of conducting persistent day-by-day work with the Social-Democrat deputies, so as to make them consistent revolutionary parliamentarians. They proposed that an ultimatum should be presented to the Social-Democratic group in the Duma, demanding their absolute subordination to decisions of the Party's Central Committee, should the deputies fail to comply, they were to be recalled from the Duma. A conference of the enlarged editorial board of the Bolshevik paper *Proletary*, held in June 1909, pointed out in its decision that "Bolshevism, as a definite trend in the R.S.D.L.P., had nothing in common either with otzovism or with ultimatumism." The conference urged the Bolsheviks "to wage a most resolute struggle against these deviations from the path

of revolutionary Marxism" [*KP SS v rezolutsiyakh i resheniyakk syezdou, konferentsii i plenumov TsK* [*The C.P.S.U. in the Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses, Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee*], part 1 (1954), p. 221].

35. On August 6 (19), 1905, tsar's manifesto was made public, proclaiming the law on the setting up of the Duma and the election procedures. This body was known as the Bulygin Duma, after A. G. Bulygin, the Minister of the Interior, whom the tsar entrusted with drawing up the Duma draft. According to the latter, the Duma had no legislative functions, but could merely discuss certain questions as a consultative body under the tsar. The Bolsheviks called upon the workers and peasants to actively boycott the Bulygin Duma, and concentrate all agitation on the slogans of an armed uprising, a revolutionary army, and a provisional revolutionary government. The boycott campaign against the Bulygin Duma was used by the Bolsheviks to mobilize all the revolutionary forces, organize mass political strikes, and prepare for an armed uprising. Elections to the Bulygin Duma were not held and the government was unable to convene it. The Duma was swept away by the mounting tide of the revolution and the all-Russia October political strike of 1905.

36. Lenin is referring to the *all-Russia October political strike of 1905*, during the first Russian revolution. This strike, which involved over two million people, was conducted under the slogan of the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy, an active boycott of the Bulygin Duma, the summoning of a Constituent Assembly and the establishment of a democratic republic. The all-Russia political strike showed the strength of the working-class movement, fostered the development of the revolutionary struggle in the countryside, the army and the navy. The October strike led the proletariat to the December armed uprising. [Concerning the October strike see V. I. Lenin, "The All-Russia Political Strike," in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1977), vol. 9, pp. 392-395].

37. *"Left Communists"*—an anti-Party group which emerged early in 1918, when the question of concluding a peace treaty with Germany (the Brest Treaty) was discussed. Employing Left phrases about a revolutionary war, the "Left Communists" advocated an adventurist policy aimed at drawing the Soviet Republic, which had as yet no army, into a war against imperialist Germany which would have threated the Soviet Republic with destruction. Lenin and his supporters had a hard struggle in the C.C. against Trotsky and the "Left Communists" to achieve the adoption of a decision on the signing of a peace treaty with Germany and thus to save the young Soviet Republic from ruin.

38. *Laborites*—members of the British Labor Party. The Labor Party was founded in 1900 as an association of the trade unions of socialist organizations and groups with the aim of electing labor members to parliament—the Labor Representation Committee—which in 1906 adopted the name of Labor Party. All trade unionists paying Party dues automatically become Party members. From the moment of the Party's inception its leaders pursued a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. During the First World War the Labor Party leaders (Arthur Henderson and others) took a social-chauvinist stand and entered the government, where they helped to promulgate a number of anti-workers' laws (on the country's militarization, etc.). Laborist leaders repeatedly headed the government.

39. On October 26 (November 8), 1917, the Second Congress of Soviets adopted the Decree on Peace. In it the workers' and peasants' government proposed to all the belligerent nations and their governments immediately to open negotiations on a just and democratic peace.

40. Abbreviated name of the Constitutional Democratic Party, the party of the Liberal bourgeoisie.

41. The "*opposition on principle*"—a group of German Left-wing Communists advocating anarcho-syndicalist views. When the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, which was held in Heidelberg in October 1919, expelled the opposition, the latter formed the so-called Communist Workers' Party of Germany, in April 1920. To facilitate the unification of all German communist forces and win over the finest proletarian elements in the C.W.P.G., the opposition was temporarily admitted into the Communist International in November 1920 with the rights of a sympathizing member.

However, the Executive Committee of the Communist International still considered the United Communist Party of Germany to be the only authoritative section of the Comintern. C.W.P.G.'s representatives were admitted into the Comintern on the condition that they merged with the United Communist Party of Germany and supported all its activities. The C.W.P.G. leaders, however, failed to observe these conditions. The Third Congress of the Communist International, which was held in June-July 1921, and wanted solidarity with workers who still followed the C.W.P.G. leaders, resolved to give the C.W.P.G. two months to call a congress and settle the question of affiliation. The C.W.P.G. leaders did not obey the Third Congress's resolution and thus placed themselves outside the Communist International. Later the C.W.P.G. degenerated into a small sectarian group without any support in the working class.

42. The *Third, Communist, International*—an international revolutionary proletarian organization uniting Communist Parties of various countries. It existed from 1919 to 1943.

The affiliation of revolutionary proletarian parties into the Third International became an historical necessity after the split in the working-class movement caused by the betrayal of socialism by the opportunist leaders of the Second International when the First World War broke out, and by the collapse of the Second International.

The Third International was founded in March 1919 at the First Congress of the Comintern in Moscow. It restored and strengthened ties between the working people of all countries, contributed to exposing opportunism in the international working-class movement, strengthening the young Communist Parties, and elaborating the strategy and tactics of the international communist movement.

In May 1943, the Executive Committee of the Comintern, proceeding from the fact that the organizational form of uniting workers, which had met the requirements of the past historical period, had outlived itself, decided to dissolve the Communist International.

43. *Horner, Karl*—Anton Pannekoek.

44. Karl Erler, "The Dissolution of the Party," *Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung*,* Hamburg, February 7, 1920, No. 32: "The working class cannot destroy the bourgeois state without destroying bourgeois democracy, and it cannot destroy bourgeois democracy without destroying parties."

The more muddle-headed of the syndicalists and anarchists in the Latin countries may derive "satisfaction" from the fact that solid Germans, who evidently consider themselves Marxists (by their articles in the above-mentioned paper K. Erler and K. Horner have shown most plainly that they consider themselves sound Marxists, but talk incredible nonsense in a most ridiculous manner and reveal their failure to understand the ABC of Marxism), go to the length of making utterly inept statements. Mere acceptance of Marxism does not save one from errors. We Russians know this especially well, because Marxism has been very often the "fashion" in our country.—*Lenin*

* *Kommunistische Arbeiterzeitung* (*The Communist Workers' Newspaper*)—organ of the anarcho-syndicalist group of the German Left-wing Communists [see Note 41]. The newspaper was published in Hamburg from 1919 till 1927. Karl Erler, who is mentioned by V. I. Lenin, was Heinrich Laufenberg's pen-name.

45. The reference is to the *League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class* organized by V. I. Lenin in the autumn of 1895. The League of Struggle united about twenty Marxist circles in St. Petersburg. It was headed by the Central Group including V. I. Lenin, A. A. Vaneyev, P. K. Zaporozhets, G. M. Krzhizhanovsky, N. K. Krupskaya, L. Martov, M. A. Silvin, V. V. Starkov, and others; five members headed by V. I. Lenin directed the League's activities. The organization was divided into district groups. Progressive workers such as I. V. Babushkin, V. A. Shelgunov and others linked these groups with the factories.

The St. Petersburg League of Struggle far the Emancipation of the Working Class was, in V. I. Lenin's words, the embryo of a revolutionary party based on the working-class movement and giving leadership to the class struggle of the proletariat.

46. The Congress was held in Moscow from March 29 to April 5, 1920. The Ninth Congress was more numerous than any previous Party congresses. It was attended by 715 delegates—553 of them with full votes, and 162 with deliberative votes representing a membership of 611,978. Represented were the Party organizations of Central Russia, the Ukraine, the Urals, Siberia and other regions recently liberated by the Red Army. Many of the delegates came to the Congress straight from the front.

The agenda of the Congress was as follows: 1. The report of the Central Committee. 2. The immediate tasks of economic construction. 3. The trade union movement. 4. Organizational questions. 5. The tasks of the Communist International. 6. The attitude towards the co-operatives. 7. The change-over to the militia system. 8. Elections to the Central Committee. 9. Miscellaneous.

The Congress was held under the guidance of V. I. Lenin, who was the main speaker on the political work of the Central Committee and replied to the debate on the report. He also spoke on economic construction and co-operation, made the speech at the closing of the Congress, and submitted a proposal on the list of candidates to the Party's Central Committee.

In the resolution "The Immediate Tasks of Economic Development" the Congress noted that "the basic condition of economic rehabilitation of the country is a steady implementation of the single economic plan for the coming historical epoch" [*KP SS v rezolutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK* [*The C.P.S.U. in the Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses, Conferences and Plenums of the Central Committee*], part 1 (1954), p. 478]. The kingpin of the single economic plan was electrification, which V. I. Lenin considered a great program for a period of 10 to 20 years. The directives of the Ninth Congress were the

basis of the plan conclusively drawn up by the State Commission for the Electrification of Russia (the GOELRO plan) and approved by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets in December 1920.

The Congress paid particular attention to the organization of industrial management. The resolution on this question called for the establishment of competent, firm and energetic one-man management. Taking its guidance from Lenin, the Congress especially stressed the necessity to extensively enlist old and experienced experts.

The anti-Party group of Democratic Centralists, consisting of Sapronov, Osinsky, V. Smirnov and others, came out against the Party line. Behind a cover of phrases about Democratic Centralism but in fact distorting that principle, they denied the need for one-man management at factories, came out against strict Party and state discipline, and alleged that the Central Committee did not give effect to the principle of collective leadership.

The group of Democratic Centralists was supported at the Congress by Rykov, Tomsky, Milyutin and Lomov. The Congress rebuffed the Democratic Centralists and rejected their proposals.

The Congress gave special attention to labor emulation and communist *Subbotniks* [days of volunteer unpaid labor—*Ed.*]. To stimulate such emulation, the extensive application of the bonus system of wages was recommended. The Congress resolved that May 1, the international proletarian holiday, which in 1920 fell on Saturday, should be a mass Subbotnik organized throughout Russia.

An important place in the work of the Congress was held by the question of trade unions, which was considered from the viewpoint of adapting the entire work of the trade unions to the accomplishment of the economic tasks. In a resolution on this question, the Congress distinctly defined the trade unions' role, their relations with the state and the Party, forms and methods of guidance of trade unions by the Communist Party, as well as forms of their participation in communist construction. The Congress decisively rebuffed the anarcho-syndicalist elements (Shlyapnikov, Lozovsky, Tomsky and Lutovinov), who advocated the "independence" of the trade unions and contraposed them to the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

At a closed meeting held on April 4, the Congress elected a new Central Committee of 19 members and 12 candidate members. The former included V. I. Lenin, A. A. Andreyev, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, M. I. Kalinin, Y. E. Rudzutak, F. A. Sergeyev (Artyom), and J. V. Stalin. On April 5 the Congress concluded its work.

47. Between the February 1917 Revolution and 1919 inclusively, the Party's membership changed as follows: by the Seventh All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) (April 1917) the Party numbered 80,000 members; by the Sixth R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Congress in July-August 1917—about 240,000; by the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1918—not less than 270,000; by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1919—313,766 members.

48. The reference is to *Party Week*, which was held in accordance with the resolution of the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) on building up the Party's membership. The Party Week was conducted in conditions of the bitter struggle waged by the Soviet state against the foreign intervention and domestic counter-revolution. Party Week was first held in the Petrograd organization of the R.C.P.(B.), August 10-17, 1919 (the second Party Week was held in Petrograd in October-November 1919); between September 20 and 28 a Party Week was held in the Moscow Gubernia organization. Summarizing the experience of the first Party Weeks, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the R.C.P.(B.), held on September 26, 1919, resolved that Party Weeks should be held in cities, the countryside and the army. At the end of September, the Central Committee addressed a circular to all Party organizations pointing out that, as the re-registration and purge of the membership had been accomplished in almost all Party organizations, new members might be enrolled. The Central Committee stressed that during Party Weeks only industrial workers, peasants, and Red Army and Navy men should be admitted into the Party. As a result of Party Weeks, over 200,000 joined the Party in 38 gubernias of the European part of the R.S.F.S.R., more than a half of them being industrial workers. Over 25 percent of the armed forces' strength joined the Party at the fronts.

49. The Constituent Assembly was convened on January 5, 1918. The polling was conducted along the lists compiled prior to the October Socialist Revolution, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly reflected the correlation of forces at the moment when the bourgeoisie was at the helm of state. Thus, the will of the great majority of the people, favoring Soviet power, was at odds with the policy pursued by the S. R.-Menshevik-Cadet majority of the Constituent Assembly, who expressed the interests of the bourgeoisie and landowners. Since the Constituent Assembly refused to discuss the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People and to ratify the Decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets on Peace, Land and the Transfer of Power to the Soviets, it was dissolved by a decision of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of January 6 (19), 1918.

50. See *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers, 1974), vol. 30, pp. 253-275.

51. See Engels's letter to Marx in 1858 about the British workers [*Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 40, pp. 343-345].

52. The *Entente*—a bloc of imperialist powers (Britain, France and Russia) which took final shape in 1907. It was spearheaded against the imperialists of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria- Hungary and Italy). It got its name from the *Entente cordiale*, an Anglo-French agreement of 1904. During the First World War (1914-1918), the Entente was joined by the U.S.A., Japan and other countries. After the October Socialist Revolution the chief participants in this bloc—Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Japan—inspired and organized intervention against the Soviet land, in which their troops were directly involved.

53. The *Industrial Workers of the World* (*I.W.W.*)—a workers' trade union organization, founded in the U.S.A. in 1905, and in the main organizing unskilled and low-paid workers of various trades. Among its founders were such working-class leaders as Daniel De Leon, Eugene Debs and William Haywood. I.W.W. organizations were also set up in Canada, Australia, Britain, Latin America and South Africa. In conditions of the mass strike movement in the U.S.A., which developed under the influence of the Russian revolution of 1905-07, the I.W.W. organized a number of successful mass strikes, waged a struggle against the policy of class collaboration conducted by reformist leaders of the American Federation of Labor and Right-wing socialists. During the First World War of 1914-18, the organization led a number of mass anti-war actions by the American working class. Some I.W.W. leaders, among them William Haywood, welcomed the Great October Socialist Revolution and joined the Communist Party of the U.S.A. At the same time, anarcho-syndicalist features showed up in I.W.W. activities: it did not recognize the proletariat's political struggle, denied the Party's leading role and the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, and refused to carry on work among the membership of the American Federation of Labor. In 1920 the organization's anarcho-syndicalist leaders took advantage of the imprisonment of many revolutionaries and, against the will of the trade union masses, rejected appeal by the Comintern's Executive Committee that they join the Communist International. As a result of the leaders' opportunist policy, the I.W.W. degenerated into a sectarian organization, which soon lost all influence on the working-class movement.

54. The Black Hundred were reactionary and monarchist organizations.

55. On December 1918 the Congress of the German Communist Party discussed the question of the participation in the elections to the National Assembly. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were for participation in the elections and stressed that it was necessary to use the parliamentary platform for popularizing revolutionary slogans among the masses. The majority of the Congress opposed participation and adopted a decision to that effect.

56. On October 26 (November 8), 1917, the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the Decree on Land which abolished big landed estates in Russia and transferred land to the peasants. The Decree on Land contained the Peasant Mandate on Land based on 242 local peasant mandates and included the S. R. slogan of "equal land tenure." Explaining why the Bolsheviks had opposed this slogan before but found it possible to accept it at present, Lenin said:

> "As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realize where the truth lies."

57. I have had too little opportunity to acquaint myself with "Left-wing" communism in Italy. Comrade Bordiga and his faction of Abstentionist Communists (*Comunista astensionista*) are certainly wrong in advocating non-participation in parliament. But on one point, it seems to me, Comrade Bordiga is right—as far as can be judged from two issues of his paper, *Il Soviet* (Nos. 3 and 4, January 18 and February 1, 1920), from four issues of Comrade Serrati's excellent periodical, *Comunismo* (Nos. 1-4, October 1 -November 30, 1919), and from separate issues of Italian bourgeois papers which I have seen. Comrade Bordiga and his group are right in attacking Turati and his partisans, who remain in a party which has recognized Soviet power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and yet continue their former pernicious and opportunist policy as members of parliament. Of course, in tolerating this, Comrade Serrati and the entire Italian Socialist Party* are making a mistake which threatens to do as much harm and give rise to the same dangers as it did in Hungary, where the Hungarian Turatis sabotaged both the party and the Soviet government** from within. Such a mistaken, inconsistent, or spineless attitude towards the opportunist parliamentarians gives rise to "Left-wing" communism, on the one hand, and *to a certain extent* justifies its existence, on the other. Comrade Serrati is obviously wrong when he accuses Deputy Turati of being "inconsistent" (*Comunismo* No. 3), for it is the Italian Socialist Party itself that is inconsistent in tolerating such opportunist parliamentarians as Turati and Co.—*Lenin*.

* From its foundation in 1892, the *Italian Socialist Party* saw a bitter ideological struggle between the opportunist and the revolutionary trends within it. At the Reggio Emilia Congress of 1912, the most outspoken reformists who supported the war and collaboration with the government and the bourgeoisie (Ivanoe Bonomi, Leonida Bissorati and others) were expelled from the party under pressure from the Left wing. After the outbreak of the First World War and prior to Italy's entry into it, the I.S.P. came out against the war and advanced the slogan: "Against war, for neutrality!" In December 1914, a group of renegades including Benito Mussolini, who advocated the bourgeoisie's imperialist policy and supported the war, were expelled from the party. When Italy entered the war on the Entente's side (May 1915), three distinct trends emerged in the Italian Socialist Party: 1) the Right wing, which aided the bourgeoisie in the conduct of the war; 2) the Centre, which united most of party members and came out under the slogan: "No part in the war, and no sabotage of the war" and 3) the Left wing, which took a firmer anti-war stand, but could not organize a consistent struggle against the war. Tho Left wing did not realize the necessity of converting the imperialist war into a civil war, and of a decisive break with the reformists.

After the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the Left wing of the I.S.P. grew stronger, and the 16th Party Congress held on October 5-8, 1919, in Bologna, adopted a resolution on affiliation to the Third International. I.S.P. representatives took part in the work of the Second Congress of the Comintern. After the Congress Centrist Serrati, head of the delegation, declared against a break with the reformists. At the 17th Party Congress in Leghorn in January 1921, the Centrists, who were in the majority, refused to break with the reformists and to accept all the terms of admission into the Comintern. On January 21, 1921, the Left-wing delegates walked out of the Congress and founded the Communist Party of Italy.

** Soviet rule was established in Hungary on March 21, 1919. The socialist revolution in Hungary was a peaceful one, the Hungarian bourgeoisie being unable to resist the people. Incapable of overcoming its internal and external difficulties, it decided to hand over power for a while to the Right-wing Social-Democrats so as to prevent the development of the revolution. However, the Hungarian Communist Party's prestige had grown so great, and the demands of rank-and-file Social-Democrats for unity with the Communists had become so insistent that the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party proposed to the arrested Communist leaders the formation of a joint government. The Social-Democratic leaders were obliged to accept the terms advanced by the Communists during the negotiations, i.e., the formation of a Soviet government, disarmament

of the bourgeoisie, the creation of a Red Army and people's militia, confiscation of the landed estates, the nationalization of industry, an alliance with Soviet Russia, etc.

An agreement was simultaneously signed on the merging of the two parties to form the Hungarian Socialist Party. While the two parties were being merged, errors were made which later became clear. The merger was carried out mechanically, without isolation of the reformist elements.

At its first meeting, the Revolutionary Governmental Council adopted a resolution on the formation of the Red Army. On March 26, the Soviet Government of Hungary issued decrees on the nationalization of industrial enterprises, transport, and the banks; on April 2, a decree was published on the monopoly of foreign trade. Workers' wages were increased by an average of 25 percent, and an 8-hour working day was introduced. On April 3, land-reform law was issued, by which all estates exceeding 57 hectares in area were confiscated. The confiscated land, however, was not distributed among the land-starved and landless peasants, but was turned over to agricultural producers' co-operatives and state farms organized after the reform. The poor peasants, who had hoped to get land, were disappointed. This prevented the establishment of a firm alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, and weakened Soviet power in Hungary.

The Entente imperialists instituted an economic blockade of the Soviet Republic. Armed intervention against the Hungarian Soviet Republic was organized, the advance of interventionist troops stirring up the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries. The treachery of the Right-wing Social-Democrats, who entered into an alliance with international imperialism, was one of the causes of the Hungarian Soviet Republic's downfall.

The unfavorable international situation in the summer of 1919, when Soviet Russia was encircled by enemies and therefore could not help the Hungarian Soviet Republic, also played a definite role. On August 1, 1919, as a result of joint actions by the foreign imperialist interventionists and the domestic counter-revolutionaries, Soviet power in Hungary was overthrown.

58. *Blanquists*—a trend in the French socialist movement headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), an outstanding revolutionary, and prominent representative of the French Utopian communism. The Blanquists expected "that mankind will be emancipated from wage slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals" (V. I. Lenin). Giving preference to actions by a group of conspirators over the activity of a revolutionary party, the

Blanquists ignored the establishment of links with the masses and failed to grasp the necessity of a mass revolutionary movement.

59. Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1962, Bd. 18, S. 533. [Friedrich Engels, "Refugee Literatre," in *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 24, p. 17].

60. The *League of Nations* was an international body which existed between the First and the Second World Wars. It was founded in 1919 at the Paris Peace Conference of the victor powers of the First World War. The Covenant of the League of Nations formed part of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, and was signed by 44 nations. The Covenant was designed to produce the impression that this organization's aim was to combat aggression, reduce armaments, and consolidate peace and security. In practice, however, its leaders shielded the aggressors, fostered the arms race and preparations for the Second World War.

Between 1920 and 1934, the League's activities were hostile towards the Soviet Union. It was one of the centers for the organizing of armed intervention against the Soviet state in 1920-21.

On September 15, 1934, on French initiative, 34 member states invited the Soviet Union to join the League of Nations, which the U.S.S.R. did, with the aim of strengthening peace. However, the Soviet Union's attempts to form a peace front met with resistance from reactionary circles in the Western powers. With the outbreak of the Second World War the League's activities came to an end, the formal dissolution taking place in April 1946, according to a decision by the specially summoned Assembly.

61. Lenin is referring to a passage from Friedrich Engels's letter to F. A. Sorge of November 29, 1886, in which, criticizing German Social-Democrat political exiles living in America, Engels wrote that for them the theory was "a credo, not a guide to action" [see *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 47, pp. 531-534].

62. In his review of H. Ch. Carey's book *Letters to the President on the Foreign and Domestic Policy of the Union and Its Effect* Chernyshevsky wrote:

> "The path of history is not the pavement of the Nevsky Prospekt; it goes wholly through fields, now dusty, now muddy, sometimes through bogs and sometimes through dense forest land. He who is afraid of getting soiled with dust and dirtying his shoes should not take part in social activities."

63. The reference is to the international socialist conferences in Zimmerwald and Kienthal (Switzerland).

The *Zimmerwald Conference*, the first international socialist conference, was held on September 5-8, 1915. The *Kienthal Conference*, the second international socialist conference, was held in the small town of Kienthal on April 24-30, 1916.

The Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences contributed to the ideological unity, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, of the Left-wing elements in West-European Social-Democracy, who later played an active part in the formation of Communist parties in their countries and the establishment of the Third, Communist International.

64. "*Revolutionary Communists*"—a Narodnik group which broke away from the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries after the latter's mutiny in July 1918. In September 1918, they formed the "Party of Revolutionary Communism," which favored co-operation with the R.C.P.(B.), and pledged support for Soviet power. Their program, which remained on the platform of Narodnik utopianism, was muddled and eclectic. While recognizing that Soviet rule created preconditions for the establishment of a socialist system, the "revolutionary communists" denied the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship during the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. Throughout the lifetime of the "Party of Revolutionary Communism," certain of its groups broke away from it, some of them joining the R.C.P.(B.) (A. Kolegayev, A. Bitsenko, M. Dobrokhotov and others), and others, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. Two representatives of the "Party of Revolutionary Communism" were allowed to attend the Second Congress of the Comintern, in a deliberative capacity, but with no votes. In September 1920, following the Congress decision that there must be a single Communist Party in each country, the "Party of Revolutionary Communism" decided to join the R.C.P.(B.). In October of the same year, the R.C.P.(B.) Central Committee permitted Party organizations to enroll members of the former "Party of Revolutionary Communism" in the R.C.P.(B.).

65. *Left Socialist-Revolutionaries* (Internationalists) formed a party at their First All-Russia Congress held on November 19-28 (December 2-11), 1917. Prior to that Left S.R.s had represented the Left wing of the S.R. Party. The Left S.R.s voted together with the Bolsheviks on all the main questions on the agenda of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets; but refused to accept the proposal of the Bolsheviks that they should enter the Soviet Government. After long vacillations and in an attempt to preserve their influence among the peasants, the Left S.R.s entered into an agreement with the Bolsheviks and were appointed to a number of collegiums under the People's Commissariats. Despite their co-operation

with the Bolsheviks, the Left S.R.s disagreed with them on fundamental questions concerned with the building of socialism and opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. In January-February 1918, the C.C. of the Left S.R. Party launched a campaign against the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty, and when it was signed and ratified by the Fourth Congress of Soviets in March 1918, the Left S.R.s withdrew from the Council of People's Commissars but continued to keep their posts in the collegiums of the People's Commissariats and in local bodies. The development of the socialist revolution in the countryside aroused ever stronger anti-Soviet feelings among the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. In July 1918, their C.C. organized in Moscow the assassination of the German Ambassador with the intent of provoking a war between Soviet Russia and Germany, and staged a revolt against the Soviet power. The revolt was suppressed, and the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets resolved to expel from the Soviets Left S.R.s who shared the views of their leadership.

66. The *Treaty of Versailles* which put an end to the First World War of 1914-1918, was signed on June 28, 1919 between the U.S.A., the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan and the countries that joined them, on the one hand, and Germany on the other.

When appraising the Treaty of Versailles, Lenin wrote: "It is an unparalleled and predatory peace, which has made slaves of tens of millions of people, including the most civilized." This treaty redivided the capitalist world in favor of the victor countries and established a system of relations between countries aimed at strangling Soviet Russia and smashing the revolutionary movement the world over.

67. The *British Socialist Party* was founded in 1911, in Manchester, as a result of a merger of the Social-Democratic Party and other socialist groups. The B.S.P. conducted agitation in the spirit of Marxism; it was "not opportunist and was *really* independent of the Liberals." However, its small membership and its poor links with the masses gave the B.S.P. a somewhat sectarian character. During the First World War, a bitter struggle developed within the British Socialist Party between the internationalists (William Gallacher, Albert Inkpin, John Maclean, Theodore Rothstein and others), and the social-chauvinists, headed by Hyndman. Within the internationalist trend were inconsistent elements that took a Centrist stand on a number of issues. In February 1916, a group of B.S.P. leaders founded the newspaper *The Call*, which played an important role in uniting the internationalists. The B.S.P.'s annual conference, held in Salford in April 1916, condemned the social-chauvinist stand of Hyndman and his supporters, who, after the conference, left the party.

The British Socialist Party welcomed the Great October Socialist Revolution, its members playing an important part in the "Hands Off Russia" movement. In 1919, the overwhelming majority of its organizations (98 against 4) declared for affiliation to the Communist International. The British Socialist Party, together with the Communist Unity Group formed the core of the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the First (Unity) Congress, held in 1920, the vast majority of B.S.P. local organizations entered the Communist Party.

68. The *Socialist Labor Party* was organized in 1903 by a group of the Left-wing Social-Democrats who had broken away from the Social-Democratic Federation. The *South Wales Socialist Society* was a small group consisting mostly of Welsh coal miners. The *Workers' Socialist Federation* was a small organization which emerged from the Women's Suffrage League and consisted mostly of women.

The Leftist organizations did not join the Communist Party of Great Britain when it was formed (its Inaugural Congress was held on July 31-August 1, 1920) since the Party's program contained a clause on the Party participation in parliamentary elections and on affiliation to the Labor Party. At the Communist Party's Congress in January 1921, the South Wales Socialist Society and the Workers' Socialist Federation, which had assumed the names of the Communist Workers' Party and the Communist Party respectively, united with the Communist Party of Great Britain under the name of the United Communist Party of Great Britain. The leaders of the Socialist Labor Party refused to join.

69. Workers' Dreadnought appeared in London between March 1914 and June 1924. Until July 1917 it was entitled Woman's Dreadnought. When the Workers' Socialist Federation was founded in 1918, it became its organ.

70. This refers to the counter-revolutionary mutiny organized in August 1917 by the bourgeoisie and the landowners, under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, the tsarist General Kornilov. The conspirators hoped to seize Petrograd, smash the Bolshevik Party, break up the Soviets, establish a military dictatorship in the country, and prepare the restoration of the monarchy.

The mutiny began on August 25 (September 7), Kornilov sending the 3rd Cavalry Corps against Petrograd, where Kornilov counter-revolutionary organizations were ready to act.

The Kornilov mutiny was crushed by the workers and peasants led by the Bolshevik Party. Under pressure from the masses, the Provisional

Government was forced to order that Kornilov and his accomplices be arrested and brought to trial.

71. The reference is to the military-monarchist coup d'état, the so-called Kapp *putsch* organized by the German reactionary militarists. It was headed by the monarchist landowner Kapp and Generals Ludendorff, Seeckt and Lüttwitz. The conspirators prepared the coup with the connivance of the Social-Democratic government. On March 13, 1920, the mutinous generals moved troops against Berlin and, meeting with no resistance from the government, proclaimed a military dictatorship. The German workers replied with a general strike. Under pressure from the proletariat, the Kapp government was overthrown on March 17, and the Social-Democrats again took power.

72. The *Dreyfus Case*—a provocative trial organized in 1894 by the reactionary-monarchist circles of the French militarists. On trial was Dreyfus, a Jewish officer of the French General Staff, falsely accused of espionage and high treason. Dreyfus's conviction—he was condemned to life imprisonment—was used by the French reactionaries to rouse anti-Semitism and to attack the republican regime and democratic liberties. When, in 1898, socialists and progressive bourgeois democrats such as Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès, and Anatole France launched a campaign for Dreyfus's re-trial, the case became a major political issue and split the country into two camps—the republicans and democrats on the one hand, and a bloc of monarchists, clericals, anti-Semites and nationalists, on the other. Under the pressure of public opinion, Dreyfus was released in 1899, and in 1906 was acquitted by the Court of Cassation and reinstated in the Army.

73. The attack organized by the Social-Democratic government in 1919.

74. "*Soviet pleaders*"—collegiums of advocates established in February 1918, under the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and Cossacks' Deputies. In October 1920, these collegiums were abolished.

75. On the basis of this directive from Lenin the words "certain members of the Communist Party of Holland" have been substituted in this text for the expression "Dutch Tribunists."

On The Party

76. J. V. Stalin, *Works* (Red Star Press Ltd., 1978), vol. 14, pp. 290-291.

77. Mao Zedong, "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," in *present edition*, p. 227.

78. Mao Zedong, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, 2nd ed. (Foreign Languages Press, 2021), vol. 2, p. 190.

How to be a Good Leader

79. Hongyan (No. 13 Hongyanzui, Hualongqiao, in the suburbs of Chongqing) was the site of the Chongqing offices of both the Southern Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Eighteenth Group Army. No. 50 Zengjiayan was the site of the Chongqing offices of the Southern Bureau of the Central Committee and the Eighteenth Group Army inside Chongqing proper.

80. J. V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism* (Red Prints Publishing, 2022), pp. 56-57.

> "To lead correctly means:
>
> "First, to find a correct solution of the question. But a correct solution cannot be found unless account is taken of the experience of the masses, who test the results of our leadership on their own backs.
>
> "Second, to organize the operation of the correct solution which, however, cannot be done without direct aid from the masses.
>
> "Third, to organize a check on the fulfillment of this decision, which, again, cannot be done without the direct aid of the masses."

81. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*, pp. 48.

82. These reports, including "Reform Our Study," Rectify the Party's Style of Work," and "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing," were delivered by Mao Zedong in Yan'an in 1941 and 1942.

83. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*, pp. 49.

On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party

84. For a brief period after the defeat of the revolution in 1927, a "Left" putschist tendency arose in the Communist Party. Regarding the Chinese revolution as a "permanent revolution" and the revolutionary situation in China as a "permanent upsurge", the putschist comrades refused to organize an orderly retreat and, adopting the methods of commandism and relying only on a small number of Party members and a small section of the masses, erroneously attempted to stage a series of local uprisings throughout the country, which had no prospect of success. Such putschist activities were widespread at the end of 1927 but gradually subsided in the

beginning of 1928, though sentiments in favor of putschism still survived among some comrades.

85. In the guerrilla system of organization, a column corresponded to a division in the regular army, with a complement much more flexible and usually much smaller than that of a regular division.

86. These two Chinese idioms refer to the methods which some rebels in Chinese history adopted to expand their forces. In the application of these methods, attention was paid to numbers rather than to quality, and people of all sorts were indiscriminately recruited to swell the ranks.

87. Huang Chao was the leader of the peasant revolts towards the end of the Tang Dynasty. In A.D. 875, starting from his home district Caozhou (now Heze County in Shandong), Huang led armed peasants in victorious battles against the imperial forces and styled himself the "Heaven-Storming General". In the course of a decade, he swept over most of the provinces in the Yellow, Yangtze, Huai and Pearl river valleys, reaching as far as Guangxi. He finally broke through the Tongguan pass, captured the imperial capital of Chang'an (now Xi'an in Shaanxi), and was crowned Emperor of Qi. Internal dissensions and attacks by the non-Han tribal allies of the Tang forces compelled Huang to abandon Chang'an and retreat to his native district, where he committed suicide. The ten years' war fought by him is one of the most famous peasant wars in Chinese history. Dynastic historians record that "all people suffering from heavy taxes and levies rallied to him". But as he merely carried on roving warfare without ever establishing relatively consolidated base areas, his forces were called "roving rebel bands".

88. Li Chuang, short for Li Zicheng the King Chuang (the Dare-All King), native of Mizhi, northern Shaanxi, was the leader of a peasant revolt which led to the overthrow of the Ming Dynasty. The revolt first started in northern Shaanxi in 1628. Li joined the forces led by Gao Yingxiang and campaigned through Henan and Anhui and back to Shaanxi. After Gao's death in 1636, Li succeeded him, becoming King Chuang, and campaigned in and out of the provinces of Shaanxi, Sichuan, Henan and Hubei. Finally he captured the imperial capital of Beijing in 1644, whereupon the last Ming emperor committed suicide. The chief slogan he spread among the masses was "Support King Chuang, and pay no grain taxes". Another slogan of his to enforce discipline among his men ran: "Any murder means the killing of my father; any rape means the violation of my mother." Thus, he won the support of the masses and his movement became the main current of the peasant revolts raging all over the country. As he, too, roamed about without ever establishing relatively consolidated

base areas, he was eventually defeated by Wu Sangui, a Ming general who colluded with the Qing troops in a joint attack on Li.

Reform Our Study

89. Fuxian County is about seventy kilometers south of Yan'an.

90. The Border Region currency consisted of the currency notes issued by the Bank of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region Government. The Kuomintang currency was the paper currency issued by the four big Kuomintang bureaucrat-capitalist banks from 1935 onwards with British and U.S. imperialist support. Comrade Mao Zedong was referring to the fluctuations in the rates of exchange between these two currencies.

91. See Karl Marx, "Afterword to the Second German Edition" in *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), vol. 35, p. 19.

> "The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connection. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described."

92. See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," in *Marxist-Leninist Reading Hub Curriculum: Stage 1*, 3rd ed. (Red Prints Publishing, 2026), p. 138.

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