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# **Democracy & Revolution**

**V.I. Lenin**

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V.I. Lenin at the Third Congress of the Communist International  
(Moscow, June-July 1921).

# Introduction

*By Doug Lorimer*

The establishment in Russia of a revolutionary workers' and peasants' government by the second Congress of Soviets on November 8, 1917 (October 26, 1917 in the Julian calendar which remained in effect in Russia until January 1918) and the subsequent dissolving by the Soviet government of the first democratically-elected parliament in Russia (the Constituent Assembly) polarised the working-class movement around the world.

As Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the chairperson of the Soviet government and central leader of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), noted, “working people all over the world have instinctively grasped the significance of the soviets as an instrument in the proletarian struggle and as a form of the proletarian state. But the ‘leaders’, corrupted by opportunism, still continue to worship bourgeois democracy, which they still call ‘democracy’ in general.”<sup>1</sup>

Foremost among the opportunist labour leaders who opposed the Bolshevik-led workers' and peasants' revolution was Karl Kautsky, widely regarded as the most prominent Marxist theorist after Frederick Engels' death in 1895 and a leading figure in the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the leading party within the Second (or Socialist) International.

In a series of articles that appeared in the German press in early 1918 and even more so in his pamphlet *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in Vienna later that year, Kautsky claimed that in dissolving the Constituent Assembly in favour of the dictatorial rule of the soviets (councils) of workers', soldiers' and peasants' delegates the Bolsheviks had departed from Marxism. According to Kautsky, Marx had said that the transition to socialism “could be achieved only democratically and not by means of a dictatorship”.<sup>2</sup>

Kautsky's criticisms of the Bolshevik-led October Revolution revealed that the opportunist distortion of Marx's theory of the state and the tasks of the proletarian

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revolution that Kautsky had begun to develop from 1902 on (and which Lenin had exposed and refuted in his August 1917 pamphlet *The State and Revolution*) had degenerated into a full-blown liberal caricature of Marxism.

In October–November 1918 Lenin wrote a devastating reply to Kautsky’s pamphlet — *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*. This pamphlet forms the central item reprinted in this collection. It is preceded by a lecture that Lenin gave in July 1919 on the Marxist theory of the state, and followed by two articles by Lenin on the Constituent Assembly elections, plus Lenin’s theses and report on “Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, presented to the founding congress of the Communist International in March 1919.

Appended to these writings by Lenin are chapters II and III of Leon Trotsky’s 1920 reply to Kautsky’s 1919 anti-Bolshevik pamphlet *Terrorism and Communism* (which was published under the same name), plus extracts on the subject of democracy and the proletarian dictatorship from the 1919 program of the RCP and from the extensive commentary on the program written by Bolshevik leaders Nikolai Bukharin and Evgeny Preobrazhensky.

Together, the items reprinted in this collection aim to acquaint the reader with the main Bolshevik documents defending the orthodox Marxist view on the state and democracy, as applied during the world’s first victorious working-class revolution.

## The liberal mystification of the state

At the heart of Kautsky’s criticism of the October Revolution was his acceptance of the liberal mystification of democracy and dictatorship as classless and polar opposite *forms* of the political organisation of society. This was already evident in Kautsky’s 1902 pamphlet *The Social Revolution*, wherein he had affirmed that “parliament is in need of a revolution in order to become viable again”.<sup>3</sup> For Kautsky, the task of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state was to make the liberal *form* of democracy “viable”, i.e., to invest this form with real democratic content.

The unstated assumption behind Kautsky’s position — one which he shared in common with liberal political thinkers — was that parliament and the bureaucratic-military machine that is subordinated to parliament in the “modern representative state” are supra-class institutions which could be filled with either a bourgeois or a proletarian-socialist content.

For Marx and Engels, however, the “modern representative state” is the vehicle through which the bourgeoisie had “conquered ... exclusive political sway”, such that the “executive of the modern [i.e., parliamentary] state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”.<sup>4</sup> This view was completely in accord

with their conception of the state.

Whereas liberals view the state as an eternal set of institutions that maintained social order or that expressed the common interests of society, for Marx and Engels the state was a historical product of the division of society into exploiter and exploited classes, a special organisation of force, of coercion, divorced from the people as a whole by which the rule of one class was maintained over the rest of society.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels had argued that “the first step in the revolution of the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy”. The proletariat would then “use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class ...”<sup>5</sup>

“Political power”, Marx and Engels observed, “is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another.” However, if the working class “by means of a revolution” made “itself the ruling class” and abolished bourgeois “conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally”.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of the experience of the popular uprising in Paris in 1871 (the “Paris Commune”), Marx had drawn the conclusion that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes”<sup>7</sup> through the winning of a socialist majority in parliament; that in order to raise itself to the position of ruling class, the proletariat had to establish the supremacy of a representative institution which “was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time”<sup>8</sup> — a form of state organisation in which all civil and military officials would be elected, subject to recall at any time by their electors, and paid no more than “workmen’s wages”.

Marx attached particular importance to the concrete measures undertaken by the Paris Commune because they indicated the institutional forms through which the proletariat could raise itself to the position of ruling class, could “win the battle of democracy”. As Lenin observed in his 1917 work *The State and Revolution*, the Paris Commune “appears to have replaced the smashed state machine ‘only’ by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this ‘only’ signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of ‘quantity being transformed into quality’: democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; the state (= a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into

something which is no longer the state proper.”<sup>9</sup>

## The proletarian revolution & the state

Continuing his exposition of the Marxist approach to the state and the tasks of the proletarian revolution, Lenin wrote:

It is still necessary to suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination [by not launching a military-political offensive against the bourgeois republican government based in Versailles — DL]. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage slavery. And since the majority of people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a “special force” for suppression *is no longer necessary!* In this sense, the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasised by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges of officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of “*workmen’s wages*”. This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed class, from the state as a “*special force*” for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people — the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored!<sup>10</sup>

Here we come to the fundamental difference between Kautsky’s conception of the proletarian revolution and Marx’s and Lenin’s. Whereas Lenin, following Marx, envisages the first step of the proletarian revolution as the replacement of the existing (bourgeois) machinery of state power by new, proletarian institutions of state power, for Kautsky the political task of the revolution involved only the seizure of control of the existing state machinery by the proletariat, or rather by its parliamentary representatives. In an article printed in the SPD theoretical journal *Neue Zeit* in 1912, Kautsky explicitly argued that the political tasks of the “proletarian revolution” did not involve the destruction of the institutions of bourgeois state power (parliament and the bureaucratic-military machine) but only “a certain *shifting* of the balance of forces

*within the state power*". This was to be achieved through socialists "winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the rank of master of the government".<sup>11</sup>

In the preamble to the rules of the International Working Men's Association (the "First International") which he wrote in 1864, Marx expressed the *essence* of his political theory in one sentence: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves."<sup>12</sup>

That one word in Marx's formulation — "*themselves*" — highlights in the most striking manner the contrast between his conception of the first step of the proletarian revolution and Kautsky's. Is there any doubt? Just try reading Marx's formulation as modified by Kautsky: The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered *not* by the working classes *themselves*, but by *their parliamentary representatives*!

Whereas for Marx and Lenin the task of socialists was to organise the proletariat *itself* as the coercive power, as the state ("the proletariat organised as the ruling class"), for Kautsky the task of socialists was organise the proletariat so as to win a socialist majority in parliament and to make parliament "the master of the government".

The fundamental objective of Marxist policy is the *conquest* of state power *by the proletariat*. The pseudo-"Marxist" who narrows that conception down to the conquest of the *existing machinery* of state power by the *political representatives* of the proletariat is in reality indistinguishable from the open liberal-reformist, who denies any need exists for the working class to suppress the existing bourgeois institutions of state power and therefore any need for the working class to constitute itself as a state power, as a coercive force. Both agree in thinking that all that is required can be done if only *the right majority* is elected to parliament! As between the two the more open reformists are (because they are such openly) less dangerous to the working class than the concealed reformists, who hide their real nature under a cloak of "leftist" and "revolutionary" phrases.

The contrast between a genuinely revolutionary perspective and a pseudo-revolutionary, concealed reformist, one (such as presented by Kautsky) becomes clear when we examine the question of the relationship between democracy and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## The class struggle & the proletarian dictatorship

In *The State and Revolution* Lenin noted that the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat lay at the heart of Marx's scientific theory of socialism, i.e., of his theory of how socialism — a classless society — could be brought into being. Lenin cited the following comments by Marx, written in 1852:

... no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or

the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historical phases in the development of production*; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.<sup>13</sup>

The dictatorship of the proletariat is in the first place the logical *continuation* of the proletarian class struggle. Since, however, it is the continuation of the class struggle beyond capitalist rule, it is a *complete alteration* of the struggle in the sense that what had been a revolutionary struggle against the ruling (capitalist) class and its state becomes under the dictatorship of the proletariat a struggle by a new form of state and ruling class to suppress all resistance to its establishment of a new system of production and a new form of society. In the third place, since the dictatorship of the proletariat will succeed in its aim only insofar as it *abolishes the proletariat*, by abolishing all class distinctions, it is its own negation — in that, obviously, its dictatorial function withers away with the withering away of all resistance to itself which, in turn, withers away with the disappearance of the objective class basis from which this resistance arose.

There is nothing peculiar or distinctive in the fact that the revolutionary rule of the working class will take on a dictatorial form. On the contrary, every revolutionary regime must during its period of revolutionising the old conditions of production rule dictatorially since its historical ground of existence is the need to forcibly suppress the resistance of the overthrown ruling class to the abolition of those conditions of production which made it possible for that class to rule. As Marx observed in September 1848: “Every provisional political setup following a revolution requires a dictatorship, and an energetic dictatorship at that.”<sup>14</sup>

In fact, every social revolution — and not just the proletarian-socialist revolution — is dictatorial by its very nature. As was well-illustrated by the bourgeois revolutions against the feudal ruling class, a social revolution is an event in which one section of a society forcibly imposes its will upon the other. Politics itself is the theory and practice of the use of state power — the coercive effect of organised armed force — to impose the will of a class or a coalition of classes upon the entire population of a given territory.

The only thing even relatively new about the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is its name. That the Marxist concept of class struggle — that the great end to which all Marxist political practice must be subordinated as means is that of developing all proletarian struggles (local, national, and international; economic, political, and ideological) up to the point of conquest of political power by the working class —

includes the dictatorship of the proletariat should be obvious to anyone capable of concretely envisaging the process.

A familiar “democratic” juggle from the liberal-reformist pseudo-“socialist” camp falls under notice here. “Since the proletariat constitutes the majority of the population in developed capitalist countries like the USA, Britain and Australia, why cannot it win power *democratically*?” Where is the need for *dictatorship*?, they ask.

The juggle is a transparent one. Firstly, it confuses the *form* of a “democratic” election with the *reality* of democracy — the rule of the common people. Secondly, it supposes (in the face of all historical evidence) that the winning of a parliamentary election, *of itself*, constitutes the “conquest of power”. Thirdly, it supposes that the capitalist class (including its military and police officials) will submit without a struggle to the verdict of a parliamentary election. Fourthly, it supposes that this “peaceful and democratic” procedure constitutes a *real* alternative to the revolutionary conquest, defeat, and immobilisation of the actual forces of resistance at the disposal of the bourgeoisie. Fifthly, it ignores the fact that *all* government in a class-divided society involves, of necessity, the dictatorial use of compulsion by one class at the expense of all other classes, and of the refractory members of its own class.

The reformist pseudo-“socialists” — like Kautsky — who counterpose “democracy” to all forms of “dictatorship” thereby reveal that they are as ignorant as any common, garden-variety liberal of what these political terms actually mean, i.e., that democracy is a form of state power, of the *dictatorial* use of compulsion by the majority of the people or their representatives against the minority. “Democracy”, even in the sense meant by liberals and liberal, pseudo-“socialists” — i.e., the bourgeois parliamentary state machine — is itself a *form of dictatorship*!

The problem of “democracy”, whether considered from the proletarian-socialist or the bourgeois standpoint, is in concrete reality, a problem of how to achieve and how to exercise *the power to dictate*! Governmental power is the power of one section of the population to *dictate* its will (though not necessarily arbitrarily) by means of a monopoly of armed force to the rest of the population.

In his criticism of the Bolshevik Revolution, Kautsky affirmed categorically that Marx only intended by the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” to describe a “political situation, not a *form of government*”.<sup>15</sup> Whether this effort of Kautsky’s is valid and whether it reveals anything more than a distinction without a difference can be demonstrated by a few citations from Marx.

In 1881, Marx, when writing to the Christian-anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, had emphasised the fact that “a socialist government does not come into power in a country unless conditions are so developed that *it can immediately take*

*the necessary measures for intimidating the mass of the bourgeoisie*". (Emphasis added)<sup>16</sup>

In his letter of May 1875 to the SPD leaders criticising their "Gotha" program, Marx wrote:

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period during which the state can be nothing else than the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Now the program does not deal with this nor with the future state of communist society.

Its political demands contain nothing beyond the old democratic litany familiar to all: universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, a people's militia, etc. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois People's Party, of the League of Peace and Freedom. They are all demands which, in so far as they are not exaggerated in fantastic presentation, have already been *realised*. Only the state to which they belong does not lie within the borders of the German Empire, but in Switzerland, the United States, etc...

Even vulgar democracy, which sees the millennium in the democratic republic and has no suspicion that it is precisely in this last form of state of bourgeois society that the class struggle has to be fought out to a conclusion — even it towers mountains above this kind of democratism which keeps within the limits of what is permitted by the police and not permitted by logic.<sup>17</sup>

These passages are decisive both as regards the "dictatorship" and the "democracy". Quite explicitly, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is postulated as the only state form possible during the transition from capitalism to the future classless society. Equally definitely, the "democratic republic" is categorically indicated as the state form of *bourgeois society* in which "the class struggle has to be fought to a conclusion", to the conquest of power by the proletariat.

Kautsky's endeavour to draw a distinction as between a "*form of government*" and a "*political situation*" is here exposed for what it is — a wretched quibble. Obviously, if the dictatorship of the proletariat is the conclusion of the proletariat's class struggle against bourgeois rule which has taken place within the framework of a "democratic republic", it is a "political situation" both so far as the proletarian "dictators" are concerned, and also for the bourgeois "subjects" dictated to. It is a form of government insofar as it is a *state*, and has specific functions as the agency of a revolutionary transition, which, precisely because it is a *transition* and *revolutionary*, is a *continuation* of the proletariat's class struggle in altered form.

## Democracy & ‘democracy’

The real issue is one which Kautsky obscures under a cloud of pretentious sophistry, i.e., what is the difference between the fullest and most consistent democracy as Marx, Engels and Lenin understood it, and the “dictatorship of the proletariat” as Marx, Engels and Lenin used the term?

In essence: *no difference at all*. In fact, Lenin always argued that the fullest democracy was only possible through the dictatorship of the proletariat; while Marx and Engels quite often used the word “democracy” *as synonymous with* “proletarian dictatorship”; and never lost a chance to pour scorn on the petty-bourgeois democratic parliamentary charlatans who tried to fob off the workers with the parliamentary *form* of democracy instead of its revolutionary-proletarian *substance*.

There is, it is clear, *democracy* and “democracy” — the reality and the (liberal and pseudo-“socialist” parliamentarist) humbug. Let us see if we can discover how to distinguish between them.

At the core of the word “democracy” in its original meaning is a *class* demand — the demand for *class equality*: for the abolition of rule by privileged classes.

The ancient Greeks, who invented the word “democracy”, always gave it a *class* meaning. To them it meant the *rule of the demos* (the common people), which meant the *loss of power* by a privileged minority. “A democracy”, Aristotle wrote in his *Politics*, “exists whenever those who are free and are not well-off, being in the majority, are in control of government”. He contrasted “democracy” to “oligarchy”, wherein “control lies with the rich and well-born, there being few”.<sup>18</sup>

Only the barest minimum of reflection is required to see that all arguments as to “democracy” or “dictatorship” *in the abstract* are worthless. Only when we ask “democracy *for whom*” or “dictatorship, *over whom* by *whom*?” — only when the question is thus concretised and it is made possible for us to examine it in its actual practical connections with the *class* structure of a society, does the problem become capable of rational solution.

For instance, to a Greek of the era of city-states, in which the term “democracy” was first coined, it had, as we can see from Aristotle’s comments above, a concrete social meaning, and not at all an abstract one. Either the function of making and administering laws was a *birth-right* of the “rich and well-born, these being few” in which case we do not have a democracy, or the functions were exercised by the *demos*, by those who are “not well-off” these being “the majority”, in which case we do.

To an aristocratic Greek (like Aristotle) a state in which the *demos* exercised absolute sovereignty, in which as Aristotle put it “the people becomes monarchical” and “lord it over the better class of citizen”<sup>19</sup>, meant exactly what the revolutionary dictatorship of

the proletariat would mean in practice to the bourgeoisie of today. Indeed, it is a historical fact the first “tyrants” to be so called (the ancient Greeks again were the inventors of the word) were the *dictators* set up by the victorious *democracy* to rule as their agents in place of the aristocratic rulers who had been chased away. To an ancient Greek, “democracy” was inseparable from “dictatorship” of the common people.

That was also the sense which the word bore when it was revived by the Great French Revolution of 1789-93. Edmund Burke, who is regarded by liberal academics as one of the most profound political philosophers that Britain has ever produced (despite the fact that he was Irish!), fought the French Revolution precisely because it was upsetting the “proper subordination of classes” and giving power to “the swinish multitude”. He called the revolutionary democratic republic established by the Jacobins in 1793 “Cannibal Castle”, a “republic of assassins”; it was governed by “the dirtiest, *lowest*, most fraudulent, most knavish of chicaners”, its people were “an allied army of Amazonian and male cannibal Parisians”, “the basest of mankind”, “murderous atheists”, “a gang of robbers”, “a desperate gang of plunderers, murderers, tyrants, and atheists”, the “scum of the earth”.

There is no difficulty in detecting the class feeling here, or the identification of “democracy” with the rule of the common people. Nor can one fail to note that many an opponent of Bolshevism at a loss for terms of abuse seems to have turned to Burke for the loan of a vocabulary of denunciation.

While Burke was raving at the French Republic, the Jacobin writer Jean Paul Marat, described the essential fact about the forces which terrified Burke and his like out of their wits:

... the revolution has been made and sustained only by the lowest orders of society, by the workers, artisans, the retailers, the farmers, by the plebians, by those unfortunates whom the rich impudently call the rabble, and whom the insolent Romans call their proletarians.<sup>20</sup>

This passage is notable as giving what is probably the first modern usage of the term *proletarians* in its revolutionary sense. It endorses the fact that all the “democrats” of the period from 1792 to 1848 were revolutionaries who fought for the abolition of the *subjection* of the “people” — who fought for the destruction of *class privileges* in order that the unprivileged mass might *rule* instead of the rich. Mere formal ballot-box “equality”, which left the machinery of state in the actual hands of the rich, would have seemed to them no democracy at all — nothing but a mockery of the term.

Marat, for example, is famous both for his championing of the cause of the Parisian proletariat and for his share in achieving the Parisian revolt which brought into being the famous Constitution of 1793, under which all government officials were to be

elected and subject to immediate recall by their electors and in which the central legislature was to consist of delegates from primary assemblies.

## Formal equality & class inequality

Out of the fights of the Parisian proletariat for the recovery of this truly *democratic* constitution, which virtually established the dictatorship of the Parisian proletariat, (and was overthrown by the well-to-do bourgeoisie precisely because it did so) — out of these fights came the first definite beginning of the *revolutionary socialist* movement. This was made by the “Conspiracy of the Equals” of 1796-97 headed by Gracchus Babeuf, editor of the left-Jacobin journal, *Tribune du Peuple*.

The most common slogan of the “Conspiracy of the Equals” was “Bread and the Constitution of 1793!” In this slogan they linked together the issue of social and political equality: democracy had meaning to the proletarian class only insofar as it secured their *right* to “Bread”. The line of their thinking is illustrated by this extract from a manuscript pamphlet found in Babeuf’s possession at the time of his arrest in 1797:

We claim to live and die, as we are born, equals: we want true equality or death; that is what we must have. And we will have equality whatever the price. Woe to those who stand between it and us! Woe to whoever would resist a wish so pronounced!

The French Revolution is only the forerunner of another revolution far greater, far more solemn, which will be the last!<sup>21</sup>

In this document we have what was probably the very earliest formulation of that democracy which in substance is also the dictatorship of the proletariat, and aimed at establishing socialist equality.

The logical one-sidedness of the argument is seen in the fact that it ignores the *inequality* of using *equal rights* to enforce the demands of *one class only* — the proletariat. That was the “logical” bourgeois reply to the demand of the “Equals”. Democracy, they said, meant that *each individual* should be deemed “equal” to every other individual in the eyes of the state. To raise questions of class inequality is logically impermissible. In fact, bourgeois “democracy” demands that individuals shall be, by law, reduced to their common denominator as abstract independent *units* of the compound, humanity.

No one has explained the material-social source of this core component of bourgeois ideology more probingly than Karl Marx. In *Capital* he pointed out that the process of capitalist appropriation of the surplus value created by the working class starts with the sale and purchase of labour-power (of the individual’s capacity to perform labour activities). He then showed how capitalism’s commodification of labour-power gives rise to the bourgeois conception of the abstract equality of all individuals:

The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale

and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham. Freedom, because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour-power, are determined only by their own free will. They contract as free persons, who are equal before the law. Their contract is the final result in which their joint will finds a common legal expression. Equality, because each enters into relation with the other, as with a simple owner of commodities, and they exchange equivalent for equivalent. Property, because each disposes only of what is his own. And Bentham, because each looks only to his own advantage. The only force bringing them together, and putting them into relation with each other, is the selfishness, the gain and the private interest of each. Each pays heed to himself only, and no one worries about the others. And precisely for that reason, either in accordance with the pre-established harmony of things, or under the auspices of an omniscient providence, they all work together to their mutual advantage, for the common weal, and in the common interest.<sup>22</sup>

On the surface, in the sphere of the circulation of commodities, there appears to be equality between the individual capitalist purchaser of labour-power and the individual wage-worker. In the process of production, however, the workers must give more than they get by virtue of the workers' capacity to produce commodities embodying more exchange-value than the wages they are paid for the time spend in the capitalist's employment. The production of surplus value is the motor of the capitalist system of production.

The economic relations established in the sphere of circulation of commodities — in the market, particularly the labour market — are reflected in the legal and political superstructure of bourgeois society by the presumption that all individuals are by nature equal, and have an equal right to a say — as *atomised* individual voters — in deciding public affairs.

To the “logical” bourgeois argument about the abstract equality of each individual “before the law” the class-conscious proletarian had no “logical” reply — only the practical one: that at meal-times it was anything but satisfactory to be an *abstract unit* of humanity; at meal-times a person has a concrete need for specific and concrete food. Therefore, argued the proletarian, the “democratic equality” which recognises my equality with the bourgeois only in the abstract, and refuses to recognise it in the concrete because it has already “recognised” it “in law” — this “democratic equality” is a bourgeois humbug. As Anatole France expressed it: “The Law in its majestic *equality* forbids rich and poor alike — to sleep under arches; to beg in the streets; and to steal bread!”

The assumptions of *bourgeois* “democracy” are based not on human, but on

private-property, relations. It is only when one refuses to be persuaded that it is all-sufficient to endow a person with a “property right” in his or her own person, regardless of whether he or she possesses *any means for maintaining that person in being*, that the sophistry of bourgeois equality-before-the-law and its “democratic” political expression, “equality before the parliamentary ballot-box”, is revealed as the sham that it is.

In bourgeois “democracies” such as Britain and Australia, all are equally “free” to stand as parliamentary candidates (*provided* they have the money to pay for the requisite deposit!). All are equally “free” to persuade the voters to elect them (*provided* they have the money to hire meeting halls, print and circulate campaign literature, and purchase advertising space in the daily newspapers and advertising time on the radio and television!). All are equally “free” to publish daily newspapers with a mass circulation (*provided* they have the odd few hundreds of millions of pounds or dollars required to purchase large printing presses, delivery trucks, etc.). All are equally “free” to vote for the “best” candidate or political party (*provided* they possess the means of knowing which and who is the “best” *for them!*).

### **Dialectical development of the term ‘democracy’**

It was the pressure of the historically experience of the disparity between the legal and political *form* of equality under bourgeois “democracy” and its *substantial reality* in the actual life-conditions of the proletariat which caused the slogans of the working-class democrats to change abruptly from the demand for “*real* democracy” (that of the “Constitution of 1793” in France, that of the “People’s Charter” in England) into one for the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. It was made about the middle of 1848, when in the course of the democratic revolutions that broke out all over Europe that year it was revealed that it was the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois *democrats* who at every crisis surrendered to the anti-democratic counter-revolution even such “democratic equality” as they themselves enjoyed rather than yield a grain of “*real* democracy” to the proletariat.

In that “Year of Revolution” the very words “democrat” and “democracy” became a reproach in the ears of the proletarian masses. The “democrats”, in the light of the experience of that year, were *poseurs*, pretenders, demagogic charlatans, generous only in promises, egalitarian only in equal baseness revealed in every comparison between their words and their deeds.

It was in the heat of the actual revolutionary practice of that same year that the slogan “dictatorship of the proletariat” was born. Marx himself, in fact, seems to credit the coining of the phrase to the Parisian proletariat during its premature, and therefore ill-fated, revolutionary uprising of June 1848 *against* the “democratic republic”

established by its own uprising in February 1848:

The Paris proletariat was *forced* into the June insurrection by the bourgeoisie. This sufficed to mark its doom. Its immediate, avowed needs did not drive it to engage in a fight for the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, nor was it equal to this task. The *Moniteur* had to inform it officially that the time was past when the republic saw any occasion to bow and scrape to its illusions, and only its defeat convinced it of the truth that the slightest improvement in its position remains a *utopia within* the bourgeois republic, a utopia that becomes a crime as soon as it wants to become a reality. In place of its demands, exuberant in form, but petty and even bourgeois still in content, the concession of which it wanted to wring from the February republic, there appeared the bold slogan of revolutionary struggle: *Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!*<sup>23</sup>

What conclusions follow from this examination of the historical dialectic of the term “democracy” and the revolutionary proletarian demand for it?

*Firstly*, that the *essence* of the demand for “democracy” was a demand for equality, which in the case of the proletariat took increasingly (and that necessarily) the practical significance of a demand for the abolition of class distinctions — which (and likewise necessarily) became under the pressure of historical development a demand for the overthrow of bourgeois rule, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for socialism.

*Secondly*, that Marx and Engels understood, and so interpreted, the term “democracy”. This was made most explicit by Engels in his critique of Kautsky’s 1891 draft program for the Social-democratic Party of Germany, wherein he observed that:

If one thing is certain it is that our Party and the working class can only come to power under the form of a democratic republic. This is *even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat*, as the Great French Revolution [i.e., the 1871 Paris Commune] has already shown.<sup>24</sup>

*Thirdly*, that Kautsky’s restriction of the significance of the term “democracy” to *only one* of its historically conditioned *forms* — that of parliamentarism — would have been and was scornfully repudiated by Marx and Engels as totally contrary to the plain sense of their whole political doctrine.

*Fourthly*, that the attempt by Kautsky to contrapose “democracy” (in the abstract) *as an alternative* to the dictatorship of the proletariat represented an endeavour to cover up his desertion of the revolutionary proletarian struggle in favour of an attempt to drive a huckster’s political bargain with bourgeois reaction against this struggle.

*Finally*, that the contraposition of “democracy” to *any* sort of dictatorship means, in practice, what all pseudo-“socialist” opportunism ends in — an objective cooperation with the bourgeoisie in *its* class struggle *against* the proletariat. The denial that the

proletariat's class struggle against the bourgeoisie necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat is a waging of class struggle *against* the proletarian revolution in practice. Kautsky's own political evolution in Germany in the year after he wrote his polemic against the Bolshevik Revolution — during which he became an official in a government that used the bureaucratic-military machine of the bourgeois state to bloodily suppress the German workers' revolution of November 1918-March 1919 — provided abundant proof of the truth of this conclusion. ■

# The State<sup>25</sup>

*By V.I. Lenin*

Comrades, according to the plan you have adopted and which has been conveyed to me, the subject of today's talk is the state. I do not know how familiar you are already with this subject. If I am not mistaken your courses have only just begun and this is the first time you will be tackling this subject systematically. If that is so, then it may very well happen that in the first lecture on this difficult subject I may not succeed in making my exposition sufficiently clear and comprehensible to many of my listeners. And if this should prove to be the case, I should request you not to be perturbed by the fact, because the question of the state is a most complex and difficult one, perhaps one that more than any other has been confused by bourgeois scholars, writers and philosophers. It should not therefore be expected that a thorough understanding of this subject can be obtained from one brief talk, at a first sitting. After the first talk on this subject you should make a note of the passages which you have not understood or which are not clear to you, and return to them a second, a third and a fourth time, so that what you have not understood maybe further supplemented and elucidated later, both by reading and by various lectures and talks. I hope that we may manage to meet once again and that we shall then be able to exchange opinions on all supplementary questions and see what has remained most unclear. I also hope that in addition to talks and lectures you will devote some time to reading at least a few of the most important works of Marx and Engels. I have no doubt that these most important works are to be found in the lists of books and in the handbooks which are available in your library for the students of the soviet and party school; and although, again, some of you may at first be dismayed by the difficulty of the exposition, I must again warn you that you should not let this worry you; what is unclear at a first reading will become clear at a second reading, or when you subsequently approach the question from a somewhat different angle. For I once more repeat that the question is so complex and has been so confused

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A lecture delivered at the Sverdlov University, July 11, 1919.

by bourgeois scholars and writers that anybody who desires to study it seriously and master it independently must attack it several times, return to it again and again and consider it from various angles in order to attain a clear, sound understanding of it. Because it is such a fundamental, such a basic question in all politics, and because not only in such stormy and revolutionary times as the present, but even in the most peaceful times, you will come across it every day in any newspaper in connection with any economic or political question it will be all the easier to return to it. Every day, in one context or another, you will be returning to the question: what is the state, what is its nature, what is its significance and what is the attitude of our party, the party that is fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the Communist Party — what is its attitude to the state? And the chief thing is that you should acquire, as a result of your reading, as a result of the talks and lectures you will hear on the state, the ability to approach this question independently, since you will be meeting with it on the most diverse occasions, in connection with the most trifling questions, in the most unexpected contexts and in discussions and disputes with opponents. Only when you learn to find your way about independently in this question may you consider yourself sufficiently confirmed in your convictions and able with sufficient success to defend them against anybody and at any time.

After these brief remarks, I shall proceed to deal with the question itself — what is the state, how did it arise and fundamentally what attitude to the state should be displayed by the party of the working class, which is fighting for the complete overthrow of capitalism — the Communist Party?

I have already said that you are not likely to find another question which has been so confused, deliberately and unwittingly, by representatives of bourgeois science, philosophy, jurisprudence, political economy and journalism, as the question of the state. To this day it is very often confused with religious questions; not only those professing religious doctrines (it is quite natural to expect it of them), but even people who consider themselves free from religious prejudice, very often confuse the specific question of the state with questions of religion and endeavour to build up a doctrine — very often a complex one, with an ideological, philosophical approach and argumentation — which claims that the state is something divine, something supernatural, that it is a certain force by virtue of which mankind has lived, that it is a force of divine origin which confers on people, or can confer on people, or which brings with it something that is not of man, but is given him from without. And it must be said that this doctrine is so closely bound up with the interests of the exploiting classes — the landowners and the capitalists — so serves their interests, has so deeply permeated all the customs, views and science of the gentlemen who represent the

bourgeoisie, that you will meet with vestiges of it on every hand, even in the view of the state held by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, although they are convinced that they can regard the state with sober eyes and reject indignantly the suggestion that they are under the sway of religious prejudices. This question has been so confused and complicated because it affects the interests of the ruling classes more than any other question (yielding place in this respect only to the foundations of economic science). The doctrine of the state serves to justify social privilege, the existence of exploitation, the existence of capitalism — and that is why it would be the greatest mistake to expect impartiality on this question, to approach it in the belief that people who claim to be scientific can give you a purely scientific view of the subject. In the question of the state, in the doctrine of the state, in the theory of the state, when you have become familiar with it and have gone into it deeply enough, you will always discern the struggle between different classes, a struggle which is reflected or expressed in a conflict of views on the state, in the estimate of the role and significance of the state.

To approach this question as scientifically as possible we must cast at least a fleeting glance back on the history of the state, its emergence and development. The most reliable thing in a question of social science, and one that is most necessary in order really to acquire the habit of approaching this question correctly and not allowing oneself to get lost in the mass of detail or in the immense variety of conflicting opinion — the most important thing if one is to approach this question scientifically is not to forget the underlying historical connection, to examine every question from the standpoint of how the given phenomenon arose in history and what were the principal stages in its development, and, from the standpoint of its development, to examine what it has become today.

I hope that in studying this question of the state you will acquaint yourselves with Engels' book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This is one of the fundamental works of modern socialism, every sentence of which can be accepted with confidence, in the assurance that it has not been said at random but is based on immense historical and political material. Undoubtedly, not all the parts of this work have been expounded in an equally popular and comprehensible way; some of them presume a reader who already possesses a certain knowledge of history and economics. But I again repeat that you should not be perturbed if on reading this work you do not understand it at once. Very few people do. But returning to it later, when your interest has been aroused, you will succeed in understanding the greater part, if not the whole of it. I refer to this book because it gives the correct approach to the question in the sense mentioned. It begins with a historical sketch of the origin of the state.

This question, like every other — for example, that of the origin of capitalism, the exploitation of man by man, socialism, how socialism arose, what conditions gave rise to it — can be approached soundly and confidently only if we cast a glance back on the history of its development as a whole. In connection with this problem it should first of all be noted that the state has not always existed. There was a time when there was no state. It appears wherever and whenever a division of society into classes appears, whenever exploiters and exploited appear.

Before the first form of exploitation of man by man arose, the first form of division into classes — slave-owners and slaves — there existed the patriarchal family, or, as it is sometimes called, the *clan* family. (Clan-tribe; at the time people of one kin lived together.) Fairly definite traces of these primitive times have survived in the life of many primitive peoples; and if you take any work whatsoever on primitive civilisation, you will always come across more or less definite descriptions, indications and recollections of the fact that there was a time, more or less similar to primitive communism, when the division of society into slave-owners and slaves did not exist. And in those times there was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of force and the subjugation of people by force. It is such an apparatus that is called the state.

In primitive society, when people lived in small family groups and were still at the lowest stages of development, in a condition approximating to savagery — an epoch from which modern, civilised human society is separated by several thousand years — there were yet no signs of the existence of a state. We find the predominance of custom, authority, respect, the power enjoyed by the elders of the clan; we find this power sometimes accorded to women — the position of women then was not like the downtrodden and oppressed condition of women today — but nowhere do we find a special *category* of people set apart to rule others and who, for the sake and purpose of rule, systematically and permanently have at their disposal a certain apparatus of coercion, an apparatus of violence, such as is represented at the present time, as you all realise, by armed contingents of troops, prisons and other means of subjugating the will of others by force — all that which constitutes the essence of the state.

If we get away from what are known as religious teachings, from the subtleties, philosophical arguments and various opinions advanced by bourgeois scholars, if we get away from these and try to get at the real core of the matter, we shall find that the state really does amount to such an apparatus of rule which stands outside society as a whole. When there appears such a special group of men occupied solely with government, and who in order to rule need a special apparatus of coercion to subjugate the will of others by force — prisons, special contingents of men, armies, etc. — then

there appears the state.

But there was a time when there was no state, when general ties, the community itself, discipline and the ordering of work were maintained by force of custom and tradition, by the authority or the respect enjoyed by the elders of the clan or by women — who in those times not only frequently enjoyed a status equal to that of men, but not infrequently enjoyed an even higher status — and when there was no special category of persons who were specialists in ruling. History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing people arose wherever and whenever there appeared a division of society into classes, that is, a division into groups of people some of which were permanently in a position to appropriate the labour of others, where some people exploited others.

And this division of society into classes must always be clearly borne in mind as a fundamental fact of history. The development of all human societies for thousands of years, in all countries without exception, reveals a general conformity to law, a regularity and consistency; so that at first we had a society without classes — the original patriarchal, primitive society, in which there were no aristocrats; then we had a society based on slavery — a slave-owning society. The whole of modern, civilised Europe has passed through this stage — slavery ruled supreme 2,000 years ago. The vast majority of peoples of the other parts of the world also passed through this stage. Traces of slavery survive to this day among the less developed peoples; you will find the institution of slavery in Africa, for example, at the present time. The division into slave-owners and slaves was the first important class division. The former group not only owned all the means of production — the land and the implements, however poor and primitive they may have been in those times — but, also owned people. This group was known as slaveowners, while those who laboured and supplied labour for others were known as slaves.

This form was followed in history by another — feudalism. In the great majority of countries slavery in the course of its development evolved into serfdom. The fundamental division of society was now into feudal lords and peasant serfs. The form of relations between people changed. The slaveowners had regarded the slaves as their property; the law had confirmed this view and regarded the slave as a chattel completely owned by the slaveowner. As far as the peasant serf was concerned, class oppression and dependence remained, but it was not considered that the feudal lord owned the peasants as chattels, but that he was only entitled to their labour, to the obligatory performance of certain services. In practice, as you know, serfdom, especially in Russia where it survived longest of all and assumed the crudest forms, in no way differed from slavery.

Further, with the development of trade, the appearance of the world market and the development of money circulation, a new class arose within feudal society — the capitalist class. From the commodity, the exchange of commodities and the rise of the power of money, there derived the power of capital. During the 18th century, or rather, from the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century, revolutions took place all over the world. Feudalism was abolished in all the countries of Western Europe. Russia was the last country in which this took place. In 1861 a radical change took place in Russia as well; as a consequence of this one form of society was replaced by another — feudalism was replaced by capitalism, under which division into classes remained, as well as various traces and remnants of serfdom, but fundamentally the division into classes assumed a different form.

The owners of capital, the owners of the land and the owners of the factories in all capitalist countries constituted and still constitute an insignificant minority of the population who have complete command of the labour of the whole people, and, consequently, command, oppress and exploit the whole mass of labourers, the majority of whom are proletarians, wage-workers, who procure their livelihood in the process of production only by the sale of their own worker's hands, their labour-power. With the transition to capitalism, the peasants, who had been disunited and downtrodden in feudal times, were converted partly (the majority) into proletarians, and partly (the minority) into wealthy peasants, who themselves hired labourers and who constituted a rural bourgeoisie.

This fundamental fact — the transition of society from primitive forms of slavery to serfdom and finally to capitalism — you must always bear in mind, for only by remembering this fundamental fact, only by examining all political doctrines placed in this fundamental scheme, will you be able properly to appraise these doctrines and understand what they refer to; for each of these great periods in the history of mankind, slaveowning, feudal and capitalist, embraces scores and hundreds of centuries and presents such a mass of political forms, such a variety of political doctrines, opinions and revolutions, that this extreme diversity and immense variety (especially in connection with the political, philosophical and other doctrines of bourgeois scholars and politicians) can be understood only by firmly holding, as to a guiding thread, to this division of society into classes, this change in the forms of class rule, and from this standpoint examining all social questions — economic, political, spiritual, religious, etc.

If you examine the state from the standpoint of this fundamental division, you will find that before the division of society into classes, as I have already said, no state existed. But as the social division into classes arose and took firm root, as class society

arose, the state also arose and took firm root. The history of mankind knows scores and hundreds of countries that have passed or are still passing through slavery, feudalism and capitalism. In each of these countries, despite the immense historical changes that have taken place, despite all the political vicissitudes and all the revolutions due to this development of mankind, to the transition from slavery through feudalism to capitalism and to the present worldwide struggle against capitalism, you will always discern the emergence of the state. It has always been a certain apparatus which stood outside society and consisted of a group of people engaged solely, or almost solely, or mainly, in ruling. People are divided into the ruled, and into specialists in ruling, those who rise above society and are called rulers, statesmen. This apparatus, this group of people who rule others, always possesses certain means of coercion, of physical force, irrespective of whether this violence over people is expressed in the primitive club, or in more perfected types of weapons in the epoch of slavery, or in the firearms which appeared in the Middle Ages, or, finally, in modern weapons, which in the 20th century are technical marvels and are based entirely on the latest achievements of modern technology. The methods of violence changed, but whenever there was a state there existed in every society a group of persons who ruled, who commanded, who dominated and who in order to maintain their power possessed an apparatus of physical coercion, an apparatus of violence, with those weapons which corresponded to the technical level of the given epoch. And by examining these general phenomena, by asking ourselves why no state existed when there were no classes, when there were no exploiters and exploited, and why it appeared when classes appeared — only in this way shall we find a definite answer to the question of what is the nature and significance of the state.

The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another. When there were no classes in society, when, before the epoch of slavery, people laboured in primitive conditions of greater equality, in conditions when the productivity of labour was still at its lowest, and when primitive man could barely procure the wherewithal for the crudest and most primitive existence, a special group of people whose function is to rule and to dominate the rest of society, had not and could not yet have emerged. Only when the first form of the division of society into classes appeared, only when slavery appeared, when a certain class of people, by concentrating on the crudest forms of agricultural labour, could produce a certain surplus, when this surplus was not absolutely essential for the most wretched existence of the slave and passed into the hands of the slaveowner, when in this way the existence of this class of slaveowners was secure — then in order that it might take firm root it was necessary for a state to appear.

And it did appear — the slaveowning state, an apparatus which gave the slaveowners power and enabled them to rule over the slaves. Both society and the state were then on a much smaller scale than they are now, they possessed incomparably poorer means of communication — the modern means of communication did not then exist. Mountains, rivers and seas were immeasurably greater obstacles than they are now, and the state took shape within far narrower geographical boundaries. A technically weak state apparatus served a state confined within relatively narrow boundaries and with a narrow range of action. Nevertheless, there did exist an apparatus which compelled the slaves to remain in slavery, which kept one part of society subjugated to and oppressed by another. It is impossible to compel the greater part of society to work systematically for the other part of society without a permanent apparatus of coercion. So long as there were no classes, there was no apparatus of this sort. When classes appeared, everywhere and always, as the division grew and took firmer hold, there also appeared a special institution — the state. The forms of state were extremely varied. As early as the period of slavery we find diverse forms of the state in the countries that were the most advanced, cultured and civilised according to the standards of the time — for example, in ancient Greece and Rome — which were based entirely on slavery. At that time there was already a difference between monarchy and republic, between aristocracy and democracy. A monarchy is the power of a single person, a republic is the absence of any non-elected authority; an aristocracy is the power of a relatively small minority, a democracy is the power of the people (democracy in Greek literally means the power of the people). All these differences arose in the epoch of slavery. Despite these differences, the state of the slaveowning epoch was a slaveowning state, irrespective of whether it was a monarchy or a republic, aristocratic or democratic.

In every course on the history of ancient times, in any lecture on this subject, you will hear about the struggle which was waged between the monarchical and republican states. But the fundamental fact is that the slaves were not regarded as human beings — not only were they not regarded as citizens, they were not even regarded as human beings. Roman law regarded them as chattels. The law of manslaughter, not to mention the other laws for the protection of the person, did not extend to slaves. It defended only the slaveowners, who were alone recognised as citizens with full rights. But whether a monarchy was instituted or a republic, it was a monarchy of the slaveowners or a republic of the slaveowners. All rights were enjoyed by the slaveowners, while the slave was a chattel in the eyes of the law; and not only could any sort of violence be perpetrated against a slave, but even the killing of a slave was not considered a crime. Slaveowning republics differed in their internal organisation, there were aristocratic republics and democratic republics. In an aristocratic republic only a small number of

privileged persons took part in the elections; in a democratic republic everybody took part — but everybody meant only the slaveowners, that is, everybody except the slaves. This fundamental fact must be borne in mind, because it throws more light than any other on the question of the state and clearly demonstrates the nature of the state.

The state is a machine for the oppression of one class by another, a machine for holding in obedience to one class other, subordinated classes. There are various forms of this machine. The slaveowning state could be a monarchy, an aristocratic republic or even a democratic republic. In fact the forms of government varied extremely, but their essence was always the same: the slaves enjoyed no rights and constituted an oppressed class; they were not regarded as human beings. We find the same thing in the feudal state.

The change in the form of exploitation transformed the slaveowning state into the feudal state. This was of immense importance. In slaveowning society, the slave enjoyed no rights whatever and was not regarded as a human being; in feudal society the peasant was bound to the soil. The chief distinguishing feature of serfdom was that the peasants (and at that time the peasants constituted the majority; the urban population was still very small) were considered bound to the land — this is the very basis of “serfdom”. The peasant might work a definite number of days for himself on the plot assigned to him by the landlord; on the other days the peasant serf worked for his lord. The essence of class society remained — society was based on class exploitation. Only the owners of the land could enjoy full rights; the peasants had no rights at all. In practice their condition differed very little from the condition of slaves in the slaveowning state. Nevertheless, a wider road was opened for their emancipation, for the emancipation of the peasants, since the peasant serf was not regarded as the direct property of the lord. He could work part of his time on his own plot, could, so to speak, belong to himself to some extent; and with the wider opportunities for the development of exchange and trade relations the feudal system steadily disintegrated and the scope of emancipation of the peasantry steadily widened.

Feudal society was always more complex than slave society. There was a greater development of trade and industry, which even in those days led to capitalism. In the Middle Ages feudalism predominated. And here too the forms of state varied, here too we find both the monarchy and the republic, although the latter was much more weakly expressed. But always the feudal lord was regarded as the only ruler. The peasant serfs were deprived of absolutely all political rights.

Neither under slavery nor under the feudal system could a small minority of people dominate over the vast majority without coercion. History is full of the constant

attempts of the oppressed classes to throw off oppression. The history of slavery contains records of wars of emancipation from slavery which lasted for decades. Incidentally, the name “Spartacist” now adopted by the German Communists — the only German party which is really fighting against the yoke of capitalism — was adopted by them because Spartacus was one of the most prominent heroes of one of the greatest revolts of slaves, which took place about 2,000 years ago. For many years the seemingly omnipotent Roman Empire, which rested entirely on slavery, experienced the shocks and blows of a widespread uprising of slaves who armed and united to form a vast army under the leadership of Spartacus. In the end they were defeated, captured and put to torture by the slaveowners. Such civil wars mark the whole history of the existence of class society. I have just mentioned an example of the greatest of these civil wars in the epoch of slavery. The whole epoch of feudalism is likewise marked by constant uprisings of the peasants. For example, in Germany in the Middle Ages the struggle between the two classes — the landlords and the serfs — assumed wide proportions and was transformed into a civil war of the peasants against the landowners. You are all familiar with similar examples of repeated uprisings of the peasants against the feudal landowners in Russia.

In order to maintain their rule and to preserve their power, the feudal lords had to have an apparatus by which they could unite under their subjugation a vast number of people and subordinate them to certain laws and regulations; and all these laws fundamentally amounted to one thing — the maintenance of the power of the lords over the peasant serfs. And this was the feudal state, which in Russia, for example, or in quite backward Asiatic countries (where feudalism prevails to this day) differed in form — it was either a republic or a monarchy. When the state was a monarchy, the rule of one person was recognised; when it was a republic, the participation of the elected representatives of landowning society was in one degree or another recognised — this was in feudal society. Feudal society represented a division of classes under which the vast majority — the peasant serfs — were completely subjected to an insignificant minority — the owners of the land.

The development of trade, the development of commodity exchange, led to the emergence of a new class — the capitalists. Capital took shape as such at the close of the Middle Ages, when, after the discovery of America, world trade developed enormously, when the quantity of precious metals increased, when silver and gold became the medium of exchange, when money circulation made it possible for individuals to possess tremendous wealth. Silver and gold were recognised as wealth all over the world. The economic power of the landowning class declined and the power of the new class — the representatives of capital — developed. The reconstruction

of society was such that all citizens seemed to be equal, the old division into slaveowners and slaves disappeared, all were regarded as equal before the law irrespective of what capital each owned; whether he owned land as private property, or was a poor man who owned nothing but his labour-power — all were equal before the law. The law protects everybody equally; it protects the property of those who have it from attack by the masses who, possessing no property, possessing nothing but their labour power, grow steadily impoverished and ruined and become converted into proletarians. Such is capitalist society.

I cannot dwell on it in detail. You will return to this when you come to discuss the program of the party — you will then hear a description of capitalist society. This society advanced against serfdom, against the old feudal system, under the slogan of liberty. But it was liberty for those who owned property. And when feudalism was shattered, which occurred at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century — in Russia it occurred later than in other countries, in 1861 — the feudal state was then superseded by the capitalist state, which proclaims liberty for the whole people as its slogan, which declares that it expresses the will of the whole people and denies that it is a class state. And here there developed a struggle between the socialists, who are fighting for the liberty of the whole people, and the capitalist state — a struggle which has led to the creation of the Soviet Socialist Republic and which is going on throughout the world.

To understand the struggle that has been started against world capital, to understand the nature of the capitalist state, we must remember that when the capitalist state advanced against the feudal state it entered the fight under the slogan of liberty. The abolition of feudalism meant liberty for the representatives of the capitalist state and served their purpose, inasmuch as serfdom was breaking down and the peasants had acquired the opportunity of owning as their full property the land which they had purchased for compensation or in part by quit-rent — this did not concern the state: it protected property irrespective of its origin, because the state was founded on private property. The peasants became private owners in all the modern, civilised states. Even when the landowner surrendered part of his land to the peasant, the state protected private property, rewarding the landowner by compensation, by letting him take money for the land. The state as it were declared that it would fully preserve private property, and it accorded it every support and protection. The state recognised the property rights of every merchant, industrialist and manufacturer. And this society, based on private property, on the power of capital, on the complete subjection of the propertyless workers and labouring masses of the peasantry, proclaimed that its rule was based on liberty. Combating feudalism, it proclaimed freedom of property and

was particularly proud of the fact that the state had ceased, supposedly, to be a class state.

Yet the state continued to be a machine which helped the capitalists to hold the poor peasants and the working class in subjection. But in outward appearance it was free. It proclaimed universal suffrage, and declared through its champions, preachers, scholars and philosophers, that it was not a class state. Even now, when the Soviet Socialist Republics have begun to fight the state, they accuse us of violating liberty, of building a state based on coercion, on the suppression of some by others, whereas they represent a popular, democratic state. And now, when the world socialist revolution has begun, and when the revolution has succeeded in some countries, when the fight against world capital has grown particularly acute, this question of the state has acquired the greatest importance and has become, one might say, the most burning one, the focus of all present-day political questions and political disputes.

Whichever party we take in Russia or in any of the more civilised countries, we find that nearly all political disputes, disagreements and opinions now centre around the conception of the state. Is the state in a capitalist country, in a democratic republic — especially one like Switzerland or the USA — in the freest democratic republics, an expression of the popular will, the sum total of the general decision of the people, the expression of the national will, and so forth; or is the state a machine that enables the capitalists of those countries to maintain their power over the working class and the peasantry? That is the fundamental question around which all political disputes all over the world now centre. What do they say about Bolshevism? The bourgeois press abuses the Bolsheviks. You will not find a single newspaper that does not repeat the hackneyed accusation that the Bolsheviks violate popular rule. If our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in their simplicity of heart (perhaps it is not simplicity, or perhaps it is the simplicity which the proverb says is worse than robbery) think that they discovered and invented the accusation that the Bolsheviks have violated liberty and popular rule, they are ludicrously mistaken. Today every one of the richest newspapers in the richest countries, which spend tens of millions on their distribution and disseminate bourgeois lies and imperialist policy in tens of millions of copies — every one of these newspapers repeats these basic arguments and accusations against Bolshevism, namely, that the USA, Britain and Switzerland are advanced states based on popular rule, whereas the Bolshevik republic is a state of bandits in which liberty is unknown, and that the Bolsheviks have violated the idea of popular rule and have even gone so far as to disperse the Constituent Assembly. These terrible accusations against the Bolsheviks are repeated all over the world. These accusations lead us directly to the question — what is the state? In order to understand these accusations, in order to

study them and have a fully intelligent attitude towards them, and not to examine them on hearsay but with a firm opinion of our own, we must have a clear idea of what the state is. We have before us capitalist states of every kind and all the theories in defence of them which were created before the war. In order to answer the question properly we must critically examine all these theories and views.

I have already advised you to turn for help to Engels' book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. This book says that every state in which private ownership of the land and means of production exists, in which capital dominates, however democratic it may be, is a capitalist state, a machine used by the capitalists to keep the working class and the poor peasants in subjection; while universal suffrage, a Constituent Assembly, a parliament are merely a form, a sort of promissory note, which does not change the real state of affairs.

The forms of domination of the state may vary: capital manifests its power in one way where one form exists, and in another way where another form exists — but essentially the power is in the hands of capital, whether there are voting qualifications or some other rights or not, or whether the republic is a democratic one or not — in fact, the more democratic it is the cruder and more cynical is the rule of capitalism. One of the most democratic republics in the world is the United States of America, yet nowhere (and those who have been there since 1905 probably know it) is the power of capital, the power of a handful of multimillionaires over the whole of society, so crude and so openly corrupt as in America. Once capital exists, it dominates the whole of society, and no democratic republic, no franchise can change its nature.

The democratic republic and universal suffrage were an immense progressive advance as compared with feudalism: they have enabled the proletariat to achieve its present unity and solidarity, to form those firm and disciplined ranks which are waging a systematic struggle against capital. There was nothing even approximately resembling this among the peasant serfs, not to speak of the slaves. The slaves, as we know, revolted, rioted, started civil wars, but they could never create a class-conscious majority and parties to lead the struggle, they could not clearly realise what their aims were, and even in the most revolutionary moments of history they were always pawns in the hands of the ruling classes. The bourgeois republic, parliament, universal suffrage — all represent great progress from the standpoint of the world development of society. Mankind moved towards capitalism, and it was capitalism alone which, thanks to urban culture, enabled the oppressed proletarian class to become conscious of itself and to create the world working-class movement, the millions of workers organised all over the world in parties — the socialist parties which are consciously leading the struggle of the masses. Without parliamentarism, without an electoral system, this

development of the working class would have been impossible. That is why all these things have acquired such great importance in the eyes of the broad masses of people. That is why a radical change seems to be so difficult. It is not only the conscious hypocrites, scientists and priests that uphold and defend the bourgeois lie that the state is free and that it is its mission to defend the interests of all; so also do a large number of people who sincerely adhere to the old prejudices and who cannot understand the transition from the old, capitalist society to socialism. Not only people who are directly dependent on the bourgeoisie, not only those who live under the yoke of capital or who have been bribed by capital (there are a large number of all sorts of scientists, artists, priests, etc., in the service of capital), but even people who are simply under the sway of the prejudice of bourgeois liberty, have taken up arms against Bolshevism all over the world because when the Soviet Republic was founded it rejected these bourgeois lies and openly declared: you say your state is free, whereas in reality, as long as there is private property, your state, even if it is a democratic republic, is nothing but a machine used by the capitalists to suppress the workers, and the freer the state, the more clearly is this expressed. Examples of this are Switzerland in Europe and the United States in America. Nowhere does capital rule so cynically and ruthlessly, and nowhere is it so clearly apparent, as in these countries, although they are democratic republics, no matter how prettily they are painted and notwithstanding all the talk about labour democracy and the equality of all citizens. The fact is that in Switzerland and the United States capital dominates, and every attempt of the workers to achieve the slightest real improvement in their condition is immediately met by civil war. There are fewer soldiers, a smaller standing army, in these countries — Switzerland has a militia and every Swiss has a gun at home, while in America there was no standing army until quite recently — and so when there is a strike the bourgeoisie arms, hires soldiery and suppresses the strike; and nowhere is this suppression of the working-class movement accompanied by such ruthless severity as in Switzerland and the USA, and nowhere does the influence of capital in parliament manifest itself as powerfully as in these countries. The power of capital is everything, the stock exchange is everything, while parliament and elections are marionettes, puppets ... But the eyes of the workers are being opened more and more, and the idea of Soviet government is spreading farther and farther afield, especially after the bloody carnage we have just experienced. The necessity for a relentless war on the capitalists is becoming clearer and clearer to the working class.

Whatever guise a republic may assume, however democratic it may be, if it is a bourgeois republic, if it retains private ownership of the land and factories, and if private capital keeps the whole of society in wage-slavery, that is, if the republic does

not carry out what is proclaimed in the program of our party and in the Soviet constitution, then this state is a machine for the suppression of some people by others. And we shall place this machine in the hands of the class that is to overthrow the power of capital.. We shall reject all the old prejudices about the state meaning universal equality — for that is a fraud: as long as there is exploitation there cannot be equality. The landowner cannot be the equal of the worker, or the hungry man the equal of the full man. This machine called the state, before which people bowed in superstitious awe, believing the old tales that it means popular rule, tales which the proletariat declares to be a bourgeois lie — this machine the proletariat will smash. So far we have deprived the capitalists of this machine and have taken it over. We shall use this machine, or bludgeon, to destroy all exploitation. And when the possibility of exploitation no longer exists anywhere in the world, when there are no longer owners of land and owners of factories, and when there is no longer a situation in which some gorge while others starve, only when the possibility of this no longer exists shall we consign this machine to the scrap-heap. Then there will be no state and no exploitation. Such is the view of our Communist Party. I hope that we shall return to this subject in subsequent lectures, return to it again and again. ■

# The Proletarian Revolution & the Renegade Kautsky<sup>26</sup>

By V.I. Lenin

## Preface

Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, recently published in Vienna (Wien, 1918, Ignaz Brand, 63pp.) is a most lucid example of that utter and ignominious bankruptcy of the Second International about which all honest socialists in all countries have been talking for a long time. The proletarian revolution is now becoming a practical issue in a number of countries, and an examination of Kautsky's renegade sophistries and his complete renunciation of Marxism is therefore essential.

First of all, it should be emphasised, however, that the present author has, from the very beginning of the war, repeatedly pointed to Kautsky's rupture with Marxism. A number of articles published between 1914 and 1916 in *Sotsial-Demokrat*<sup>27</sup> and *Kommunist*,<sup>28</sup> issued abroad, dealt with this subject. These articles were afterwards collected and published by the Petrograd Soviet under the title *Against the Stream*, by G. Zinoviev and N. Lenin (Petrograd, 1918, 550 pp.). In a pamphlet published in Geneva in 1915 and translated at the same time into German and French<sup>29</sup> I wrote about "Kautskyism" as follows:

Kautsky, the leading authority in the Second International, is a most typical and striking example of how a verbal recognition of Marxism has led in practice to its conversion into "Struivism" or into "Brentanoism" [i.e., into a bourgeois-liberal theory recognising the non-revolutionary "class" struggle of the proletariat, which was expressed most clearly by Struve, the Russian writer, and Brentano, the German economist]. Another example is Plekhanov. By means of patent sophistry, Marxism is stripped of

its revolutionary living spirit; *everything* is recognised in Marxism *except* the revolutionary methods of struggle, the propaganda and preparation of those methods, and the education of the masses in this direction. Kautsky “reconciles” in an unprincipled way the fundamental idea of social-chauvinism, recognition of defence of the fatherland in the present war, with a diplomatic sham concession to the lefts — his abstention from voting for war credits, his verbal claim to be in the opposition, etc. Kautsky, who in 1909 wrote a book on the approaching epoch of revolutions and on the connection between war and revolution, Kautsky, who in 1912 signed the Basle Manifesto on taking revolutionary advantage of the impending war, is outdoing himself in justifying and embellishing social-chauvinism and, like Plekhanov, joins the bourgeoisie in ridiculing any thought of revolution and all steps towards the immediate revolutionary struggle.

The working class cannot play its world-revolutionary role unless it wages a ruthless struggle against this backsliding, spinelessness, subservience to opportunism, and unparalleled vulgarisation of the theories of Marxism. Kautskyism is not fortuitous; it is the social product of the contradictions within the Second International, a blend of loyalty to Marxism in word and subordination to opportunism in deed. (G. Zinoviev and N. Lenin, *Socialism and War*, Geneva, 1915, pp. 13-14)

Again, in my book *Imperialism, the Latest Stage of Capitalism*,<sup>30</sup> written in 1916 and published in Petrograd in 1917, I examined in detail the theoretical fallacy of all Kautsky’s arguments about imperialism. I quoted Kautsky’s definition of imperialism: “Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism . It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large areas of *agrarian* [Kautsky’s italics] territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it.” I showed how utterly incorrect this definition was, and how it was “adapted” to the glossing over of the most profound contradictions of imperialism, and then to reconciliation with opportunism. I gave my own definition of imperialism: “Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; at which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; at which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; at which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.” I showed that Kautsky’s critique of imperialism is on an even lower plane than the bourgeois, philistine critique.

Finally, in August and September 1917 — that is, before the proletarian revolution in Russia (October 25 [November 7], 1917), I wrote a pamphlet (published in Petrograd at the beginning of 1918) entitled *The State and Revolution. The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*.<sup>31</sup> In Chapter VI of this book,

entitled “The Vulgarisation of Marxism by the Opportunists”, I devoted special attention to Kautsky, showing that he had completely distorted Marx’s ideas, tailoring them to suit opportunism, and that he had “repudiated the revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words”.

In substance, the chief theoretical mistake Kautsky makes in his pamphlet on the dictatorship of the proletariat lies in those opportunist distortions of Marx’s ideas on the state — the distortions which I exposed in detail in my pamphlet, *The State and Revolution*.

These preliminary remarks were necessary for they show that I openly accused Kautsky of being a renegade *long before* the Bolsheviks assumed state power and were condemned by him on that account. ■



Karl Kautsky

# 1. How Kautsky Turned Marx Into a Common Liberal

The fundamental question that Kautsky discusses in his pamphlet is that of the very essence of proletarian revolution, namely, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a question that is of the greatest importance for all countries, especially for the advanced ones, especially for those at war, and especially at the present time. One may say without fear of exaggeration that this is the key problem of the entire proletarian class struggle. It is, therefore, necessary to pay particular attention to it.

Kautsky formulates the question as follows: “The contrast between the two socialist trends” (i.e., the Bolsheviks and non-Bolsheviks) “is the contrast between two radically different methods: the *dictatorial* and the *democratic*” (p. 3).

Let us point out, in passing, that when calling the non-Bolsheviks in Russia, i.e., the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, socialists, Kautsky was guided by their *name*, that is, by a word, and not by the *actual place* they occupy in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. What a wonderful understanding and application of Marxism! But more of this later.

For the moment we must deal with the main point, namely, with Kautsky’s great discovery of the “fundamental contrast” between “democratic and dictatorial methods”. That is the crux of the matter; that is the essence of Kautsky’s pamphlet. And that is such an awful theoretical muddle, such a complete renunciation of Marxism, that Kautsky, it must be confessed, has far excelled Bernstein.

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a question of the relation of the proletarian state to the bourgeois state, of proletarian democracy to bourgeois democracy. One would think that this is as plain as a pikestaff. But Kautsky, like a schoolmaster who has become as dry as dust from quoting the same old textbooks on history, persistently turns his back on the 20th century and his face to the 18th century, and for the hundredth time, in a number of paragraphs, in an incredibly tedious fashion chews the old cud over the relation of bourgeois democracy to absolutism and medievalism!

It sounds just like he were chewing rags in his sleep!

But this means he utterly fails to understand what is what! One cannot help smiling at Kautsky's effort to make it appear that there are people who preach "contempt for democracy" (p. 11) and so forth. That is the sort of twaddle Kautsky uses to befog and confuse the issue, for he talks like the liberals, speaking of democracy in general, and not of *bourgeois* democracy; he even avoids using this precise, class term, and, instead, tries to speak about "pre-socialist" democracy. This windbag devotes almost one-third of his pamphlet, 20 pages out of 63, to this twaddle, which is so agreeable to the bourgeoisie, for it is tantamount to embellishing bourgeois democracy, and obscures the question of the proletarian revolution.

But, after all, the title of Kautsky's pamphlet is *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. Everybody knows that this is the very *essence* of Marx's doctrine; and after a lot of irrelevant twaddle Kautsky *was obliged* to quote Marx's words on the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the *way* in which he the "Marxist" did it was simply farcical! Listen to this:

"This view" (which Kautsky dubs "contempt for democracy") "rests upon a single word of Karl Marx's." This is what Kautsky literally says on page 20. And on page 60 the same thing is repeated even in the form that they (the Bolsheviks) "opportunely recalled the little word" (that is literally what he says — *des Wörtchens!*) "about the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx once used in 1875 in a letter".

Here is Marx's "little word":

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>32</sup>

First of all, to call this classical reasoning of Marx's, which sums up the whole of his revolutionary teaching, "a single word" and even "a little word", is an insult to and complete renunciation of Marxism. It must not be forgotten that Kautsky knows Marx almost by heart, and, judging by all he has written, he has in his desk, or in his head, a number of pigeonholes in which all that was ever written by Marx is most carefully filed so as to be ready at hand for quotation. Kautsky *must know* that both Marx and Engels, in their letters as well as in their published works, *repeatedly* spoke about the dictatorship of the proletariat, before and especially after the Paris Commune. Kautsky must know that the formula "dictatorship of the proletariat" is merely a more historically concrete and scientifically exact formulation of the proletariat's task of "smashing" the bourgeois state machine, about which both Marx and Engels, in summing up the experience of the Revolution of 1848, and, still more so, of 1871, spoke *for 40 years*, between 1852 and 1891.

How is this monstrous distortion of Marxism by that Marxist pedant Kautsky to be explained? As far as the philosophical roots of this phenomenon are concerned, it amounts to the substitution of eclecticism and sophistry for dialectics. Kautsky is a past master at this sort of substitution. Regarded from the point of view of practical politics, it amounts to subservience to the opportunists, that is, in the last analysis to the bourgeoisie. Since the outbreak of the war, Kautsky has made increasingly rapid progress in this art of being a Marxist in words and a lackey of the bourgeoisie in deeds, until he has become a virtuoso at it.

One feels even more convinced of this when examining the remarkable way in which Kautsky “interprets” Marx’s “little word” about the dictatorship of the proletariat. Listen to this:

Marx, unfortunately, neglected to show us in greater detail how he conceived this dictatorship. [This is an utterly mendacious phrase of a renegade, for Marx and Engels gave us, indeed, quite a number of most detailed indications, which Kautsky, the Marxist pedant, has deliberately ignored.] Literally, the word dictatorship means the abolition of democracy. But, of course, taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single person unrestricted by any laws — an autocracy, which differs from despotism only insofar as it is not meant as a permanent state institution, but as a transient emergency measure.

The term, “dictatorship of the proletariat”, hence not the dictatorship of a single individual, but of a class, *ipso facto* precludes the possibility that Marx in this connection had in mind a dictatorship in the literal sense of the term.

He speaks here not of a *form of government*, but of a *condition*, which must necessarily arise wherever the proletariat has gained political power. That Marx in this case did not have in mind a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in Britain and America the transition might take place peacefully, i.e., in a democratic way. (p. 20)

We have deliberately quoted this argument in full so that the reader may clearly see the methods Kautsky the “theoretician” employs.

Kautsky chose to approach the question in such a way as to begin with a definition of the “*word*” dictatorship.

Very well. Everyone has a sacred right to approach a question in whatever way he pleases. One must only distinguish a serious and honest approach from a dishonest one. Anyone who wants to be serious in approaching the question in this way ought to give *his own definition* of the “word”. Then the question would be put fairly and squarely. But Kautsky does not do that. “Literally”, he writes, “the word dictatorship means the abolition of democracy.”

In the first place, this is not a definition. If Kautsky wanted to avoid giving a definition of the concept dictatorship, why did he choose this particular approach to the question?

Secondly, it is obviously wrong. It is natural for a liberal to speak of “democracy” in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: “for what class?” Everyone knows, for instance (and Kautsky the “historian” knows it too), that rebellions, or even strong ferment, among the slaves in ancient times at once revealed the fact that the ancient state was essentially a *dictatorship of the slaveowners*. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy *among*, and *for*, the slaveowners? Everybody knows that it did not.

Kautsky the “Marxist” made this monstrously absurd and untrue statement because he “*forgot*” the class struggle ...

To transform Kautsky’s liberal and false assertion into a Marxist and true one, one must say: dictatorship does not necessarily mean the abolition of democracy for the class that exercises the dictatorship over other classes; but it does mean the abolition (or very material restriction, which is also a form of abolition) of democracy for the class over which, or against which, the dictatorship is exercised.

But, however true this assertion may be, it does not give a definition of dictatorship.

Let us examine Kautsky’s next sentence:

... But, of course, taken literally, this word also means the undivided rule of a single person unrestricted by any laws ...

Like a blind puppy sniffing at random first in one direction and then in another, Kautsky accidentally stumbled upon *one* true idea (namely, that dictatorship is rule unrestricted by any laws), *nevertheless*, he *failed* to give a definition of dictatorship, and, moreover, he made an obvious historical blunder, namely, that dictatorship means the rule of a single person. This is even grammatically incorrect, since dictatorship may also be exercised by a handful of persons, or by an oligarchy, or by a class, etc.

Kautsky then goes on to point out the difference between dictatorship and despotism, but, although what he says is obviously incorrect, we shall not dwell upon it, as it is wholly irrelevant to the question that interests us. Everyone knows Kautsky’s inclination to turn from the 20th century to the 18th, and from the 18th century to classical antiquity, and we hope that the German proletariat, after it has attained its dictatorship, will bear this inclination of his in mind and appoint him, say, teacher of ancient history at some gymnasium. To try to evade a definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by philosophising about despotism is either crass stupidity or very clumsy trickery.

As a result, we find that, having undertaken to discuss the dictatorship, Kautsky rattled off a great deal of manifest lies, but has given no definition! Yet, instead of

relying on his mental faculties he could have used his memory to extract from “pigeonholes” all those instances in which Marx speaks of dictatorship. Had he done so, he would certainly have arrived either at the following definition or at one in substance coinciding with it:

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

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

This simple truth, a truth that is as plain as a pikestaff to every class-conscious worker (who represents the people, and not an upper section of petty-bourgeois scoundrels who have been bribed by the capitalists, such as are the social-imperialists of all countries), this truth, which is obvious to every representative of the exploited classes fighting for their emancipation, this truth, which is beyond dispute for every Marxist, has to be “extracted by force” from the most learned Mr. Kautsky! How is it to be explained? Simply by that spirit of servility with which the leaders of the Second International, who have become contemptible sycophants in the service of the bourgeoisie, are imbued.

Kautsky first committed a sleight of hand by proclaiming the obvious nonsense that the word dictatorship, in its literal sense, means the dictatorship of a single person, and then — on the strength of this sleight of hand — he declared that “hence” Marx’s words about the dictatorship of a class were *not* meant in the literal sense (but in one in which dictatorship does not imply revolutionary violence, but the “peaceful” winning of a majority under bourgeois — mark you — “democracy”).

One must, if you please, distinguish between a “condition” and a “form of government”. A wonderfully profound distinction; it is like drawing a distinction between the “condition” of stupidity of a man who reasons foolishly and the “form” of his stupidity.

Kautsky *finds it necessary* to interpret dictatorship as a “condition of domination” (this is the literal expression he uses on the very next page, p. 21), because then *revolutionary violence, and violent revolution, disappear*. The “condition of domination” is a condition in which any majority finds itself under ... “democracy”! Thanks to such a fraud, *revolution* happily *disappears*!

The fraud, however, is too crude and will not save Kautsky. One cannot hide the fact that dictatorship presupposes and implies a “condition”, one so disagreeable to renegades, of *revolutionary violence* of one class against another. It is patently absurd to draw a distinction between a “condition” and a “form of government”. To speak of forms of government in this connection is trebly stupid, for every schoolboy knows

that monarchy and republic are two different forms of government. It must be explained to Mr. Kautsky that *both* these forms of government, like all transitional “forms of government” under capitalism, are only variations of the *bourgeois state*, that is, of the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*.

Lastly, to speak of forms of government is not only a stupid, but also a very crude falsification of Marx, who was very clearly speaking here of this or that form or type of *state*, and not of forms of government.

The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois state machine and the substitution for it of a *new one* which, in the words of Engels, is “no longer a state in the proper sense of the word”.<sup>33</sup>

Because of his renegade position, Kautsky, however, has to befog and belie all this. Look what wretched subterfuges he uses.

First subterfuge. “That Marx in this case did not have in mind a form of government is proved by the fact that he was of the opinion that in Britain and America the transition might take place peacefully, i.e., in a democratic way.”

The *form of government* has absolutely nothing to do with it, for there are monarchies which are not typical of the bourgeois *state*, such, for instance, as have no military clique, and there are republics which are quite typical in this respect, such, for instance, as have a military clique and a bureaucracy. This is a universally known historical and political fact, and Kautsky cannot falsify it.

If Kautsky had wanted to argue in a serious and honest manner he would have asked himself: Are there historical laws relating to revolution which know of no exception? And the reply would have been: No, there are no such laws. Such laws only apply to the typical, to what Marx once termed the “ideal”, meaning average, normal, typical capitalism.

Further, was there in the 1870s anything which made England and America exceptional *in regard to what we are now discussing*? It will be obvious to anyone at all familiar with the requirements of science in regard to the problems of history that this question must be put. To fail to put it is tantamount to falsifying science, to engaging in sophistry. And, the question having been put, there can be no doubt as to the reply: the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is *violence* against the bourgeoisie; and the necessity of such violence is *particularly* called for, as Marx and Engels have repeatedly explained in detail (especially in *The Civil War in France* and in the preface to it), by the existence of *militarism and a bureaucracy*. But it is precisely these institutions that were *non-existent* in Britain and America in the seventies, when Marx made his observations (they *do* exist in Britain and in America now)!

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

And note how he inadvertently betrayed his cloven hoof when he wrote: “peacefully, i.e., in a democratic way”!

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

That is the crux of the matter. Kautsky has to resort to all these subterfuges, sophistries and falsifications only to *excuse* himself from *violent* revolution, and to conceal his renunciation of it, his desertion to the side of the *liberal* labour policy, i.e., to the side of the bourgeoisie. That is the crux of the matter.

Kautsky the “historian” so shamelessly falsifies history that he “forgets” the fundamental fact that pre-monopoly capitalism — which actually reached its zenith in the 1870s — was by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, which found most typical expression in Britain and in America, distinguished by a, relatively speaking, maximum fondness for peace and freedom. Imperialism, on the other hand, i.e., monopoly capitalism, which finally matured only in the 20th century, is, by virtue of its fundamental *economic* traits, distinguished by a minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by a maximum and universal development of militarism. To “fail to notice” this in discussing the extent to which a peaceful or violent revolution is typical or probable is to stoop to the level of a most ordinary lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Second subterfuge. The Paris Commune was a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it was elected by *universal* suffrage, i.e., without depriving the bourgeoisie of the franchise, i.e., “*democratically*”. And Kautsky says triumphantly: “... The dictatorship of the proletariat was for Marx” (or: according to Marx) “a condition which necessarily follows from pure democracy, if the proletariat forms the majority” (*bei überwiegendem Proletariat*, S. 21).

This argument of Kautsky’s is so amusing that one truly suffers from a veritable *embarras de richesses* (an embarrassment due to the wealth ... of objections that can be made to it). Firstly, it is well known that the flower, the general staff, the upper sections of the bourgeoisie, had fled from Paris to Versailles. In Versailles there was the “socialist” Louis Blanc — which, by the way, proves the falsity of Kautsky’s assertion that “all trends” of socialism took part in the Paris Commune. Is it not ridiculous to represent the division of the inhabitants of Paris into two belligerent camps, one of which embraced the entire militant and politically active section of the bourgeoisie, as “pure democracy” with “universal suffrage”?

Secondly, the Paris Commune waged war against Versailles as the workers’ government of *France* against the bourgeois government. What have “pure democracy” and “universal suffrage” to do with it, when Paris was deciding the fate of France?

When Marx expressed the opinion that the Paris Commune had committed a mistake in failing to seize the bank, which belonged to the whole of France,<sup>34</sup> did he not proceed from the principles and practice of “pure democracy”?

In actual fact, it is obvious that Kautsky is writing in a country where the police forbid people to laugh “in crowds”, otherwise Kautsky would have been killed by ridicule.

Thirdly, I would respectfully remind Mr. Kautsky, who has Marx and Engels off pat, of the following appraisal of the Paris Commune given by Engels from the point of view of ... “pure democracy”:

Have these gentlemen [the anti-authoritarians] ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon — all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority?<sup>35</sup>

Here is your “pure democracy”! How Engels would have ridiculed the vulgar petty bourgeois, the “Social-Democrat” (in the French sense of the 1840s and the general European sense of 1914-18), who took it into his head to talk about “pure democracy” in a class-divided society!

But that’s enough. It is impossible to enumerate all Kautsky’s various absurdities, since every phrase he utters is a bottomless pit of apostasy.

Marx and Engels analysed the Paris Commune in a most detailed manner and showed that its merit lay in its attempt *to smash, to break up* the “ready-made state machinery”. Marx and Engels considered this conclusion to be so important that this was the *only* amendment they introduced in 1872 into the “obsolete” (in parts) program of the *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>36</sup> Marx and Engels showed that the Paris Commune had abolished the army and the bureaucracy, had abolished *parliamentarism*, had destroyed “that parasitic excrescence, the state”, etc. But the sage Kautsky, donning his nightcap, repeats the fairytale about “pure democracy”, which has been told a thousand times by liberal professors.

No wonder Rosa Luxemburg declared, on August 4, 1914, that German Social-Democracy was a stinking corpse.<sup>37</sup>

Third subterfuge. “When we speak of the dictatorship as a form of government we cannot speak of the dictatorship of a class, since a class, as we have already pointed out, can only rule but not govern ...” It is “organisations” or “parties” that govern.

That is a muddle, a disgusting muddle, Mr. “Muddleheaded Counsellor”! Dictatorship is not a “form of government”; that is ridiculous nonsense. And Marx does not speak of the “form of government” but of the form or type of *state*. That is something altogether different, entirely different. It is altogether wrong, too, to say that a *class* cannot govern: such an absurdity could only have been uttered by a “parliamentary cretin”, who sees nothing but bourgeois parliaments and notices nothing but “ruling parties”. Any European country will provide Kautsky with examples of government by a ruling *class*, for instance, by the landowners in the Middle Ages, in spite of their insufficient organisation.

To sum up: Kautsky has in a most unparalleled manner distorted the concept dictatorship of the proletariat, and has turned Marx into a common liberal; that is, he himself has sunk to the level of a liberal who utters banal phrases about “pure democracy”, embellishing and glossing over the class content of *bourgeois* democracy, and shrinking, above all, from the use of *revolutionary violence* by the oppressed class. By so “interpreting” the concept “revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” as to expunge the revolutionary violence of the oppressed class against its oppressors, Kautsky has beaten the world record in the liberal distortion of Marx. The renegade Bernstein has proved to be a mere puppy compared with the renegade Kautsky. ■

## 2. Bourgeois & Proletarian Democracy

The question which Kautsky has so shamelessly muddled really stands as follows.

If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of “pure democracy” as long as different *classes* exist; we can only speak of class democracy. (Let us say in parenthesis that “pure democracy” is not only an *ignorant* phrase, revealing a lack of understanding both of the class struggle and of the nature of the state, but also a thrice-empty phrase, since in communist society democracy will *wither away* in the process of changing and becoming a habit, but will never be “pure” democracy.)

“Pure democracy” is the mendacious phrase of a liberal who wants to fool the workers. History knows of bourgeois democracy which takes the place of feudalism, and of proletarian democracy which takes the place of bourgeois democracy.

When Kautsky devotes dozens of pages to “proving” the truth that bourgeois democracy is progressive compared with medievalism, and that the proletariat must unflinchingly utilise it in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, that in fact is just liberal twaddle intended to fool the workers. This is a truism, not only for educated Germany, but also for uneducated Russia. Kautsky is simply throwing “learned” dust in the eyes of the workers when, with a pompous mien, he talks about Weitling and the Jesuits of Paraguay and many other things, *in order to avoid* telling about the *bourgeois* essence of modern, i.e., *capitalist*, democracy.

Kautsky takes from Marxism what is acceptable to the liberals, to the bourgeoisie (the criticism of the Middle Ages, and the progressive historical role of capitalism in general and of capitalist democracy in particular), and discards, passes over in silence, glosses over all that in Marxism which is *unacceptable* to the bourgeoisie (the revolutionary violence of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for the latter’s destruction). That is why Kautsky, by virtue of his objective position and irrespective of what his subjective convictions may be, inevitably proves to be a lackey of the bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois democracy, although a great historical advance in comparison with medievalism, always remains, and under capitalism is bound to remain, restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and deception for

the exploited, for the poor. It is this truth, which forms a most essential part of Marx's teaching, that Kautsky the "Marxist" has failed to understand. On this — the fundamental issue — Kautsky offers "delights" for the bourgeoisie instead of a scientific criticism of those conditions which make every bourgeois democracy a democracy for the rich.

Let us first remind the most learned Mr. Kautsky of the theoretical propositions of Marx and Engels which that pedant has so disgracefully "forgotten" (to please the bourgeoisie), and then explain the matter as popularly as possible.

Not only the ancient and feudal, but also "the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital" (Engels, in his work on the state).<sup>38</sup> "As, therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still needs the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist" (Engels, in his letter to Bebel, March 28, 1875).<sup>39</sup> "In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy" (Engels, Introduction to *The Civil War in France* by Marx).<sup>40</sup> Universal suffrage is "the gauge of the maturity of the working class. *It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state*". (Engels, in his work on the state.)<sup>41</sup> Mr. Kautsky very tediously chews over the cud in the first part of this proposition, which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. But the second part, which we have italicised and which is not acceptable to the bourgeoisie, the renegade Kautsky passes over in silence! "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time ... Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and suppress [*ver- und zertreten*] the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business" (Marx, in his work on the Paris Commune, *The Civil War in France*).<sup>42</sup>

Every one of these propositions, which are excellently known to the most learned Mr. Kautsky, is a slap in his face and lays bare his apostasy. Nowhere in his pamphlet does Kautsky reveal the slightest understanding of these truths. His whole pamphlet is a sheer mockery of Marxism!

Take the fundamental laws of modern states, take their administration, take freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, or "equality of all citizens before the law", and you will see at every turn evidence of the hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy with

which every honest and class-conscious worker is familiar. There is not a single state, however democratic, which has no loopholes or reservations in its constitution guaranteeing the bourgeoisie the possibility of dispatching troops against the workers, of proclaiming martial law, and so forth, in case of a “violation of public order”, and actually in case the exploited class “violates” its position of slavery and tries to behave in a non-slavish manner. Kautsky shamelessly embellishes bourgeois democracy and omits to mention, for instance, how the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie in America or Switzerland deal with workers on strike.

The wise and learned Kautsky keeps silent about these things! That learned politician does not realise that to remain silent on this matter is despicable. He prefers to tell the workers nursery tales of the kind that democracy means “protecting the minority”. It is incredible, but it is a fact! In the year of our Lord 1918, in the fifth year of the world imperialist slaughter and the strangulation of internationalist minorities (i.e., those who have not despicably betrayed socialism, like the Renaudels and Longuets, the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Hendersons and Webbs et al.) in all “democracies” of the world, the learned Mr. Kautsky sweetly, very sweetly, sings the praises of “protection of the minority”. Those who are interested may read this on page 15 of Kautsky’s pamphlet. And on page 16 this learned ... individual tells you about the Whigs and Tories in England in the 18th century!

What wonderful erudition! What refined servility to the bourgeoisie! What civilised belly-crawling before the capitalists and boot-licking! If I were Krupp or Scheidemann, or Clemenceau or Renaudel, I would pay Mr. Kautsky millions, reward him with Judas kisses, praise him before the workers and urge “socialist unity” with “honourable” men like him. To write pamphlets against the dictatorship of the proletariat, to talk about the Whigs and Tories in England in the 18th century, to assert that democracy means “protecting the minority”, and remain silent about *pogroms* against internationalists in the “democratic” republic of America — isn’t this rendering lackey service to the bourgeoisie?

The learned Mr. Kautsky has “forgotten” — accidentally forgotten, probably — a “trifle”, namely, that the ruling party in a bourgeois democracy extends the protection of the minority only to another *bourgeois* party, while the proletariat, on all *serious, profound and fundamental* issues, gets martial law or pogroms, instead of the “protection of the minority”. *The more highly developed a democracy is, the more imminent are pogroms or civil war in connection with any profound political divergence which is dangerous to the bourgeoisie.* The learned Mr. Kautsky could have studied this “law” of bourgeois democracy in connection with the Dreyfus case in republican France, with the lynching of Negroes and internationalists in the democratic republic of America,

with the case of Ireland and Ulster in democratic Britain,<sup>43</sup> with the baiting of the Bolsheviks and the staging of pogroms against them in April 1917 in the democratic republic of Russia. I have purposely chosen examples not only from wartime but also from prewar time, peacetime. But mealy-mouthed Mr. Kautsky prefers to shut his eyes to these facts of the 20th century, and instead tell the workers wonderfully new, remarkably interesting, unusually edifying and incredibly important things about the Whigs and Tories of the 18th century!

Take the bourgeois parliament. Can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the *more highly* democracy is developed, the *more* the bourgeois parliaments are subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers? This does not mean that we must not make use of bourgeois parliament (the Bolsheviks made better use of it than probably any other party in the world, for in 1912-14 we won the entire workers' curia in the Fourth Duma). But it does mean that only a liberal can forget the *historical limitations and conventional nature* of the bourgeois parliamentary system as Kautsky does. Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the "democracy" of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the people to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagandists of socialism are constantly exposing to the people, *in order to prepare* them for revolution! And now that the era of revolution *has begun*, Kautsky turns his back upon it and begins to extol the charms of *moribund* bourgeois democracy.

Proletarian democracy, of which Soviet government is one of the forms, has brought a development and expansion of democracy unprecedented in the world, for the vast majority of the population, for the exploited and working people. To write a whole pamphlet about democracy, as Kautsky did, in which two pages are devoted to dictatorship and dozens to "pure democracy", and *fall to notice* this fact, means completely distorting the subject in liberal fashion.

Take foreign policy. In no bourgeois state, not even in the most democratic, is it conducted openly. The people are deceived everywhere, and in democratic France, Switzerland, America and Britain this is done on an incomparably wider scale and in an incomparably subtler manner than in other countries. The Soviet government has torn the veil of mystery from foreign policy in a revolutionary manner. Kautsky has not noticed this, he keeps silent about it, although in the era of predatory wars and secret treaties for the "division of spheres of influence" (i.e., for the partition of the world among the capitalist bandits) this is of *cardinal* importance, for on it depends

the question of peace, the life and death of tens of millions of people.

Take the structure of the state. Kautsky picks at all manner of “trifles”, down to the argument that under the Soviet Constitution elections are “indirect”, but he misses the point. He fails to see the *class* nature of the state apparatus, of the machinery of state. Under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by thousands of tricks — which are the more artful and effective the more “pure” democracy is developed — *drive* the people *away* from administrative work, from freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, etc. The Soviet government is the *first* in the world (or strictly speaking, the second, because the Paris Commune began to do the same thing) to *enlist* the people, specifically the *exploited* people, in the work of administration. The working people are *barred* from participation in bourgeois parliaments (they *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy, which are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) by thousands of obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realise perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the workers by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of the exploiting minority.

The soviets are the direct organisation of the working and exploited people themselves, which *helps* them to organise and administer their own state in every possible way. And in this it is the vanguard of the working and exploited people, the urban proletariat, that enjoys the advantage of being best united by the large enterprises; it is easier for it than for all others to elect and exercise control over those elected. The soviet form of organisation automatically *helps* to unite all the working and exploited people around their vanguard, the proletariat. The old bourgeois apparatus — the bureaucracy, the privileges of wealth, of bourgeois education, of social connections, etc. (these real privileges are the more varied the more highly bourgeois democracy is developed) — all this disappears under the soviet form of organisation. Freedom of the press ceases to be hypocrisy, because the printing-plants and stocks of paper are taken away from the bourgeoisie. The same thing applies to the best buildings, the palaces, the mansions and manorhouses. Soviet power took thousands upon thousands of these best buildings from the exploiters at one stroke, and in this way made the right of assembly — without which democracy is a fraud — *a million times* more democratic for the people. Indirect elections to non-local soviets make it easier to hold congresses of soviets, they make the *entire* apparatus less costly, more flexible, more accessible to the workers and peasants at a time when life is seething and it is necessary to be able very quickly to recall one’s local deputy or to delegate him to a general congress of soviets.

Proletarian democracy is a *million times* more democratic than any bourgeois

democracy; soviet power is a million times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kautsky does not understand this truth, which is so clear and obvious to every

worker, because he has “forgotten”, “unlearned” to put the question: democracy *for which class?* He argues from the point of view of “pure” (i.e., non-class? or above-class?) democracy. He argues like Shylock: my “pound of flesh” and nothing else. Equality for all citizens — otherwise there is no democracy.

We must ask the learned Kautsky, the “Marxist” and “socialist” Kautsky:

Can there be equality between the exploited and the exploiters?

It is dreadful, it is incredible that such a question should have to be put in discussing a book written by the ideological leader of the Second International. But “having put your hand to the plough, don’t look back”, and having undertaken to write about Kautsky, I must explain to the learned man why there can be no equality between the exploiter and the exploited. ■

### 3. Can There Be Equality Between the Exploited & the Exploiter?

Kautsky argues as follows:

(1) “The exploiters have always formed only a small minority of the population” (p. 14 of Kautsky’s pamphlet).

This is indisputably true. Taking this as the starting-point, what should be the argument? One may argue in a Marxist, a socialist way. In which case one would proceed from the relation between the exploited and the exploiters. Or one may argue in a liberal, a bourgeois-democratic way. And in that case one would proceed from the relation between the majority and the minority.

If we argue in a Marxist way, we must say: the exploiters inevitably transform the state (and we are speaking of democracy, i.e., one of the forms of the state) into an instrument of the rule of their class, the exploiters, over the exploited. Hence, as long as there are exploiters who rule the majority, the exploited, the democratic state must inevitably be a democracy for the exploiters. A state of the exploited must fundamentally differ from such a state; it must be a democracy for the exploited, and a means of *suppressing the exploiters*; and the suppression of a class means inequality for that class, its exclusion from “democracy”.

If we argue in a liberal way, we must say: the majority decides, the minority submits. Those who do not submit are punished. That is all. Nothing need be said about the class character of the state in general, or of “pure democracy” in particular, because it is irrelevant; for a majority is a majority and a minority is a minority. A pound of flesh is a pound of flesh, and that is all there is to it.

And this is exactly how Kautsky argues.

(2) “Why should the rule of the proletariat assume, and necessarily assume, a form which is incompatible with democracy?” (p. 21) Then follows a very detailed and a very verbose explanation, backed by a quotation from Marx and the election figures of the Paris Commune, to the effect that the proletariat is in the majority. The conclusion is: “A regime which is so strongly rooted in the people has not the slightest reason for encroaching upon democracy. It cannot always dispense with violence in cases when

violence is employed to suppress democracy. Violence can only be met with violence. But a regime which knows that it has popular backing will employ violence only to *protect* democracy and not to *destroy* it. It would be simply suicidal if it attempted to do away with its most reliable basis — universal suffrage, that deep source of mighty moral authority” (p. 22).

As you see, the relation between the exploited and the exploiters has vanished in Kautsky’s argument. All that remains is majority in general, minority in general, democracy in general, the “pure democracy” with which we are already familiar.

And all this, mark you, is said *apropos of the Paris Commune!* To make things clearer I shall quote Marx and Engels to show what they said on the subject of dictatorship *apropos of the Paris Commune*:

*Marx*: “... When the workers replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by their revolutionary dictatorship ... to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie ... the workers invest the state with a revolutionary and transitional form ...”<sup>44</sup>

*Engels*: “... And the victorious party” (in a revolution) “must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority?...”<sup>45</sup>

*Engels*: “As, therefore, the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one’s adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a ‘free people’s state’; so long as the proletariat still needs the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist ...”<sup>46</sup>

Kautsky is as far removed from Marx and Engels as heaven is from earth, as a liberal from a proletarian revolutionary. The pure democracy and simple “democracy” that Kautsky talks about is merely a paraphrase of the “free people’s state”, i.e., *sheer nonsense*. Kautsky, with the learned air of a most learned armchair fool, or with the innocent air of a 10-year-old schoolgirl, asks: Why do we need a dictatorship when we have a majority? And Marx and Engels explain:

- to break down the resistance of the bourgeoisie;
- to inspire the reactionaries with fear;
- to maintain the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie;
- that the proletariat may forcibly hold down its adversaries.

Kautsky does not understand these explanations. Infatuated with the “purity” of democracy, blind to its bourgeois character, he “consistently” urges that the majority, since it is the majority, need not “break down the resistance” of the minority, nor

“forcibly hold it down” — it is sufficient to suppress *cases* of infringement of democracy. Infatuated with the “purity” of democracy, Kautsky *inadvertently* commits the same little error that all bourgeois democrats always commit, namely, he takes formal equality (which is nothing but a fraud and hypocrisy under capitalism) for actual equality! Quite a trifle!

The exploiter and the exploited cannot be equal.

This truth, however unpleasant it may be to Kautsky, nevertheless forms the essence of socialism.

Another truth: there can be no real, actual equality until all possibility of the exploitation of one class by another has been totally destroyed.

The exploiters can be defeated at one stroke in the event of a successful uprising at the centre, or of a revolt in the army. But except in very rare and special cases, the exploiters cannot be destroyed at one stroke. It is impossible to expropriate all the landowners and capitalists of any big country at one stroke. Furthermore, expropriation alone, as a legal or political act, does not settle the matter by a long chalk, because it is necessary to *depose* the landowners and capitalists in actual fact, to *replace* their management of the factories and estates by a different management, workers’ management, in actual fact. There can be no equality between the exploiters — who for many generations have been better off because of their education, conditions of wealthy life, and habits — and the exploited, the majority of whom even in the most advanced and most democratic bourgeois republics are downtrodden, backward, ignorant, intimidated and disunited. For a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to retain a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once); some movable property — often fairly considerable; they still have various connections, habits of organisation and management; knowledge of all the “secrets” (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of management; superior education; close connections with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie); incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so on and so forth.

If the exploiters are defeated in one country only — and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception — they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited, for the international connections of the exploiters are enormous. That a section of the exploited from the least advanced middle-peasant, artisan and similar groups of the population may, and indeed does, follow the exploiters has been proved by *all* revolutions, including the Commune (for there were also proletarians among the Versailles troops, which the most learned Kautsky has “forgotten”).

In these circumstances, to assume that in a revolution which is at all profound and serious the issue is decided simply by the relation between the majority and the minority is the acme of stupidity, the silliest prejudice of a common liberal, an attempt to *deceive the people* by concealing from them a well-established historical truth. This historical truth is that in every profound revolution, the *prolonged, stubborn and desperate* resistance of the exploiters, who for a number of years retain important practical advantages over the exploited, is the *rule*. Never — except in the sentimental fantasies of the sentimental fool Kautsky — will the exploiters submit to the decision of the exploited majority without trying to make use of their advantages in a last desperate battle, or series of battles.

The transition from capitalism to communism takes an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch is over, the exploiters inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* turns into *attempts* at restoration. After their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters — who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it — throw themselves with energy grown tenfold, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of the “paradise”, of which they were deprived, on behalf of their families, who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the “common herd” is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to “common” labour ...). In the train of the capitalist exploiters follow the wide sections of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom decades of historical experience of all countries testify that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel, and rush from one camp into the other — just like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

In these circumstances, in an epoch of desperately acute war, when history presents the question of whether age-old and thousand-year-old privileges are to be or not to be — at such a time to talk about majority and minority, about pure democracy, about dictatorship being unnecessary and about equality between the exploiter and the exploited! What infinite stupidity and abysmal philistinism are needed for this!

However, during the decades of comparatively “peaceful” capitalism between 1871 and 1914, the Augean stables of philistinism, imbecility, and apostasy accumulated in the socialist parties which were adapting themselves to opportunism ...



The reader will probably have noticed that Kautsky, in the passage from his pamphlet quoted above, speaks of an attempt to encroach upon universal suffrage (calling it, by

the way, a deep source of mighty moral authority, whereas Engels, apropos of the same Paris Commune and the same question of dictatorship, spoke of the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie — a very characteristic difference between the philistine's and the revolutionary's views on "authority" ...).

It should be observed that the question of depriving the exploiters of the franchise is a *purely Russian* question, and not a question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in general. Had Kautsky, casting aside hypocrisy, entitled his pamphlet *Against the Bolsheviks*, the title would have corresponded to the contents of the pamphlet, and Kautsky would have been justified in speaking bluntly about the franchise. But Kautsky wanted to come out primarily as a "theoretician". He called his pamphlet *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat — in general*. He speaks about the soviets and about Russia specifically only in the second part of the pamphlet, beginning with the sixth paragraph. The subject dealt with in the first part (from which I took the quotation) is *democracy and dictatorship in general*. In speaking about the franchise, Kautsky *betrayed himself* as an opponent of the Bolsheviks, *who does not care a brass farthing for theory*. For theory, i.e., the reasoning about the general (and not the nationally specific) class foundations of democracy and dictatorship, ought to deal not with a special question, such as the franchise, but with the general question of whether democracy can be *preserved for the rich, for the exploiters* in the historical period of the overthrow of the exploiters and the replacement of their state by the state of the exploited.

That is the way, the only way, a theoretician can present the question.

We know the example of the Paris Commune, we know all that was said by the founders of Marxism in connection with it and in reference to it. On the basis of this material I examined, for instance, the question of democracy and dictatorship in my pamphlet, *The State and Revolution*, written before the October Revolution. *I did not say anything at all* about restricting the franchise. And it must be said now that the question of restricting the franchise is a nationally specific and not a general question of the dictatorship. One must approach the question of restricting the franchise by studying the *specific conditions* of the Russian revolution and the *specific path* of its development. This will be done later on in this pamphlet. It would be a mistake, however, to guarantee in advance that the impending proletarian revolutions in Europe will all, or the majority of them, be necessarily accompanied by restriction of the franchise for the bourgeoisie. It may be so. After the war and the experience of the Russian revolution it probably will be so; but it is *not absolutely necessary* for the exercise of the dictatorship, it is not an *indispensable* characteristic of the logical concept "dictatorship", it does not enter as an *indispensable* condition in the historical and class concept "dictatorship".

The indispensable characteristic, the necessary condition of dictatorship is the *forcible* suppression of the exploiters as a class, and, consequently, the *infringement* of “pure democracy”, i.e., of equality and freedom, *in regard to that class*.

This is the way, the only way, the question can be put theoretically. And by failing to put the question thus, Kautsky has shown that he opposes the Bolsheviks not as a theoretician, but as a sycophant of the opportunists and the bourgeoisie.

In which countries, and given what national features of capitalism, democracy for the exploiters will be in one or another form restricted (wholly or in part), infringed upon, is a question of the specific national features of this or that capitalism, of this or that revolution. The theoretical question is different: Is the dictatorship of the proletariat possible *without infringing democracy* in relation to the *exploiting* class?

It is precisely this question, the *only* theoretically important and essential one, that Kautsky has evaded. He has quoted all sorts of passages from Marx and Engels, *except those* which bear on this question, and which I quoted above.

Kautsky talks about anything you like, about everything that is acceptable to liberals and bourgeois democrats and does not go beyond their circle of ideas, but he does not talk about the main thing, namely, the fact that the proletariat cannot achieve victory *without breaking the resistance* of the bourgeoisie, *without forcibly suppressing its adversaries*, and that, where there is “forcible suppression”, where there is no “freedom”, *there is, of course, no democracy*.

This Kautsky has not understood.



We shall now examine the experience of the Russian revolution and that divergence between the soviets of deputies and the Constituent Assembly which led to the dissolution of the latter and to the withdrawal of the franchise from the bourgeoisie. ■

## 4. The Soviets Dare Not Become State Organisations

The soviets are the Russian form of the proletarian dictatorship. If a Marxist theoretician, writing a work on the dictatorship of the proletariat, had really studied the subject (and not merely repeated the petty-bourgeois lamentations against dictatorship, as Kautsky did, singing to Menshevik tunes), he would first have given a general definition of dictatorship, and would then have examined its peculiar, national, form, the soviets; he would have given his critique of them as one of the forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It goes without saying that nothing serious could be expected from Kautsky after his liberalistic “interpretation” of Marx’s teaching on dictatorship; but the manner in which he approached the question of what the soviets are and the way he dealt with this question is highly characteristic.

The soviets, he says, recalling their rise in 1905, created “the most all-embracing (*unifassendste*) form of proletarian organisation, for it embraced all the wage-workers” (p. 31). In 1905 they were only local bodies; in 1917 they became a national organisation.

The soviet form of organisation [Kautsky continues] has a great and glorious history behind it, and it has a still mightier future before it, and not in Russia alone. It appears that everywhere the old methods of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate [*versagen*: this German expression is somewhat stronger than “inadequate” and somewhat weaker than “impotent”] against the gigantic economic and political forces which finance capital has at its disposal. These old methods cannot be discarded; they are still indispensable for normal times; but from time to time tasks arise which they cannot cope with, tasks that can be accomplished successfully only as a result of a combination of all the political and economic instruments of force of the working class. (p. 32)

Then follows a reasoning on the mass strike and on “trade union bureaucracy” — which is no less necessary than the trade unions — being “useless for the purpose of directing the mighty mass battles that are more and more becoming a sign of the times ...”

Thus [Kautsky concludes] the soviet form of organisation is one of the most important

phenomena of our time. It promises to acquire decisive importance in the great decisive battles between capital and labour towards which we are marching.

But are we entitled to demand more of the soviets? The Bolsheviks, after the November Revolution [new style, or October, according to our style] 1917, secured in conjunction with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries a majority in the Russian soviets of workers' deputies, and after the dispersion of the Constituent Assembly, they set out to transform the soviets from a *combat organisation* of one *class* as they had been up to then, into a *state organisation*. They destroyed the democracy which the Russian people had won in the March [new style, or February, our style] Revolution. In line with this, the Bolsheviks have ceased to call themselves Social-*Democrats*. They call themselves *Communists*. (p. 33, Kautsky's italics)

Those who are familiar with Russian Menshevik literature will at once see how slavishly Kautsky copies Martov, Axelrod, Stein and Co. Yes, "slavishly", because Kautsky ridiculously distorts the facts in order to pander to Menshevik prejudices. Kautsky did not take the trouble, for instance, to ask his informants (Stein of Berlin, or Axelrod of Stockholm) *when* the questions of changing the name of the Bolsheviks to Communists and of the significance of the soviets as state organisations were first raised. Had Kautsky made this simple inquiry he would not have penned these ludicrous lines, for both these questions were raised by the Bolsheviks *in April 1917*, for example, in my "Theses" of April 4, 1917, i.e., *long before* the revolution of October 1917 (and, of course, long before the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on January 5, 1918).

But Kautsky's argument which I have just quoted in full represents the *crux* of the whole question of the soviets. The *crux* is: should the soviets aspire to become state organisations (in April 1917 the Bolsheviks put forward the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets!" and at the Bolshevik party conference held in the same month they declared they were not satisfied with a bourgeois parliamentary republic but demanded a workers' and peasants' republic of the Paris Commune or soviet type); *or* should the soviets not strive for this, refrain from taking power into their hands, refrain from becoming state organisations and remain the "combat organisations" of one "class" (as Martov expressed it, embellishing by this innocent wish the fact that under Menshevik leadership the soviets were *an instrument for the subjection of the workers to the bourgeoisie*)?

Kautsky slavishly repeats Martov's words, picks out *fragments* of the theoretical controversy between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, and uncritically and senselessly transplants them to the general theoretical and general European field. The result is such a hodge-podge as to provoke Homeric laughter in every class-conscious Russian worker had he read these arguments of Kautsky's.

When we explain what the question at issue is, every worker in Europe (barring a handful of inveterate social-imperialists) will greet Kautsky with similar laughter.

Kautsky has rendered Martov a backhanded service by developing his mistake into a glaring absurdity. Indeed, look what Kautsky's argument amounts to.

The soviets embrace all wage-workers. The old methods of economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate against finance capital. The soviets have a great to play in the future, and not only in Russia. They will play a decisive role in great decisive battles between capital and labour in Europe. That is what Kautsky says.

Excellent. But won't the "decisive battles between capital and labour" decide which of the two classes will assume state power?

Nothing of the kind! Heaven forbid!

The soviets, which embrace all the wage-workers, *must not become state organisations* in the "decisive" battles!

But what is the state?

The state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another.

Thus, the oppressed class, the vanguard of all the working and exploited people in modern society, must strive towards the "decisive battles between capital and labour", *but must not touch* the machine by means of which capital suppresses labour! — *It must not break up* that machine! *It must not make use* of its all-embracing organisation *for suppressing the exploiters!*

Excellent, Mr. Kautsky, magnificent! "We" recognise the class struggle — in the same way as all liberals recognise it, i.e., without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie ...

This is where Kautsky's complete rupture both with Marxism and with socialism becomes obvious. Actually, it is desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie, who are prepared to concede everything except the transformation of the organisations of the class which they oppress into state organisations. Kautsky can no longer save his position of trying to reconcile everything and of getting away from all profound contradictions with mere phrases.

Kautsky either rejects the assumption of state power by the working class altogether, or he concedes that the working class may take over the old, bourgeois state machine. But he will by no means concede that it must break it up, smash it, and replace it by a new, proletarian machine. Whichever way Kautsky's arguments are "interpreted", or "explained", his rupture with Marxism and his desertion to the bourgeoisie are obvious.

Back in the *Communist Manifesto*, describing what sort of state the victorious working class needs, Marx wrote: "the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class".<sup>47</sup> Now we have a man who claims still to be a Marxist coming forward and declaring that the proletariat, fully organised and waging the "decisive battle" against

capital, *must not* transform its class organisation into a state organisation. Here Kautsky has betrayed that “superstitious belief in the state” which in Germany, as Engels wrote in 1891, “has been carried over into the general thinking of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers”.<sup>48</sup> Workers, fight! — our philistine “agrees” to this (as every bourgeois “agrees”, since the workers are fighting all the same, and the only thing to do is to devise means of blunting the edge of their sword) — fight, but *don’t dare win!* Don’t destroy the state machine of the bourgeoisie, don’t replace the bourgeois “state organisation” by the proletarian “state organisation”!

Whoever sincerely shared the Marxist view that the state is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another, and who has at all reflected upon this truth, could never have reached the absurd conclusion that the proletarian organisations capable of defeating finance capital must not transform themselves into state organisations. It was this point that betrayed the petty bourgeois who believes that “after all is said and done” the state is something outside classes or above classes. Indeed, why should the proletariat, “*one class*”, be permitted to wage unremitting war on *capital*, which rules not only over the proletariat, but over the whole people, over the whole petty bourgeoisie, over all the peasants, yet this proletariat, this “*one class*”, is not to be permitted to transform its organisation into a state organisation? Because the petty bourgeois is *afraid* of the class struggle, and does not carry it to its logical conclusion, *to its main object*.

Kautsky has got himself completely mixed up and has given himself away entirely. Mark you, he himself admits that Europe is heading for decisive battles between capital and labour, and that the old methods of economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate. But these old methods were precisely the utilisation of *bourgeois* democracy. It therefore follows ...?

But Kautsky is afraid to think of what follows.

... It therefore follows that only a reactionary, an enemy of the working class, a henchman of the bourgeoisie, can now turn his face to the obsolete past, paint the charms of bourgeois democracy and babble about pure democracy. Bourgeois democracy *was* progressive compared with medievalism, and it had to be utilised. But now it is *not sufficient* for the working class. Now we must look forward instead of backward — to replacing the bourgeois democracy by *proletarian* democracy. And while the preparatory work for the proletarian revolution, the formation and training of the proletarian army were possible (and necessary) *within the framework* of the bourgeois-democratic state, now that we have reached the stage of “decisive battles”, to confine the proletariat to this framework means betraying the cause of the proletariat, means being a renegade.

Kautsky has made himself particularly ridiculous by repeating Martov's argument *without noticing* that in Martov's case this argument was based on *another* argument which he, Kautsky, does not use! Martov said (and Kautsky repeats after him) that Russia is not yet ripe for socialism; from which it logically follows that it is too early to transform the soviets from organs of struggle into state organisations (read: it is timely to transform the soviets, with the assistance of the Menshevik leaders, into instruments for *subjecting* the workers to the imperialist bourgeoisie). Kautsky, however, *cannot* say outright that Europe is not ripe for socialism. In 1909, when he was not yet a renegade, he wrote that there was then no reason to fear a *premature* revolution, that whoever had renounced revolution for fear of defeat would have been a traitor. Kautsky does not dare renounce this *outright*. And so we get an absurdity, which completely reveals the stupidity and cowardice of the petty bourgeois: on the one hand, Europe is ripe for socialism and is heading towards decisive battles between capital and labour; but, on the other hand, the *combat organisation* (i.e., the organisation which arises, grows and gains strength in combat), the organisation of the proletariat, the vanguard and organiser, the leader of the oppressed, *must not* be transformed into a state organisation!



From the point of view of practical politics the idea that the soviets are necessary as combat organisations but must not be transformed into state organisations is infinitely more absurd than from the point of view of theory. Even in peacetime, when there is no revolutionary situation, the mass struggle of the workers against the capitalists — for instance, the mass strike — gives rise to great bitterness on both sides, to fierce passions in the struggle, the bourgeoisie constantly insisting that they remain and mean to remain “masters in their own house”, etc. And in time of revolution, when political life reaches boiling point, an organisation like the soviets, which embraces *all* the workers in *all* branches of industry, *all* the soldiers, and all the working and poorest sections of the rural population — such an organisation, of its own accord, with the development of the struggle, by the simple “logic” of attack and defence, comes inevitably to pose the question *point-blank*. The attempt to take up a middle position and to “reconcile” the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is sheer stupidity and doomed to miserable failure. That is what happened in Russia to the preachings of Martov and other Mensheviks, and that will inevitably happen in Germany and other countries if the soviets succeed in developing on any wide scale, manage to unite and strengthen. To say to the soviets: fight, but don't take all state power into your hands, don't become state organisations — is tantamount to preaching class collaboration and

“social peace” between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is ridiculous even to think that such a position in the midst of fierce struggle could lead to anything but ignominious failure. But it is Kautsky’s everlasting fate to sit between two stools. He pretends to disagree with the opportunists on everything in theory, but *in practice* he agrees with them on everything essential (i.e., on everything pertaining to revolution). ■

## 5. The Constituent Assembly & the Soviet Republic

The question of the Constituent Assembly and its dispersal by the Bolsheviks is the crux of Kautsky's entire pamphlet. He constantly reverts to it, and the whole of this literary production of the ideological leader of the Second International is replete with innuendoes to the effect that the Bolsheviks have "destroyed democracy" (see one of the quotations from Kautsky above). The question is really an interesting and important one, because the relation between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy here confronted the revolution in a *practical* form. Let us see how our "Marxist theoretician" has dealt with the question.

He quotes the "Theses on the Constituent Assembly", written by me and published in *Pravda* on December 26, 1917. One would think that no better evidence of Kautsky's serious approach to the subject, quoting as he does the documents, could he desired. But look *how* he quotes. He does not say that there were 19 of these theses; he does not say that they dealt with the relation between the ordinary bourgeois republic with a constituent assembly and a soviet republic, as well as with the *history* of the divergence in our revolution between the Constituent Assembly and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky ignores all that, and simply tells the reader that "two of them" (of the theses) "are particularly important": one stating that a split occurred among the Socialist-Revolutionaries after the elections to the Constituent Assembly, but before it was convened (Kautsky does not mention that this was the fifth thesis), and the other, that the republic of soviets is in general a higher democratic form than the Constituent Assembly (Kautsky does not mention that this was the third thesis).

Only from this third thesis does Kautsky quote a part in full, namely, the following passage:

"The republic of soviets is not only a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the usual bourgeois republic crowned by a constituent assembly), but is the only form capable of securing the most painless<sup>a</sup> transition to socialism" (Kautsky omits the word "usual" and the introductory words of the thesis: "For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist system, for the dictatorship of the proletariat").

After quoting these words, Kautsky, with magnificent irony, exclaims:

It is a pity that this conclusion was arrived at only after the Bolsheviks found themselves in the minority in the Constituent Assembly. Before that no one had demanded it more vociferously than Lenin.

This is literally what Kautsky says on page 31 of his book!

It is positively a gem! Only a sycophant of the bourgeoisie could present the question in such a false way as to give the reader the impression that all the Bolsheviks' talk about a higher type of state was an invention which saw light of day *after* they found themselves in the minority in the Constituent Assembly! Such an infamous lie could only have been uttered by a scoundrel who has sold himself to the bourgeoisie, or, what is absolutely the same thing, who has placed his trust in Axelrod and is concealing the source of his information.

For everyone knows that on the very day of my arrival in Russia, on April 4, 1917, I publicly read my theses in which I proclaimed the superiority of the Paris Commune type of state over the bourgeois parliamentary republic. Afterwards I *repeatedly* stated this in print, as, for instance, in a pamphlet on political parties, which was translated into English and was published in January 1918 in the New York *Evening Post*.<sup>49</sup> More than that, the conference of the Bolshevik Party held at the end of April 1917 adopted a resolution to the effect that a proletarian and peasant republic was superior to a bourgeois parliamentary republic, that our party would not be satisfied with the latter, and that the party program should be modified accordingly.

In face of these facts, what name can be given to Kautsky's trick of assuring his German readers that I had been vigorously demanding the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and that I began to "belittle" the honour and dignity of the Constituent Assembly only after the Bolsheviks found themselves in the minority in it? How can one excuse such a trick?<sup>b</sup> By pleading that Kautsky did not know the facts? If that is the case, why did he undertake to write about them? Or why did he not honestly announce that he was writing on the strength of information supplied by the

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<sup>a</sup> Incidentally, Kautsky, obviously trying to be ironical, repeatedly quotes the expression "most painless" transition; but as the shaft misses its mark, a few pages farther on he commits a slight forgery and falsely quotes it as a "painless" transition! Of course, by such means it is easy to put any absurdity into the mouth of an opponent. The forgery also helps him to evade the substance of the argument, namely, that the most painless transition to socialism is possible only when all the poor are organised to a man (soviets) and when the core of state power (the proletariat) helps them to organise.

<sup>b</sup> Incidentally, there are many Menshevik lies of this kind in Kautsky's pamphlet! It is a lampoon written by an embittered Menshevik.

Mensheviks Stein and Axelrod and co.? By pretending to be objective, Kautsky wants to conceal his role as the servant of the Mensheviks, who are disgruntled because they have been defeated.

This, however, is a mere trifle compared with what is to come.

Let us assume that Kautsky would not or could not (?) obtain from his informants a translation of the Bolshevik resolutions and declarations on the question of whether the Bolsheviks would be satisfied with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic or not. Let us assume this, although it is incredible. But Kautsky *directly mentions* my theses of December 26, 1917, on page 30 of his book.

Does he not know these theses in full, or does he know only what was translated for him by the Steins, the Axelrods and co.? Kautsky quotes the *third* thesis on the *fundamental* question of whether the Bolsheviks, *before* the elections to the Constituent Assembly, realised that a soviet republic is superior to a bourgeois republic, and whether they told the *people* that, *But he keeps silent about the second thesis.*

The second thesis reads as follows:

While demanding the convocation of a constituent assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has ever since the beginning of the revolution of 1917 *repeatedly emphasised that a republic of soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a constituent assembly* [my italics].

In order to represent the Bolsheviks as unprincipled people, as “revolutionary opportunists” (this is a term which Kautsky employs somewhere in his book, I forget in which connection), Mr. Kautsky *has concealed from his German readers* the fact that the theses contain a direct reference to “*repeated*” declarations!

These are the petty, miserable and contemptible methods Mr. Kautsky employs! That is the way he has evaded the *theoretical* question.

Is it true or not that the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary republic is *inferior* to the republic of the Paris Commune or soviet type? This is the whole point, and Kautsky has evaded it. Kautsky has “forgotten” all that Marx said in his analysis of the Paris Commune. He has also “forgotten” Engels’s letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, in which this same idea of Marx is formulated in a particularly lucid and comprehensible fashion: “The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word.”

Here is the most prominent theoretician of the Second International, in a special pamphlet on *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, specially dealing with Russia, where the question of a form of state that is higher than a democratic bourgeois republic has been raised directly and repeatedly, ignoring this very question. In what way does this differ *in fact* from desertion to the bourgeois camp?

(Let us observe in parenthesis that in this respect, too, Kautsky is merely trailing

after the Russian Mensheviks. Among the latter there are any number of people who know “all the quotations” from Marx and Engels. Yet not a single Menshevik, from April to October 1917 and from October 1917 to October 1918, has *ever* made a *single* attempt to examine the question of the Paris Commune type of state. Plekhanov, too, has evaded the question. *Evidently he had to.*)

It goes without saying that to discuss the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly with people who call themselves socialists and Marxists, but who in fact desert to the bourgeoisie on the *main* question, the question of the Paris Commune type of state, would be casting pearls before swine. It will be sufficient to give the complete text of my theses on the Constituent Assembly as an appendix to the present book. The reader will then see that the question was presented on December 26, 1917, in the light of theory, history and practical politics.

If Kautsky has completely renounced Marxism as a theoretician he might at least have examined the question of the struggle of the soviets with the Constituent Assembly as a historian. We know from many of Kautsky’s works that he *knew how* to be a Marxist historian, and that *such* works of his will remain a permanent possession of the proletariat in spite of his subsequent apostasy. But on this question Kautsky, even as a historian, *turns his back* on the truth, ignores *well-known* facts and behaves like a sycophant. He *wants* to represent the Bolsheviks as being unprincipled and he tells his readers that they tried to *mitigate* the conflict with the Constituent Assembly before dispersing it. There is absolutely nothing wrong about it, we have nothing to recant; I give the theses in full and there it is said as clear as clear can be: Gentlemen of the vacillating petty bourgeoisie entrenched in the Constituent Assembly, either reconcile yourselves to the proletarian dictatorship, or else we shall defeat you by “revolutionary means” (theses 18 and 19).

That is how a really revolutionary proletariat has always behaved and always will behave towards the vacillating petty bourgeoisie.

Kautsky adopts a formal standpoint on the question of the Constituent Assembly. My theses say clearly and repeatedly that the interests of the revolution are higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly (see theses 16 and 17). The formal democratic point of view is precisely the point of view of the *bourgeois* democrat who refuses to admit that the interests of the proletariat and of the proletarian class struggle are supreme. As a historian, Kautsky would not have been able to deny that bourgeois parliaments are the organs of this or that class. But now (for the sordid purpose of renouncing revolution) Kautsky finds it necessary to forget his Marxism, and he *refrains from putting the question*: the organ of what *class* was the Constituent Assembly of Russia? Kautsky does not examine the concrete conditions; he does not want to face

facts; he does not say a single word to his German readers about the fact that the theses contained not only a theoretical elucidation of the question of the limited character of bourgeois democracy (theses 1-3), not only a description of the concrete conditions which determined the discrepancy between the party lists of candidates in the middle of October 1917 and the real state of affairs in December 1917 (theses 4-6), but also *a history of the class struggle and the Civil War* in October-December 1917 (theses 7-15). From this concrete history we drew the conclusion (thesis 14) that the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly!" had, *in reality*, become the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledin men and their abettors.

Kautsky the historian fails to see this. Kautsky the historian has never heard that universal suffrage sometimes produces petty-bourgeois, sometimes reactionary and counter-revolutionary parliaments. Kautsky the Marxist historian has never heard that the form of elections, the form of democracy, is one thing, and the class content of the given institution is another. This question of the class content of the Constituent Assembly is directly put and answered in my theses. Perhaps my answer is wrong. Nothing would have been more welcome to us than a Marxist criticism of our analysis by an outsider. Instead of writing utterly silly phrases (of which there are plenty in Kautsky's book) about somebody preventing criticism of Bolshevism, he ought to have set out to make such a criticism. But the point is that he offers no criticism. He does not even *raise the question* of a class analysis of the soviets on the one hand, and of the Constituent Assembly on the other. It is therefore *impossible* to argue, to debate with Kautsky. All we can do is *demonstrate* to the reader why Kautsky cannot be called anything else but a renegade.

The divergence between the soviets and the Constituent Assembly has its history, which even a historian who does not share the point of view of the class struggle could not have ignored. Kautsky would not *touch* upon this actual history. Kautsky has concealed from his German readers the universally known fact (which only malignant Mensheviks now conceal) that the divergence between the soviets and the "general state" (that is, bourgeois) institutions existed even under the rule of the Mensheviks, i.e., from the end of February to October 1917. Actually, Kautsky adopts the position of conciliation, compromise and collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. However much Kautsky may repudiate this, it is a fact which is borne out by his whole pamphlet. To say that the Constituent Assembly should not have been dispersed is tantamount to saying that the fight against the bourgeoisie should not have been fought to a finish, that the bourgeoisie should not have been overthrown and that the proletariat should have made peace with them.

Why has Kautsky kept quiet about the fact that the Mensheviks were engaged in

this inglorious work between February and October 1917 and did not achieve anything? If it was possible to reconcile the bourgeoisie with the proletariat, why didn't the Mensheviks succeed in doing so? Why did the bourgeoisie stand aloof from the soviets? Why did the *Mensheviks* call the soviets "revolutionary democracy", and the bourgeoisie the "propertied elements"?

Kautsky has concealed from his German readers that it was the Mensheviks who, in the "epoch" of their rule (February to October 1917), called the soviets "revolutionary democracy", *thereby* admitting their superiority over all other institutions. It is only by concealing this fact that Kautsky the historian made it appear that the divergence between the soviets and the bourgeoisie had no history, that it arose instantaneously, without cause, suddenly, because of the bad behaviour of the Bolsheviks. Yet, in actual fact, it was *the more than six months'* (an enormous period in time of revolution) *experience* of Menshevik compromise, of their attempts to reconcile the proletariat with the bourgeoisie, that convinced the people of the fruitlessness of these attempts and drove the proletariat away from the Mensheviks.

Kautsky admits that the soviets are an excellent combat organisation of the proletariat, and that they have a great future before them. But, that being the case, Kautsky's position collapses like a house of cards, or like the dreams of a petty bourgeois that the acute struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be avoided. For revolution is one continuous and moreover desperate struggle, and the proletariat is the vanguard class of *all* the oppressed, the focus and centre of all the aspirations of all the oppressed for their emancipation! Naturally, therefore, the soviets, as the organ of the struggle of the oppressed people, reflected and expressed the moods and changes of opinions of these people ever so much more quickly, fully, and faithfully than any other institution (that, incidentally, is one of the reasons why soviet democracy is the highest type of democracy).

In the period between February 28 (old style) and October 25, 1917, the soviets managed to convene *two* all-Russia congresses of representatives of the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, of all the workers and soldiers, and of 70% or 80% of the peasants, not to mention the vast number of local, uyezd, town, gubernia, and regional congresses. During this period the bourgeoisie did not succeed in convening a single institution representing the majority (except that obvious sham and mockery called the "Democratic Conference",<sup>50</sup> which enraged the proletariat). The Constituent Assembly reflected *the same* popular mood and *the same* political grouping as the First (June) All-Russia Congress of Soviets.<sup>51</sup> By the time the Constituent Assembly was convened (January 1918), the Second (October 1917)<sup>52</sup> and Third (January 1918) Congresses of Soviets<sup>53</sup> had met, both of which had *demonstrated as clear as clear could*

be that the people had swung to the left, had become revolutionised, had turned away from the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and had passed over to the side of the Bolsheviks; *that is*, had turned away from petty-bourgeois leadership, from the illusion that it was possible to reach a compromise with the bourgeoisie, and had joined the proletarian revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

So, even the *external history* of the soviets shows that the Constituent Assembly was a reactionary body and that its dispersal was inevitable. But Kautsky sticks firmly to his “slogan”: let “pure democracy” prevail though the revolution perish and the bourgeoisie triumph over the proletariat! *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus!*<sup>a</sup>

Here are the brief figures relating to the all-Russia congresses of soviets in the course of the history of the Russian revolution:

<i>All-Russia Congress of Soviets</i>	<i>No. of Delegates</i>	<i>No. of Bolsheviks</i>	<i>Percentage Bolsheviks</i>
First (June 3, 1917)	790	103	13
Second (October 25, 1917)	675	343	51
Third (January 10, 1918)	710	434	61
Fourth (March 14, 1918)	1,232	795	64
Fifth (July 4, 1918)	1,164	773	66

One glance at these figures is enough to understand why the defence of the Constituent Assembly and talk (like Kautsky’s) about the Bolsheviks not having a majority of the population behind them are just ridiculed in Russia. ■

<sup>a</sup> Let justice be done, even though the world may perish. — *Ed.*

## 6. The Soviet Constitution

As I have already pointed out, the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie is not a necessary and indispensable feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. And in Russia, the Bolsheviks, who long before October put forward the slogan of proletarian dictatorship, did not say anything in advance about disfranchising the exploiters. *This* aspect of the dictatorship did not make its appearance “according to the plan” of any particular party; it *emerged* of itself in the course of the struggle. Of course, Kautsky the historian failed to notice this. He failed to understand that even when the Mensheviks (who compromised with the bourgeoisie) still ruled the soviets, the bourgeoisie cut themselves off from the soviets of their own accord, boycotted them, put themselves up in opposition to them and intrigued against them. The soviets arose without any constitution and existed without one for *more than a year* (from the spring of 1917 to the summer of 1918). The fury of the bourgeoisie against this independent and omnipotent (because it was all-embracing) organisation of the oppressed; the fight, the unscrupulous, self-seeking and sordid fight, the bourgeoisie waged against the soviets; and, lastly, the overt participation of the bourgeoisie (from the Cadets to the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, from Milyukov to Kerensky) in the Kornilov mutiny — all this *paved the way* for the formal exclusion of the bourgeoisie from the soviets.

Kautsky has heard about the Kornilov mutiny, but he majestically scorns historical facts and the course and forms of the struggle which determine the *forms* of the dictatorship. Indeed, who should care about facts where “pure” democracy is involved? That is why Kautsky’s “criticism” of the disfranchisement of the bourgeoisie is distinguished by such ... sweet naiveté, which would be touching in a child but is repulsive in a person who has not yet been officially certified as feeble-minded.

“... If the capitalists found themselves in an insignificant minority under universal suffrage they would more ... readily become reconciled to their fate” (p. 33). ... Charming, isn’t it? Clever Kautsky has seen many cases in history, and, generally, knows perfectly well from his own observations of life of landowners and capitalists reckoning with the will of the majority of the oppressed. Clever Kautsky firmly advocates an “opposition”, i.e., parliamentary struggle. That is literally what he says: “opposition” (p. 34 and elsewhere).

My dear learned historian and politician! It would not harm you to know that “opposition” is a concept that belongs to the peaceful and only to the parliamentary struggle, i.e., a concept that corresponds to a non-revolutionary situation, a concept that corresponds to an *absence of revolution*. During revolution we have to deal with a ruthless enemy in civil war; and no reactionary jeremiads of a petty bourgeois who fears such a war, as Kautsky does, will alter the fact. To examine the problems of ruthless civil war from the point of view of “opposition” at a time when the bourgeoisie are prepared to commit any crime — the example of the Versailles men and their deals with Bismarck must mean something to every person who does not treat history like Gogol’s *Petrushka*<sup>54</sup> — when the bourgeoisie are summoning foreign states to their aid and intriguing with them against the revolution, is simply comical. The revolutionary proletariat is to put on a nightcap, like “Muddle-headed Counsellor” Kautsky, and regard the bourgeoisie, who are organising Dutov, Krasnov and Czech counterrevolutionary insurrections and are paying millions to saboteurs, as a legal “opposition”. Oh, what profundity!

Kautsky is exclusively interested in the formal, legal aspect of the question, and, reading his disquisitions on the Soviet Constitution, one involuntarily recalls Bebel’s words: Lawyers are thoroughbred reactionaries. “In reality”, Kautsky writes, “the capitalists alone cannot be disfranchised. What is a capitalist in the legal sense of the term? A properly-owner? Even in a country which has advanced so far along the path of economic progress as Germany, where the proletariat is so numerous, the establishment of a soviet republic would disfranchise a large mass of people. In 1907, the number of persons in the German Empire engaged in the three great occupational groups — agriculture, industry and commerce — together with their families amounted roughly to 35 million in the wage-earners’ and salaried employees’ group, and 17 million in the independent group. Hence, a party might well form a majority among the wage-workers but a minority among the population as a whole” (p. 33).

That is an example of Kautsky’s mode of argument. Isn’t it the counter-revolutionary whining of a bourgeois? Why, Mr. Kautsky, have you relegated all the “independents” to the category of the disfranchised, when you know very well that the overwhelming majority of the Russian peasants do not employ hired labour, and do not, therefore, lose their franchise? Isn’t this falsification?

Why, learned economist, did you not quote the facts with which you are perfectly familiar and which are to be found in those same German statistical returns for 1907 relating to hired labour in agriculture according to size of farms? Why did you not quote these facts to enable the German workers, the readers of your pamphlet, to see *how many exploiters there are*, and how few they are compared with the total number

of “farmers” who figure in German statistics?

You did not because your apostasy has made you a mere sycophant of the bourgeoisie.

The term capitalist, Kautsky argues, is legally a vague concept, and on several pages he thunders against the “arbitrariness” of the Soviet Constitution. This “serious scholar” has no objection to the British bourgeoisie taking several centuries to work out and develop a new (new for the Middle Ages) bourgeois constitution, but, representative of lackey’s science that he is, he will allow no time to us, the workers and peasants of Russia. He expects us to have a constitution all worked out to the very last letter in a few months ...

“Arbitrariness!” Just imagine what a depth of vile subservience to the bourgeoisie and most inept pedantry is contained in *such* a reproach. When thoroughly bourgeois and for the most part reactionary lawyers in the capitalist countries have for centuries or decades been drawing up most detailed rules and regulations and writing scores and hundreds of volumes of laws and interpretations of laws to *oppress* the workers, to bind the *poor man* hand and foot and to place thousands of hindrances and obstacles in the way of any of the common labouring people — there the bourgeois liberals and Mr. Kautsky see no “arbitrariness”! That is “law” and “order”! The ways in which the poor are to be “kept down” have all been thought out and written down. There are thousands of bourgeois lawyers and bureaucrats (about them Kautsky says nothing at all, probably just because Marx attached enormous significance to *smashing* the bureaucratic machine ...) — lawyers and bureaucrats who know how to interpret the laws in such a way that the worker and the average peasant can never break through the barbed-wire entanglements of these laws. This is not “arbitrariness” on the part of the bourgeoisie, it is not the dictatorship of the sordid and self-seeking exploiters who are sucking the blood of the people. Nothing of the kind! It is “pure democracy”, which is becoming purer and purer every day.

But now that the toiling and exploited classes, while cut off by the imperialist war from their brothers across the border, have for the first time in history set up their *own* soviets, have called to the work of political construction *those people* whom the bourgeoisie used to oppress, grind down and stupefy, and have begun *themselves* to build a *new*, proletarian state, have begun in the heat of furious struggle, in the fire of civil war, to *sketch* the fundamental principles of a state *without exploiters* — all the bourgeois scoundrels, the whole gang of bloodsuckers, with Kautsky echoing them, howl about “arbitrariness”! Indeed, how will these ignorant people, these workers and peasants, this “mob”, be able to interpret their laws? How can these common labourers acquire a sense of justice without the counsel of educated lawyers, of bourgeois writers,

of the Kautskys and the wise old bureaucrats?

Mr. Kautsky quotes from my speech of April 28, 1918, the words: “The people themselves determine the procedure and the time of elections” — and Kautsky, the “pure democrat”, infers from this:

... Hence, it would mean that every assembly of electors may determine the procedure of elections at their own discretion. Arbitrariness and the opportunity of getting rid of undesirable opposition in the ranks of the proletariat itself would thus be carried to the extreme (p. 37).

Well, how does this differ from the talk of a hack hired by capitalists, who howls about the people oppressing industrious workers who are “willing to work” during a strike? Why is the *bourgeois* bureaucratic method of determining electoral procedure under “pure” bourgeois democracy *not* arbitrariness? Why should the sense of justice *among the masses who have risen to fight* their age-old exploiters and who are being educated and steeled in this desperate struggle be less than that of a *handful* of bureaucrats, intellectuals and lawyers brought up in *bourgeois* prejudices?

Kautsky is a true socialist. Don’t dare suspect the sincerity of this very respectable father of a family, of this very honest citizen. He is an ardent and convinced supporter of the victory of the workers, of the proletarian revolution. All he wants is that the honey-mouthed, petty-bourgeois intellectuals and philistines in nightcaps should *first* — *before* the masses begin to move, *before* they start a furious battle with the exploiters, and certainly *without* civil war — draw up a moderate and precise *set of rules for the development of the revolution* ...

Burning with profound moral indignation, our most learned Judas Golovlyov<sup>55</sup> tells the German workers that on June 14, 1918, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee of Soviets resolved to expel the representatives of the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Party and the Mensheviks from the soviets. “This measure,” writes Judas Kautsky, all afire with noble indignation, “is not directed against definite persons guilty of definite punishable offences ... The Constitution of the Soviet Republic does not contain a single word about the immunity of soviet deputies. It is not definite *persons*, but definite *parties* that are expelled from the soviets” (p. 37).

Yes, that is really awful, an intolerable departure from pure democracy, according to the rules of which our revolutionary Judas Kautsky will make the revolution. We Russian Bolsheviks should first have guaranteed immunity to the Savinkovs and co., to the Lieberdants,<sup>56</sup> Potresovs (“activists”<sup>57</sup>) and co., then drawn up a criminal code proclaiming participation in the Czech counter-revolutionary war, or in the alliance with the German imperialists in the Ukraine or in Georgia *against* the workers of one’s own country, to be “punishable offences”, and *only then*, on the basis of this criminal

code, would we be entitled, in accordance with the principles of “pure democracy” to expel “definite persons” from the soviets. It goes without saying that the Czechs, who are subsidised by the British and French capitalists through the medium (or thanks to the agitation) of the Savinkovs, Potresovs and Lieberdans, and the Krasilovs who receive ammunition from the Germans through the medium of the Ukrainian and Tiflis Mensheviks, would have sat quietly waiting until we were ready with our proper criminal code, and, like the purest democrats they are, would have confined themselves to the role of an “opposition” ...

No less profound moral indignation is aroused in Kautsky’s breast by the fact that the Soviet Constitution disfranchises all those who “employ hired labour with a view to profit”. “A home-worker, or a small master employing only one journeyman”, Kautsky writes, “may live and feel quite like a proletarian, but he has no vote” (p. 36).

What a departure from “pure democracy”! What an injustice! True, up to now all Marxists have thought — and thousands of facts have proved it — that the small masters were the most unscrupulous and grasping exploiters of hired labour, but our Judas Kautsky takes the small masters not as a *class* (who invented that pernicious theory of the class struggle?) but as single individuals, exploiters who “live and feel quite like proletarians”. The famous “thrifty Agnes”, who was considered dead and buried long ago, has come to life again under Kautsky’s pen. This “thrifty Agnes” was invented and launched into German literature some decades ago by that “pure” democrat, the bourgeois Eugen Richter. He predicted untold calamities that would follow the dictatorship of the proletariat, the confiscation of the capital of the exploiters, and asked with an innocent air: What is a capitalist in the legal sense of the term? He took as an example a poor, thrifty seamstress (“thrifty Agnes”), whom the wicked “proletarian dictators” rob of her last farthing. There was a time when all German Social-Democrats used to poke fun at this “thrifty Agnes” of the pure democrat, Eugen Richter. But that was a long, long time ago, when Bebel, who was quite frank and open about there being many national-liberals<sup>58</sup> in his party, was still alive; that was very long ago, when Kautsky was not yet a renegade.

Now “thrifty Agnes” has come to life again in the person of the “small master who employs only one journeyman who lives and feels quite like a proletarian”. The wicked Bolsheviks are wronging him, depriving him of his vote. It is true that “every assembly of electors” in the Soviet Republic, as Kautsky tells us, may admit into its midst a poor little master who, for instance, may be connected with this or that factory, if, by way of an exception, he is not an exploiter, and if he *really* “lives and feels quite like a proletarian”. But can one rely on the knowledge of life, on the sense of justice of an irregular factory meeting of common workers acting (how awful!) without a written code? Would it not

clearly be better to grant the vote to *all* exploiters, to *all* who employ hired labour, rather than risk the possibility of “thrifty Agnes” and the “small master who lives and feels quite like a proletarian” being wronged by the workers?



Let the contemptible renegade scoundrels, amidst the applause of the bourgeoisie and the social-chauvinists,<sup>a</sup> abuse our Soviet Constitution for disfranchising the exploiters! That’s fine because it will accelerate and widen the split between the revolutionary workers of Europe and the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, the Renaudels and Longuets, the Hendersons and Ramsay MacDonalds, the old leaders and old betrayers of socialism.

The mass of the oppressed classes, the class-conscious and honest revolutionary proletarian leaders will be *on our side*. It will be enough to acquaint such proletarians and such people with our Soviet Constitution for them to say at once: “These are really *our people*, this is a real workers’ party, this is a real workers’ government, for it does not deceive the workers by talking about reforms in the way *all the above-mentioned leaders have done*, but is fighting the exploiters in real earnest, making a revolution in real earnest and *actually* fighting for the complete emancipation of the workers.”

The *fact* that after a year’s “experience” the soviets deprived the exploiters of the franchise *shows* that the soviets are really organisations of the oppressed and not social-imperialists and social-pacifists who have sold themselves to the bourgeoisie. The *fact* that the soviets have disfranchised the exploiters *shows* they are not organs of petty-bourgeois compromise with the capitalists, organs of parliamentary chatter (on the part of the Kautskys, the Longuets and the MacDonalds), but organs of the genuinely revolutionary proletariat which is waging a life-and-death struggle against the exploiters.

“Kautsky’s book is almost unknown here”, a well-informed comrade wrote to me from Berlin a few days ago (today is October 30). I would advise our ambassadors in Germany and Switzerland not to stint thousands in buying up this book and *distributing it gratis* among the class-conscious workers so as to trample in the mud this “European” — read: imperialist and reformist — Social-Democracy, which has long been a “stinking corpse”.

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<sup>a</sup> I have just read a leading article in *Frankfurter Zeitung*<sup>59</sup> (No. 293, October 22, 1918), giving an enthusiastic summary of Kautsky’s pamphlet. This organ of the stock exchange is satisfied. And no wonder! And a comrade writes home from Berlin that *Vorwärts*,<sup>60</sup> the organ of the Scheidemanns, has declared in a special article that it subscribes to almost every line Kautsky has written. Hearty congratulations!



At the end of his book, on pages 61 and 63, Mr. Kautsky bitterly laments the fact that the “new theory” (as he calls Bolshevism, fearing to touch Marx’s and Engels’s analysis of the Paris Commune) “finds supporters even in old democracies like Switzerland, for instance”. “It is incomprehensible” to Kautsky “how this theory can be adopted by German Social-Democrats”.

No, it is quite comprehensible; for after the serious lessons of the war the revolutionary masses are becoming sick and tired of the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys.

“We” have always been in favour of democracy, Kautsky writes, yet we are supposed suddenly to renounce it!

“We”, the opportunists of Social-Democracy, have always been opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Kolb and co. proclaimed this *long ago*. Kautsky knows this and vainly expects that he will be able to conceal from his readers the obvious fact that he has “returned to the fold” of the Bernsteins and Kolbs.

“We”, the revolutionary Marxists, have never made a fetish of “pure” (bourgeois) democracy. As is known, in 1903 Plekhanov was a revolutionary Marxist (later his unfortunate turn brought him to the position of a Russian Scheidemann). And in that year Plekhanov declared at our party congress, which was then adopting its program, that in the revolution the proletariat would, if necessary, disfranchise the capitalists and *disperse any parliament* that was found to be counterrevolutionary. That this is the only view that corresponds to Marxism will be clear to anybody even from the statements of Marx and Engels which I have quoted above; it patently follows from all the fundamental principles of Marxism.

“We”, the revolutionary Marxists, never made speeches to the people that the Kautskyites of all nations love to make, cringing before the bourgeoisie, adapting themselves to the bourgeois parliamentary system, keeping silent about the *bourgeois* character of modern democracy and demanding only *its* extension, only that *it* be carried to its logical conclusion.

“We” said to the bourgeoisie: You, exploiters and hypocrites, talk about democracy, while at every step you erect thousands of barriers to prevent the *oppressed people* from taking part in politics. We take you at your word and, in the interests of these people, demand the extension of *your* bourgeois democracy *in order to prepare the people for revolution* for the purpose of overthrowing you, the exploiters. And if you exploiters attempt to offer resistance to our proletarian revolution we shall ruthlessly suppress you; we shall deprive you of all rights; more than that, we shall not give you

any bread, for in our proletarian republic the exploiters will have no rights, they will be deprived of fire and water, for we are socialists in real earnest, and not in the Scheidemann or Kautsky fashion.

That is what “we”, the revolutionary Marxists, said, and will say — and that is why the oppressed people will support us and be with us, while the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys will be swept into the renegades’ cesspool. ■

## 7. What Is Internationalism?

Kautsky is absolutely convinced that he is an internationalist and calls himself one. The Scheidemanns he calls “government socialists”. In defending the Mensheviks (he does not openly express his solidarity with them, but he faithfully expresses their views), Kautsky has shown with perfect clarity what kind of “internationalism” he subscribes to. And since Kautsky is not alone, but is spokesman for a trend which inevitably grew up in the atmosphere of the Second International (Longuet in France, Turati in Italy, Nobs and Grimm, Graber and Naine in Switzerland, Ramsay MacDonald in Britain, etc.), it will be instructive to dwell on Kautsky’s “internationalism”.

After emphasising that the Mensheviks also attended the Zimmerwald conference (a diploma, certainly, but ... a tainted one), Kautsky sets forth the views of the Mensheviks, with whom he agrees, in the following manner:

“... The Mensheviks wanted a general peace. They wanted all the belligerents to adopt the formula: no annexations and no indemnities. Until this had been achieved, the Russian army, according to this view, was to stand ready for battle. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, demanded an immediate peace at any price; they were prepared, if need be, to make a separate peace; they tried to force it by increasing the state of disorganisation of the army, which was already bad enough” (p. 27). In Kautsky’s opinion the Bolsheviks should not have taken power, and should have contented themselves with a constituent assembly.

So, the internationalism of Kautsky and the Mensheviks amounts to this: to demand reforms from the imperialist bourgeois government, but to continue to support it, and to continue to support the war that this government is waging until everyone in the war has accepted the formula: no annexations and no indemnities. This view was repeatedly expressed by Turati, and by the Kautsky supporters (Haase and others), and by Longuet and co., who declared that they stood *for* defence of the fatherland.

Theoretically, this shows a complete inability to dissociate oneself from the social-chauvinists and complete confusion on the question of defence of the fatherland. Politically, it means substituting petty-bourgeois nationalism for internationalism, deserting to the reformists’ camp and renouncing revolution.

From the point of view of the proletariat, recognising “defence of the fatherland”

means justifying the present war, admitting that it is legitimate. And since the war remains an imperialist war (both under a monarchy and under a republic), irrespective of the country — mine or some other country — in which the enemy troops are stationed at the given moment, recognising defence of the fatherland means, *in fact*, supporting the imperialist, predatory bourgeoisie, and completely betraying socialism. In Russia, even under Kerensky, under the bourgeois-democratic republic, the war continued to be an imperialist war, for it was being waged by the bourgeoisie as a ruling class (and war is a “continuation of politics”); and a particularly striking expression of the imperialist character of the war were the secret treaties for the partitioning of the world and the plunder of other countries which had been concluded by the tsar at the time with the capitalists of Britain and France.

The Mensheviks deceived the people in a most despicable manner by calling this war a defensive or revolutionary war. And by approving the policy of the Mensheviks, Kautsky is approving the popular deception, is approving the part played by the petty bourgeoisie in helping capital to trick the workers and harness them to the chariot of the imperialists. Kautsky is pursuing a characteristically petty-bourgeois, philistine policy by pretending (and trying to make the people believe the absurd idea) that *putting forward a slogan* alters the position. The entire history of bourgeois democracy refutes this illusion; the bourgeois democrats have always advanced all sorts of “slogans” to deceive the people. The point is to *test* their sincerity, to compare their words with their *deeds*, not to be satisfied with idealistic or charlatan *phrases*, but to get down to *class reality*. An imperialist war does not cease to be imperialist when charlatans or phrase-mongers or petty-bourgeois philistines put forward sentimental “slogans”, but only when the *class* which is conducting the imperialist war, and is bound to it by millions of economic threads (and even ropes), is really *overthrown* and is replaced at the helm of state by the really revolutionary class, the proletariat. *There is no other way of getting out of an imperialist war, as also out of an imperialist predatory peace.*

By approving the foreign policy of the Mensheviks. and by declaring it to be internationalist and Zimmerwaldist, Kautsky, first, reveals the utter rottenness of the opportunist Zimmerwald majority (no wonder we, the *Left* Zimmerwaldists, at once dissociated ourselves from such a majority!), and, secondly — and this is the chief thing — passes from the position of the proletariat to the position of the petty bourgeoisie, from the revolutionary to the reformist.

The proletariat fights for the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie; the petty bourgeoisie fights for the reformist “improvement” of imperialism, for adaptation to it, while *submitting* to it. When Kautsky was still a Marxist, for example, in 1909, when he wrote his *Road to Power*, it was the idea that war would inevitably lead

to *revolution* that he advocated, and he spoke of the approach of an *era of revolutions*. The Basle Manifesto of 1912 plainly and definitely speaks of a *proletarian revolution* in connection with that very imperialist war between the German and the British groups which actually broke out in 1914. But in 1918, when revolutions did begin in connection with the war, Kautsky, instead of explaining that they were inevitable, instead of pondering over and thinking out the *revolutionary* tactics and the ways and means of preparing for revolution, began to describe the reformist tactics of the Mensheviks as internationalism. Isn't this apostasy?

Kautsky praises the Mensheviks for having insisted on maintaining the fighting strength of the army, and he blames the Bolsheviks for having added to "disorganisation of the army", which was already disorganised enough as it was. This means praising reformism and submission to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and blaming and renouncing revolution. For under Kerensky maintaining the fighting strength of the army meant its preservation under *bourgeois* (albeit republican) command. Everybody knows, and the progress of events has strikingly confirmed it, that this republican army preserved the *Kornilov* spirit because its officers were Kornilov men. The bourgeois officers could not help being Kornilov men; they could not help gravitating towards imperialism and towards the forcible suppression of the proletariat. All that the Menshevik tactics amounted to *in practice* was to leave all the foundations of the imperialist war and all the foundations of the *bourgeois* dictatorship intact, to patch up details and to daub over a few trifles ("reforms").

On the other hand, not a single great revolution has ever taken place, or ever can take place, without the "disorganisation" of the army. For the army is the most ossified instrument for supporting the old regime, the most hardened bulwark of bourgeois discipline, buttressing up the rule of capital, and preserving and fostering among the working people the servile spirit of submission and subjection to capital. Counterrevolution has never tolerated, and never could tolerate, armed workers side by side with the army. In France, Engels wrote, the workers emerged armed from every revolution: "therefore, the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeoisie, who were at the helm of the state."<sup>61</sup> The armed workers were the embryo of a *new* army, the organised nucleus of a *new* social order. The first commandment of the bourgeoisie was to crush this nucleus and prevent it from growing. The first commandment of every victorious revolution, as Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised, was to smash the old army, dissolve it and replace it by a new one. A new social class, when rising to power, never could, and cannot now, attain power and consolidate it except by completely disintegrating the old army ("Disorganisation!" the reactionary or just cowardly philistines howl on this score),

except by passing through a most difficult and painful period without any army (the great French Revolution also passed through such a painful period), and by gradually building up, in the midst of hard civil war, a new army, a new discipline, a new military organisation of the new class. Formerly, Kautsky the historian understood this. Now, Kautsky the renegade has forgotten it.

What right has Kautsky to call the Scheidemanns “government socialists” if he *approves* of the tactics of the Mensheviks in the Russian revolution? In supporting Kerensky and joining his ministry, the Mensheviks were also government socialists. Kautsky could not escape this conclusion if he were to put the question as to which is the *ruling class* that is waging the imperialist war. But Kautsky avoids raising the question about the ruling class, a question that is imperative for a Marxist, for the mere raising of it would expose the renegade.

The Kautsky supporters in Germany, the Longuet supporters in France, and Turati and co. in Italy argue in this way: socialism presupposes the equality and freedom of nations, their self-determination, *hence*, when our country is attacked, or when enemy troops invade our territory, it is the right and duty of socialists to defend their country. But theoretically such an argument is either a sheer mockery of socialism or a fraudulent subterfuge, while from the point of view of practical politics it coincides with the argument of the quite ignorant country yokel who has even no conception of the social, class character of the war, and of the tasks of a revolutionary party during a reactionary war.

Socialism is opposed to violence against nations. That is indisputable. But socialism is opposed to violence against men in general. Apart from Christian anarchists and Tolstoyans, however, no one has yet drawn the conclusion from this that socialism is opposed to *revolutionary* violence. So, to talk about “violence” in general, without examining the conditions which distinguish reactionary from revolutionary violence, means being a philistine who renounces revolution, or else it means simply deceiving oneself and others by sophistry.

The same holds true of violence against nations. Every war is violence against nations, but that does not prevent socialists from being *in favour* of a revolutionary war. The class character of war — that is the fundamental question which confronts a socialist (if he is not a renegade). The imperialist war of 1914-18 is a war between two groups of the imperialist bourgeoisie for the division of the world, for the division of the booty, and for the plunder and strangulation of small and weak nations. This was the appraisal of the impending war given in the Basle Manifesto in 1912, and it has been confirmed by the facts. Whoever departs from this view of war is not a socialist.

If a German under Wilhelm or a Frenchman under Clemenceau says, “It is my

right and duty as a socialist to defend my country if it is invaded by an enemy”, he argues not like a socialist, not like an internationalist, not like a revolutionary proletarian, but like a *petty-bourgeois nationalist*. Because this argument ignores the revolutionary class struggle of the workers against capital, it ignores the appraisal of the war as a *whole* from the point of view of the world bourgeoisie and the world proletariat, that is, it ignores internationalism, and all that remains is miserable and narrow-minded nationalism. My country is being wronged, that is all I care about — that is what this argument amounts to, and that is where its petty-bourgeois, nationalist narrow-mindedness lies. It is the same as if in regard to individual violence, violence against an individual, one were to argue that socialism is opposed to violence and therefore I would rather be a traitor than go to prison.

The Frenchman, German or Italian who says: “Socialism is opposed to violence against nations, *therefore* I defend myself when my country is invaded”, *betrays* socialism and internationalism, because such a man sees *only* his own “country”, he puts “his own” ... *bourgeoisie* above everything else and does not give a thought to the *international connections* which make the war an imperialist war and *his* bourgeoisie a link in the chain of imperialist plunder.

All philistines and all stupid and ignorant yokels argue in the same way as the renegade Kautsky supporters, Longuet supporters, Turati and co.: “The enemy has invaded my country, I don’t care about anything else.”<sup>a</sup>

The socialist, the revolutionary proletarian, the internationalist, argues differently. He says: “The character of the war (whether it is reactionary or revolutionary) does not depend on who the attacker was, or in whose country the ‘enemy’ is stationed; it depends on *what class* is waging the war, and on what politics this war is a continuation of. If the war is a reactionary, imperialist war, that is, if it is being waged by two world groups of the imperialist, rapacious, predatory, reactionary bourgeoisie, then every bourgeoisie (even of the smallest country) becomes a participant in the plunder, and my duty as a representative of the revolutionary proletariat is to prepare for the *world*

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<sup>a</sup> The social-chauvinists (the Scheidemanns, Renaudels, Hendersons, Gomperses and co.) absolutely refuse to talk about the “International” during the war. They regard the enemies of “*their*” respective bourgeoisies as “traitors” to ... socialism. They *support* the policy of conquest pursued by *their* respective bourgeoisies. The social-pacifists (i.e., socialists in words and petty-bourgeois pacifists in practice) express all sorts of “internationalist” sentiments, protest against annexations, etc., but *in practice* they continue to *support their* respective imperialist bourgeoisies. The difference between the two types is unimportant; it is like the difference between two capitalists — one with bitter, and the other with sweet, words on his lips.

*proletarian revolution* as the *only* escape from the horrors of a world slaughter. I must argue, not from the point of view of ‘my’ country (for that is the argument of a wretched, stupid, petty-bourgeois nationalist who does not realise that he is only a plaything in the hands of the imperialist bourgeoisie), but from the point of view of *my share* in the preparation, in the propaganda, and in the acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.”

That is what internationalism means, and that is the duty of the internationalist, the revolutionary worker, the genuine socialist. That is the *ABC* that Kautsky the renegade has “forgotten”. And his apostasy becomes still more obvious when he passes from approving the tactics of the petty-bourgeois nationalists (the Mensheviks in Russia, the Longuet supporters in France, the Turatis in Italy, and Haase and co. in Germany) to criticising the Bolshevik tactics. Here is his criticism:

The Bolshevik revolution was based on the assumption that it would become the starting-point of a general European revolution, that the bold initiative of Russia would prompt the proletarians of all Europe to rise.

On this assumption it was, of course, immaterial what forms the Russian separate peace would take, what hardships and territorial losses (literally: mutilation or maiming, *Verstümmelungen*) it would cause the Russian people, and what interpretation of the self-determination of nations it would give. At that time it was also immaterial whether Russia was able to defend herself or not. According to this view, the European revolution would be the best protection of the Russian revolution, and would bring complete and genuine self-determination to all peoples inhabiting the former Russian territory.

A revolution in Europe, which would establish and consolidate socialism there, would also become the means of removing the obstacles that would arise in Russia in the way of the introduction of the socialist system of production owing to the economic backwardness of the country.

All this was very logical and very sound — only if the main assumption were granted, namely, that the Russian revolution would infallibly let loose a European revolution. But what if that did not happen?

So far the assumption has not been justified. And the proletarians of Europe are now being accused of having abandoned and betrayed the Russian revolution. This is an accusation levelled against unknown persons, for who is to be held responsible for the behaviour of the European proletariat? (p. 28)

And Kautsky then goes on to explain at great length that Marx, Engels and Bebel were more than once mistaken about the advent of revolution they had anticipated, but that they never based their tactics on the expectation of a revolution “*at a definite date*” (p. 29), whereas, he says, the Bolsheviks “staked everything on one card, on a general

European revolution”.

We have deliberately quoted this long passage to demonstrate to our readers Kautsky’s “skill” in counterfeiting Marxism by palming off his banal and reactionary philistine view in its stead.

First, to ascribe to an opponent an obviously stupid idea and then to refute it is a trick practised by none-too-clever people. If the Bolsheviks had based their tactics on the expectation of a revolution in other countries *by a definite date* that would have been an undeniable stupidity. But the Bolshevik Party has never been guilty of such stupidity. In my letter to American workers (August 20, 1918), I expressly disown this foolish idea by saying that we count on an American revolution, but not by any definite date. I dwell at length upon the very same idea more than once in my controversy with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the “Left Communists” (January-March 1918). Kautsky has committed a slight ... just a very slight forgery, on which he in fact based his criticism of Bolshevism. Kautsky has confused tactics based on the expectation of a European revolution in the more or less near future, but not at a definite date, with tactics based on the expectation of a European revolution at a definite date. A slight, just a very slight forgery!

The last-named tactics are foolish. The first-named are *obligatory* for a Marxist, for every revolutionary proletarian and internationalist — *obligatory*, because they alone take into account in a proper Marxist way the objective situation brought about by the war in all European countries, and they alone conform to the international tasks of the proletariat.

By substituting the petty question about an error which the Bolshevik revolutionaries might have made, but did not, for the important question of the foundations of revolutionary tactics in general, Kautsky adroitly abjures all revolutionary tactics!

A renegade in politics, he is *unable even to present the question* of the objective prerequisites of revolutionary tactics theoretically.

And this brings us to the second point.

Secondly, it is obligatory for a Marxist to count on a European revolution if a *revolutionary situation* exists. It is the ABC of Marxism that the tactics of the socialist proletariat cannot be the same both when there is a revolutionary situation and when there is no revolutionary situation.

If Kautsky had put this question, which is obligatory for a Marxist, he would have seen that the answer was absolutely against him. Long before the war, all Marxists, all socialists were agreed that a European war would create a revolutionary situation. Kautsky himself, before he became a renegade, clearly and definitely recognised this

— in 1902 (in his *Social Revolution*) and in 1909 (in his *Road to Power*). It was also admitted in the name of the entire Second International in the Basle Manifesto. No wonder the social-chauvinists and Kautsky supporters (the “centrists”, i.e., those who waver between the revolutionaries and the opportunists) of all countries shun like the plague the declarations of the Basle Manifesto on this score!

So, the expectation of a revolutionary situation in Europe was not an infatuation of the Bolsheviks, but the *general opinion* of all Marxists. When Kautsky tries to escape from this indisputable truth using such phrases as the Bolsheviks “always believed in the omnipotence of violence and will”, he simply utters a sonorous and empty phrase to *cover up* his evasion, a shameful evasion, to put the question of a revolutionary situation.

To proceed. Has a revolutionary situation actually come or not? Kautsky proved unable to put this question either. The economic facts provide an answer: the famine and ruin created everywhere by the war imply a revolutionary situation. The political facts also provide an answer: ever since 1915 a splitting process has been evident in *all* countries within the old and decayed socialist parties, a process of *departure of the mass* of the proletariat from the social-chauvinist leaders to the left, to revolutionary ideas and sentiments, to revolutionary leaders.

Only a person who dreads revolution and betrays it could have failed to see these facts on August 5, 1918, when Kautsky was writing his pamphlet. And now, at the end of October 1918, the revolution is growing *in a number* of European countries, and growing under everybody’s eyes and very rapidly at that. Kautsky the “revolutionary”, who still wants to be regarded as a Marxist, has proved to be a short-sighted philistine, who, like those philistines of 1847 whom Marx ridiculed, failed to see the approaching revolution!

Now to the third point.

Thirdly, what should be the specific features of revolutionary tactics when there is a revolutionary situation in Europe? Having become a renegade. Kautsky feared to put this question, which is obligatory for a Marxist. Kautsky argues like a typical petty bourgeois, a philistine, or like an ignorant peasant: has a “general European revolution” begun or not? If it has, then *he too* is prepared to become a revolutionary! But then, mark you, every scoundrel (like the scoundrels who now sometimes attach themselves to the victorious Bolsheviks) would proclaim himself a revolutionary!

If it has not, then Kautsky will turn his back on revolution! Kautsky does not display a shade of understanding of the truth that a revolutionary Marxist differs from the philistine and petty bourgeois by his ability to *preach* to the uneducated masses that the maturing revolution is necessary, to *prove* that it is inevitable, to *explain* its

benefits to the people, and to *prepare* the proletariat and all the working and exploited people for it.

Kautsky ascribed to the Bolsheviks an absurdity, namely, that they had staked everything on one card, on a European revolution breaking out at a definite date. This absurdity has turned against Kautsky himself, because the logical conclusion of his argument is that the tactics of the Bolsheviks would have been correct if a European revolution had broken out by August 5, 1918! That is the date Kautsky mentions as the time he was writing his pamphlet. And when, a few weeks after this August 5, it became clear that revolution was coming in a number of European countries, the whole apostasy of Kautsky, his whole falsification of Marxism, and his utter inability to reason or even to present questions in a revolutionary manner, became revealed in all their charm!

When the proletarians of Europe are accused of treachery, Kautsky writes, it is an accusation levelled at unknown persons.

You are mistaken, Mr. Kautsky! Look in the mirror and you will see those “unknown persons” against whom this accusation is levelled. Kautsky assumes an air of naïveté and pretends not to understand *who* levelled the accusation, and its *meaning*. In reality, however, Kautsky knows perfectly well that the accusation has been and is being levelled by the German “lefts”, by the Spartacists, by Liebknecht and his friends. This accusation expresses a *clear appreciation* of the fact that the German proletariat betrayed the Russian (and world) revolution when it strangled Finland, the Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia. This accusation is levelled primarily and above all, not against the *masses*, who are always downtrodden, but against those *leaders* who, like the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, *failed* in their duty to carry on revolutionary agitation, revolutionary propaganda, revolutionary work among the masses to overcome their inertness, who in fact worked *against* the revolutionary instincts and aspirations which are always aglow deep down among the mass of the oppressed class. The Scheidemanns bluntly, crudely, cynically, and in most cases for selfish motives betrayed the proletariat and deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie. The Kautsky and the Longuet supporters did the same thing, only hesitatingly and haltingly, and casting cowardly side-glances at those who were stronger at the moment. In all his writings during the war Kautsky tried to *extinguish* the revolutionary spirit instead of fostering and fanning it.

The fact that Kautsky does not even understand the enormous *theoretical* importance, and the even greater agitational and propaganda importance, of the “accusation” that the proletarians of Europe have betrayed the Russian revolution will remain a veritable historical monument to the philistine stupefaction of the “average” leader of German official Social-Democracy! Kautsky does not understand that, owing

to the censorship prevailing in the German “Reich”, this “accusation” is perhaps the only form in which the German socialists who have not betrayed socialism — Liebknecht and his friends — can express *their appeal to the German workers* to throw off the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, to push aside such “leaders”, to free themselves from their stultifying and debasing propaganda, to rise in revolt *in spite* of them, *without* them, and march over their heads *towards revolution!*

Kautsky does not understand this. And how could he understand the tactics of the Bolsheviks? Can a man who renounces revolution in general be expected to weigh and appraise the conditions of the development of revolution in one of the most “difficult” cases?

The Bolsheviks’ tactics were correct; they were the *only* internationalist tactics, because they were based, not on the cowardly fear of a world revolution, not on a philistine “lack of faith” in it, not on the narrow nationalist desire to protect one’s “own” fatherland (the fatherland of one’s own bourgeoisie), while not “giving a damn” about all the rest, but on a correct (and, before the war and before the apostasy of the social-chauvinists and social-pacifists, a universally accepted) *estimation* of the revolutionary situation in Europe. These tactics were the only internationalist tactics, because they did the utmost possible in one country *for* the development, support and awakening of the revolution *in all countries*. These tactics have been justified by their enormous success, for Bolshevism (not by any means because of the merits of the Russian Bolsheviks, but because of the most profound sympathy of the *people* everywhere for tactics that are revolutionary in practice) has become *world* Bolshevism, has produced an idea, a theory, a program and tactics which differ concretely and in practice from those of social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. Bolshevism *has given a coup de grâce* to the old, decayed International of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys, Renaudels and Longuets, Hendersons and MacDonalds, who from now on will be treading on each other’s feet, dreaming about “unity” and trying to revive a corpse. Bolshevism *has created* the ideological and tactical foundations of a Third International, of a really proletarian and Communist International, which will take into consideration both the gains of the tranquil epoch and the experience of the *epoch of revolutions, which has begun*.

Bolshevism has popularised throughout the world the idea of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, has translated these words from the Latin, first into Russian, and then into *all* the languages of the world, and has shown by the example of *soviet government* that the workers and poor peasants, *even* of a backward country, even with the least experience, education and habits of organisation, *have been able* for a whole year, amidst gigantic difficulties and amidst a struggle against the exploiters (who were

supported by the bourgeoisie of the *whole* world), to maintain the power of the working people, to create a democracy that is immeasurably higher and broader than all previous democracies in the world, and to *start* the creative work of tens of millions of workers and peasants for the practical construction of socialism.

Bolshevism has actually helped to develop the proletarian revolution in Europe and America more powerfully than any party in any other country has so far succeeded in doing. While the workers of the whole world are realising more and more clearly every day that the tactics of the Scheidemanns and Kautskys have not delivered them from the imperialist war and from wage-slavery to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and that these tactics cannot serve as a model for all countries, the mass of workers in all countries are realising more and more clearly every day that Bolshevism has indicated the right road of escape from the horrors of war and imperialism, that Bolshevism *can serve as a model of tactics for all*.

Not only the general European, but the world, proletarian revolution is maturing before the eyes of all, and it has been assisted, accelerated and supported by the victory of the proletariat in Russia. All this is not enough for the complete victory of socialism, you say? Of course it is not enough. One country alone cannot do more. But this one country, thanks to soviet government, has done so much that even if soviet government in Russia were to be crushed by world imperialism tomorrow, as a result, let us say, of an agreement between German and Anglo-French imperialism — even granted that very worst possibility — it would still be found that Bolshevik tactics have brought enormous benefit to socialism and have assisted the growth of the invincible world revolution. ■

## 8. Subservience to the Bourgeoisie in the Guise of ‘Economic Analysis’

As has already been said, if the title of Kautsky’s book were properly to reflect its contents, it should have been called, not *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, but *A Rehash of Bourgeois Attacks on the Bolsheviks*.

The old Menshevik “theories” about the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution, i.e., the old distortion of Marxism by the Mensheviks (*rejected* by Kautsky in 1905!) are now once again being rehashed by our theoretician. We must deal with this question, however boring it may be for Russian Marxists.

The Russian revolution is a bourgeois revolution, said all the Marxists of Russia before 1905. The Mensheviks, substituting liberalism for Marxism, drew the following conclusion from this: the proletariat therefore must not go beyond what is acceptable to the bourgeoisie and must pursue a policy of compromise with them. The Bolsheviks said this was a bourgeois-liberal theory. The bourgeoisie were trying to bring about the reform of the state on bourgeois, *reformist*, not revolutionary lines, while preserving the monarchy, the landlord system, etc., as far as possible. The proletariat must carry through the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end, not allowing itself to be “bound” by the reformism of the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks formulated the alignment of *class* forces in the bourgeois revolution as follows: the proletariat, winning over the peasants, will neutralise the liberal bourgeoisie and utterly destroy the monarchy, medievalism and the landlord system.

It is the alliance between the proletariat and the peasants *in general* that reveals the bourgeois character of the revolution, for the peasants in general are small producers who exist on the basis of commodity production. Further, the Bolsheviks then added, the proletariat will win over *the entire semi-proletariat* (all the working and exploited people), will neutralise the middle peasants and *overthrow* the bourgeoisie; this will be a socialist revolution, as distinct from a bourgeois-democratic revolution. (See my pamphlet *Two Tactics*, published in 1905 and reprinted in *Twelve Years*, St. Petersburg, 1907.)

Kautsky took an indirect part in this controversy in 1905, when, in reply to an

inquiry by the then Menshevik Plekhanov, he expressed an opinion that was essentially *against* Plekhanov, which provoked particular ridicule in the Bolshevick press at the time. But now Kautsky does *not say a single word* about the controversies of that time (for fear of being exposed by his own statements!) and thereby makes it utterly impossible for the German reader to understand the essence of the matter. Mr. Kautsky *could not* tell the German workers in 1918 that in 1905 he had been in favour of an alliance of the workers with the peasants and not with the liberal bourgeoisie, and on what conditions he had advocated this alliance, and what program he had outlined for it.

Backing out from his old position, Kautsky, under the guise of an “economic analysis”, and talking proudly about “historical materialism”, now advocates the subordination of the workers to the bourgeoisie, and, with the aid of quotations from the Menshevik Maslov, chews over the old liberal views of the Mensheviks. Quotations are used to prove the new idea of the backwardness of Russia. But the deduction drawn from this new idea is the old one, that in a bourgeois revolution one must not go farther than the bourgeoisie! And this in spite of all that Marx and Engels said when comparing the bourgeois revolution of 1789-93 in France with the bourgeois revolution of 1848 in Germany!<sup>62</sup>

Before passing to the chief “argument” and the main content of Kautsky’s “economic analysis”, let us note that Kautsky’s very first sentences reveal a curious confusion, or superficiality, of thought.

“Agriculture, and specifically small peasant farming”, our “theoretician” announces, “to this day represents the economic foundation of Russia. About four-fifths, perhaps even five-sixths, of the population live by it” (p. 45). First of all, my dear theoretician, have you considered how many exploiters there may be among this mass of small producers? Certainly not more than one-tenth of the total, and in the towns still less, for there large-scale production is more highly developed. Take even an incredibly high figure; assume that one-fifth of the small producers are exploiters who are deprived of the franchise. Even then you will find that the 66% of the votes held by the Bolsheviks at the Fifth Congress of Soviets represented the *majority of the population*. To this it must be added that there was always a considerable section of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who were in favour of soviet power — in principle *all* the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were in favour of soviet power, and when a section of them, in July 1918, started an adventurous revolt, two new parties split away from the old party, namely, the “Narodnik Communists” and the “Revolutionary Communists”<sup>63</sup> (of the prominent Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who had been nominated for important posts in the government by the old party, to the first-mentioned belongs Zax, for instance,

and to the second Kolegayev). So, Kautsky has himself — inadvertently — refuted the ridiculous fable that the Bolsheviks only have the backing of a minority of the population.

Secondly, my dear theoretician, have you considered the fact that the small peasant producer *inevitably* vacillates between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? This Marxist truth, which has been confirmed by the whole modern history of Europe, Kautsky very conveniently “forgot”, for it simply demolishes the Menshevik “theory” that he keeps repeating! Had Kautsky not “forgotten” this he could not have denied the need for a proletarian dictatorship in a country in which the small peasant producers predominate.

Let us examine the main content of our theoretician’s “economic analysis”.

That soviet power is a dictatorship cannot be disputed, says Kautsky. “But is it a dictatorship *of the proletariat?*” (p. 34)

According to the Soviet constitution, the peasants form the majority of the population entitled to participate in legislation and administration. What is presented to us as a dictatorship *of the proletariat* would prove to be — if carried out consistently, and if, generally speaking, a class could directly exercise a dictatorship, which in reality can only be exercised by a party — a dictatorship *of the peasants* (p. 35).

And, highly elated over so profound and clever an argument, our good Kautsky tries to be witty and says: “It would appear, therefore, that the most painless achievement of socialism is best assured when it is put in the hands of the peasants” (p. 35).

In the greatest detail, and citing a number of extremely learned quotations from the semi-liberal Maslov, our theoretician labours to prove the new idea that the peasants are interested in high grain prices, in low wages for the urban workers, etc., etc. Incidentally, the enunciation of these new ideas is the more tedious the less attention our author pays to the really new features of the postwar period — for example, that the peasants demand for their grain, not money, but goods, and that they have not enough agricultural implements, which cannot be obtained in sufficient quantities for any amount of money. But more of this later.

Thus, Kautsky charges the Bolsheviks, the party of the proletariat, with having surrendered the dictatorship, the work of achieving socialism, to the petty-bourgeois peasants. Excellent, Mr. Kautsky! But what, in your enlightened opinion, should have been the attitude of the proletarian party towards the petty-bourgeois peasants?

Our theoretician preferred to say nothing on this score — evidently bearing in mind the proverb: “Speech is silver, silence is gold.” But he gives himself away by the following argument:

At the beginning of the Soviet Republic, the peasants’ soviets were organisations of the *peasants* in general. Now this republic proclaims that the soviets are organisations of

the proletarians and the *poor* peasants. The well-to-do peasants are deprived of the suffrage in the elections to the soviets. The poor peasant is here recognised to be a permanent and mass product of the socialist agrarian reform under the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. (p. 48)

What deadly irony! It is the kind that may be heard in Russia from any bourgeois: they all jeer and gloat over the fact that the Soviet Republic openly admits the existence of poor peasants. They ridicule socialism. That is their right. But a “socialist” who jeers at the fact that after four years of a most ruinous war there remain (and will remain for a long time) poor peasants in Russia — such a “socialist” could only have been born at a time of wholesale apostasy.

And further:

...The Soviet Republic interferes in the relations between the rich and poor peasants, but not by redistributing the land. In order to relieve the bread shortage in the towns, detachments of armed workers are sent into the countryside to take away the rich peasants’ surplus stocks of grain. Part of that stock is given to the urban population, the other — to the poorer peasants. (p. 48)

Of course, Kautsky the socialist and Marxist is profoundly indignant at the idea that such a measure should be extended beyond the environs of the large towns (and we have extended it to the whole of the country). With the matchless, incomparable and admirable coolness (or pigheadedness) of a philistine, Kautsky the socialist and Marxist sermonises: ... “It [the expropriation of the well-to-do peasants] introduces a new element of unrest and civil war into the process of production” ... (civil war introduced into the “process of production” — that is something supernatural!) ... “which stands in urgent need of peace and security for its recovery” (p. 49).

Oh, yes, of course, Kautsky the Marxist and socialist must sigh and shed tears over the subject of peace and security for the exploiters and grain profiteers who hoard their surplus stocks, sabotage the grain monopoly law, and reduce the urban population to famine. “We are all socialists and Marxists and internationalists”, the Kautskys, Heinrich Webers (Vienna), Longuets (Paris), MacDonalds (London), etc., sing in chorus. “We are all in favour of a working-class revolution. Only ... only we would like a revolution that does not infringe upon the peace and security of the grain profiteers! And we camouflage this sordid subservience to the capitalists by a ‘Marxist’ reference to the ‘process of production’ ...” If this is Marxism, what is servility to the bourgeoisie?

Just see what our theoretician arrives at. He accuses the Bolsheviks of presenting the dictatorship of the peasants as the dictatorship of the proletariat. But at the same time he accuses us of introducing civil war into the rural districts (which we think is to our *credit*), of dispatching into the countryside armed detachments of workers, who

publicly proclaim that they are exercising the “dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants”, assist the latter and confiscate from the profiteers and the rich peasants the surplus stocks of grain which they are hoarding in contravention of the grain monopoly law.

On the one hand, our Marxist theoretician stands for pure democracy, for the subordination of the revolutionary class, the leader of the working and exploited people, to the majority of the population (including, therefore, the exploiters). On the other hand, as an argument *against* us, he explains that the revolution must inevitably bear a bourgeois character — bourgeois, because the life of the peasants as a whole is based on bourgeois social relations — and at the same time he pretends to uphold the proletarian, class, Marxist point of view!

Instead of an “economic analysis” we have a first-class hodge-podge. Instead of Marxism we have fragments of liberal doctrines and the preaching of servility to the bourgeoisie and the kulaks.

The question which Kautsky has so tangled up was fully explained by the Bolsheviks as far back as 1905. Yes, our revolution is a bourgeois revolution *as long* as we march with the peasants *as a whole*. This has been as clear as clear can be to us; we have said it hundreds and thousands of times since 1905, and we have never attempted to skip this necessary stage of the historical process or abolish it by decrees. Kautsky’s efforts to “expose” us on this point merely expose his own confusion of mind and his fear to recall what he wrote in 1905, when he was not yet a renegade.

Beginning with *April 1917*, however, long before the October Revolution, that is, long before we assumed power, we publicly declared and explained to the people: the revolution cannot now stop at this stage, for the country has marched forward, capitalism has advanced, ruin has reached fantastic dimensions, which (whether one likes it or not) *will demand* steps forward, *to socialism*. For there is *no* other way of advancing, of saving the war-weary country and of *alleviating* the sufferings of the working and exploited people.

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

vulgarise it, to substitute liberalism in its place. It means smuggling in a reactionary defence of the bourgeoisie against the socialist proletariat by means of quasi-scientific references to the progressive character of the bourgeoisie in comparison with medievalism.

Incidentally, the soviets represent an immensely higher form and type of democracy just because, by uniting and drawing the *mass of workers and peasants* into political life, they serve as a most sensitive barometer, the one closest to the “people” (in the sense in which Marx, in 1871, spoke of a real people’s revolution<sup>64</sup>), of the growth and development of the political, class maturity of the people. The Soviet Constitution was not drawn up according to some “plan”; it was not drawn up in a study, and was not foisted on the working people by bourgeois lawyers. No, this constitution *grew up* in the course of the development of *the class struggle* in proportion as *class antagonisms* matured. The very facts which Kautsky himself has to admit prove this.

At first, the soviets embraced the peasants as a whole. It was owing to the immaturity, the backwardness, the ignorance of the poor peasants that the leadership passed into the hands of the kulaks, the rich, the capitalists and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. That was the period of the domination of the petty bourgeoisie, of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries (only fools or renegades like Kautsky can regard either of these as socialists). The petty bourgeoisie inevitably and unavoidably vacillated between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (Kerensky, Kornilov, Savinkov) and the dictatorship of the proletariat; for owing to the basic features of its economic position, the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of doing anything independently. Kautsky, by the way, completely renounces Marxism by confining himself in his analysis of the Russian revolution to the legal and formal concept of “democracy”, which serves the bourgeoisie as a screen to conceal their domination and as a means of deceiving the people, and by *forgetting* that in practice “democracy” sometimes stands for the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*, sometimes for the impotent reformism of the petty bourgeoisie who submit to that dictatorship, and so on. According to Kautsky, in a capitalist country there were bourgeois parties and there was a proletarian party (the Bolsheviks), which led the majority, the mass of the proletariat, but *there were no* petty-bourgeois parties! The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries had no *class roots*, no petty-bourgeois roots!

The vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, helped to enlighten the people and to repel the overwhelming majority of them, all the “lower sections”, all the proletarians and semi-proletarians, from such “leaders”. The Bolsheviks won predominance in the soviets (in Petrograd and Moscow by October 1917); the split among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks

became more pronounced.

The victorious Bolshevik revolution meant the end of vacillation, meant the complete destruction of the monarchy and of the landlord system (which had *not* been destroyed before the October Revolution). We carried the *bourgeois* revolution to its *conclusion*. The peasants supported us *as a whole*. Their antagonism to the socialist proletariat could not reveal itself all at once. The soviets united the peasants *in general*. The class divisions among the peasants had not yet matured, had not yet come into the open.

*That* process took place in the summer and autumn of 1918. The Czech counter-revolutionary mutiny roused the kulaks. A wave of kulak revolts swept over Russia. The poor peasants learned, not from books or newspapers, *but from life itself*, that their interests were irreconcilably antagonistic to those of the kulaks, the rich, the rural bourgeoisie. Like every other petty-bourgeois party, the “Left Socialist-Revolutionaries” reflected the vacillation of the people, and in the summer of 1918 they split: one section joined forces with the Czechs (the rebellion in Moscow, when Proshyan, having seized the Telegraph Office — for one hour! — announced to Russia that the Bolsheviks had been overthrown; then the treachery of Muravyov, commander-in-chief of the army that was fighting the Czechs, etc.), while the other section, that mentioned above, remained with the Bolsheviks.

The growing food shortage in the towns lent increasing urgency to the question of the grain monopoly (this Kautsky the theoretician completely “forgot” in his economic analysis, which is a mere repetition of platitudes gleaned 10 years ago from Maslov’s writings!).

The old landowner and bourgeois, and even democratic-republican, state had sent to the rural districts armed detachments which were practically at the beck and call of the bourgeoisie. Mr. Kautsky does not know this! He does not regard that as the “dictatorship of the bourgeoisie” — Heaven forbid! That is “pure democracy”, especially if endorsed by a bourgeois parliament! Nor has Kautsky “heard” that, in the summer and autumn of 1917, Avksentyev and S. Maslov, in company with the Kerenskys, the Tseretelis and other Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, arrested members of the land committees; he does not say a word about that!

The whole point is that a bourgeois state which is exercising the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through a democratic republic cannot confess to the people that it is serving the bourgeoisie; it cannot tell the truth, and has to play the hypocrite.

But the state of the Paris Commune type, the Soviet state, openly and frankly tells the people the *truth* and declares that it is the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants; and by this truth it wins over scores and scores of millions of new

citizens who are kept down in any democratic republic, but who are drawn by the soviets into political life, *into democracy*, into the administration of the state. The Soviet Republic sends into the rural districts detachments of armed workers, primarily the more advanced, from the capitals. These workers carry socialism into the countryside, win over the poor, organise and enlighten them, and help them to *suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie*.

All who are familiar with the situation and have been in the rural districts declare that it is only now, in the summer and autumn of 1918, that the rural districts *themselves* are passing through the “October” (i.e., proletarian) Revolution. Things are beginning to change. The wave of kulak revolts is giving way to a rise of the poor, to a growth of the “poor peasants’ committees”. In the army, the number of workers who become commissars, officers and commanders of divisions and armies is increasing. And at the very time that the simple-minded Kautsky, frightened by the July (1918) crisis<sup>65</sup> and the lamentations of the bourgeoisie, was running after the latter like a cockerel, and writing a whole pamphlet breathing the conviction that the Bolsheviks are on the eve of being overthrown by the peasants; at the very time that this simpleton regarded the secession of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries as a “narrowing” (p. 37) of the circle of those who support the Bolsheviks — at that very time the *real* circle of supporters of Bolshevism was *expanding enormously*, because scores and scores of millions of the village poor were freeing themselves from the tutelage and influence of the kulaks and village bourgeoisie and were awakening to *independent* political life.

We have lost hundreds of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, spineless intellectuals and kulaks from among the peasants; but we have gained millions of poor people.<sup>a</sup>

A year after the proletarian revolution in the capitals, and under its influence and with its assistance, the proletarian revolution began in the remote rural districts, and it has finally consolidated the power of the soviets and Bolshevism, and has finally proved there is no force in the country that can withstand it.

Having completed the bourgeois-democratic revolution in alliance with the peasants as a whole, the Russian proletariat finally passed on to the socialist revolution when it succeeded in splitting the rural population, in winning over the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, and in uniting them against the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, including the peasant bourgeoisie.

Now, if the Bolshevik proletariat in the capitals and large industrial centres had not

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<sup>a</sup> At the Sixth Congress of Soviets (November 6-9, 1918), there were 967 voting delegates, 950 of whom were Bolsheviks, and 351 delegates with voice but no vote, of whom 335 were Bolsheviks, i.e., 97 per cent of the total number of delegates were Bolsheviks.

been able to rally the village poor around itself against the rich peasants, this would indeed have proved that Russia was “unripe” for socialist revolution. The peasants would then have remained an “integral whole”, i.e., they would have remained under the economic, political, and moral leadership of the kulaks, the rich, the bourgeoisie, and the revolution would not have passed beyond the limits of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. (But, let it be said in parenthesis, even if this had been the case, it would not have proved that the proletariat should not have taken power, for it is the proletariat alone that has really carried the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its conclusion, it is the proletariat alone that has done something really important to bring nearer the world proletarian revolution, and the proletariat alone that has created the Soviet state, which, after the Paris Commune, is the second step towards the socialist state.)

On the other hand, if the Bolshevik proletariat had tried at once, in October-November 1917, without waiting for the class differentiation in the rural districts, without being able to *prepare* it and bring it about, to “decree” a civil war or the “introduction of socialism” in the rural districts, had tried to do without a temporary bloc with the peasants in general, without making a number of concessions to the middle peasants, etc., that would have been a *Blanquist* distortion of Marxism, an attempt by the *minority* to impose its will upon the majority; it would have been a theoretical absurdity, revealing a failure to understand that a general peasant revolution is *still* a bourgeois revolution, and that without *a series of transitions*, of *transitional* stages, it cannot be transformed into a socialist revolution in a backward country.

Kautsky has confused *everything* in this very important theoretical and political problem, and has, in practice, proved to be nothing but a servant of the bourgeoisie, howling against the dictatorship of the proletariat.



Kautsky has introduced a similar, if not greater, confusion into another extremely interesting and important question, namely: was the *legislative* activity of the Soviet Republic in the sphere of agrarian reform — that most difficult and yet most important of socialist reforms — based on sound principles and then properly carried out? We should be boundlessly grateful to any West-European Marxist who, after studying at least the most important documents, gave a *criticism* of our policy, because he would thereby help us immensely, and would also help the revolution that is maturing throughout the world. But instead of criticism Kautsky produces an incredible theoretical muddle, which converts Marxism into liberalism and which, in practice, is a series of idle, venomous, vulgar sallies against the Bolsheviks. Let the reader judge for himself:

“Large landed estates could not be preserved. This was a result of the revolution. That was at once clear. The transfer of the large estates to the peasant population became inevitable ...” (That is not true, Mr. Kautsky. You substitute what is “clear” to you for the attitude of the different *classes* towards the question. The history of the revolution has shown that the coalition government of the bourgeois and the petty bourgeois, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, pursued a policy of preserving big landownership. This was proved particularly by S. Maslov’s bill and by the arrest of the members of the land committees.<sup>66</sup> Without the dictatorship of the proletariat, the “peasant population” would not have vanquished the landowners, who had joined forces with the capitalists.)

“... But as to the forms in which it was to take place, there was no unity. Various solutions were conceivable ...” (Kautsky is most of all concerned about the “unity” of the “socialists”, no matter who called themselves by that name. He forgets that the principal classes in capitalist society are bound to arrive at different solutions.) “... From the socialist point of view, the most rational solution would have been to convert the large estates into state property and to allow the peasants who hitherto had been employed on them as wage-labourers to cultivate them in the form of cooperative societies. But such a solution presupposes the existence of a type of farm labourer that did not exist in Russia. Another solution would have been to convert the large estates into state property and to divide them up into small plots to be rented out to peasants who owned little land. Had that been done, at least something socialistic would have been achieved ...”

As usual Kautsky confines himself to the celebrated: on the one hand it cannot but be admitted, and on the other hand it must be confessed. He places different solutions *side by side* without a thought — the only realistic and Marxist thought — as to what must be the *transitional stages* from capitalism to communism in such-and-such *specific* conditions. There are farm labourers in Russia, but not many; and Kautsky did not touch on the question — which the Soviet government *did raise* — of the method of transition to a communal and cooperative form of land cultivation. The most curious thing, however, is that Kautsky claims to see “something socialistic” in the renting out of small plots of land. In reality, this is a *petty-bourgeois* slogan, and there is *nothing* “socialistic” in it. If the “state” that rents out the land is *not* a state of the Paris Commune type, but a parliamentary bourgeois republic (and that is exactly Kautsky’s constant assumption), the renting of land in small plots is a typical *liberal reform*.

Kautsky says nothing about the Soviet government having abolished *all* private ownership of land. Worse than that: he resorts to an incredible forgery and quotes the decrees of the Soviet government in such a way as to omit the most essential.

After stating that “small production strives for complete private ownership of the means of production”, and that the Constituent Assembly would have been the “only authority” capable of preventing the dividing up of the land (an assertion which will evoke laughter in Russia, where everybody knows that the soviets *alone* are recognised as authoritative by the workers and peasants, while the Constituent Assembly has become the slogan of the Czechs and the landowners), Kautsky continues:

One of the first decrees of the Soviet government declared that: (1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without any compensation. (2) The landed estates, as also all crown, monastery and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed at the disposal of the volost land committees of the uyezd soviets of peasants’ deputies pending the settlement of the land question by the Constituent Assembly.

Having quoted *only these two clauses*, Kautsky concludes:

The reference to the Constituent Assembly has remained a dead letter. In point of fact, the peasants in the separate volosts could do as they pleased with the land. (p. 47)

Here you have an example of Kautsky’s “criticism”! Here you have a “scientific” work which is more like a fraud. The German reader is induced to believe that the Bolsheviks capitulated before the peasants on the question of private ownership of land, that the Bolsheviks permitted the peasants to act locally (“in the separate volosts”) in whatever way they pleased!

But in reality, the decree Kautsky quotes — the first to be promulgated, on October 26, 1917 (old style) — consists not of two, but of five clauses, *plus* eight clauses of the mandate, which, it was expressly stated, “shall serve as a guide”.

Clause 3 of the decree states that the estates are transferred “*to the people*”, and the “exact inventories of all property confiscated” shall be drawn up and the property “protected in the strictest revolutionary way”. And the mandate declares that “private ownership of land shall be abolished for ever”, that “lands on which high-level scientific farming is practised ... *shall not be divided up*”, that “all livestock and farm implements of the confiscated estates shall pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid for this”, and that “all land shall become part of the national land fund”.

Further, simultaneously with the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 5, 1918), the Third Congress of Soviets adopted the *Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People*, which now forms part of the Fundamental Law of the Soviet Republic. Article 2, paragraph 1 of this declaration states that “private ownership of land is hereby abolished”, and that “model estates and agricultural enterprises are proclaimed national property”.

So, the reference to the Constituent Assembly did *not* remain a dead letter, because another national representative body, immeasurably more authoritative in the eyes of the peasants, took upon itself the solution of the agrarian problem.

Again, on February 6 (19), 1918, the land socialisation law was promulgated, which once more confirmed the abolition of all private ownership of land, and placed the land and *all private* stock and implements at the disposal of the soviet authorities *under the control of the federal soviet government*. Among the duties connected with the disposal of the land, the law prescribed:

the development of collective farming as more advantageous from the point of view of economy of labour and produce, at the expense of individual farming, with a view to transition to socialist farming. (Article 11, paragraph e)

The same law, in establishing the principle of *equal* land tenure, replied to the fundamental question: “Who has a right to the use of the land?” in the following manner:

[Article 20.] Plots of land surface within the borders of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic may be used for public and private needs. A. For cultural and educational purposes: (1) by the state as represented by the organs of soviet power (federal, as well as in regions, gubernias, uyezds, volosts, and villages), and (2) by public bodies (under the control, and with the permission, of the local soviet authorities); B. For agricultural purposes: (3) by agricultural communes, (4) by agricultural cooperative societies, (5) by village communities, (6) by individual families and persons ...

The reader will see that Kautsky has completely distorted the facts, and has given the German reader an absolutely false view of the agrarian policy and agrarian legislation of the proletarian state in Russia.

Kautsky proved even unable to formulate the theoretically important fundamental questions!

These questions are:

(1) Equal land tenure and  
(2) Nationalisation of the land — the relation of these two measures to socialism in general, and to the transition from capitalism to communism in particular.

(3) Farming in common as a transition from small scattered farming to large-scale collective farming; does the manner in which this question is dealt with in soviet legislation meet the requirements of socialism?

On the first question it is necessary, first of all, to establish the following two fundamental facts: (a) in reviewing the experience of 1905 (I may refer, for instance, to my work on the agrarian problem in the first Russian revolution), the Bolsheviks pointed to the democratically progressive, the democratically revolutionary meaning

of the slogan “equal land tenure”, and in 1917, *before* the October Revolution, they spoke of this quite definitely; (b) when enforcing the land socialisation law — the “spirit” of which is equal land tenure — the Bolsheviks most explicitly and definitely declared: this is not our idea, we do not agree with this slogan, but we think it our duty to enforce it because this is the demand of the overwhelming majority of the peasants. And the idea and demands of the majority of the working people are things that the working people must *discard of their own accord*: such demands cannot be either “abolished” or “skipped over”. We Bolsheviks shall *help* the peasants to discard petty-bourgeois slogans, to *pass* from them as quickly and as easily as possible to socialist slogans.

A Marxist theoretician who wanted to help the working-class revolution by his scientific analysis should have answered the following questions: first, is it true that the idea of equal land tenure has a democratically revolutionary meaning of carrying the *bourgeois*-democratic revolution to its conclusion? Secondly, did the Bolsheviks act rightly in helping to pass by their votes (and in most loyally observing) the petty-bourgeois equal land tenure law?

Kautsky failed even to *perceive* what, theoretically, was the crux of the problem!

Kautsky will never be able to refute the view that the idea of equal land tenure has a progressive and revolutionary value in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Such a revolution cannot go beyond this. By reaching its limit, it *all the more clearly, rapidly* and *easily* reveals to the people the *inadequacy* of bourgeois-democratic solutions and the necessity of proceeding beyond their limits, of passing on to *socialism*.

The peasants, who have overthrown tsarism and the landowners, dream of equal land tenure, and no power on earth could have stopped the peasants, once they had been freed both from the landowners and from the *bourgeois* parliamentary republican state. The workers say to the peasants: We shall help you reach “ideal” capitalism, for equal land tenure is the idealisation of capitalism by the small producer. At the same time we shall prove to you its inadequacy and the necessity of passing to farming in common.

It would be interesting to see Kautsky’s attempt to disprove that *this kind* of leadership of the peasant struggle by the proletariat was right.

Kautsky, however, preferred to evade the question altogether ...

Next, Kautsky deliberately deceived his German readers by withholding from them the fact that in its *land law* the Soviet government gave *direct* preference to communes and cooperative societies.

With all the peasants right through to the end of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and with the poor, the proletarian and semi-proletarian section of the

peasants, forward to the socialist revolution! That has been the policy of the Bolsheviks, and it is the only Marxist policy.

But Kautsky is all muddled and incapable of formulating a single question! On the one hand, he *dare not say* that the workers should have parted company with the peasants over the question of equal land tenure, for he realises that it would have been absurd (and, moreover, in 1905, when he was not yet a renegade, he himself clearly and explicitly advocated an alliance between the workers and peasants as a condition for the victory of the revolution). On the other hand, he sympathetically quotes the liberal platitudes of the Menshevik Maslov, who “proves” that petty-bourgeois equal land tenure is utopian and reactionary *from the point of view of socialism*, but hushes up the progressive and revolutionary character of the petty-bourgeois struggle for equality and equal tenure *from the point of view of the bourgeois-democratic revolution*.

Kautsky is in a hopeless muddle: note that he (in 1918) *insists* on the *bourgeois* character of the Russian revolution. He (in 1918) peremptorily says: Don’t go beyond these limits! Yet this very same Kautsky sees “something *socialistic*” (for a *bourgeois* revolution) in the petty-bourgeois reform of renting out small plots of land to the *poor* peasants (which is an approximation to equal land tenure)!

Understand this if you can!

In addition to all this, Kautsky displays a philistine inability to take into account the real policy of a definite party., He quotes the empty *phrases* of the Menshevik Maslov and *refuses to see the real* policy the Menshevik Party pursued in 1917, when, in “coalition” with the landowners and Cadets, they advocated what was virtually a *liberal agrarian reform and compromise with the landowners* (proof: the arrest of the members of the land committees and S. Maslov’s land bill).

Kautsky failed to notice that P. Maslov’s phrases about the reactionary and utopian character of petty-bourgeois equality are really a screen to conceal the Menshevik policy of *compromise* between the peasants and the landowners (i.e., of supporting the landowners in duping the peasants), instead of the *revolutionary* overthrow of the landowners by the peasants.

What a “Marxist” Kautsky is!

It was the Bolsheviks who strictly differentiated between the bourgeois -democratic revolution and the socialist revolution: by carrying the former through, they opened the door for the transition to the latter. This was the only policy that was revolutionary and Marxist.

It would have been wiser for Kautsky not to repeat the feeble liberal witticism: “Never yet have the small peasants anywhere adopted collective farming under the influence of theoretical convictions” (p. 50).

How very smart!

But never as yet and nowhere have the small peasants of any large country been under the influence of a proletarian state.

Never as yet and nowhere have the small peasants engaged in an open class struggle reaching the extent of a civil war between the poor peasants and the rich peasants, *with* propagandist, political, economic and military support given to the poor by a proletarian state.

Never as yet and nowhere have the profiteers and the rich amassed such wealth out of war, while the mass of peasants have been so utterly ruined.

Kautsky just reiterates the old stuff, he just chews the old cud, afraid even to give thought to the new tasks of the proletarian dictatorship.

But what, dear Kautsky, if the peasants *lack* implements for small-scale farming and the proletarian state *helps* them to obtain machines for collective farming — is that a “theoretical conviction”?

We shall now pass to the question of nationalisation of the land. Our Narodniks, including all the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, deny that the measure we have adopted is nationalisation of the land. They are wrong in theory. Insofar as we remain within the framework of commodity production and capitalism, the abolition of private ownership of land is nationalisation of the land. The term “socialisation” merely expresses a tendency, a desire, the preparation for the transition to socialism.

What should be the attitude of Marxists towards nationalisation of the land?

Here, too, Kautsky fails even to formulate the theoretical question, or, which is still worse, he deliberately evades it, although one knows from Russian literature that Kautsky is aware of the old controversies among the Russian Marxists on the question of nationalisation, municipalisation (i.e., the transfer of the large estates to the local self-government authorities), or division of the land.

Kautsky’s assertion that to transfer the large estates to the state and rent them out in small plots to peasants who own little land would be achieving “something socialistic” is a downright mockery of Marxism. We have already shown that there is nothing socialistic about it. But that is not all; it would not even be carrying the *bourgeois-democratic* revolution to its conclusion. Kautsky’s great misfortune is that he placed his trust in the Mensheviks. Hence the curious position that while insisting on our revolution having a bourgeois character and reproaching the Bolsheviks for taking it into their heads to proceed to socialism, he *himself* proposes a liberal reform under the guise of socialism, *without carrying this reform* to the point of completely clearing away all the survivals of medievalism in agrarian relations! The arguments of Kautsky, as of his Menshevik advisers, amount to a defence of the liberal bourgeoisie, who fear

revolution, instead of defence of consistent bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Indeed, why should only the large estates, and not all the land, be converted into state property? The liberal bourgeoisie thereby achieve the maximum preservation of the old conditions (i.e., the least consistency in revolution) and the maximum facility for a reversion to the old conditions. The radical bourgeoisie, i.e., the bourgeoisie that want to carry the bourgeois revolution to its conclusion, put forward the slogan of *nationalisation of the land*.

Kautsky, who in the dim and distant past, some 20 years ago, wrote an excellent Marxist work on the agrarian question, cannot but know that Marx declared that land nationalisation is in fact a *consistent* slogan of the *bourgeoisie*.<sup>67</sup> Kautsky cannot but be aware of Marx's controversy with Rodbertus, and Marx's remarkable passages in his *Theories of Surplus Value* where the revolutionary significance — in the bourgeois-democratic sense — of land nationalisation is explained with particular clarity.

The Menshevik P. Maslov, whom Kautsky, unfortunately for himself, chose as an adviser, denied that the Russian peasants would agree to the nationalisation of all the land (including the peasants' lands). To a certain extent, this view of Maslov's could be connected with his "original" theory (which merely parrots the bourgeois critics of Marx), namely, his repudiation of absolute rent and his recognition of the "law" (or "fact", as Maslov expressed it) "of diminishing returns".

In point of fact, however, already the 1905 revolution revealed that the vast majority of the peasants in Russia, members of village communes as well as homestead peasants, were in favour of nationalisation of all the land. The 1917 revolution confirmed this, and after the assumption of power by the proletariat this was done. The Bolsheviks remained loyal to Marxism and never tried (in spite of Kautsky, who, without a scrap of evidence, accuses us of doing so) to "skip" the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Bolsheviks, first of all, helped the most radical, most revolutionary of the bourgeois-democratic ideologists of the peasants, those who stood closest to the proletariat, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, to carry out what was in effect nationalisation of the land. On October 26, 1917, i.e., on the very first day of the proletarian, socialist revolution, private ownership of land was abolished in Russia.

This laid the foundation, the most perfect from the point of view of the development of capitalism (Kautsky cannot deny this without breaking with Marx), and at the same time created an agrarian system which is the *most flexible* from the point of view of the transition to socialism. From the bourgeois-democratic point of view, the revolutionary peasants in Russia *could go no farther: there can be nothing* "more ideal" from this point of view, nothing "more radical" (from this same point of view) than nationalisation of the land and equal land tenure. It was the Bolsheviks, and only the Bolsheviks, who,

thanks only to the victory of the *proletarian* revolution, helped the peasants to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolution really to its conclusion. And only in this way did they do the utmost to facilitate and accelerate the transition to the socialist revolution.

One can judge from this what an incredible muddle Kautsky offers to his readers when he accuses the Bolsheviks of failing to understand the bourgeois character of the revolution, and yet himself betrays such a departure from Marxism that *he says nothing* about nationalisation of the land and presents the least revolutionary (from the bourgeois point of view) liberal agrarian reform as “something socialistic”!

We have now come to the third question formulated above, namely, to what extent the proletarian dictatorship in Russia has taken into account the necessity of passing to farming in common. Here again, Kautsky commits something very much in the nature of a forgery: he quotes only the “theses” of one Bolshevik which speak of the task of passing to farming in common! After quoting one of these theses, our “theoretician” triumphantly exclaims:

Unfortunately, a task is not accomplished by the fact that it is called a task. For the time being, collective farming in Russia is doomed to remain on paper only. Never yet have the small peasants anywhere adopted collective farming under the influence of theoretical convictions. (p. 50)

Never as yet and nowhere has a literary swindle been perpetrated equal to that to which Kautsky has stooped. He quotes “theses”, but says nothing about the *law* of the Soviet government. He talks about “theoretical convictions”, but says nothing about the proletarian state power which holds in its hands the factories and goods! All that Kautsky the Marxist wrote in 1899 in his *Agrarian Question* about the means at the disposal of the proletarian state for bringing about the gradual transition of the small peasants to socialism has been forgotten by Kautsky the renegade in 1918.

Of course, a few hundred state-supported agricultural communes and state farms (i.e., large farms cultivated by associations of workers at the expense of the state) are very little, but can Kautsky’s ignoring of this fact be called “criticism”?

The nationalisation of the land that has been effected in Russia by the proletarian dictatorship has best ensured the carrying of the bourgeois-democratic revolution to its conclusion — even in the event of a victory of the counterrevolution causing a reversion from land nationalisation to land division (I made a special examination of this possibility in my pamphlet on the agrarian program of the Marxists in the 1905 Revolution). In addition, the nationalisation of the land has given the proletarian state the maximum opportunity of passing to socialism in agriculture.

To sum up, Kautsky has presented us, as far as theory is concerned, with an incredible hodge-podge which is a complete renunciation of Marxism, and, as far as

practice is concerned, with a policy of servility to the bourgeoisie and their reformism. A fine criticism indeed!



Kautsky begins his “economic analysis” of industry with the following magnificent argument:

Russia has a large-scale capitalist industry. Cannot a socialist system of production be built up on this foundation? “One might think so if socialism meant that the workers of the separate factories and mines made these their property” (literally appropriated these for themselves) “in order to carry on production separately at each factory” (p. 52). “This very day, August 5, as I am writing these lines”, Kautsky adds, “a speech is reported from Moscow delivered by Lenin on August 2, in which he is stated to have declared: ‘The workers are holding the factories firmly in their hands, and the peasants will not return the land to the landowners.’ Up till now, the slogan: the factories to the workers, and the land to the peasants, has been an anarcho-syndicalist slogan, not a Social-Democratic one” (pp. 52-53).

I have quoted this passage in full so that the Russian workers, who formerly respected Kautsky, and quite rightly, might see for themselves the methods employed by this deserter to the bourgeois camp.

Just think: on August 5, when numerous decrees on the nationalisation of factories in Russia had been issued — and not a single factory had been “appropriated” by the workers, but had *all* been converted into the property of the republic — on August 5, Kautsky, on the strength of an obviously crooked interpretation of one sentence in my speech, tries to make the German readers believe that in Russia the factories are being turned over to individual groups of workers! And after that Kautsky, at great length, chews the cud about it being wrong to turn over factories to individual groups of workers!

This is not criticism, it is the trick of a lackey of the bourgeoisie, whom the capitalists have hired to slander the workers’ revolution.

The factories must be turned over to the state, or to the municipalities, or the consumers’ cooperative societies, says Kautsky over and over again, and finally adds:

“This is what they are now trying to do in Russia ...” Now! What does that mean? In August? Why, could not Kautsky have commissioned his friends Stein or Axelrod, or any of the other friends of the Russian bourgeoisie, to translate at least one of the decrees on the factories?

How far they have gone in this direction, we cannot yet tell. At all events, this aspect of the activity of the Soviet Republic is of the greatest interest to us, but it still remains

entirely shrouded in darkness. There is no lack of decrees ... [That is why Kautsky ignores their *content*, or conceals it from his readers!] But there is no reliable information as to the effect of these decrees. Socialist production is impossible without all-round, detailed, reliable and rapidly informative statistics. The Soviet Republic cannot possibly have created such statistics yet. What we learn about its economic activities is highly contradictory and can in no way be verified. This, too, is a result of the dictatorship and the suppression of democracy. There is no freedom of the press, or of speech. (p. 53)

This is how history is written! From a “free” press of the capitalists and Dutov men Kautsky would have received information about factories being taken over by the workers ... This “serious savant” who stands above classes is magnificent, indeed! About the countless facts which show that the factories are being turned over to the republic *only*, that they are managed by an organ of Soviet power, the Supreme Economic Council, which is constituted mainly of workers elected by the trade unions, Kautsky refuses to say a single word. With the obstinacy of the “man in the muffler”, he stubbornly keeps repeating one thing: give me peaceful democracy, without civil war, without a dictatorship and with good statistics (the Soviet Republic has created a statistical service in which the best statistical experts in Russia are employed, but, of course, ideal statistics cannot be obtained so quickly). In a word, what Kautsky demands is a revolution without revolution, without fierce struggle, without violence. It is equivalent to asking for strikes in which workers and employers do not get excited. Try to find the difference between this kind of “socialist” and common liberal bureaucrat!

So, relying upon such “factual material”, i.e., deliberately and contemptuously ignoring the innumerable facts, Kautsky “concludes”:

It is doubtful whether the Russian proletariat has obtained more in the sense of real practical gains, and not of mere decrees, under the Soviet Republic than it would have obtained from a constituent assembly, in which, as in the soviets, socialists, although of a different hue, predominated. (p. 58)

A gem, is it not? We would advise Kautsky’s admirers to circulate this utterance as widely as possible among the Russian workers, for Kautsky could not have provided better material for gauging the depth of his political degradation. Comrade workers, Kerensky, too, was a “socialist”, only of a “different hue”! Kautsky the historian is satisfied with the name, the title which the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks “appropriated” to themselves. Kautsky the historian refuses even to listen to the facts which show that under Kerensky the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries supported the imperialist policy and marauding practices of the bourgeoisie; he is discreetly silent about the fact that the majority in the Constituent Assembly consisted of these very champions of imperialist war and bourgeois

dictatorship. And this is called “economic analysis”!

In conclusion let me quote another sample of this “economic analysis”:

... After nine months’ existence, the Soviet Republic, instead of spreading general wellbeing, felt itself obliged to explain why there is general want. (p. 41)

We are accustomed to hear such arguments from the lips of the Cadets. All the flunkeys of the bourgeoisie in Russia argue in this way: show us, after nine months, your general wellbeing — and this after four years of devastating war, with foreign capital giving all-round support to the sabotage and rebellions of the bourgeoisie in Russia. *Actually*, there has remained absolutely no difference whatever, not a shadow of difference, between Kautsky and a counter-revolutionary bourgeois. His honeyed talk, cloaked in the guise of “socialism”, only repeats what the Kornilov men, the Dutov men and Krasnov men in Russia say bluntly, straightforwardly and without embellishment.



The above lines were written on November 9, 1918. That same night news was received from Germany announcing the beginning of a victorious revolution, first in Kiel and other northern towns and ports, where power has passed into the hands of councils of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies, then in Berlin, where, too, power has passed into the hands of a council.

The conclusion which still remained to be written to my pamphlet on Kautsky and on the proletarian revolution is now superfluous.

*November 10, 1918*

# Theses on the Constituent Assembly<sup>68</sup>

*By V.I. Lenin*

1. The demand for the convocation of a constituent assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the program of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy and because, in setting up a pre-parliament, the imperialist republic headed by Kerensky was preparing to rig the elections and violate democracy in a number of ways.
2. While demanding the convocation of a constituent assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has ever since the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a republic of soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a constituent assembly.
3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist system, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the republic of soviets (of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies) is not only a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the usual bourgeois republic crowned by a constituent assembly), but is the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism.
4. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly in our revolution on the basis of lists submitted in the middle of October 1917 is taking place under conditions which preclude the possibility of the elections to this constituent assembly faithfully expressing the will of the people in general and of the working people in particular.
5. Firstly, proportional representation results in a faithful expression of the will of the people only when the party lists correspond to the real division of the people according to the party groupings reflected in those lists. In our case, however, as is well known, the party which from May to October had the largest number of followers among the people, and especially among the peasants — the Socialist-Revolutionary Party — came out with united election lists for the Constituent

Assembly in the middle of October 1917, but split in November 1917, after the elections and before the Assembly met.

For this reason, there is not, nor can there be, even a formal correspondence between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly.

6. Secondly, a still more important, not a formal nor legal, but a socioeconomic, class source of the discrepancy between the will of the people, and especially the will of, the working classes, on the one hand, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, on the other, is due to the elections to the Constituent Assembly having taken place at a time when the overwhelming majority of the people could not yet know the full scope and significance of the October, soviet, proletarian-peasant revolution, which began on October 25, 1917, i. e., after the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been submitted.
7. The October Revolution is passing through successive stages of development before our very eyes, winning power for the soviets and wresting political rule from the bourgeoisie and transferring it to the proletariat and poor peasantry.
8. It began with the victory of October 24-25 in the capital, when the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the vanguard of the proletarians and of the most politically active section of the peasants, gave a majority to the Bolshevik Party and put it in power.
9. Then, in the course of November and December, the revolution spread to the entire army and peasants, this being expressed first of all in the deposition of the old leading bodies (army committees, gubernia peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, etc.) — which expressed the superseded, compromising phase of the revolution, its bourgeois, and not proletarian, phase, and which were therefore inevitably bound to disappear under the pressure of the deeper and broader masses of the people — and in the election of new leading bodies in their place.
10. This mighty movement of the exploited people for the reconstruction of the leading bodies of their organisations has not ended even now, in the middle of December 1917, and the railwaymen's congress, which is still in session, represents one of its stages.
11. Consequently, the grouping of the class forces in Russia in the course of their class struggle is in fact assuming, in November and December 1917, a form differing in principle from the one that the party lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly compiled in the middle of October 1917 could have reflected.
12. Recent events in the Ukraine (partly also in Finland and Byelorussia, as well as in

the Caucasus) point similarly to a regrouping of class forces which is taking place in the process of the struggle between the bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian Rada, the Finnish Diet, etc., on the one hand, and Soviet power, the proletarian-peasant revolution in each of these national republics, on the other.

13. Lastly, the civil war which was started by the Cadet-Kaledin counterrevolutionary revolt against the Soviet authorities, against the workers' and peasants' government, has finally brought the class struggle to a head and has destroyed every chance of setting in a formally democratic way the very acute problems with which history has confronted the peoples of Russia, and in the first place her working class and peasants.
14. Only the complete victory of the workers and peasants over the bourgeois and landowner revolt (as expressed in the Cadet-Kaledin movement), only the ruthless military suppression of this revolt of the slaveowners can really safeguard the proletarian-peasant revolution. The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution have resulted in the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly!" — which disregards the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which disregards Soviet power, which disregards the decisions of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of the Second All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, etc — *becoming in fact* the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledinites and of their helpers. The entire people are now fully aware that the Constituent Assembly, if it parted ways with Soviet power, would inevitably be doomed to political extinction.
15. One of the particularly acute problems of national life is the problem of peace. A really revolutionary struggle for peace began in Russia only after the victory of the October 25 revolution, and the first fruits of this victory were the publication of the secret treaties, the conclusion of an armistice, and the beginning of open negotiations for a general peace without annexations and indemnities.

Only now are the broad sections of the people actually receiving a chance fully and openly to observe the policy of revolutionary struggle for peace and to study its results.

At the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the mass of the people had no such chance.

It is clear that the discrepancy between the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly and the actual will of the people on the question of terminating the war is inevitable from this point of view too.

16. The result of all the above-mentioned circumstances taken together is that the Constituent Assembly, summoned on the basis of the election lists of the parties

existing prior to the proletarian-peasant revolution under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the working and exploited classes which on October 25 began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution stand higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly, even if those formal rights were not undermined by the absence in the law on the Constituent Assembly of a provision recognising the right of the people to recall their deputies and hold new elections at any moment.

17. Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint. The revolutionary Social-Democrats are duty bound to warn all and sundry against this error, into which a few Bolshevik leaders, who have been unable to appreciate the significance of the October uprising and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, have strayed.
18. The only chance of securing a painless solution to the crisis which has arisen owing to the divergence between the elections to the Constituent Assembly, on the one hand, and the will of the people and the interests of the working and exploited classes, on the other, is for the people to exercise as broadly and as rapidly as possible the right to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly anew, and for the Constituent Assembly to accept the law of the Central Executive Committee on these new elections, to proclaim that it unreservedly recognises soviet power, the soviet revolution, and its policy on the questions of peace, the land and workers' control, and to resolutely join the camp of the enemies of the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution.
19. Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the crisis in connection with the Constituent Assembly can be settled only in a revolutionary way, by Soviet power adopting the most energetic, speedy, firm and determined revolutionary measures against the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution, no matter behind what slogans and institutions (even participation in the Constituent Assembly) this counter-revolution may hide. Any attempt to tie the hands of Soviet power in this struggle would be tantamount to aiding counterrevolution. ■

# The Constituent Assembly Elections & the Dictatorship of the Proletariat<sup>69</sup>

By V.I. Lenin

The symposium issued by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, *A Year of the Russian Revolution. 1917-18* (Moscow, Zemlya i Volya Publishers, 1918), contains an extremely interesting article by N. V. Svyatitsky: "Results of the All-Russia Constituent Assembly Elections (Preface)". The author gives the returns for 54 constituencies out of the total of 79.

The author's survey covers nearly all the gubernias of European Russia and Siberia, only the following being omitted: Olonets, Estonian, Kaluga, Bessarabian, Podolsk, Orenburg, Yakut and Don gubernias.

First of all I shall quote the main returns published by N. V. Svyatitsky and then discuss the political conclusions to be drawn from them.

## I

The total number of votes polled in the 54 constituencies in November 1917 was 36,262,560. The author gives the figure of 36,257,960, distributed over seven regions (plus the army and navy), but the figures he gives for the various parties total up to what I give.

The distribution of the votes according to parties is as follows: the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 16.5 million votes; if we add the votes polled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries of the other nations (Ukrainians, Moslems, and others), the total will be 20.9 million, i.e., 58%.

The Mensheviks polled 668,064 votes, but if we add the votes polled by the analogous groups of Popular Socialists (312,000), *Yedinstvo* (25,000), Cooperators

(51,000), Ukrainian Social-Democrats (95,000), Ukrainian socialists (507,000), German socialists (44,000) and Finnish Socialists (14,000), the total will be 1.7 million.

The Bolsheviks polled 9,023,963 votes.

The Cadets polled 1,856,639 votes. By adding the Association of Rural Proprietors and Landowners (215,000), the Right groups (292,000), Old Believers (73,000), nationalists-Jews (550,000), Moslems (576,000), Bashkirs (195,000), Letts (67,000), Poles (155,000), Cossacks (79,000), Germans (130,000), Byelorussians (12,000) — and the “lists of various groups and organisations” (418,000), we get a total for the landowning and bourgeois parties of 4.6 million.

We know that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks formed a bloc during the whole period of the revolution from February to October 1917. Moreover, the entire development of events during that period and after it showed definitely that those two parties together represent petty-bourgeois democracy, which mistakenly imagines it is, and calls itself, socialist, like all the parties of the Second International.

Uniting the three main groups of parties in the Constituent Assembly elections, we get the following total:

Party of the proletariat (Bolsheviks)	9.02 million = 25%
Petty-bourgeois democratic parties (Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, etc.)	22.62 million = 62%
Parties of landowners and bourgeoisie (Cadets, etc.)	4.62 million = 13%
<i>Total</i>	36.26 million = 100%

Here are N.V. Svyatitsky’s returns by regions.

Regions <sup>a</sup> (and armed forces separately)	<i>Votes polled (thousands)</i>				Cadets	%	Total
	SRs (Russian)	%	Bolsheviks	%			
Northern	1,140.0	38	1,177.2	40	393.0	13	2,975.1
Central-Industrial	1,987.9	38	2,305.6	44	550.2	10	5,242.5
Volga-Black Earth	4,733.9	70	1,115.6	16	267.0	4	6,764.3
Western	1,242.1	43	1,282.2	44	48.1	2	2,961.0
East-Urals	1,547.7	43(62) <sup>b</sup>	443.9	12	181.3	5	3,583.5
Siberia	2,094.8	75	273.9	10	87.5	3	2,786.7
The Ukraine	1,878.1	25(77) <sup>c</sup>	754.0	10	277.5	4	7,581.3
Army and navy	1,885.1	43	1,671.3	38	51.9	1	4,363.6

From these figures it is evident that during the Constituent Assembly elections the Bolsheviks were the party of the proletariat and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the

<sup>a</sup> The author divides Russia into districts in a rather unusual way: *Northern*: Archangel, Vologda, Petrograd, Novgorod, Pskov, Baltic. *Central-Industrial*: Vladimir, Kostroma, Moscow,

party of the peasantry. In the purely peasant districts, Great-Russian (Volga-Black Earth, Siberia, East-Urals) and Ukrainian, the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 62-77%. In the industrial centres the Bolsheviks had a majority over the Socialist-Revolutionaries. This majority is understated in the district figures given by N.V. Svyatitsky, for he combined the most highly industrialised districts with little industrialised and non-industrial areas. For example, the gubernia figures of the votes polled by the Socialist-Revolutionary, Bolshevik, and Cadet parties, and by the “national and other groups”, show the following:

- In the Northern Region the Bolshevik majority seems to be insignificant: 40% against 38%. But in this region non-industrial areas (Archangel, Vologda, Novgorod and Pskov gubernias), where the Socialist-Revolutionaries predominate, are combined with industrial areas:
- Petrograd City — Bolsheviks 45% (of the votes), Socialist-Revolutionaries 16%; Petrograd Gubernia — Bolsheviks 50%, Socialist-Revolutionaries 26%; Baltic — Bolsheviks 72%, Socialist-Revolutionaries — 0.
- In the Central Industrial Region the Bolsheviks in Moscow Gubernia polled 56% and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 25%; in Moscow City the Bolsheviks polled 50% and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 8%; in Tver Gubernia the Bolsheviks polled 54% and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 39%; in Vladimir Gubernia the Bolsheviks polled 56% and the Socialist-Revolutionaries 32%.

Let us note, in passing, how ridiculous, in face of such facts, is the talk about the Bolsheviks having only a “minority” of the proletariat behind them! And we hear this talk from the Mensheviks (668,000 votes, and with Transcaucasia another 700,000-800,000, against 9,000,000 votes polled by the Bolsheviks), and also from the social-traitors of the Second International.

## II

How could such a miracle have occurred? How could the Bolsheviks, who polled one-fourth of the votes, have won a victory over the petty-bourgeois democrats, who were

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Nizhni-Novgorod, Ryazan, Tula, Tvor, Yaroslavl. *Volga-Black Earth*: Astrakhan, Voronezh, Kursk, Orel, Penza, Samara, Saratov, Simbirsk, Tambov. *Western*: Vitebsk, Minsk, Mogilev, Smolensk. *East-Urals*: Vyatka, Kazan, Perm, Ufa. *Siberia*: Tobolsk, Tomsk, Altai, Yeniseisk, Irkutsk, Transbaikal, Amur. *The Ukraine*: Volhynia, Ekaterinoslav, Kiev. Poltava, Taurida, Kharkov, Kherson, Chernigov.

<sup>b</sup> Svyatitsky obtains the figure in brackets, 62%, by adding the Moslem and Chuvash Socialist-Revolutionaries.

<sup>c</sup> The figure in brackets, 77%, is mine, obtained by adding the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries.

in alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie, and who together with the bourgeoisie polled three-fourths of the votes?

To deny this victory now, after the Entente — the all-mighty Entente — has been helping the enemies of Bolshevism for two years, is simply ridiculous.

The point is that the fanatical political hatred of those who have been defeated, including all the supporters of the Second International, prevents them from even raising seriously the extremely interesting historical and political question of why the Bolsheviks were victorious. The point is that this is a “miracle” only from the standpoint of vulgar petty-bourgeois democracy, the abysmal ignorance and deep-rooted prejudices of which are exposed by this question and the answer to it.

From the standpoint of the class struggle and socialism, from that standpoint, which the Second International has abandoned, the answer to the question is indisputable.

The Bolsheviks were victorious, first of all, because they had behind them the vast majority of the proletariat, which included the most class-conscious, energetic and revolutionary section, the real vanguard, of that advanced class.

Take the two metropolitan cities, Petrograd and Moscow. The total number of votes polled during the Constituent Assembly elections was 1,765,100, of which Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 218,000, Bolsheviks — 837,000 and Cadets — 515,400.

No matter how much the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists and Social-Democrats (the Chernovs, Martovs, Kautskys, Longuets, MacDonalds and co.) may beat their breasts and bow to the goddesses of “equality”, “universal suffrage”, “democracy”, “pure democracy”, or “consistent democracy”, it does not do away with the economic and political fact of the *inequality* of town and country.

That fact is inevitable under capitalism in general, and in the period of transition from capitalism to communism in particular.

The town cannot be equal to the country. The country cannot be equal to the town under the historical conditions of this epoch. The town inevitably *leads* the country. The country inevitably *follows the town*. The only question is which class, of the “urban” classes, will succeed in leading the country, will cope with this task, and what forms will *leadership by the town* assume?

In November 1917, the Bolsheviks had behind them the vast majority of the proletariat. By that time, the party which competed with the Bolsheviks among the proletariat, the Menshevik party, had been utterly defeated (9,000,000 votes against 1,400,000, if we add together 668,000 and 700,000-800,000 in Transcaucasia). Moreover, that party was defeated in the 15-year struggle (1903-17) which *steeled*, enlightened and organised the vanguard of the proletariat, and *forged* it into a genuine revolutionary

vanguard. Furthermore, the first revolution, that of 1905, prepared the subsequent development, determined in a *practical* way the relations between the two parties, and served as the general rehearsal of the great events of 1917-19.

The petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists of the Second International are fond of dismissing this extremely important historical question with honeyed phrases about the benefits of proletarian “unity”. When they use these honeyed phrases they forget the historical fact of the *accumulation of opportunism* in the working-class movement of 1871-1914; they forget (or do not want) to *think* about the causes of the collapse of opportunism in August 1914, about the causes of the split in international socialism in 1914-17.

Unless the *revolutionary* section of the proletariat is thoroughly prepared in every way for the expulsion and suppression of opportunism it is useless even thinking about the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is the lesson of the Russian revolution which should be taken to heart by the leaders of the “independent” German Social-Democrats”, French Socialists, and so forth, who now want to evade the issue by means of verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To continue. The Bolsheviks had behind them not only the majority of the proletariat, not only the *revolutionary* vanguard of the proletariat which had been steeled in the long and persevering struggle against opportunism; they had, if it is permissible to use a military term, a powerful “striking force” in the metropolitan cities.

An overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment — this “law” of military success is also the law of political success, especially in that fierce, seething class war which is called revolution.

Capitals, or, in general, big commercial and industrial centres (here in Russia the two coincided, but they do not everywhere coincide), to a considerable degree decide the political fate of a nation, provided, of course, the centres are supported by sufficient local, rural forces, even if that support does not come immediately.

In the two chief cities, in the two principal commercial and industrial centres of Russia, the Bolsheviks had an overwhelming, decisive superiority of forces. Here our forces were *nearly four times* as great as those of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. We had here *more than the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Cadets put together*. Moreover, our adversaries were split up, for the “coalition” of the Cadets with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks (in Petrograd and Moscow the Mensheviks polled only 3% of the votes) was utterly discredited among the working people. *Real* unity between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the Cadets against us was quite out of the question at that time.<sup>a</sup> It will be remembered that in November 1917,

even the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who were a hundred times nearer to the idea of a bloc with the Cadets than the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik workers and peasants, even those leaders thought (and bargained with us) about a bloc with the Bolsheviks *without* the Cadets!

We were *certain* of winning Petrograd and Moscow in October-November 1917, for we had an overwhelming superiority of forces and the most thorough political preparation, insofar as concerns both the assembly, concentration, training, testing and battle-hardening of the Bolshevik “armies”, and the disintegration, exhaustion, disunity and demoralisation of the “enemy’s” “armies”.

And being certain of winning the two metropolitan cities, the two centres of the capitalist state machine (economic and political), by a swift, decisive blow, we, in spite of the furious resistance of the bureaucracy and intelligentsia, despite sabotage, and so forth, were able with the aid of the central apparatus of state power to *prove by deeds* to the *non*-proletarian working people that the proletariat was their only reliable ally, friend and leader.

### III

But before passing on to this most important question — that of the attitude of the proletariat towards the non-proletarian working people — we must deal with the *armed forces*.

The flower of the people’s forces went to form the army during the imperialist war; the opportunist scoundrels of the Second International (not only the social-chauvinists, i.e., the Scheidemanns and Renaudels who directly went over to the side of “defence of the fatherland”, but also the centrists<sup>70</sup>) by their words and deeds strengthened the subordination of the armed forces to the leadership of the imperialist robbers of both the German and Anglo-French groups, but the real proletarian revolutionaries never forgot what Marx said in 1870: “The bourgeoisie will give the proletariat practice in arms!”<sup>71</sup> Only the Austro-German and Anglo-Franco-Russian betrayers of socialism could talk about “defence of the fatherland” in the imperialist war, i.e., a war that was predatory on both sides; the proletarian revolutionaries, however (from August 1914 onwards), turned all their attention to revolutionising the armed forces, to utilising them *against* the imperialist robber bourgeoisie, to converting the unjust and predatory war between the two groups of imperialist predators into a

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<sup>a</sup> It is interesting to note that the above figures also reveal the unity and solidarity of the party of the proletariat and the extremely fragmented state of the parties of the petty bourgeoisie and of the bourgeoisie.

just and legitimate war of the proletarians and oppressed working people in each country against their own”, “national” bourgeoisie.

During 1914-17 the betrayers of socialism *did not make preparations* to use the armed forces *against* the imperialist government of *each* nation.

The Bolsheviks prepared for this by the whole of their propaganda, agitation and underground organisational work from August 1914 onwards. Of course, the betrayers of socialism, the Scheidemanns and Kautskys of all nations, got out of this by talking about the *demoralisation* of the armed forces by Bolshevik agitation, but we are *proud* of the fact that we performed our duty in demoralising the forces of our class enemy, in winning away *from him* the armed masses of the workers and peasants *for the struggle* against the exploiters.

The results of our work were seen in, among other things, the votes polled in the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1917, in which, in Russia, the armed forces also participated.

The following are the principal results of the voting as given by N.V. Svyatitsky:

*Number of Votes Polled in the Constituent Assembly Elections  
November 1917 (thousands)*

Army and navy units	SRs	Bolsheviks	Cadets	National & other groups	Total
Northern Front	240.0	480.0	?	60.0 <sup>b</sup>	780.0
Western Front	180.6	653.4	16.7	125.2	976.0
South-Western Front	402.9	300.1	13.7	290.6	1,007.4
Rumanian Front	679.4	167.0	21.4	260.7	1,128.6
Caucasian Front	360.0	60.0	?	—	420.0
Baltic Fleet	—	(120.0) <sup>a</sup>	—	—	(120.0) <sup>a</sup>
Black Sea Fleet	22.2	10.8	—	19.5	52.5
<i>Total</i>	1,885.1	1,671.3	51.8	756.0	4,364.5
		<u>+(120.0)<sup>a</sup></u>	+?		<u>+(120.0)<sup>a</sup></u>
		1,791.3			+?

Summary: the Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 1,885,100 votes; the Bolsheviks polled 1,671,300 votes. If to the latter we add the 120,000 votes (approximately) polled in the

<sup>a</sup> The figure is approximate. Two Bolsheviks were elected. N.V. Svyatitsky counts an average of 60,000 votes per elected person. That is why I give the figure 120,000.

<sup>b</sup> No information is given as to which party polled 19,500 votes in the Black Sea Fleet. The other figures in this column evidently apply almost entirely to the Ukrainian socialists for 10 Ukrainian socialists and one Social Democrat (i.e., a Menshevik) were elected.

Baltic Fleet, the total votes polled by the Bolsheviks will be 1,791,300.

The Bolsheviks, therefore, polled a *little less* than the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

And so, by October-November 1917, the armed forces were *half Bolshevik*.

If that had not been the case we could not have been victorious.

We polled nearly half the votes of the armed forces as a whole, but had an overwhelming majority on the fronts *nearest to the metropolitan cities* and, in general, on those not too far away. If we leave out the Caucasian front, the Bolsheviks obtained on the whole a majority over the Socialist-Revolutionaries. And if we take the northern and western fronts, the votes polled by the Bolsheviks will amount to over *one million*, compared with 420,000 votes polled by the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Thus, in the armed forces, too, the Bolsheviks already had a *political "striking force"*, by November 1917, which ensured them an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive point at the decisive moment. Resistance on the part of the armed forces to the October Revolution of the proletariat, to the winning of political power by the proletariat, was entirely out of the question, considering that the Bolsheviks had an enormous majority on the northern and western fronts, while on the other fronts, far removed from the centre, the Bolsheviks had the time and opportunity to *win the peasants away from the Socialist-Revolutionary Party*. With this we shall deal later.

#### IV

On the basis of the returns of the Constituent Assembly elections we have studied the three conditions which determined the victory of Bolshevism: (1) an overwhelming majority among the proletariat; (2) almost half of the armed forces; (3) an overwhelming superiority of forces at the decisive moment at the decisive points, namely: in Petrograd and Moscow and on the war fronts near the centre.

But these conditions could have ensured only a very short-lived and unstable victory had the Bolsheviks been unable to win to their side the majority of the *non-proletarian working masses*, to win them from the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the other petty-bourgeois parties.

That is the main thing.

And the chief reason why the "socialists" (read: petty-bourgeois democrats) of the Second International fail to understand the dictatorship of the proletariat is that they fail to understand that:

*State power in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can and must become an instrument for winning to the side of the proletariat the non-proletarian working masses, an instrument for winning those masses from the bourgeoisie and from the petty-bourgeois parties.*

Filled with petty-bourgeois prejudices, forgetting the most important thing in the teachings of Marx about the state, the “socialists” of the Second International regard *state power* as something holy, as an idol, or as the result of formal voting, the absolute of “consistent democracy” (or whatever else they call this nonsense). They fail to see that state power is simply an *instrument* which *different* classes can and must use (and know how to use) *for their class aims*.

The bourgeoisie has used state power as an instrument of the capitalist class against the proletariat, against all the working people. That has been the case in the most democratic bourgeois republics. Only the betrayers of Marxism have “forgotten” this.

The proletariat must (after mustering sufficiently strong political and military “striking forces”) overthrow the bourgeoisie, take state power from it in order to use that *instrument* for its class aims.

What are the class aims of the proletariat?

- Suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie;
- Neutralise the peasantry and, if possible, win them over — at any rate the majority of the labouring, non-exploiting section — to the side of the proletariat;
- Organise large-scale machine production, using factories, and means of production in general, expropriated from the bourgeoisie;
- Organise socialism on the ruins of capitalism.



In mockery of the teachings of Marx, those gentlemen, the opportunists, including the Kautskyites, “teach” the people that the proletariat must first win a majority by means of universal suffrage, then obtain state power, by the vote of that majority, and only after that, on the basis of “consistent” (some call it “pure”) democracy, organise socialism.

But we say on the basis of the teachings of Marx and the experience of the Russian revolution: The proletariat must first overthrow the bourgeoisie and win *for itself* state power, and then use that state power, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an instrument of its class for the purpose of winning the sympathy of the majority of the working people.



How can state power in the hands of the proletariat become the instrument of its class struggle for influence over the non-proletarian working people, of the struggle to draw them to its side, to win them over, to wrest them from the bourgeoisie?

First, the proletariat achieves this *not* by putting into operation the old apparatus

of state power, but by *smashing* it to pieces, levelling it with the ground (in spite of the howls of frightened philistines and the threats of saboteurs), and building a *new* state apparatus. That new state apparatus is adapted to the dictatorship of the proletariat and to its struggle against the bourgeoisie to *win* the non-proletarian working people. That new apparatus is not anybody's invention, it *grows* out of the proletarian class struggle as that struggle becomes more widespread and intense. That new apparatus of state power, the new *type* of state power, is *soviet power*.

The Russian proletariat, immediately, a few hours after winning state power, proclaimed the dissolution of the old state apparatus (which, as Marx showed, had been for centuries adapted to serve the class interests of the bourgeoisie, even in the most democratic republic<sup>72</sup>) and transferred *all power to the soviets*; and only the working and exploited people could enter the soviets, all exploiters of every kind were excluded.

In that way the proletariat at once, at one stroke, immediately *after* it had taken state power, *won* from the bourgeoisie *the vast mass* of its supporters in the petty-bourgeois and "socialist" parties; for that mass, the working and exploited people who had been deceived by the bourgeoisie (and by its yes-men, the Chernovs, Kautskys, Martovs and co.), *on obtaining soviet power*, acquired, *for the first time*, an instrument of mass struggle for their interests against the bourgeoisie.

Secondly, the proletariat can, and must, at once, or at all events very quickly, win from the bourgeoisie and from petty-bourgeois democrats "*their*" masses, i.e., the masses which follow them — win them *by satisfying their most urgent economic needs in a revolutionary way by expropriating the landowners and the bourgeoisie*.

The bourgeoisie *cannot* do that, no matter how "mighty" its state power may be.

The proletariat *can* do that on the very next day after it has won state power, because for this it has both an apparatus (the soviets) and economic means (the expropriation of the landowners and the bourgeoisie).

That is exactly how the Russian proletariat *won the peasantry* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and won them literally *a few hours after* achieving state power; a few hours after the victory over the bourgeoisie in Petrograd, the victorious proletariat issued a "decree on land",<sup>73</sup> and in that decree it entirely, at once, with revolutionary swiftness, energy and devotion, *satisfied* all the most urgent economic needs of the *majority* of the peasants, it expropriated the landowners, entirely and without compensation.

To prove to the peasants that the proletarians did not want to steamroller them, did not want to boss them, but to help them and be their friends, the victorious Bolsheviks did not put a *single word of their own* into that "decree on land", but copied

it, word for word, from the peasant mandates (the most revolutionary of them, of course) which the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* had published in the *Socialist-Revolutionary* newspaper.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries fumed and raved, protested and howled that “the Bolsheviks had stolen their program”, but they were only laughed at for that; a fine party, indeed, which had to be defeated and driven from the government in order that everything in its program that was revolutionary and of benefit to the working people could be carried out!

The traitors, blockheads and pedants of the Second International could never understand such dialectics; the proletariat cannot achieve victory if it does not win the majority of the population to its side. But to limit that winning to polling a majority of votes in an election *under the rule of the bourgeoisie*, or to make it the condition for it, is crass stupidity, or else sheer deception of the workers. In order to win the majority of the population to its side the proletariat must, in the first place, overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize state power; secondly, it must introduce soviet power and completely smash the old state apparatus, whereby it immediately undermines the rule, prestige and influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the non-proletarian working people. Thirdly, it must *entirely destroy* the influence of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois compromisers over the *majority* of the non-proletarian masses by satisfying *their* economic needs *in a revolutionary way at the expense of the exploiters*.

It is possible to do this, of course, only when capitalist development has reached a certain level. Failing that fundamental condition, the proletariat cannot develop into a separate class, nor can success be achieved in its prolonged training, education, instruction and trial in battle during long years of strikes and demonstrations when the opportunists are disgraced and expelled. Failing that fundamental condition, the centres will not play that economic and political role which enables the proletariat, after their capture, to lay hold of state power in its entirety, or more correctly, of its vital nerve, its core, its node. Failing that fundamental condition, there cannot be the kinship, closeness and bond between the position of the proletariat and that of the non-proletarian working people which (kinship, closeness and bond) are necessary for the proletariat to influence those masses, for its influence over them to be effective.

## V

Let us proceed further.

The proletariat can win state power, establish the soviet system, and satisfy the economic needs of the majority of the working people at the expense of the exploiters.

Is that sufficient for achieving complete and final victory? No, it is not.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, their chief present-day representatives, the “socialists” and “Social-Democrats”, are suffering from illusions when they imagine that the working people are capable, under capitalism, of acquiring the high degree of class consciousness, firmness of character, perception and wide political outlook that will enable them to decide, *merely by voting*, or at all events, to *decide in advance*, without long experience of struggle, that they will follow a particular class, or a particular party.

It is a mere illusion. It is a sentimental story invented by pedants and sentimental socialists of the Kautsky, Longuet, and MacDonald type.

Capitalism would not be capitalism if it did not, on the one hand, condemn the *masses* to a downtrodden, crushed and terrified state of existence, to disunity (the countryside!) and ignorance, and if it (capitalism) did not, on the other hand, place in the hands of the bourgeoisie a gigantic apparatus of falsehood and deception to hoodwink the masses of workers and peasants, to stultify their minds, and so forth.

That is why only the proletariat can *lead the working people* out of capitalism to communism. It is no use thinking that the petty-bourgeois or semi-petty-bourgeois masses can decide in advance the extremely complicated political question: “to be with the working class or with the bourgeoisie”. The *vacillation* of the non-proletarian sections of the working people is inevitable; and inevitable also is their own *practical experience*, which will enable them to *compare* leadership by the bourgeoisie with leadership by the proletariat.

This is the circumstance that is constantly lost sight of by those who worship “consistent democracy” and who imagine that extremely important political problems can be solved by voting. Such problems are actually solved by *civil war* if they are acute and aggravated by struggle, and the *experience* of the non-proletarian masses (primarily of the peasants), their experience of comparing the rule of the proletariat with the rule of the bourgeoisie, is of tremendous importance in that war.

The Constituent Assembly elections in Russia in November 1917, compared with the two-year Civil War of 1917-19, are highly instructive in this respect.

See which districts proved to be the least Bolshevik. First, the East-Urals and the Siberian where the Bolsheviks polled 12% and 10% of the votes respectively. Secondly, the Ukraine where the Bolsheviks polled 10% of the votes. Of the other districts, the Bolsheviks polled the smallest percentage of votes in the peasant district of Great Russia, the Volga-Black Earth district, but even there the Bolsheviks polled 16% of the votes.

It was precisely in the districts where the Bolsheviks polled the lowest percentage

of votes in November 1917 that the counterrevolutionary movements, the revolts and the organisation of counterrevolutionary forces had the greatest success. It was precisely in those districts that the rule of Kolchak and Denikin lasted for months and months.

The vacillation of the petty-bourgeois population was particularly marked in those districts where the influence of the proletariat is weakest. Vacillation was at first in favour of the Bolsheviks when they granted land and when the demobilised soldiers brought the news about peace; later — against the Bolsheviks when, to promote the international development of the revolution and to protect its centre in Russia, they agreed to sign the Treaty of Brest and thereby “offended” patriotic sentiments, the deepest of petty-bourgeois sentiments. The dictatorship of the proletariat was particularly displeasing to the peasants in those places where there were the largest stocks of surplus grain, when the Bolsheviks showed that they would strictly and firmly secure the transfer of those surplus stocks to the state at fixed prices. The peasants in the Urals, Siberia and the Ukraine turned to Kolchak and Denikin.

Further, the experience of Kolchak and Denikin “democracy”, about which every hack writer in Kolchakia and Denikia shouted in every issue of the whiteguard newspapers, showed the peasants that phrases about democracy and about the “Constituent Assembly” serve only as a screen to conceal the dictatorship of the landowners and capitalists.

Another turn towards Bolshevism began and peasant revolts spread in the rear of Kolchak and Denikin. The peasants welcomed the Red troops as liberators.

In the long run, it was this vacillation of the peasantry, the main body of the petty-bourgeois working people, that decided the fate of Soviet rule and of the rule of Kolchak and Denikin. But this “long run” was preceded by a fairly lengthy period of severe struggle and painful trial, which have not ended in Russia after two years, have not ended precisely in Siberia and in the Ukraine. And there is no guarantee that they will end *completely* within, say, another year or so.

The supporters of “consistent” democracy have not given thought to the importance of this historic fact. They invented, and are still inventing, nursery tales about the proletariat under capitalism being able to “convince” the majority of the working people and win them firmly to its side by voting. But reality shows that only in the course of a long and fierce struggle does the stern experience of the *vacillating* petty bourgeoisie *lead it* to the conclusion, after comparing the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the capitalists, that the former is better than the latter.

In theory, all socialists who have studied Marxism and are willing to take into account the lessons of the 19th century political history of the advanced countries recognise that the *vacillation* of the petty bourgeoisie between the proletariat and the

capitalist class is inevitable. The economic roots of this vacillation are clearly revealed by economic science, the truths of which have been repeated millions of times in the newspapers, leaflets and pamphlets issued by the socialists of the Second International.

But these people cannot apply those truths to the peculiar epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They substitute petty-bourgeois-democratic prejudices and illusions (about class “equality”, about “consistent” or “pure” democracy, about solving great historic problems by voting, and so forth) for the *class struggle*. They will not understand that after capturing state power the proletariat does not thereby cease its class struggle, but continues it in a different form and by different means. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat conducted with the aid of an instrument like state power, a class struggle, one of whose aims is to demonstrate to the non-proletarian sections of the working people by means of their long experience and a long list of practical examples that it is more to their advantage to side with the dictatorship of the proletariat than with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and that there can be no third course.

The returns of the Constituent Assembly elections held in November 1917 give us the main background to the picture of the development of the Civil War that has raged for two years since those elections. The main forces in that war were *already* clearly evident during the Constituent Assembly elections — the role of the “striking force” of the proletarian army, the role of the vacillating peasantry; and the role of the bourgeoisie were already apparent. In his article N.V. Svyatitsky writes: “The Cadets were most successful in the same regions where the Bolsheviks were most successful — in the northern and central-industrial regions” (p. 116). Naturally, in the most highly developed capitalist centres, the intermediary elements standing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie were the weakest. Naturally, in those centres, the class struggle was most acute. It was there that the main forces of the bourgeoisie were concentrated and there, only there, could the proletariat defeat the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat could rout the bourgeoisie, and only after routing the bourgeoisie could the proletariat definitely win the sympathy and support of the petty-bourgeois strata of the population by using an instrument like state power.

If properly used, if correctly read, the returns of the Constituent Assembly elections reveal to us again and again the fundamental truths of the Marxist doctrine of the class struggle.

These returns, incidentally, also reveal the role and importance of the national question. Take the Ukraine. At the last conferences on the Ukrainian question some comrades accused the writer of these lines of giving too much “prominence” to the national question in the Ukraine. The returns of the Constituent Assembly elections

show that in the Ukraine, as early as November 1917, the *Ukrainian* Socialist-Revolutionaries and socialists polled a majority (3.4 million votes + 0.5 = 3.9 million against 1.9 million polled by the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries, out of a total poll in the whole of the Ukraine of 7.6 million votes). In the army on the south-western and Rumanian fronts the Ukrainian socialists polled 30% and 34% of the total votes (the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries polled 40% and 59%).

Under these circumstances, to ignore the importance of the national question in the Ukraine — a sin of which Great Russians are often guilty (and of which the Jews are guilty perhaps only a little less often than the Great Russians) — is a great and dangerous mistake. The division between the Russian and Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionaries as early as 1917 could not have been accidental. As internationalists it is our duty, first, to combat very vigorously the survivals (sometimes unconscious) of Great-Russian imperialism and chauvinism among “Russian” Communists; and secondly, it is our duty, precisely, on the national question, which is a relatively minor one (for an internationalist the question of state frontiers is a secondary, if not a tenth-rate, question), to make concessions. There are other questions — the fundamental interests of the proletarian dictatorship; the interests of the unity and discipline of the Red Army which is fighting Denikin; the leading role of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry — that are more important; the question whether the Ukraine will be a separate state is far less important. We must not be in the least surprised, or frightened, even by the prospect of the Ukrainian workers and peasants trying out different systems, and in the course of, say, several years, testing by practice union with the RSFSR, or seceding from the latter and forming an independent Ukrainian SSR, or various forms of their close alliance, and so on, and so forth.

To attempt to settle this question in advance, once and for all, “firmly” and “irrevocably”, would be narrow-mindedness or sheer stupidity, for the vacillation of the non-proletarian working people on *such* a question is quite natural, even inevitable, but not in the least frightful for the proletariat. It is the duty of the proletarian who is really capable of being an internationalist to treat *such* vacillation with the greatest caution and tolerance, it is his duty to leave it to the non-proletarian masses *themselves* to *get rid* of this vacillation as a result of their own experience. We must be intolerant and ruthless, uncompromising and inflexible on other, more fundamental questions, some of which I have already pointed to above.

## VI

The comparison of the Constituent Assembly elections in November 1917 with the development of the proletarian revolution in Russia from October 1917 to December

1919 enables us to draw conclusions concerning bourgeois parliamentarism and the proletarian revolution in every capitalist country. Let me try briefly to formulate, or at least to outline, the principal conclusions.

1. Universal suffrage is an index of the level reached by the various classes in their understanding of their problems.

It shows how the various classes are *inclined* to solve their problems. The actual *solution* of those problems is not provided by voting, but by the class struggle in all its forms, including civil war.

2. The socialists and Social-Democrats of the Second International take the stand of vulgar petty-bourgeois democrats and share the prejudice that the fundamental problems of the class struggle can be solved by voting.
3. The party of the revolutionary proletariat must take part in bourgeois parliaments in order to enlighten the masses; this can be done during elections and in the struggle between parties in parliament. But limiting the class struggle to the parliamentary struggle, or regarding the latter as the highest and decisive form, to which all the other forms of struggle are subordinate, is actually desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.
4. All the representatives and supporters of the Second International, and all the leaders of the German, so-called “independent”, Social-Democratic Party, actually go over to the bourgeoisie in this way when they recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat in words, but in deeds, by their propaganda, imbue the proletariat with the idea that it must first obtain a formal expression of the will the majority of the population under capitalism (i.e., a majority of votes in the bourgeois parliament) to transfer political power to the proletariat, which transfer is to take place later.

All the cries, based on this premise, of the German “independent” Social-Democrats and similar leaders of decayed socialism against the “dictatorship of a minority”, and so forth, merely indicate that those leaders fail to understand the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, which actually reigns even in the most democratic republics, and that they fail to understand the conditions for its destruction by the class struggle of the proletariat.

5. This failure to understand consists, in particular, in the following: they forget that, to a very large degree, the bourgeois parties are able to rule because they deceive the masses of the people, because of the yoke of capital, and to this is added self-deception concerning the nature of capitalism, a self-deception which is characteristic mostly of the petty-bourgeois parties, which usually want to substitute more or less disguised forms of class conciliation for the class struggle.

“First let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, i.e.,

while the rule and yoke of capital still exist, express themselves in favour of the party of the proletariat, and only then can and should the party take power” — say the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists but who are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie.

“Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, and smash the bourgeois state apparatus, then the victorious proletariat will be able rapidly to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the non-proletarian working people by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters” — say we. The opposite will be rare exception in history (and even in such an exception the bourgeoisie can resort to civil war, as the example of Finland showed).

6. Or in other words:

“First we shall pledge ourselves to recognise the principle of equality, or consistent democracy, while preserving private property and the yoke of capital (i.e., actual inequality under formal equality), and try to obtain the decision of the majority on this basis” — say the bourgeoisie and their yes-men, the petty-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialists and Social-Democrats.

“First the proletarian class struggle, winning state power, will destroy the pillars and foundations of actual inequality, and then the proletariat, which has defeated the exploiters, will lead all working people to the *abolition of classes*, i.e., to socialist *equality*, the only kind that is not a deception” — say we.

7. In all capitalist countries, besides the proletariat, or that part of the proletariat which is conscious of its revolutionary aims and is capable of fighting to achieve them, there are numerous politically immature proletarian, semi-proletarian, semi-petty-bourgeois strata which follow the bourgeoisie and bourgeois democracy (including the “socialists” of the Second International) because they have been deceived, have no confidence in their own strength, or in the strength of the proletariat, are unaware of the possibility of having their urgent needs satisfied by means of the expropriation of the exploiters.

These strata of the working and exploited people provide the vanguard of the proletariat with allies and give it a stable majority of the population; but the proletariat can win these allies only with the aid of an instrument like state power, that is to say, only after it has overthrown the bourgeoisie and has destroyed the bourgeois state apparatus.

8. The strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population. That is because the proletariat economically dominates the centre and nerve of the entire economic system of

capitalism, and also because the proletariat expresses economically and politically the real interests of the overwhelming majority of the working people under capitalism.

Therefore, the proletariat, even when it constitutes a minority of the population (or when the class-conscious and really revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat constitutes a minority of the population), is capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and, after that, of winning to its side numerous allies from a mass of semi-proletarians and petty bourgeoisie who never declare in advance in favour of the rule of the proletariat, who do not understand the conditions and aims of that rule, and only by their subsequent experience become convinced that the proletarian dictatorship is inevitable, proper and legitimate.

9. Finally, in every capitalist country there are always very broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie which inevitably vacillate between capital and labour. To achieve victory, the proletariat must, first, choose the right moment for its decisive assault on the bourgeoisie, taking into account, among other things, the disunity between the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies, or the instability of their alliance, and so forth. Secondly, the proletariat must, after its victory, utilise this vacillation of the petty bourgeoisie in such a way as to neutralise them, prevent their siding with the exploiters; it must be able to hold on for some time *in spite of this vacillation*, and so on, and so forth.
10. One of the necessary conditions for preparing the proletariat for its victory is a long, stubborn and ruthless struggle against opportunism, reformism, social-chauvinism, and similar bourgeois influences and trends, which are inevitable, since the proletariat is operating in a capitalist environment. If there is no such struggle, if opportunism in the working-class movement is not utterly defeated beforehand, there can be no dictatorship of the proletariat. Bolshevism would not have defeated the bourgeoisie in 1917-19 if before that, in 1903-17, it had not learned to defeat the Mensheviks, i.e., the opportunists, reformists, social-chauvinists, and ruthlessly expel them from the party of the proletarian vanguard.

At the present time, the verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat by the leaders of the German “Independents”, or by the French Longuetists, and the like, who are *actually* continuing the old, habitual policy of big and small concessions to and conciliation with opportunism, subservience to the prejudices of bourgeois democracy (“consistent democracy” or “pure democracy” as they call it) and bourgeois parliamentarism, and so forth, is the most dangerous self-deception — and sometimes sheer fooling of the workers. ■

# Theses & Report on Bourgeois Democracy & the Dictatorship of the Proletariat<sup>74</sup>

*By V.I. Lenin*

1. Faced with the growth of the revolutionary workers' movement in every country, the bourgeoisie and their agents in the workers' organisations are making desperate attempts to find ideological and political arguments in defence of the rule of the exploiters. Condemnation of dictatorship and defence of democracy are particularly prominent among these arguments. The falsity and hypocrisy of this argument, repeated in a thousand strains by the capitalist press and at the Berne yellow International Conference in February 1919, are obvious to all who refuse to betray the fundamental principles of socialism.
2. Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general", without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognise in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does "democracy in general" exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of "dictatorship in general", but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination.
3. History teaches us that no oppressed class ever did, or could, achieve power without going through a period of the dictatorship, i.e., the conquest of political power and forcible suppression of the resistance always offered by the exploiters — a resistance that is most desperate, most furious, and that stops at nothing. The bourgeoisie,

whose domination is now defended by the socialists who denounce “dictatorship in general” and extol “democracy in general”, won power in the advanced countries through a series of insurrections, civil wars, and the forcible suppression of kings, feudal lords, slaveowners and their attempts at restoration. In books, pamphlets, congress resolutions and propaganda speeches socialists everywhere have thousands and millions of times explained to the people the class nature of these bourgeois revolutions and this bourgeois dictatorship. That is why the present defence of bourgeois democracy under cover of talk about “democracy in general” and the present howls and shouts against proletarian dictatorship under cover of shouts about “dictatorship in general” are an outright betrayal of socialism. They are, in fact, desertion to the bourgeoisie, denial of the proletariat’s right to its own, proletarian, revolution, and defence of bourgeois reformism at the very historical juncture when bourgeois reformism throughout the world has collapsed and the war has created a revolutionary situation.

4. In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists.<sup>75</sup> There is not a single revolutionary, not a single Marxist among those now shouting against dictatorship and for democracy who has not sworn and vowed to the workers that he accepts this basic truth of socialism. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is in a fighting mood and taking action to destroy this machine of oppression and to establish proletarian dictatorship, these traitors to socialism claim that the bourgeoisie have granted the working people “pure democracy”, have abandoned resistance and are prepared to yield to the majority of the working people. They assert that in a democratic republic there is not, and never has been, any such thing as a state machine for the oppression of labour by capital.
5. The Paris Commune — to which all who parade as socialists pay lip service, for they know that the workers ardently and sincerely sympathise with the Commune — showed very clearly the historically conventional nature and limited value of the bourgeois parliamentary system and bourgeois democracy — institutions which, though highly progressive compared with medieval times, inevitably require a radical alteration in the era of proletarian revolution. It was Marx who best appraised the historical significance of the Commune. In his analysis, he revealed the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary

system under which the oppressed classes enjoy the right to decide once in several years which representative of the propertied classes shall “represent and suppress” (*ver- und zertreten*) the people in parliament.<sup>76</sup> And it is now, when the soviet movement is embracing the entire world and continuing the work of the Commune for all to see, that the traitors to socialism are forgetting the concrete experience and concrete lessons of the Paris Commune and repeating the old bourgeois rubbish about “democracy in general”. The Commune was not a parliamentary institution.

6. The significance of the Commune, furthermore, lies in the fact that it endeavoured to crush, to smash to its very foundations, the bourgeois state apparatus, the bureaucratic, judicial, military and police machine, and to replace it by a self-governing, mass workers’ organisation in which there was no division between legislative and executive power. All contemporary bourgeois-democratic republics, including the German republic, which the traitors to socialism, in mockery of the truth, describe as a proletarian republic, retain this state apparatus. We therefore again get quite clear confirmation of the point that shouting in defence of “democracy in general” is actually defence of the bourgeoisie and their privileges as exploiters.
7. “Freedom of assembly” can be taken as a sample of the requisites of “pure democracy”. Every class-conscious worker who has not broken with his class will readily appreciate the absurdity of promising freedom of assembly to the exploiters at a time and in a situation when the exploiters are resisting the overthrow of their rule and are fighting to retain their privileges. When the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they did not, either in England in 1649 or in France in 1793, grant “freedom of assembly” to the monarchists and nobles, who summoned foreign troops and “assembled” to organise attempts at restoration. If the present-day bourgeoisie, who have long since become reactionary, demand from the proletariat advance guarantees of “freedom of assembly” for the exploiters, whatever the resistance offered by the capitalists to being expropriated, the workers will only laugh at their hypocrisy.

The workers know perfectly well, too, that even in the most democratic bourgeois republic “freedom of assembly” is a hollow phrase, for the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and enough leisure to assemble at meetings, which are protected by the bourgeois machine of power. The rural and urban workers and the small peasants — the overwhelming majority of the population — are denied all these things. As long as that state of affairs prevails, “equality”, i.e., “pure democracy” is a fraud. The first thing to do to win genuine equality and enable the working people to enjoy democracy in practice is to deprive

the exploiters of all the public and sumptuous private buildings, to give the working people leisure and to see to it that their freedom of assembly is protected by armed workers, not by scions of the nobility or capitalist officers in command of downtrodden soldiers.

Only when that change is effected can we speak of freedom of assembly and of equality without mocking at the workers, at working people in general, at the poor. And this change can be effected only by the vanguard of the working people, the proletariat, which overthrows the exploiters, the bourgeoisie.

8. "Freedom of the press" is another of the principal slogans of "pure democracy". And here, too, the workers know — and socialists everywhere have admitted it millions of times — that this freedom is a deception while the best printing-presses and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists, and while capitalist rule over the press remains, a rule that is manifested throughout the world all the more strikingly, sharply and cynically the more democracy and the republican system are developed, as in America for example. The first thing to do to win real equality and genuine democracy for the working people, for the workers and peasants, is to deprive capital of the possibility of hiring writers, buying up publishing houses and bribing newspapers. And to do that the capitalists and exploiters have to be overthrown and their resistance suppressed. The capitalists have always used the term "freedom" to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death. In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion. In this respect, too, the defenders of "pure democracy" prove to be defenders of an utterly foul and venal system that gives the rich control over the mass media. They prove to be deceivers of the people, who, with the aid of plausible, fine-sounding, but thoroughly false phrases, divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavement. Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any workingman (or groups of workingmen, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses and public stocks of paper.
9. The history of the 19th and 20th centuries demonstrated, even before the war, what this celebrated "pure democracy" really is under capitalism. Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the "purer" democracy is, the more

naked, acute and merciless the class struggle becomes, and the “purer” the capitalist oppression and bourgeois dictatorship. The Dreyfus case in republican France, the massacre of strikers by hired bands armed by the capitalists in the free and democratic American republic — these and thousands of similar facts illustrate the truth which the bourgeoisie are vainly seeking to conceal, namely, that actually terror and bourgeois dictatorship prevail in the most democratic of republics and are openly displayed every time the exploiters think the power of capital is being shaken.

10. The imperialist war of 1914-18 conclusively revealed even to backward workers the true nature of bourgeois democracy, even in the freest republics, as being a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Tens of millions were killed for the sake of enriching the German or the British group of millionaires and multimillionaires, and bourgeois military dictatorships were established in the freest republics. This military dictatorship continues to exist in the Allied countries even after Germany’s defeat. It was mostly the war that opened the eyes of the working people, that stripped bourgeois democracy of its camouflage and showed the people the abyss of speculation and profiteering that existed during and because of the war. It was in the name of “freedom and equality” that the bourgeoisie waged the war, and in the name of “freedom and equality” that the munition manufacturers piled up fabulous fortunes. Nothing that the yellow Berne International does can conceal from the people the now thoroughly exposed exploiting character of bourgeois freedom, bourgeois equality and bourgeois democracy.
11. In Germany, the most developed capitalist country of continental Europe, the very first months of full republican freedom, established as a result of imperialist Germany’s defeat, have shown the German workers and the whole world the true class substance of the bourgeois-democratic republic. The murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg is an event of epoch-making significance not only because of the tragic death of these finest people and leaders of the truly proletarian, Communist International, but also because the class nature of an advanced European state — it can be said without exaggeration, of an advanced state on a worldwide scale — has been conclusively exposed. If those arrested, i.e., those placed under state protection, could be assassinated by officers and capitalists with impunity, and this under a government headed by social-patriots, then the democratic republic where such a thing was possible is a bourgeois dictatorship. Those who voice their indignation at the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg but fail to understand this fact are only demonstrating their stupidity, or hypocrisy. “Freedom” in the German republic, one of the freest and advanced

republics of the world, is freedom to murder arrested leaders of the proletariat with impunity. Nor can it be otherwise as long as capitalism remains, for the development of democracy sharpens rather than dampens the class struggle which, by virtue of all the results and influences of the war and of its consequences, has been brought to boiling point.

Throughout the civilised world we see Bolsheviks being exiled, persecuted and thrown into prison. This is the case, for example, in Switzerland, one of the freest bourgeois republics, and in America, where there have been anti-Bolshevik pogroms, etc. From the standpoint of “democracy in general”, or “pure democracy”, it is really ridiculous that advanced, civilised, and democratic countries, which are armed to the teeth, should fear the presence of a few score men from backward, famine-stricken and ruined Russia, which the bourgeois papers, in tens of millions of copies, describe as savage, criminal, etc. Clearly, the social situation that could produce this crying contradiction is in fact a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

12. In these circumstances, proletarian dictatorship is not only an absolutely legitimate means of overthrowing the exploiters and suppressing their resistance, but also absolutely necessary to the entire mass of working people, being their only defence against the bourgeois dictatorship which led to the war and is preparing new wars.

The main thing that socialists fail to understand and that constitutes their short-sightedness in matters of theory, their subservience to bourgeois prejudices and their political betrayal of the proletariat is that in capitalist society, whenever there is any serious aggravation of the class struggle intrinsic to that society, there can be no alternative but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Dreams of some third way are reactionary, petty-bourgeois lamentations. That is borne out by more than a century of development of bourgeois democracy and the working-class movement in all the advanced countries, and notably by the experience of the past five years. This is also borne out by the whole science of political economy, by the entire content of Marxism, which reveals the economic inevitability, wherever commodity economy prevails, of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie that can only be replaced by the class which the very growth of capitalism develops, multiplies, welds together and strengthens, that is, the proletarian class.

13. Another theoretical and political error of the socialists is their failure to understand that ever since the rudiments of democracy first appeared in antiquity, its forms inevitably changed over the centuries as one ruling class replaced another. Democracy assumed different forms and was applied in different degrees in the ancient republics of Greece, the medieval cities and the advanced capitalist countries.

It would be sheer nonsense to think that the most profound revolution in human history, the first case in the world of power being transferred from the exploiting minority to the exploited majority, could take place within the timeworn framework of the old, bourgeois, parliamentary democracy, without drastic changes, without the creation of new forms of democracy, new institutions that embody the new conditions for applying democracy, etc.

14. Proletarian dictatorship is similar to the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises out of the need, as every other dictatorship does, to forcibly suppress the resistance of the class that is losing its political sway. The fundamental distinction between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of other classes — landlord dictatorship in the Middle Ages and bourgeois dictatorship in all the civilised capitalist countries — consists in the fact that the dictatorship of the landowners and bourgeoisie was the forcible suppression of the resistance offered by the vast majority of the population, namely the working people. In contrast, proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, i. e., an insignificant minority of the population, the landowners and capitalists.

It follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably entail not only a change in democratic forms and institutions, generally speaking, but precisely such a change as provides an unparalleled extension of the actual enjoyment of democracy by those oppressed by capitalism — the toiling classes.

And indeed, the form of proletarian dictatorship that has already taken shape, i. e., soviet power in Russia, the räte-system in Germany, the shop stewards committees in Britain and similar soviet institutions in other countries, all this implies and presents to the toiling classes, i. e., the vast majority of the population, greater practical opportunities for enjoying democratic rights and liberties than ever existed before, even approximately, in the best and the most democratic bourgeois republics.

The substance of soviet government is that the permanent and only foundation of state power, the entire machinery of state, is the mass-scale organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, i. e., the workers and the semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit the labour of others and regularly resort to the sale of at least a part of their own labour-power). It is the people, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, while possessing equal rights by law, have in fact been debarred by thousands of devices and subterfuges from participation in political life and enjoyment of democratic rights and liberties, that are now drawn into constant and unflinching, moreover, decisive, participation in the democratic administration of the state.

15. The equality of citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race, or nationality, which bourgeois democracy everywhere has always promised but never effected, and never could effect because of the domination of capital, is given immediate and full effect by the soviet system, or dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact is that this can only be done by a government of the workers, who are not interested in the means of production being privately owned and in the fight for their division and redivision.
16. The old, i.e., bourgeois, democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised that it was the mass of working people who were kept farthest away from the machinery of government. Soviet power, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, on the other hand, is so organised as to bring the working people close to the machinery of government. That, too, is the purpose of combining the legislative and executive authority under the soviet organisation of the state and of replacing territorial constituencies by production units — the factory.
17. The army was a machine of oppression not only under the monarchy. It remains as such in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic ones. Only the soviets, the permanent organisations of government authority of the classes that were oppressed by capitalism, are in a position to destroy the army's subordination to bourgeois commanders and really merge the proletariat with the army; only the soviets can effectively arm the proletariat and disarm the bourgeoisie. Unless this is done, the victory of socialism is impossible.
18. The soviet organisation of the state is suited to the leading role of the proletariat as a class most concentrated and enlightened by capitalism. The experience of all revolutions and all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world socialist movement teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite and lead the scattered and backward sections of the working and exploited population.
19. Only the soviet organisation of the state can really effect the immediate break-up and total destruction of the old, i.e., bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial machinery, which has been, and has inevitably had to be, retained under capitalism even in the most democratic republics, and which is, in actual fact, the greatest obstacle to the practical implementation of democracy for the workers and working people generally. The Paris Commune took the first epoch-making step along this path. The soviet system has taken the second.
20. Destruction of state power is the aim set by all socialists, including Marx above all. Genuine democracy, i.e., liberty and equality, is unrealisable unless this aim is achieved. But its practical achievement is possible only through soviet, or proletarian,

democracy, for by enlisting the mass organisations of the working people in constant and unflinching participation in the administration of the state, it immediately begins to prepare the complete withering away of any state.

21. The complete bankruptcy of the socialists who assembled in Berne, their complete failure to understand the new, i.e., proletarian, democracy, is especially apparent from the following. On February 10, 1919, Branting delivered the concluding speech at the international conference of the yellow International in Berne. In Berlin, on February 11, 1919, *Die Freiheit*, the paper of the International's affiliates, published an appeal from the party of "Independents" to the proletariat. The appeal acknowledged the bourgeois character of the Scheidemann government, rebuked it for wanting to abolish the soviets, which it described as *Träger und Schützer der Revolution* — vehicles and guardians of the revolution — and proposed that the soviets be legalised, invested with government authority and given the right to suspend the operation of National Assembly decisions pending a popular referendum.

That proposal indicates the complete ideological bankruptcy of the theorists who defended democracy and failed to see its bourgeois character. This ludicrous attempt to combine the soviet system, i.e., proletarian dictatorship, with the National Assembly, i.e., bourgeois dictatorship, utterly exposes the paucity of thought of the yellow socialists and Social-Democrats, their reactionary petty-bourgeois political outlook, and their cowardly concessions to the irresistibly growing strength of the new, proletarian democracy.

22. From the class standpoint, the Berne yellow International majority, which did not dare to adopt a formal resolution out of fear of the mass of workers, was right in condemning Bolshevism. This majority is in full agreement with the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Scheidemanns in Germany. In complaining of persecution by the Bolsheviks, the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries try to conceal the fact that they are persecuted for participating in the Civil War on the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Similarly, the Scheidemanns and their party have already demonstrated in Germany that they, too, are participating in the civil war on the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers.

It is therefore quite natural that the Berne yellow International majority should be in favour of condemning the Bolsheviks. This was not an expression of the defence of "pure democracy", but of the self-defence of people who know and feel that in the civil war they stand with the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.

That is why, from the class point of view, the decision of the yellow International

majority must be considered correct. The proletariat must not fear the truth, it must face it squarely and draw all the necessary political conclusions.

Comrades, I would like to add a word or two to the last two points. I think that the comrades who are to report to us on the Berne conference will deal with it in greater detail.

Not a word was said at the Berne conference about the significance of soviet power. We in Russia have been discussing this question for two years now. At our party conference in April 1917 we raised the following question, theoretically and politically: "What is soviet power, what is its substance and what is its historical significance?" We have been discussing it for almost two years. And at our party congress we adopted a resolution on it.<sup>77</sup>

On February 11 Berlin *Die Freiheit* published an appeal to the German proletariat signed not only by the leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany but also by all the members of the Independent Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag. In August 1918, Kautsky, one of the leading theorists of these Independents, wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, in which he declared that he was a supporter of democracy *and* of soviet bodies, but that the soviets must be bodies merely of an economic character and that they must not by any means be recognised as state organisations. Kautsky says the same thing in *Die Freiheit* of November 11 and January 12. On February 9 an article appeared by Rudolf Hilferding, who is also regarded as one of the leading and authoritative theorists of the Second International, in which he proposed that the soviet system be united with the National Assembly juridically, by state legislation. That was on February 9. On February 11 this proposal was adopted by the whole of the Independent Party and published in the form of an appeal.

There is vacillation again, despite the fact that the National Assembly already exists, even after "pure democracy" has been embodied in reality, after the leading theorists of the Independent Social-Democratic Party have declared that the soviet organisations must not be state organisations! This proves that these gentlemen really understand nothing about the new movement and about its conditions of struggle. But it goes to prove something else, namely, that there must be conditions, causes, for this vacillation! When, after all these events, after nearly two years of victorious revolution in Russia, we are offered resolutions like those adopted at the Berne conference, which say nothing about the soviets and their significance, about which not a single delegate uttered a single word, we have a perfect right to say that all these gentlemen are dead to us as socialists and theorists.

However, comrades, from the practical side, from the political point of view, the

fact that these Independents, who in theory and on principle have been opposed to these state organisations, suddenly make the stupid proposal to “peacefully” unite the National Assembly with the soviet system, i.e., to unite the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with the dictatorship of the proletariat, shows that a great change is taking place among the masses. We see that the Independents are all bankrupt in the socialist and theoretical sense and that an enormous change is taking place among the masses. The backward masses among the German workers are coming to us, have come to us! So, the significance of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the best section of the Berne conference, is nil from the theoretical and socialist standpoint. Still, it has some significance, which is that these waverers serve as an index to us of the mood of the backward sections of the proletariat. This, in my opinion, is the great historical significance of this conference. We experienced something of the kind in our own revolution. Our Mensheviks traversed almost exactly the same path as that of the theorists of the Independents in Germany. At first, when they had a majority in the soviets, they were in favour of the soviets.

All we heard then was: “Long live the soviets!”, “For the soviets!”, “The soviets are revolutionary democracy!” When, however, we Bolsheviks secured a majority in the soviets, they changed their tune; they said: the soviets must not exist side by side with the Constituent Assembly. And various Menshevik theorists made practically the same proposals, like the one to unite the soviet system with the Constituent Assembly and to incorporate the soviets in the state structure. Once again it is here revealed that the general course of the proletarian revolution is the same throughout the world. First the spontaneous formation of soviets, then their spread and development, and then the appearance of the practical problem: soviets, or National Assembly, or Constituent Assembly, or the bourgeois parliamentary system; utter confusion among the leaders, and finally — the proletarian revolution. But I think we should not present the problem in this way after nearly two years of revolution; we should rather adopt concrete decisions because for us, and particularly for the majority of the West-European countries, spreading of the soviet system is a most important task.

I would like to quote here just one Menshevik resolution. I asked Comrade Obolensky to translate it into German. He promised to do so but, unfortunately, he is not here. I shall try to render it from memory, as I have not the full text of it with me.

It is very difficult for a foreigner who has not heard anything about Bolshevism to arrive at an independent opinion about our controversial questions. Everything the Bolsheviks assert is challenged by the Mensheviks, and vice versa. Of course, it cannot be otherwise in the middle of a struggle, and that is why it is so important that the last Menshevik party conference, held in December 1918, adopted the long and detailed

resolution published in full in the Menshevik *Gazeta Pechatnikov*.<sup>78</sup> In this resolution the Mensheviks themselves briefly outline the history of the class struggle and of the Civil War. The resolution states that they condemn those groups in their party which are allied with the propertied classes in the Urals, in the south, in the Crimea and in Georgia — all these regions are enumerated. Those groups of the Menshevik party which, in alliance with the propertied classes, fought against the soviets are now condemned in the resolution; but the last point of the resolution also condemns those who joined the Communists. It follows that the Mensheviks were compelled to admit that there was no unity in their party, and that its members were either on the side of the bourgeoisie or on the side of the proletariat. The majority of the Mensheviks went over to the bourgeoisie and fought against us during the Civil War. We, of course, persecute Mensheviks, we even shoot them, when they wage war against us, fight against our Red Army and shoot our Red commanders. We responded to the bourgeois war with the proletarian war — there can be no other way. Therefore, from the political point of view, all this is sheer Menshevik hypocrisy. Historically, it is incomprehensible how people who have not been officially certified as mad could talk at the Berne conference, on the instructions of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, about the Bolsheviks fighting the latter, yet keep silent about their own struggle, in alliance with the bourgeoisie, against the proletariat.

All of them furiously attack us for persecuting them. This is true. But they do not say a word about the part they themselves have taken in the Civil War! I think that I shall have to provide the full text of the resolution to be recorded in the minutes, and I shall ask the foreign comrades to study it because it is a historical document in which the issue is raised correctly and which provides excellent material for appraising the controversy between the “socialist” trends in Russia. In between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie there is another class of people, who incline first this way and then the other. This has always been the case in all revolutions, and it is absolutely impossible in capitalist society, in which the proletariat and the bourgeoisie form two hostile camps, for intermediary sections not to exist between them. The existence of these waverers is historically inevitable, and, unfortunately, these elements, who do not know themselves on whose side they will fight tomorrow, will exist for quite some time.

I want to make the practical proposal that a resolution be adopted in which three points shall be specifically mentioned.

*First:* One of the most important tasks confronting the West-European comrades is to explain to the people the meaning, importance and necessity of the soviet system. There is a sort of misunderstanding on this question. Although Kautsky and Hilferding

are bankrupt as theorists, their recent articles in *Die Freiheit* show that they correctly reflect the mood of the backward sections of the German proletariat. The same thing took place in our country: during the first eight months of the Russian revolution the question of the soviet organisation was very much discussed, and the workers did not understand what the new system was and whether the soviets could be transformed into a state machine. In our revolution we advanced along the path of practice, and not of theory. For example, formerly we did not raise the question of the Constituent Assembly from the theoretical side, and we did not say we did not recognise the Constituent Assembly. It was only later, when the soviet organisations had spread throughout the country and had captured political power, that we decided to dissolve the Constituent Assembly. Now we see that in Hungary and Switzerland the question is much more acute. On the one hand, this is very good: it gives us the firm conviction that in the West-European states the revolution is advancing more quickly and will yield great victories. On the other hand, a certain danger is concealed in it, namely, that the struggle will be so precipitous that the minds of the mass of workers will not keep pace with this development. Even now the significance of the soviet system is not clear to a large mass of the politically educated German workers, because they have been trained in the spirit of the parliamentary system and amid bourgeois prejudices.

*Second:* About the spread of the soviet system. When we hear how quickly the idea of soviets is spreading in Germany, and even in Britain, it is very important evidence that the proletarian revolution will be victorious. Its progress can be only retarded for a short time. It is quite another thing, however, when comrades Albert and Platten tell us that in the rural districts in their countries there are hardly any soviets among the farm labourers and small peasants. In *Die Rote Fahne* I read an article opposing peasant soviets, but quite properly supporting soviets of farm labourers and of poor peasants.<sup>79</sup> The bourgeoisie and their lackeys, like Scheidemann and co., have already issued the slogan of peasant soviets. All we need, however, is soviets of farm labourers and poor peasants. Unfortunately, from the reports of comrades Albert, Platten and others, we see that, with the exception of Hungary, very little is being done to spread the soviet system in the countryside. In this, perhaps, lies the real and quite serious danger threatening the achievement of certain victory by the German proletariat. Victory can only be considered assured when not only the urban workers, but also the rural proletarians are organised, and organised not as before — in trade unions and cooperative societies — but in soviets. Our victory was made easier by the fact that in October 1917 we marched with the peasants, with all the peasants. In that sense, our revolution at that time was a bourgeois revolution. The first step taken by our proletarian government was to embody in a law promulgated on October 26 (old

style), 1917, on the next day after the revolution, the old demands of all the peasants which peasant soviets and village assemblies had put forward under Kerensky. That is where our strength lay; that is why we were able to win the overwhelming majority so easily. As far as the countryside was concerned, our revolution continued to be a bourgeois revolution, and only later, after a lapse of six months, were we compelled within the framework of the state organisation to start the class struggle in the countryside, to establish committees of poor peasants, of semi-proletarians, in every village, and to carry on a methodical fight against the rural bourgeoisie. This was inevitable in Russia owing to the backwardness of the country. In Western Europe things will proceed differently, and that is why we must emphasise the absolute necessity of spreading the soviet system also to the rural population in proper, perhaps new, forms.

*Third:* We must say that winning a communist majority in the soviets is the principal task in all countries in which soviet government is not yet victorious. Our resolutions' commission discussed this question yesterday. Perhaps other comrades will express their opinion on it; but I would like to propose that these three points be adopted as a special resolution. Of course, we are not in a position to prescribe the path of development. It is quite likely that the revolution will come very soon in many West-European countries, but we, as the organised section of the working class, as a party, strive and must strive to gain a majority in the soviets. Then our victory will be assured and no power on earth will be able to do anything against the communist revolution. If we do not, victory will not be secured so easily, and it will not be durable. And so, I would like to propose that these three points be adopted as a special resolution. ■

# Appendix 1 *From* **Terrorism & Communism**<sup>80</sup>

*By Leon Trotsky*

## **The Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

“Marx and Engels hammered out the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which Engels stubbornly defended in 1891, shortly before his death — the idea that the political autocracy of the proletariat is the sole form in which it can realise its control of the state.”

That is what Kautsky wrote about 10 years ago. The sole form of power for the proletariat he considered to be not a socialist majority in a democratic parliament, but the political autocracy of the proletariat, its dictatorship. And it is quite clear that, if our problem is the abolition of private property in the means of production, the only road to its solution lies through the concentration of state power in its entirety in the hands of the proletariat, and the setting up for the transitional period of an exceptional regime — a regime in which the ruling class is guided, not by general principles calculated for a prolonged period, but by considerations of revolutionary policy.

The dictatorship is necessary because it is a case, not of partial changes, but of the very existence of the bourgeoisie. No agreement is possible on this ground. Only force can be the deciding factor. The dictatorship of the proletariat does not exclude, of course, either separate agreements, or considerable concessions, especially in connection with the lower middle class and the peasantry. But the proletariat can only conclude these agreements after having gained possession of the apparatus of power, and having guaranteed to itself the possibility of independently deciding on which points to yield and on which to stand firm, in the interests of the general socialist task.

Kautsky now repudiates the dictatorship of the proletariat at the very outset, as the “tyranny of the minority over the majority.” That is, he discerns in the revolutionary

regime of the proletariat those very features by which the honest socialists of all countries invariably describe the dictatorship of the exploiters, albeit masked by the forms of democracy.

Abandoning the idea of a revolutionary dictatorship, Kautsky transforms the question of the conquest of power by the proletariat into a question of the conquest of a majority of votes by the social-democratic party in one of the electoral campaigns of the future. Universal suffrage, according to the legal fiction of parliamentarism, expresses the will of the citizens of all classes in the nation, and, consequently, gives a possibility of attracting a majority to the side of socialism. While the theoretical possibility has not been realised, the socialist minority must submit to the bourgeois majority. This fetishism of the parliamentary majority represents a brutal repudiation, not only of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but of Marxism and of the revolution altogether. If, in principle, we are to subordinate socialist policy to the parliamentary mystery of majority and minority, it follows that, in countries where formal democracy prevails, there is no place at all for the revolutionary struggle. If the majority elected on the basis of universal suffrage in Switzerland pass draconian legislation against strikers, or if the executive elected by the will of a formal majority in Northern America shoots workers, have the Swiss and American workers the “right” of protest by organising a general strike? Obviously, no. The political strike is a form of extra-parliamentary pressure on the “national will”, as it has expressed itself through universal suffrage. True, Kautsky himself, apparently, is ashamed to go as far as the logic of his new position demands. Bound by some sort of remnant of the past, he is obliged to acknowledge the possibility of correcting universal suffrage by action. Parliamentary elections, at all events in principle, never took the place, in the eyes of the social-democrats, of the real class struggle, of its conflicts, repulses, attacks, revolts; they were considered merely as a contributory fact in this struggle, playing a greater part at one period, a smaller at another, and no part at all in the period of dictatorship.

In 1891, that is, not long before his death, Engels, as we just heard, obstinately defended the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only possible form of its control of the state. Kautsky himself more than once repeated this definition. Hence, by the way, we can see what an unworthy forgery is Kautsky’s present attempt to throw back the dictatorship of the proletariat at us as a purely Russian invention.

Who aims at the end cannot reject the means. The struggle must be carried on with such intensity as actually to guarantee the supremacy of the proletariat. If the socialist revolution requires a dictatorship — “the sole form in which the proletariat can achieve control of the state” — it follows that the dictatorship must be guaranteed at all cost.

To write a pamphlet about dictatorship one needs an inkpot and a pile of paper, and possibly, in addition, a certain number of ideas in one's head. But in order to establish and consolidate the dictatorship, one has to prevent the bourgeoisie from undermining the state power of the proletariat. Kautsky apparently thinks that this can be achieved by tearful pamphlets. But his own experience ought to have shown him that it is not sufficient to have lost all influence with the proletariat, to acquire influence with the bourgeoisie.

It is only possible to safeguard the supremacy of the working class by forcing the bourgeoisie, accustomed to rule, to realise that it is too dangerous an undertaking for it to revolt against the dictatorship of the proletariat, to undermine it by conspiracies, sabotage, insurrections, or the calling in of foreign troops. The bourgeoisie, hurled from power, must be forced to obey. In what way? The priests used to terrify the people with future penalties. We have no such resources at our disposal. But even the priests' hell never stood alone, but was always bracketed with the material fire of the Holy Inquisition, and with the scorpions of the democratic state. Is it possible that Kautsky is leaning to the idea that the bourgeoisie can be held down with the help of the categorical imperative, which in his last writings plays the part of the Holy Ghost? We, on our part, can only promise him our material assistance if he decides to equip a Kantian-humanitarian mission to the realms of Denikin and Kolchak. At all events, there he would have the possibility of convincing himself that the counter-revolutionaries are not naturally devoid of character, and that, thanks to their six years' existence in the fire and smoke of war, their character has managed to become thoroughly hardened. Every White Guard has long ago acquired the simple truth that it is easier to hang a communist to the branch of a tree than to convert him with a book of Kautsky's. These gentlemen have no superstitious fear, either of the principles of democracy or of the flames of hell — the more so because the priests of the church and of official learning act in collusion with them, and pour their combined thunders exclusively on the heads of the Bolsheviks. The Russian White Guards resemble the German and all other White Guards in this respect — that they cannot be convinced or shamed, but only terrorised or crushed.

The man who repudiates terrorism in principle — i.e., repudiates measures of suppression and intimidation towards determined and armed counterrevolution, must reject all idea of the political supremacy of the working class and its revolutionary dictatorship. The man who repudiates the dictatorship of the proletariat repudiates the socialist revolution, and digs the grave of socialism.



At the present time, Kautsky has no theory of the social revolution. Every time he tries to generalise his slanders against the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, he produces merely a réchauffé of the prejudices of Jaurèsism and Bernsteinism.

“The revolution of 1789”, writes Kautsky, “itself put an end to the most important causes which gave it its harsh and violent character, and prepared the way for milder forms of the future revolution” (p. 140). Let us admit this, though to do so we have to forget the June days of 1848 and the horrors of the suppression of the Commune. Let us admit that the great revolution of the 18th century, which by measures of merciless terror destroyed the rule of absolutism, of feudalism, and of clericalism, really prepared the way for more peaceful and milder solutions of social problems. But, even if we admit this purely liberal standpoint, even here our accuser will prove to be completely in the wrong; for the Russian Revolution, which culminated in the dictatorship of the proletariat, began with just that work which was done in France at the end of the 18th century. Our forefathers, in centuries gone by, did not take the trouble to prepare the democratic way — by means of revolutionary terrorism — for milder manners in our revolution. The ethical mandarin, Kautsky, ought to take these circumstances into account, and accuse our forefathers, not us.

Kautsky, however, seems to make a little concession in this direction. “True”, he says, “no man of insight could doubt that a military monarchy like the German, the Austrian, or the Russian could be overthrown only by violent methods. But in this connection there was always less thought” (amongst whom?) “of the bloody use of arms, and more of the working class weapon peculiar to the proletariat — the mass strike. And that a considerable portion of the proletariat, after seizing power, would again — as at the end of the 18th century — give vent to its rage and revenge in bloodshed could not be expected. This would have meant a complete negation of all progress” (p. 147).

As we see, the war and a series of revolutions were required to enable us to get a proper view of what was going on in reality in the heads of some of our most learned theoreticians. It turns out that Kautsky did not think that a Romanov or a Hohenzollern could be put away by means of conversations; but at the same time he seriously imagined that a military monarchy could be overthrown by a general strike — i.e., by a peaceful demonstration of folded arms. In spite of the Russian revolution, and the world discussion of this question, Kautsky, it turns out, retains the anarcho-reformist view of the general strike. We might point out to him that, in the pages of its own journal, the *Neue Zeit*, it was explained 12 years ago that the general strike is only a mobilisation of the proletariat and its setting up against its enemy, the state; but that the strike in itself cannot produce the solution of the problem, because it exhausts the

forces of the proletariat sooner than those of its enemies, and this, sooner or later, forces the workers to return to the factories. The general strike acquires a decisive importance only as a preliminary to a conflict between the proletariat and the armed forces of the opposition — i.e., to the open revolutionary rising of the workers. Only by breaking the will of the armies thrown against it can the revolutionary class solve the problem of power — the root problem of every revolution. The general strike produces the mobilisation of both sides, and gives the first serious estimate of the powers of resistance of the counterrevolution. But only in the further stages of the struggle, after the transition to the path of armed insurrection, can that bloody price be fixed which the revolutionary class has to pay for power. But that it will have to pay with blood, that, in the struggle for the conquest of power and for its consolidation, the proletariat will have not only to be killed, but also to kill — of this no serious revolutionary ever had any doubt. To announce that the existence of a determined life-and-death struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie “is a complete negation of all progress”, means simply that the heads of some of our most reverend theoreticians take the form of a camera-obscura, in which objects are represented upside down.

But, even when applied to more advanced and cultured countries with established democratic traditions, there is absolutely no proof of the justice of Kautsky’s historical argument. As a matter of fact, the argument itself is not new. Once upon a time the revisionists gave it a character more based on principle. They strove to prove that the growth of proletarian organisations under democratic conditions guaranteed the gradual and imperceptible — reformist and evolutionary — transition to socialist society — without general strikes and risings, without the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Kautsky, at that culminating period of his activity, showed that, in spite of the forms of democracy, the class contradictions of capitalist society grew deeper, and that this process must inevitably lead to a revolution and the conquest of power by the proletariat.

No one, of course, attempted to reckon up beforehand the number of victims that will be called for by the revolutionary insurrection of the proletariat, and by the regime of its dictatorship. But it was clear to all that the number of victims will vary with the strength of resistance of the propertied classes. If Kautsky desires to say in his book that a democratic upbringing has not weakened the class egoism of the bourgeoisie, this can be admitted without further parley.

If he wishes to add that the imperialist war, which broke out and continued for four years, *in spite of* democracy, brought about a degradation of morals and accustomed men to violent methods and action, and completely stripped the bourgeoisie

of the last vestige of awkwardness in ordering the destruction of masses of humanity — here also he will be right.

All this is true on the face of it. But one has to struggle in real conditions. The contending forces are not proletarian and bourgeois manikins produced in the retort of Wagner-Kautsky, but a real proletariat against a real bourgeoisie, as they have emerged from the last imperialist slaughter.

In this fact of merciless civil war that is spreading over the whole world, Kautsky sees only the result of a fatal lapse from the “experienced tactics” of the Second International.

“In reality, since the time”, he writes, “that Marxism has dominated the socialist movement, the latter, up to the world war, was, in spite of its great activities, preserved from great defeats. And the idea of insuring victory by means of terrorist domination had completely disappeared from its ranks.

“Much was contributed in this connection by the fact that, at the time when Marxism was the dominating socialist teaching, democracy threw out firm roots in Western Europe, and began there to change from an end of the struggle to a trustworthy basis of political life.” (p. 145)

In this “formula of progress” there is not one atom of Marxism. The real process of the struggle of classes and their material conflicts has been lost in Marxist propaganda, which, thanks to the conditions of democracy, guarantees, forsooth, a painless transition to a new and “wiser” order. This is the most vulgar liberalism, a belated piece of rationalism in the spirit of the 18th century — with the difference that the ideas of Condorcet are replaced by a vulgarisation of the *Communist Manifesto*. All history resolves itself into an endless sheet of printed paper, and the centre of this “humane” process proves to be the well-worn writing table of Kautsky.

We are given as an example the working-class movement in the period of the Second International, which, going forward under the banner of Marxism, never sustained great defeats whenever it deliberately challenged them. But did not the whole working-class movement, the proletariat of the whole world, and with it the whole of human culture, sustain an incalculable defeat in August 1914, when history cast up the accounts of all the forces and possibilities of the socialist parties, amongst whom, we are told, the guiding role belonged to Marxism, “on the firm footing of democracy”? *Those parties proved bankrupt*. Those features of their previous work which Kautsky now wishes to render permanent — self-adaptation, repudiation of “illegal” activity, repudiation of the open fight, hopes placed in democracy as the road to a painless revolution — all these fell into dust. In their fear of defeat, holding back the masses from open conflict, dissolving the general strike discussions, the parties of

the Second International were preparing their own terrifying defeat; for they were not able to move one finger to avert the greatest catastrophe in world history, the four years' imperialist slaughter, which foreshadowed the violent character of the civil war. Truly, one has to put a wadded nightcap not only over one's eyes, but over one's nose and ears, to be able today, after the inglorious collapse of the Second International, after the disgraceful bankruptcy of its leading party — the German Social Democracy — after the bloody lunacy of the world slaughter and the gigantic sweep of the civil war, to set up in contrast to us, the profundity, the loyalty, the peacefulness and the sobriety of the Second International, the heritage of which we are still liquidating. ■

# Democracy

## **'Either democracy or civil war'**

Kautsky has a clear and solitary path to salvation: *democracy*. All that is necessary is that every one should acknowledge it and bind himself to support it. The right-wing socialists must renounce the sanguinary slaughter with which they have been carrying out the will of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie itself must abandon the idea of using its Noskes and Lieutenant Vogels to defend its privileges to the last breath. Finally, the proletariat must once and for all reject the idea of overthrowing the bourgeoisie by means other than those laid down in the Constitution. If the conditions enumerated are observed, the social revolution will painlessly melt into democracy. In order to succeed it is sufficient, as we see, for our stormy history to draw a nightcap over its head, and take a pinch of wisdom out of Kautsky's snuffbox.

"There exist only two possibilities", says our sage, "either democracy, or civil war" (p. 220). Yet, in Germany, where the formal elements of "democracy" are present before our eyes, the civil war does not cease for a moment. "Unquestionably", agrees Kautsky, "under the present National Assembly Germany cannot arrive at a healthy condition. But that process of recovery will not be assisted, but hindered, if we transform the struggle against the present Assembly into a struggle against the democratic franchise" (p. 230). As if the question in Germany really did reduce itself to one of electoral forms and not to one of the real possession of power!

The present National Assembly, as Kautsky admits, cannot "bring the country to a healthy condition". Therefore let us begin the game again at the beginning. But will the partners agree? It is doubtful. If the rubber is not favourable to us, obviously it is so to them. The National Assembly which is "incapable of bringing the country to a healthy condition", is quite capable, through the mediocre dictatorship of Noske, of preparing the way for the dictatorship of Ludendorff. So it was with the Constituent Assembly which prepared the way for Kolchak. The historical mission of Kautsky consists precisely in having waited for the revolution to write his (n+1th) book, which should explain the collapse of the revolution by all the previous course of history, from the ape to Noske, and from Noske to Ludendorff. The problem before the revolutionary party is a difficult one: its problem is to foresee the peril in good time, and to forestall

it by *action*. And for this there is no other way at present than to tear the power out of the hands of its real possessors, the agrarian and capitalist magnates, who are only temporarily hiding behind Messrs. Ebert and Noske. Thus, from the present National Assembly, the path divides into two: either the dictatorship of the imperialist clique, or the dictatorship of the proletariat. On neither side does the path lead to “democracy”. Kautsky does not see this. He explains at great length that democracy is of great importance for its political development and its education in organisation of the masses, and that through it the proletariat can come to complete emancipation. One might imagine that, since the day on which the Erfurt Program was written, nothing worthy of notice had ever happened in the world!

Yet meanwhile, for decades, the proletariat of France, Germany, and the other most important countries has been struggling and developing, making the widest possible use of the institutions of democracy, and building up on that basis powerful political organisations. This path of the education of the proletariat through democracy to socialism proved, however, to be interrupted by an event of no inconsiderable importance — the world imperialist war. The class state at the moment when, thanks to its machinations, the war broke out succeeded in enlisting the assistance of the guiding organisations of Social-Democracy to deceive the proletariat and draw it into the whirlpool. So that, taken as they stand, the methods of democracy, in spite of the incontestable benefits which they afford at a certain period, displayed an extremely limited power of action; with the result that two generations of the proletariat, educated under conditions of democracy, by no means guaranteed the necessary political preparation for judging accurately an event like the world imperialist war. That experience gives us no reasons for affirming that, if the war had broken out 10 or 15 years later, the proletariat would have been more prepared for it. The bourgeois democratic state not only creates more favourable conditions for the political education of the workers, as compared with absolutism, but also sets a limit to that development in the shape of bourgeois legality, which skilfully accumulates and builds on the upper strata of the proletariat opportunist habits and law-abiding prejudices. The school of democracy proved quite insufficient to rouse the German proletariat to revolution when the catastrophe of the war was at hand. The barbarous school of the war, social-imperialist ambitions, colossal military victories, and unparalleled defeats were required. After these events, which made a certain amount of difference in the universe, and even in the Erfurt Program, to come out with commonplaces as to the meaning of democratic parliamentarism for the education of the proletariat signifies a fall into political childhood. This is just the misfortune which has overtaken Kautsky.

“Profound disbelief in the political struggle of the proletariat”, he writes, “and in its

participation in politics, was the characteristic of Proudhonism. Today there arises a similar [!] view, and it is recommended to us as the new gospel of socialist thought, as the result of an experience which Marx did not, and could not, know. In reality, it is only a variation of an idea which half a century ago Marx was fighting, and which he in the end defeated” (p. 79).

Bolshevism proves to be warmed-up Proudhonism! From a purely theoretical point of view, this is one of the most brazen remarks in the pamphlet.

The Proudhonists repudiated democracy for the same reason that they repudiated the political struggle generally. They stood for the economic organisation of the workers without the interference of the state, without revolutionary outbreaks — for self-help of the workers on the basis of production for profit. As far as they were driven by the course of events on to the path of the political struggle, they, as lower middle class theoreticians, preferred democracy, not only to plutocracy, but to revolutionary dictatorship. What thoughts have they in common with us? While we repudiate democracy in the name of the concentrated power of the proletariat, the Proudhonists, on the other hand, were prepared to make their peace with democracy, diluted by a federal basis, in order to avoid the revolutionary monopoly of power by the proletariat. With more foundation Kautsky might have compared us with the opponents of the Proudhonists, the *Blanquists*, who understood the meaning of a revolutionary government, but did not superstitiously make the question of seizing it depend on the formal signs of democracy. But in order to put the comparison of the communists with the Blanquists on a reasonable footing, it would have to be added that, in the workers’ and soldiers’ councils, we had at our disposal such an organisation for revolution as the Blanquists could not even dream of; in our party we had, and have, an invaluable organisation of political leadership with a perfected program of the social revolution. Finally, we had, and have, a powerful apparatus of economic transformation in our trade unions, which stand as a whole under the banner of communism, and support the Soviet government. Under such conditions, to talk of the renaissance of Proudhonist prejudices in the shape of Bolshevism can only take place when one has lost all traces of theoretical honesty and historical understanding.

### **The imperialist transformation of democracy**

It is not for nothing that the word “democracy” has a double meaning in the political vocabulary. On the one hand, it means a state system founded on universal suffrage and the other attributes of formal “popular government”. On the other hand, by the word “democracy” is understood the mass of the people itself, in so far as it leads a political existence. In the second sense, as in the first, the meaning of democracy

rises above class distinctions. This peculiarity of terminology has its profound political significance. Democracy as a political system is the more perfect and unshakable the greater is the part played in the life of the country by the intermediate and less differentiated mass of the population — the lower middle class of the town and the country. Democracy achieved its highest expression in the 19th century in Switzerland and the United States of North America. On the other side of the ocean the democratic organisation of power in a federal republic was based on the agrarian democracy of the farmers. In the small Helvetian republic, the lower middle classes of the towns and the rich peasantry constituted the basis of the conservative democracy of the united cantons.

Born of the struggle of the Third Estate against the powers of feudalism, the democratic state very soon becomes the weapon of defence against the class antagonisms generated within bourgeois society. Bourgeois society succeeds in this the more, the wider beneath it is the layer of the lower middle class, the greater is the importance of the latter in the economic life of the country, and the less advanced, consequently, is the development of class antagonism. However, the intermediate classes become ever more and more helplessly behind historical development, and, thereby, become ever more and more incapable of speaking in the name of the nation. True, the lower middle class doctrinaires (Bernstein and company) used to demonstrate with satisfaction that the disappearance of the middle classes was not taking place with that swiftness that was expected by the Marxian school. And, in reality, one might agree that, numerically, the middle-class elements in the town, and especially in the country, still maintain an extremely prominent position. But the chief meaning of evolution has shown itself in the decline in importance on the part of the middle classes from the point of view of production: the amount of values which this class brings to the general income of the nation has fallen incomparably more rapidly than the numerical strength of the middle classes. Correspondingly, falls their social, political, and cultural importance. Historical development has been relying more and more, not on these conservative elements inherited from the past, but on the polar classes of society — i. e., the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The more the middle classes lost their social importance, the less they proved capable of playing the part of an authoritative arbitral judge in the historical conflict between capital and labour. Yet the very considerable numerical proportion of the town middle classes, and still more of the peasantry, continues to find direct expression in the electoral statistics of parliamentarism. The formal equality of all citizens as electors thereby only gives more open indication of the incapacity of democratic parliamentarism to settle the root questions of historical evolution. An “equal” vote

for the proletariat, the peasant, and the manager of a trust formally placed the peasant in the position of mediator between the two antagonists; but in reality, the peasantry, socially and culturally backward and politically helpless, has in all countries always provided support for the most reactionary, filibustering, and mercenary parties which, in the long run, always supported capital against labour.

Absolutely contrary to all the prophecies of Bernstein, Sombart, Tugan-Baranovsky, and others, the continued existence of the middle classes has not softened, but has rendered to the last degree acute, the revolutionary crisis of bourgeois society. If the proletarianisation of the lower middle classes and the peasantry had been proceeding in a chemically purified form, the peaceful conquest of power by the proletariat through the democratic parliamentary apparatus would have been much more probable than we can imagine at present. Just the fact that was seized upon by the partisans of the lower middle class — its longevity — has proved fatal even for the external forms of political democracy, now that capitalism has undermined its essential foundations. Occupying in parliamentary politics a place which it has lost in production, the middle class has finally compromised parliamentarism, and has transformed it into an institution of confused chatter and legislative obstruction. From this fact alone, there grew up before the proletariat the problem of seizing the apparatus of state power as such, independently of the middle class, and even against it — not against its interests, but against its stupidity and its policy, impossible to follow in its helpless contortions.

“Imperialism”, wrote Marx of the Empire of Napoleon III, “is the most prostituted, and, at the same time, perfected form of the state which the bourgeoisie, having attained its fullest development, transforms into a weapon for the enslavement of labour by capital.” This definition has a wider significance than for the French Empire alone, and includes the latest form of imperialism, born of the world conflict between the national capitalisms of the great powers. In the economic sphere, imperialism presupposed the final collapse of the rule of the middle class; in the political sphere, it signified the complete destruction of democracy by means of an internal molecular transformation, and a universal subordination of all democracy’s resources to its own ends. Seizing upon all countries, independently of their previous political history, imperialism showed that all political prejudices were foreign to it, and that it was equally ready and capable of making use, after their transformation and subjection, of the monarchy of Nicholas Romanov or Wilhelm Hohenzollern, of the presidential autocracy of the United States of North America, and of the helplessness of a few hundred chocolate legislators in the French parliament. The last great slaughter — the bloody font in which the bourgeois world attempted to be re-baptised — presented to us a picture, unparalleled in history, of the mobilisation of all state forms, systems of

government, political tendencies, religions, and schools of philosophy, in the service of imperialism. Even many of those pedants who slept through the preparatory period of imperialist development during the last decades, and continued to maintain a traditional attitude towards ideas of democracy and universal suffrage, began to feel during the war that their accustomed ideas had become fraught with some new meaning. Absolutism, parliamentary monarchy, democracy — in the presence of imperialism (and, consequently, in the presence of the revolution rising to take its place), all the state forms of bourgeois supremacy, from Russian tsarism, to North American quasi-democratic federalism, have been given equal rights, bound up in such combinations as to supplement one another in an indivisible whole. Imperialism succeeded by means of all the resources it had at its disposal, including parliamentarism, irrespective of the electoral arithmetic of voting, to subordinate for its own purposes at the critical moment the lower middle classes of the towns and country and even the upper layers of the proletariat. The national idea, under the watchword of which the Third Estate rose to power, found in the imperialist war its rebirth in the watchword of national defence. With unexpected clearness, national ideology flamed up for the last time at the expense of class ideology. The collapse of imperialist illusions, not only amongst the vanquished, but — after a certain delay — amongst the victorious also, finally laid low what was once national democracy, and, with it, its main weapon, the democratic parliament. The flabbiness, rottenness, and helplessness of the middle class and their parties everywhere became evident with terrifying clearness. In all countries the question of the control of the state assumed first-class importance as a question of an open measuring of forces between the capitalist clique, openly or secretly supreme and disposing of hundreds of thousands of mobilised and hardened officers, devoid of all scruple, and the revolting, revolutionary proletariat; while the intermediate classes were living in a state of terror, confusion, and prostration. Under such conditions, what pitiful nonsense are speeches about the peaceful conquest of power by the proletariat by means of democratic parliamentarism!

The scheme of the political situation on a world scale is quite clear. The bourgeoisie, which has brought the nations, exhausted and bleeding to death, to the brink of destruction — particularly the victorious bourgeoisie — has displayed its complete inability to bring them out of their terrible situation, and, thereby, its incompatibility with the future development of humanity. All the intermediate political groups, including here first and foremost the social-patriotic parties, are rotting alive. The proletariat they have deceived is turning against them more and more every day, and is becoming strengthened in its revolutionary convictions as the only power that can save the peoples from savagery and destruction. However, history has not at all secured, just at

this moment, a formal parliamentary majority on the side of the party of the social revolution. In other words, history has not transformed the nation into a debating society solemnly voting the transition to the social revolution by a majority of votes. On the contrary, the violent revolution has become a necessity precisely because the imminent requirements of history are helpless to find a road through the apparatus of parliamentary democracy. The capitalist bourgeois calculates: "While I have in my hands lands, factories, workshops, banks; while I possess newspapers, universities, schools; while — and this most important of all — I retain control of the army: the apparatus of democracy, however you reconstruct it, will remain obedient to my will. I subordinate to my interests spiritually the stupid, conservative, characterless lower middle class, just as it is subjected to me materially. I oppress, and will oppress, its imagination by the gigantic scale of my buildings, my transactions, my plans, and my crimes. For moments when it is dissatisfied and murmurs, I have created scores of safety-valves and lightning-conductors. At the right moment I will bring into existence opposition parties, which will disappear tomorrow, but which today accomplish their mission by affording the possibility of the lower middle class expressing their indignation without hurt therefrom for capitalism. I shall hold the masses of the people, under cover of compulsory general education, on the verge of complete ignorance, giving them no opportunity of rising above the level which my experts in spiritual slavery consider safe. I will corrupt, deceive, and terrorise the more privileged or the more backward of the proletariat itself. By means of these measures, I shall not allow the vanguard of the working class to gain the ear of the majority of the working class, while the necessary weapons of mastery and terrorism remain in my hands."

To this the revolutionary proletariat replies: "Consequently, the first condition of salvation is to tear the weapons of domination out of the hands of the bourgeoisie. It is hopeless to think of a peaceful arrival to power while the bourgeoisie retains in its hands all the apparatus of power. Three times over hopeless is the idea of coming to power by the path which the bourgeoisie itself indicates and, at the same time, barricades — the path of parliamentary democracy. There is only one way: to seize power, taking away from the bourgeoisie the material apparatus of government. Independently of the superficial balance of forces in parliament, I shall take over for social administration the chief forces and resources of production. I shall free the mind of the lower middle class from their capitalist hypnosis. I shall show them in practice what is the meaning of socialist production. Then even the most backward, the most ignorant, or most terrorised sections of the nation will support me, and willingly and intelligently will join in the work of social construction."

When the Russian Soviet government dissolved the Constituent Assembly, that

fact seemed to the leading social-democrats of western Europe, if not the beginning of the end of the world, at all events a rude and arbitrary break with all the previous developments of socialism. In reality, it was only the inevitable outcome of the new position resulting from imperialism and the war. If Russian communism was the first to enter the path of casting up theoretical and practical accounts, this was due to the same historical reasons which forced the Russian proletariat to be the first to enter the path of the struggle for power.

All that has happened since then in Europe bears witness to the fact that we drew the right conclusion. To imagine that democracy can be restored in its general purity means that one is living in a pitiful, reactionary utopia.

### **The metaphysics of democracy**

Feeling the historical ground shaking under his feet on the question of democracy, Kautsky crosses to the ground of metaphysics. Instead of inquiring into what is, he deliberates about what ought to be.

The principles of democracy — the sovereignty of the people, universal and equal suffrage, personal liberties — appear, as presented to him, in a halo of moral duty. They are turned from their historical meaning and presented as unalterable and sacred things-in-themselves. This metaphysical fall from grace is not accidental. It is instructive that the late Plekhanov, a merciless enemy of Kantism at the best period of his activity, attempted at the end of his life, when the wave of patriotism had washed over him, to clutch at the straw of the categorical imperative.

That real democracy with which the German people is now making practical acquaintance Kautsky confronts with a kind of ideal democracy, as he would confront a common phenomenon with the thing-in-itself. Kautsky indicates with certitude not one country in which democracy is really capable of guaranteeing a painless transition to socialism. But he does know, and firmly, that such democracy ought to exist. The present German National Assembly, that organ of helplessness, reactionary malice, and degraded solicitations, is confronted by Kautsky with a different, real, true National Assembly, which possesses all virtues — excepting the small virtue of reality.

The doctrine of formal democracy is not scientific socialism, but the theory of so-called natural law. The essence of the latter consists in the recognition of eternal and unchanging standards of law, which among different peoples and at different periods find a different, more or less limited and distorted expression. The natural law of the latest history — i.e., as it emerged from the Middle Ages — included first of all a protest against class privileges, the abuse of despotic legislation, and the other “artificial” products of feudal positive law. The theoreticians of the, as yet, weak Third Estate

expressed its class interests in a few ideal standards, which later on developed into the teaching of democracy, acquiring at the same time an individualist character. The individual is absolute; all persons have the right of expressing their thoughts in speech and print; every man must enjoy equal electoral rights. As a battle cry against feudalism, the demand for democracy had a progressive character. As time went on, however, the metaphysics of natural law (the theory of formal democracy) began to show its reactionary side — the establishment of an ideal standard to control the real demands of the labouring masses and the revolutionary parties.

If we look back to the historical sequence of world concepts, the theory of natural law will prove to be a paraphrase of Christian spiritualism freed from its crude mysticism. The Gospels proclaimed to the slave that he had just the same soul as the slave-owner, and in this way established the equality of all men before the heavenly tribunal. In reality, the slave remained a slave, and obedience became for him a religious duty. In the teaching of Christianity, the slave found an expression for his own ignorant protest against his degraded condition. Side by side with the protest was also the consolation. Christianity told him: "You have an immortal soul, although you resemble a pack-horse." Here sounded the note of indignation. But the same Christianity said: "Although you are like a pack-horse, yet your immortal soul has in store for it an eternal reward." Here is the voice of consolation. These two notes were found in historical Christianity in different proportions at different periods and amongst different classes. But as a whole, Christianity, like all other religions, became a method of deadening the consciousness of the oppressed masses.

Natural law, which developed into the theory of democracy, said to the worker: "All men are equal before the law, independently of their origin, their property, and their position; every man has an equal right in determining the fate of the people." This ideal criterion revolutionised the consciousness of the masses in so far as it was a condemnation of absolutism, aristocratic privileges, and the property qualification. But the longer it went on, the more it sent the consciousness to sleep, legalising poverty, slavery and degradation: for how could one revolt against slavery when every man has an equal right in determining the fate of the nation?

Rothschild, who has coined the blood and tears of the world into the gold napoleons of his income, has one vote at the parliamentary elections. The ignorant tiller of the soil who cannot sign his name, sleeps all his life without taking his clothes off, and wanders through society like an underground mole, plays his part, however, as a trustee of the nation's sovereignty, and is equal to Rothschild in the courts and at the elections. In the real conditions of life, in the economic process, in social relations, in their way of life, people became more and more unequal; dazzling luxury was

accumulated at one pole, poverty and hopelessness at the other. But in the sphere of the legal edifice of the state, these glaring contradictions disappeared, and there penetrated thither only unsubstantial legal shadows. The landlord, the labourer, the capitalist, the proletarian, the minister, the bootblack — all are equal as “citizens” and as “legislators”. The mystic equality of Christianity has taken one step down from the heavens in the shape of the “natural”, “legal” equality of democracy. But it has not yet reached Earth, where lie the economic foundations of society. For the ignorant day-labourer, who all his life remains a beast of burden in the service of the bourgeoisie, the ideal right to influence the fate of the nations by means of the parliamentary elections remained little more real than the palace which he was promised in the kingdom of heaven.

In the practical interests of the development of the working class, the socialist party took its stand at a certain period on the path of parliamentarism. But this did not mean in the slightest that it accepted in principle the metaphysical theory of democracy, based on extra-historical, super-class rights. The proletarian doctrines examined democracy as the instrument of bourgeois society entirely adapted to the problems and requirements of the ruling classes; but as bourgeois society lived by the labour of the proletariat and could not deny it the legalisation of a certain part of its class struggle without destroying itself, this gave the socialist party the possibility of utilising, at a certain period, and within certain limits, the mechanism of democracy, without taking an oath to do so as an unshakable principle.

The root problem of the party, at all periods of its struggle, was to create the conditions for real, economic, living equality for mankind as members of a united human commonwealth. It was just for this reason that the theoreticians of the proletariat had to expose the metaphysics of democracy as a philosophic mask for political mystification.

The democratic party at the period of its revolutionary enthusiasm, when exposing the enslaving and stupefying lie of church dogma, preached to the masses: “You are lulled to sleep by promises of eternal bliss at the end of your life, while here you have no rights and you are bound with the chains of tyranny.” The socialist party, a few decades later said to the same masses with no less right: “You are lulled to sleep with the fiction of civic equality and political rights, but you are deprived of the possibility of realising those rights. Conditional and shadowy legal equality has been transformed into the convicts’ chain with which each of you is fastened to the chariot of capitalism.”

In the name of its fundamental task, the socialist party mobilised the masses on the parliamentary ground as well as on others; but nowhere and at no time did any party bind itself to bring the masses to socialism only through the gates of democracy. In

adapting ourselves to the parliamentary regime, we stopped at a theoretical exposure of democracy, because we were still too weak to overcome it in practice. But the path of socialist ideas which is visible through all deviations, and even betrayals, foreshadows no other outcome but this: to throw democracy aside and replace it by the mechanism of the proletariat, at the moment when the latter is strong enough to carry out such a task.

We shall bring one piece of evidence, albeit a sufficiently striking one. "Parliamentarism", wrote Paul Lafargue in the Russian review, *Sozialdemokrat*, in 1888, "is a system of government in which the people acquires the illusion that it is controlling the forces of the country itself, when, in reality, the actual power is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie — and not even of the whole bourgeoisie, but only of certain sections of that class. In the first period of its supremacy the bourgeoisie does not understand, or, more correctly, does not feel, the necessity for making the people believe in the illusion of self-government. Hence it was that all the parliamentary countries of Europe began with a limited franchise. Everywhere the right of influencing the policy of the country by means of the election of deputies belonged at first only to more or less large property holders, and was only gradually extended to less substantial citizens, until finally in some countries it became from a privilege the universal right of all and sundry.

"In bourgeois society, the more considerable becomes the amount of social wealth, the smaller becomes the number of individuals by whom it is appropriated. The same takes place with power: in proportion as the mass of citizens who possess political rights increases, and the number of elected rulers increases, the actual power is concentrated and becomes the monopoly of a smaller and smaller group of individuals." Such is the secret of the majority.

For the Marxist, Lafargue, parliamentarism remain as long as the supremacy of the bourgeoisie remains. "On the day", writes Lafargue, "when the proletariat of Europe and America seizes the state, it will have to organise a revolutionary government, and govern society as a dictatorship, until the bourgeoisie has disappeared as a class."

Kautsky in his time knew this Marxist estimate of parliamentarism, and more than once repeated it himself, although with no such Gallic sharpness and lucidity. The theoretical apostasy of Kautsky lies just in this point: having recognised the principle of democracy as absolute and eternal, he has stepped back from materialist dialectics to natural law. That which was exposed by Marxism as the passing mechanism of the bourgeoisie, and was subjected only to temporary utilisation with the object of preparing the proletarian revolution, has been newly sanctified by Kautsky as the supreme principle standing above classes, and unconditionally subordinating to itself

the methods of the proletarian struggle. The counterrevolutionary degeneration of parliamentarism finds its most perfect expression in the deification of democracy by the decaying theoreticians of the Second International.

### **The Constituent Assembly**

Speaking generally, the attainment of a majority in a democratic parliament by the party of the proletariat is not an absolute impossibility. But such a fact, even if it were realised, would not introduce any new principle into the course of events. The intermediate elements of the intelligentsia, under the influence of the parliamentary victory of the proletariat, might possibly display less resistance to the new regime. But the fundamental resistance of the bourgeoisie would be decided by such facts as the attitude of the army, the degree to which the workers were armed, the situation in the neighbouring states: and the civil war would develop under the pressure of these most real circumstances, and not by the mobile arithmetic of parliamentarism.

Our party has never refused to lead the way for proletarian dictatorship through the gates of democracy, having clearly summed up in its mind certain agitational and political advantages of such a “legalised” transition to the new regime. Hence, our attempt to call the Constituent Assembly. The Russian peasant, only just awakened by the revolution to political life, found himself face to face with half a dozen parties, each of which apparently had made up its mind to confuse his mind. The Constituent Assembly placed itself across the path of the revolutionary movement, and was swept aside.

The opportunist majority in the Constituent Assembly represented only the political reflection of the mental confusion and indecision which reigned amidst the middle classes in the town and country and amidst the more backward elements of the proletariat. If we take the viewpoint of isolated historical possibilities, one might say that it would have been more painless if the Constituent Assembly had worked for a year or two, had finally discredited the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks by their connection with the Cadets, and had thereby led to the formal majority of the Bolsheviks, showing the masses that in reality only two forces existed: the revolutionary proletariat, led by the Communists, and the counterrevolutionary democracy, headed by the generals and the admirals. But the point is that the pulse of the internal relations of the revolution was beating not at all in time with the pulse of the development of its external relations. If our party had thrown all responsibility on to the objective formula of “the course of events”, the development of military operations might have forestalled us. German imperialism might have seized Petrograd, the evacuation of which the Kerensky government had already begun. The fall of Petrograd would at that time

have meant a deathblow to the proletariat, for all the best forces of the revolution were concentrated there, in the Baltic fleet and in the Red capital.

Our party may be accused, therefore, not of going against the course of historical development, but of having taken at a stride several political steps. It stepped over the heads of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, in order not to allow German imperialism to step across the head of the Russian proletariat and conclude peace with the Entente on the back of the revolution before it was able to spread its wings over the whole world.

From the above it will not be difficult to deduce the answers to the two questions with which Kautsky pestered us. Firstly: Why did we summon the Constituent Assembly when we had in view the dictatorship of the proletariat? Secondly: If the first Constituent Assembly which we summoned proved backward and not in harmony with the interests of the revolution, why did we reject the idea of a new Assembly? The thought at the back of Kautsky's mind is that we repudiated democracy, not on the ground of principle, but only because it proved against us. In order to seize this insinuation by its long ears, let us establish the facts.

The watchword, "All power to the soviets", was put forward by our party at the very beginning of the revolution — i.e., long before, not merely the decree as to the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, but the decree as to its convocation. True, we did not set up the soviets in opposition to the future Constituent Assembly, the summoning of which was constantly postponed by the government of Kerensky, and consequently became more and more problematical. But in any case, we did not consider the Constituent Assembly, after the manner of the democrats, as the future master of the Russian land, who would come and settle everything. We explained to the masses that the soviets, the revolutionary organisations of the labouring masses themselves, can and must become the true masters. If we did not formally repudiate the Constituent Assembly beforehand, it was only because it stood in contrast, not to the power of the soviets, but to the power of Kerensky himself, who, in his turn, was only a screen for the bourgeoisie. At the same time we did decide beforehand that, if, in the Constituent Assembly, the majority proved in our favour, that body must dissolve itself and hand over the power to the soviets — as later on the Petrograd Town Council did, elected as it was on the basis of the most democratic electoral franchise. In my book on the October Revolution,<sup>81</sup> I tried to explain the reasons which made the Constituent Assembly the out-of-date reflection of an epoch through which the revolution had already passed. As we saw the organisation of revolutionary power only in the soviets, and as at the moment of the summoning of the Constituent Assembly the soviets were already the defacto power, the question was inevitably

decided for us in the sense of the violent dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, since it would not dissolve itself in favour of the government of the soviets.

“But why”, asks Kautsky, “did you not summon a new Constituent Assembly?”

Because we saw no need for it. If the first Constituent Assembly could still play a fleeting progressive part, conferring a sanction upon the soviet regime in its first days, convincing for the middle-class elements, now, after two years of victorious proletarian dictatorship and the complete collapse of all democratic attempts in Siberia, on the shores of the White Sea, in the Ukraine, and in the Caucasus, the power of the soviets truly does not need the blessing of the faded authority of the Constituent Assembly. “Are we not right in that case to conclude”, asks Kautsky in the tone of Lloyd George, “that the Soviet government rules by the will of the minority, since it avoids testing its supremacy by universal suffrage?” Here is a blow that misses its mark.

If the parliamentary regime, even in the period of “peaceful”, stable development, was a rather crude method of discovering the opinion of the country, and in the epoch of revolutionary storm completely lost its capacity to follow the course of the struggle and the development of revolutionary consciousness, the soviet regime, which is more closely, straightly, honestly bound up with the toiling majority of the people, does achieve meaning, not in statically reflecting a majority, but in dynamically creating it. Having taken its stand on the path of revolutionary dictatorship, the working class of Russia has thereby declared that it builds its policy in the period of transition, not on the shadowy art of rivalry with chameleon-hued parties in the chase for peasant votes, but on the actual attraction of the peasant masses, side by side with the proletariat, into the work of ruling the country in the real interests of the labouring masses. Such democracy goes a little deeper down than parliamentarism.

Today, when the main problem — the question of life and death — of the revolution consists in the military repulse of the various attacks of the White Guard bands, does Kautsky imagine that any form of parliamentary “majority” is capable of guaranteeing a more energetic, devoted, and successful organisation of revolutionary defence? The conditions of the struggle are so defined, in a revolutionary country throttled by the criminal ring of the blockade, that all the middle-class groups are confronted only with the alternative of Denikin or the Soviet government. What further proof is needed when even parties, which stand for compromise in principle, like the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, have split along that very line?

When suggesting to us the election of a Constituent Assembly, does Kautsky propose the stopping of the civil war for the purpose of the elections? By whose decision? If he intends for this purpose to bring into motion the authority of the Second International, we hasten to inform him that that institution enjoys in Denikin’s

camp only a little more authority than it does in ours. But to the extent that the civil war between the workers' and peasants' army and the imperialist bands is still going on, the elections must of necessity be limited to Soviet territory. Does Kautsky desire to insist that we should allow the parties which support Denikin to come out into the open? Empty and contemptible chatter! There is not one government, at any time and under any conditions, which would allow its enemies to mobilise hostile forces in the rear of its armies.

A not unimportant place in the discussion of the question is occupied by the fact that the flower of the labouring population is at present on active service. The foremost workers and the most class-conscious peasants, who take the first place at all elections, as in all important political activities, directing the public opinion of the workers, are at present fighting and dying as commanders, commissars, or rank and file in the Red Army. If the most "democratic" governments in the bourgeois states, whose regime is founded on parliamentarism, consider it impossible to carry on elections to parliament in wartime, it is all the more senseless to demand such elections during the war of the Soviet republic, the regime of which is not for one moment founded on parliamentarism. It is quite sufficient that the revolutionary government of Russia, in the most difficult months and times, never stood in the way of periodic re-elections of its *own* elective institutions — the local and central soviets.

Finally, as a last argument — the last and the least — we have to present to the notice of Kautsky that even the Russian Kautskyans, the Mensheviks like Martov and Dan, do not consider it possible to put forward at the present moment a demand for a Constituent Assembly, postponing it to better times in the future. Will there be any need of it then? Of this one may be permitted to doubt. When the civil war is over, the dictatorship of the working class will disclose all its creative energy, and will in practice, show the most backward masses what it can give them. By means of a systematically applied universal labour service, and a centralised organisation of distribution, the whole population of the country will be drawn into the general soviet system of economic arrangement and self-government. The soviets themselves, at present the organs of government, will gradually melt into purely economic organisations. Under such conditions it is doubtful whether anyone will think of erecting, over the real fabric of socialist society, an archaic crown in the shape of the Constituent Assembly, which would only have to register the fact that everything necessary has already been "constituted" before it and without it.<sup>a</sup> ■

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<sup>a</sup> In order to charm us in favour of a Constituent Assembly Kautsky brings forward an argument based on the rate of exchange to the assistance of his argument, based on the categorical

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imperative. “Russia requires”, he writes, “the help of foreign capital, but this help will not come to the Soviet republic if the latter does not summon a Constituent Assembly, and does not give freedom of the press; not because the capitalists are democratic idealists — to tsarism they gave without any hesitation many milliards — but because they have no business faith in a revolutionary government” (p. 218).

There are scraps of truth in this rubbish. The stock exchange did really support the government of Kolchak when it relied for support on the Constituent Assembly. From its experience of Kolchak the stock exchange became confirmed in its conviction that the mechanism of bourgeois democracy can be utilised in capitalist interests, and then thrown aside like a worn-out pair of puttees. It is quite possible that the stock exchange would again give a parliamentary loan on the guarantee of a Constituent Assembly, believing, on the basis of its former experience, that such a body would prove only an intermediate step to capitalist dictatorship. We do not propose to buy the “business faith” of the stock exchange at such a price, and decidedly prefer the “faith” which is aroused in the realist stock exchange by the weapon of the Red Army.

## Appendix 2

# The Program of the Communist Party of Russia<sup>82</sup>

*(Adopted at the Eighth Party Congress, March 18-23, 1919)*

### **General politics**

§46, 47 A bourgeois republic, however democratic, hallowed by the watchwords of the will of the people, the will of the whole nation, the will of all classes, inevitably expresses — through the very fact that it is based upon the private ownership of the land and other means of production — the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, of a machine for the exploitation and oppression of the immense majority of the workers by the capitalist clique. In contrast with this, proletarian or soviet democracy transforms the mass organisations of those who are oppressed by the capitalist class, of the proletarians and the semi-proletarians (the poor peasants), that is to say, of the immense majority of the population, into the permanent and unified foundation of the entire state apparatus, local and central, from the bottom to the top. Thereby the Soviet state realises, among other things, in an immeasurably wider form than ever before, local self-government, without any sort of authority imposed from above. It is the task of our party to work indefatigably on behalf of the complete inauguration of that higher type of democracy which needs for its right functioning the continuous uplifting of the level of culture, organisation, and initiative power of the masses.

§48 In contrast with bourgeois democracy, which conceals the class character of the capitalist state, the Soviet power openly recognises that every state will inevitably have a class character until the division of society into classes shall have completely disappeared, and therewith all state authority shall have vanished. The Soviet state, which by its very nature has led to the crushing of the resistance of the exploiters, and the Soviet constitution, which is based upon the idea that all freedom is a fraud in so far as it conflicts with the

deliverance of labour from the yoke of capital, does not shrink from depriving the exploiters of political rights. Our party, the party of the proletariat, while inexorably crushing the resistance of the exploiters, and while fighting in the field of ideas against the deep-rooted prejudices in accordance with which bourgeois rights and freedoms are regarded as inviolable, must at the same time make it perfectly clear that the forfeiture of political rights; and whatever limitations may be imposed upon freedom, are necessary only as temporary measures to cope with the attempts of the exploiters to regain their privileges. Concurrently with the disappearance of the objective possibility of the exploitation of man by man, there will likewise disappear the need for these temporary measures, and our party will aim at their restriction and ultimately at their complete abolition.

§49 Bourgeois democracy is organised upon the basis of the formal diffusion of political rights and freedoms: for instance, the right of public meeting, the right of combination, the freedom of the press; all citizens being regarded as equal in these respects. But in actual fact, as concerns administrative practice, and above all in view of their economic slavery, under bourgeois democracy the workers have always stood in the rear ranks, and have been unable to any notable extent to realise these rights and freedoms.

On the contrary, proletarian democracy, instead of formally proclaiming rights and freedoms, does in actual fact realise these rights and freedoms first of all and more than all for that very class of the population which was oppressed by capitalism, namely, for the proletariat and the peasantry. For this reason, the Soviet power confiscates the possessions of the bourgeoisie, i.e. its printing presses, stores of paper, etc., in order to place them entirely at the disposal of the workers and their organisations.

The Russian Communist Party must induce wider and yet wider masses of the working population to avail themselves of democratic rights and freedoms, and it must enlarge the material possibilities in this direction.

§50 Bourgeois democracy has repeatedly proclaimed the equality of individuals independently of sex, race, religion, and nationality; but capitalism has nowhere been able to realise this equality of rights in practice, and in its imperialistic phase it has brought about an extreme intensification of racial and national oppression. Simply for the reason that the Soviet power is the workers' power, it has been able completely and in all spheres of life to effect for the first time in the world the entire abolition of the last traces of the inequality of women in the spheres of conjugal and family rights. At the present moment, it is the task

of our party to labour in the field of ideas and in the field of education pre-eminently to this end, that it may effect the final destruction of all traces of former inequality and prejudice, especially among the backward strata of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Not content to proclaim a formal equality of rights for women, the party endeavours to free them from the material burdens of the old domestic economy by substituting for that economy communal housing, communal dining rooms, central wash houses, creches, etc.

§51 The Soviet power secures for the working masses, to an incomparably greater extent than was secured for them under bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, the power of carrying on the election and recall of delegates; this is made easy and accessible for the benefit of the workers and the peasants. Thus the Soviet power compensates the defects of the parliamentary system — especially the separation of the legislative and executive spheres characteristic of that system, the withdrawal of representative institutions from the masses, etc.

The Soviet state likewise approximates the state apparatus to the masses in this way, that the electoral units of the state, the fundamental cells out of which it is constructed, no longer consist of territorial constituencies, but are now productive units (factories and workshops).

Our party must concentrate its energies upon the task of bringing about a closer approximation between the instruments of power and the working masses, upon the basis of a clearer and fuller realisation by these masses of democracy in practice, especially by promoting the responsibility and accountability of the persons chiefly concerned.

§52 Whereas bourgeois democracy, in spite of its professions to the contrary, made of the army a tool of the well-to-do classes, detaching it from the working masses and setting it up against them, making it impossible or difficult for the soldier to exercise his political rights, the Soviet state brings the workers and the soldiers together in its organs, the soviets, in which they have equal rights and identical interests. It is the task of our party to safeguard and promote this union of the workers and the soldiers in the soviets, and to strengthen the indissoluble unity of the armed forces with the organisations of the proletariat and semi-proletariat.

§53 The industrial urban proletariat, comprising that portion of the toiling masses which is most highly concentrated, most united, most enlightened, and most perfectly tempered for the struggle, must be the leader in all revolutions. From the first, the proletariat assumed this role in the soviets, and has continued to

play the leading part throughout their development into organs of power. Our Soviet constitution reflects this, by assigning certain preferential rights to the industrial proletariat, as compared with the comparatively disunited petty-bourgeois masses in the villages.

Recognising the temporary character of these privileges, which are historically dependent upon the difficulty of effecting the socialist organisation of the villages, the Russian Communist Party must do its utmost, unerringly and systematically, to make a good use of this situation of the industrial proletariat. As a counterpoise to the narrow trade and craft interests which capitalism promoted among the workers, our party must effect a closer union between the vanguard of the workers, on the one hand, and the comparatively backward and disintegrated masses of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, together with the middle peasants, on the other.

§54 Only thanks to the soviet organisation of the state was it possible for the proletarian revolution at a single blow to overthrow and raze to the ground the old state apparatus of the bourgeoisie, with its officialdom and its judicial machinery. However, the comparatively low cultural level of the masses, the lack of the requisite experience of administrative work in those who have been summoned by the masses to fill responsible posts, the need for providing exceptional inducements to experts of the old school whose services are needed in difficult matters, in conjunction with the withdrawal of the most advanced stratum of the urban workers (who had to undertake war service), have led to a partial revival of bureaucracy within the soviet system.

Engaged in a decisive struggle with bureaucracy, the Russian Communist Party advocates the following measures for the complete eradication of this evil:

1. Every member of a soviet must undertake some definite work in the administrative service.

2. There must be a continuous rotation among those who engage in such duties, so that each member shall in turn gain experience in every branch of administration.

3. By degrees, the whole working population must be induced to take turns in the administrative service.

The complete and many-sided application of all these measures (which represent further steps along the road which the Paris Commune entered as a pioneer), in conjunction with a simplification of the function of administration when the workers shall have attained a higher cultural level, will lead to the disappearance of the state authority. ■

## Appendix 3

# The ABC of Communism<sup>83</sup>

*By Nikolai Bukharin & Evgeny Preobrazhensky*

### **§46. The Soviet power as a form of proletarian dictatorship**

Our party was the first to formulate and the first to realise the demand for soviet power. The great revolution of November 1917 was carried through under the watchword, “All power to the soviets!” Until our party took the phrase as its device, the slogan had never been heard of. Not that the notion simply sprang out of our heads! Far from this being the case, the idea was engendered at the very core of life. As early as the revolution of 1905-6, class organisations of the workers, known as soviets of workers’ delegates, came into existence. In the revolution of 1917, these organisations appeared in far greater abundance; almost everywhere there sprouted like mushrooms workers’ soviets, soldiers’ soviets, and subsequently peasants’ soviets. It became clear that these soviets, which had originated as instruments for use in the struggle for power, must inevitably be transformed into the instruments for the wielding of power.

Prior to the Russian revolution of 1917, much had been said and written concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat but no one clearly understood in what form this dictatorship would be realised. Now, in the Russian revolution, the form of the dictatorship has become manifest as the Soviet power. **The Soviet power is the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, organised in its soviets as the ruling class, and, with the aid of the peasants, crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie and landlords.**

At one time most people believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be possible in the form of a so-called democratic republic, which would have to be established by the Constituent Assembly, and which would be administered by a parliament representing all classes of the population. Even now, the opportunists and

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Written in 1919 and subtitled “A Popular Explanation of the Program of the Communist Party of Russia”. The numbers in the subheads correspond to the sections of the program. The sections in smaller type were used in the original and represent more detailed explanations, etc.

the social solidarians continue to hold the same opinion, declaring that only the Constituent Assembly and a democratic republic can save the country from the disasters of civil war. Actual experience tells a very different tale. In Germany, for instance, such a republic was set up after the revolution of November, 1918. Nevertheless, during the close of 1918 and during 1919 there were sanguinary struggles. Continually the working class was demanding the establishment of a soviet regime. The demand for a soviet regime has in fact become the international watchword of the proletariat. In all countries the workers sound this wacry, in conjunction with the demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Life has confirmed the accuracy of our slogan, "All power to the soviets", not in Russia alone, but in every country where there is a proletariat.

### **§47. Proletarian democracy & bourgeois democracy**

A bourgeois democratic republic is based upon universal suffrage and upon the so-called "will of the people", the "will of the whole nation", the "united will of all classes". The advocates of a bourgeois democratic republic, of a Constituent Assembly, etc., tell us that we are doing violence to the united will of the nation. Let us consider this matter first.

In Part One we learned that contemporary society consists of classes with conflicting interests. For example, long working hours may be profitable to the bourgeoisie, but they are disadvantageous to the working class. Peace between the classes is as impossible as peace between wolves and sheep. Wolves want to eat sheep, so sheep must defend themselves against wolves. But if this be so (and unquestionably it is so), then we have to ask whether it is possible for wolves and sheep to have a common will. Every intelligent person knows that it is absurd to talk of anything of the kind. There simply cannot be a will common to sheep and wolves. We must have one thing or the other: either a wolves' will, that of those who enslave the cheated and oppressed sheep; or else a sheep's will, that of those who wish to deliver the sheep from the wolves and to drive out the plunderers. There can be no middle course in this matter. Now, it is as clear as daylight that the same thing applies to the two main classes of human society. In contemporary society, class is arrayed against class, the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Between them there is war to the knife. How can they possibly have a common will, a bourgeois-proletarian will? Obviously there is no more possibility of bourgeois-proletarian desires and aspirations than of wolf-sheep desires and aspirations. We can either have the will of the bourgeoisie, of the class which imposes its will in various ways upon the oppressed majority of the people; or else we can have the will of the proletariat, of the class which imposes its will upon the bourgeoisie. It is particularly stupid to speak of a will common to all classes,

of interests common to the whole nation, in an epoch of civil war, in a period of revolution, when the old world is crumbling to pieces. The proletariat wants to transform the world; the bourgeoisie wants to strengthen the old slavery.

How can there be a “common” will for bourgeoisie and proletariat? It is manifest that the very phrase about a will common to the whole nation is humbug if the words are intended to apply to all classes. No such common will has been realised or can be realised.

But this fraud is necessary to the bourgeoisie, necessary for the maintenance of capitalist rule. The capitalists are in the minority. They cannot venture to say openly that this small minority rules. This is why the bourgeoisie has to cheat, declaring that it rules in the name of “the whole people”, “all classes”, “the entire nation”, and so on.

How is the fraud carried out in a “democratic republic”? The chief reason why the proletariat is enslaved today is because it is *economically* enslaved. Even in a democratic republic, the factories and workshops belong to the capitalists, and the land belongs to the capitalists and the landlords. The worker has nothing but his labour power; the poor peasant has nothing beyond a tiny scrap of land. They are eternally compelled to labour under terrible conditions, for they are under the heel of the master. On paper, they can do a great deal; in actual fact, they can do nothing. They can do nothing because all the wealth, all the power of capital, is in the hands of their enemies. This is what is termed *bourgeois democracy*.

Bourgeois republics exist in the United States, in Switzerland, and in France. But all these countries are ruled by unscrupulous imperialists, by the trust kings and the bank barons, malignant enemies of the working class. The most democratic republic which existed in the year 1919 was the German Republic with its National Assembly. Yet this was the republic to which the murderers of Karl Liebknecht belonged.

The Soviet power realises a new, a much more perfect type of democracy — *proletarian democracy*. The essence of this proletarian democracy consists in this, that it is *based upon the transference of the means of production into the hands of the workers* thus depriving the bourgeoisie of all power. In proletarian democracy, those who formerly constituted the oppressed masses, and their organisations, have become the instruments of rule. In the capitalist system of society, and therefore in bourgeois democratic republics, there existed organisations of workers and peasants. They were, however, overwhelmed by the organisations of the rich. Under proletarian democracy, on the other hand, the rich have been deprived of their wealth. The mass organisations of the workers, the semi-proletarian peasants, etc. (soviets, trade unions, factory committees, etc.), have become the actual foundations of the proletarian state authority. In the constitution of the Soviet Republic we find at the outset the statement: “Russia

declares itself to be a republic of workers', soldiers', and peasants' delegates. All power, both central and local, is vested in these soviets."

Soviet democracy does not merely not exclude the workers' organisations from government, but it actually makes of them the instruments of government. But since the soviets and the other organisations of the working class and the peasantry number their members by the million, the Soviet power entrusts with new functions innumerable masses of persons who were formerly oppressed and degraded. To an ever greater extent the masses of the people, the workers and the poor peasants, come to participate in the joint labours of the soviets, the trade unions, and the factory committees. This is going on everywhere. In the country towns and in the villages, people who never did anything of the kind before are now actively participating in the work of administration and in the upbuilding of a new life. In this way the Soviet power secures the widest self-government for the various localities, and at the same time summons the broad masses of the people to participate in the work of government.

It is evident that our party must devote itself to promoting the worldwide development of this new proletarian democracy. We must do our utmost to secure that the widest strata of the proletarians and the poor peasants shall participate to the utmost of their power in the work of the soviets. In one of his pamphlets, published before the November revolution, Comrade Lenin wrote very truly that our task was to see that every cook should be taught to take her share in governmental administration. Of course this is by no means an easy job, and there are many hindrances to its realisation. First among such obstacles comes the low cultural level of the masses. The workers' vanguard is but a small body. In this vanguard, the metal workers, for instance, are conspicuous. But a large proportion of the workers are backward, and this is especially true of the country districts. They lack initiative, they lack creative faculty; they stand aside and let others take the first steps. The task of our party consists in the systematic and gradual attraction of these backward strata to participate in the general work of administration. Of course the only way of bringing new strata to participate in the work is to raise their cultural level and their capacity for organisation. This, likewise, is the task of our party.

#### **§48. The class character & the transitoriness of the proletarian dictatorship**

The bourgeoisie has everywhere concealed its class rule behind the mask of "the cause of the whole people". How could the bourgeoisie, a comparatively small group of parasites, openly acknowledge that it imposes its class will upon all? How could the bourgeoisie venture to declare that the state is but a league of robbers? Of course it

could do nothing of the kind. Even when the bourgeoisie hoists the bloodstained standard of a militarist dictatorship, it continues to talk of “the cause of the whole people”. But the capitalist class is peculiarly adroit in the way in which it cheats the people in the so-called democratic republics. In these, the bourgeoisie rules, and is able to maintain its dictatorship through keeping up certain appearances. The workers are given the right of exercising the parliamentary vote every three or four years, but they are carefully excluded from all power in the administration. Yet because universal suffrage exists, the capitalist class loudly declares that the “whole people” rules.

The Soviet power openly proclaims its class character. It makes no attempt to conceal that it is a class power, that the Soviet state is the dictatorship of the poor. The point is emphasised in its very name ; the Soviet government is called the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government. The constitution, that is to say the fundamental laws of our Soviet Republic, the constitution adopted by the third All-Russian Soviet Congress, expressly declares: “The third All-Russian Soviet Congress of Workers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Delegates, declares that now, in the hour of the decisive struggle between the proletariat and the exploiters, there can be no place for the exploiters in any of the instruments of power.” The Soviet power, therefore, not only proclaims its class character, but does not hesitate to deprive of electoral rights and to exclude from the instruments of power the representatives of those classes which are hostile to the proletariat and to the peasantry. For what reason can and must the Soviet power act thus openly? Because the Soviet power really is the power of the working masses, the power of the majority of the population. It has no occasion to conceal that it was born in working-class quarters. Far from it, for the more conspicuously the Soviet power insists upon its origin and its meaning, the closer will be the ties between itself and the masses, and the more outstanding will be its success in the struggle against the exploiters.

Of course this state of affairs will not last for ever. The essence of the matter lies herein, that it is necessary to crush the resistance of the exploiters. But as soon as the exploiters have been repressed, bridled, and tamed, as soon as they have been trained to work and have become workers like everyone else, the pressure upon them will be relaxed and the dictatorship of the proletariat will gradually disappear.

This is expressly stipulated in our constitution (Part 11, Chapter 5): “The fundamental task of the constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic — a constitution adapted to the needs of the present period of transition — consists in the establishment of the dictatorship of the urban and rural workers and of the poor peasants in the form of a strong All-Russian Soviet power, whose purpose it will be to effect the complete crushing of the bourgeoisie, to put an end to the exploitation of one human being by another, and to realise socialism, in which there will be neither

division into classes nor any state authority.”

From this we may deduce the tasks of our party. The party must systematically expose the bourgeois fraud, which is worked as follows. Certain rights are conceded to the worker, but he is left in material dependence upon a master. Consequently the task of our party is to crush the exploiters by all the means at the disposal of the proletariat. Furthermore, it will be incumbent upon our party, in proportion as it is able to crush the exploiters and their hangers-on, in proportion as it is able to refashion them, by degrees to mitigate and to revoke the measures which it was at first necessary to enforce. Let us suppose, for example, that the professional classes have drawn nearer to the working class, that they are no longer hostile to the workers, that in all they do they are wholly on the side of the Soviet power, that they are on the best of terms with the proletariat. When this happens (and it is only a question of time), it will be incumbent upon us to give the professional classes full civil rights, and to accept them into our family. Today, when the whole world is in arms against the workers' republic, it would be premature to speak of such an extension of rights. But we must never cease to make it perfectly clear that the extension of rights will ultimately be given, and will be given all the sooner, in proportion as there comes a speedier end to the attempts made by the exploiters to overthrow communism. In this manner the proletarian state will gradually die out, and will undergo transformation into a stateless communist society, wherein the division into classes will have completely disappeared.

#### **§49. Rights of the workers under bourgeois democracy & under the Soviet power**

One of the chief frauds of bourgeois democracy consists in this, that it gives only the appearance of rights. On paper we read that the workers can elect to parliament in perfect freedom; that they have the same rights as the masters (they are said to be “equal before the law”); that they have the right of combination and of public meeting; that they can publish any newspapers and books they please; and so on. These things are called the “essence of democracy”; we are assured that democracy is for everyone, for the whole people, for all the citizens, so that conditions are quite different from those in the Soviet Republic.

First of all we must point out that no such bourgeois democracy really exists. It existed a hundred years ago, but Mr. Bourgeois has done away with it long since.

The United States will serve as the best example of this. Here, during the war, the following laws were promulgated: It was forbidden to speak slightly of the president; it was forbidden to say anything to the discredit of the Allies; it was forbidden to declare that the entry of the US and of the Entente into the war was the outcome of sordid,

material motives; it was forbidden to advocate a premature peace; it was forbidden to utter any public condemnation of the policy of the US government; it was forbidden to say anything to the credit of Germany; it was forbidden to advocate the overthrow of the existing order, the abolition of private property, the class war, etc. The penalty for breaking any of these laws ranged from three to 20 years' imprisonment. In the course a single year, about 1500 workers were arrested for such offences. The working-class organisation known as the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) was savagely attacked, and some of its leaders were lynched. As an example of the "right to strike", we may mention the strike at the Arizona copper mines in the year 1917, when many of the workers were shot, others flogged, and others tarred and feathered; when whole families were hunted from their homes and reduced to beggary. Again, during the strike at Rockefeller's coal mines, at Ludlow in the State of Colorado, Rockefeller's gunmen shot and burned several hundred workmen and workwomen. Although Congress is elected by universal suffrage, it merely carries out the orders of the trust kings, for nearly all the congressmen are in the pay of the trusts. The uncrowned kings are the real dictators of America. Among them we may name: Rockefeller, the head of the Standard Oil Trust, which controls, in addition to the oil wells, a vast number of banks; Morgan, the railway king, also in control of numerous banks; Schwab, the steel king; Swift, the head of the meat trust; Dupont, the powder king, who amassed incredible wealth during the war. Suffice it to say that Rockefeller's income is \$10,000 per *hour*! Who can withstand such strength? This gang of Schwabs and Rockefellers holds everything in its hands in the name of "democracy".

Even if what is termed bourgeois democracy did really exist, in comparison with the Soviet power it would not be worth a cracked farthing. Paper laws are of no use to the working class unless the possibility of their realisation exists. But such a possibility of realisation does not exist under the capitalist regime, cannot exist under the system in which the capitalists own all the wealth. Even if the workers enjoy on paper the right of meeting, they often find it quite impossible to exercise such a right. For instance, the innkeepers, incited by the big sharks of capital, or moved by their own hostility to the workers, will frequently refuse to let rooms for meetings — and the workers have nowhere else to go. Here is another example. The workers wish to publish a newspaper, and they have the legal right to do so. But to exercise this right they need money, paper, offices, a printing press, etc. All these things are in the hands of the capitalists. The capitalists won't relax their grip. Nothing doing! Out of the workers' paltry wage it is impossible to accumulate adequate funds. The result is that the bourgeoisie has masses of newspapers and can cheat the workers to its heart's content day after day; whereas the workers, notwithstanding their legal "rights", have practically no press of

their own.

Such is the real character of the workers' "freedom" under bourgeois democracy. The freedom exists solely on paper. The workers have what is termed "formal" freedom. In substance, however, they have no freedom, because their formal freedom cannot be translated into the realm of fact. It is the same here as in all other departments of life. According to bourgeois theory, master and man are equals in capitalist society, since "free contract" exists: the employer offers work; the worker is free to accept or refuse. Thus it is upon paper! In actual fact, the master is rich and well fed; the worker is poor and hungry. He must work or starve. Is this equality? There can be no equality between rich and poor, whatever the written word declares. This is why, in the capitalist regime, "freedom" has a bourgeois complexion.

In the Soviet republic, on the other hand, freedom really exists for the working class. It exists because it is a freedom which can be translated into the realm of fact. Let us quote from the constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (Part 11, Chapter 5).

14. In order to secure for the workers actual freedom of expression of opinion, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic abolishes the dependence of the press upon capital, and puts into the hands of the working class and the poor peasantry all the technical and material means for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books, and all other products of the printing press, and provides for their free distribution throughout the country.
15. In order to secure for the workers the actual right of assembly, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic gives to all citizens of the Soviet republic the unrestricted right to hold meetings and congresses, to march in processions, etc., and puts into the hands of the working class and the poor peasants all the buildings suitable for the purpose of holding public meetings, together with the provision of light, heating, etc.
16. In order to secure for the workers actual freedom of combination, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, having overthrown the economic and political power of the possessing classes, and having removed all the hindrances which hitherto in bourgeois society have prevented the workers and peasants from effectively realising the freedom of organisation and activity, furnishes to the workers and poor peasants every kind of assistance, material and moral, requisite for their combination and organisation.
17. In order to secure for the workers effective access to knowledge, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic makes it its duty to provide the workers and poor peasants with a complete, many-sided, and gratuitous education.

Herein we see the enormous difference between the spurious freedoms of bourgeois democracy and the effective freedoms of proletarian democracy.

The Soviet power and our party have already done much in this direction. The mansions of the nobles, the theatres, the printing presses, paper, etc. — all these now belong to the working-class organisations and to the workers' state. Our further task is to help by all possible means towards the full realisation of these rights by the backward strata of the proletariat and the peasantry. This will be achieved in two ways. First of all, we must continually advance along the road we have marked out, and must do everything in our power to broaden the material foundations of the workers' freedom. We must, therefore, do our utmost to design and build new houses, set up new printing presses, install workers' palaces, etc. Secondly, the backward strata of the population must be made intimately acquainted with those possibilities of freedom which already exist, but which they have not hitherto been able to profit by, owing to ignorance, mental darkness, and lack of culture.

### **§50. The equality of the workers, irrespective of sex, creed, & race**

Bourgeois democracy proclaims in words a whole series of freedoms, but from the oppressed these freedoms are safeguarded by five locks and seven seals. Among other things, bourgeois democracy has often declared that people are equal irrespective of sex, creed, race, and nationality. Proudly has the pledge been given that under the bourgeois democratic system all are equals: women and men; whites, yellows, and blacks; Europeans and Asiatics; Buddhists, Christians, and Jews. In reality, the bourgeoisie has failed to carry out these pledges. During the imperialist epoch, there has been all over the world a terrible increase in racial and national oppression. (For details see next chapter.) But even as concerns women, bourgeois democracy is far from having realised equality. Woman has remained a being without rights, a domestic animal, part of the furniture of the marital couch.

The working woman in capitalist society is peculiarly oppressed, peculiarly deprived of rights. In all matters she has even less than the beggarly rights which the bourgeoisie grants to the working man. The right to the parliamentary vote has been conceded in a few countries only. As regards the right of inheritance, woman everywhere receives the beggar's portion. In family life she is always subject to her husband, and everything that goes wrong is considered to be her fault. In a word, bourgeois democracy everywhere exhibits as regards women laws and customs which strongly remind us of the customs of savages, who exchange, buy, punish, or steal women just as if they were chattels, dolls, or beasts of burden. Our Russian proverb runs, "A hen is not a bird,

and a woman is not a person”; here we have the valuation of a slave society. This state of affairs is extremely disadvantageous to the proletariat. There are more women than men amongst the workers. It is obvious that the struggle of the proletariat must be greatly hindered by the lack of equality between the two halves of which it is composed. Without the aid of the women of the proletariat, it is idle to dream of a general victory, it is idle to dream of the “freeing of labour”. For this reason, it is greatly to the interest of the working class that there should be complete fighting comradeship between the female and the male portions of the proletariat, and that this comradeship should be strengthened by equality. The Soviet power is the first to have realised such equality in all departments of life: in marriage, in the family, in political affairs, etc. In all things, throughout Soviet Russia, women are the equals of men.

It is incumbent upon our party to effect the realisation of this equality in actual life. Before all, we must make it clear to the broad masses of the workers that the subjection of women is extremely harmful to them. Hitherto among the workers it has been customary to look upon women as inferiors; as for the peasants, they smile when a “mere woman” begins to take an interest in social affairs. In the Soviet republic the working woman has exactly the same rights as the working man; she can elect to the soviets and be elected to them; she can hold any commissar’s office; can do any kind of work in the army, in economic life, and in the state administration.

But in Russia, working women are far more backward than working men. Many people look down upon them. In this matter persevering efforts are needed: among men, that they may cease blocking women’s road; among women, that they may learn to make a full use of their rights, may cease to be timid or diffident.

We must not forget that “every cook has to be taught to take her share in governmental administration”. We have learned above that the really important matter is not the right that is written on paper, but the possibility of realising a right in practice. How can a working woman effectively realise her rights when she has to devote so much time to housekeeping, must go to the market and wait her turn there, must do the family washing, must look after her children, must bear the heavy burden of all this domestic drudgery?

The aim of the Soviet republic and of our party must be, to deliver working women from such slavery, to free the working woman from these obsolete and antediluvian conditions. The organisation of house communes (not places in which people will wrangle, but places in which they will live like human beings) with central wash-houses; the organisation of communal kitchens; the organisation of communal nurseries, kindergartens, playgrounds, summer colonies for children, schools with communal dining rooms, etc. — such are the things which will enfranchise woman, and will make

it possible for her to interest herself in all those matters which now interest the proletarian man.

In an era of devastation and famine, it is, of course, difficult to do all these things as they ought to be done. Nevertheless, our party must in this manner do its utmost to attract the working woman to play her part in the common task.

National equality, racial equality, etc., will be considered in the next chapter. Here we shall merely quote the paragraphs in the constitution which touch on this topic (Part II, Chapter 5).

20. In view of the solidarity of the workers of all lands, the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic grants the political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners living in the territories of the Russian republic, provided they live by their own labour and either belong to the working class or are peasants who do not employ others' labour; it recognises the right of the local soviets to grant Russian citizenship to such foreigners without any tedious formalities.
21. The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic grants the right of asylum to all foreigners suffering persecution on account of political or religious offences.
22. The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, recognising the equal rights of all citizens irrespective of their racial or national origin, declares the institution or maintenance of any privilege or preferential advantage upon the ground of such origin to be contrary to the fundamental law of the republic; no less contrary to the fundamental law is any sort of oppression of national minorities or any limitation of their equal rights.

## §51. Parliamentarism & the soviet system

In bourgeois democratic states, at the head of everything stands what is known as parliament. This is a representative institution, the electoral franchise varying in different countries. In some, only the rich have the vote; in some, a part of the poor are admitted to the franchise; in a third group, all the men of a certain age can vote; in a fourth country, all the women as well.

But even where parliament is elected by universal suffrage, the majority of the seats are invariably occupied by representatives of the bourgeoisie. Why does this always happen? The reason is obvious in view of what we have already learned. Let us suppose that the workers, who form the majority in the country, have the right to vote. But let us further suppose that all the wealth is in the hands of the capitalists, that they own all the newspapers and all the places where public meetings can be held, and that artists, printing presses, and millions of leaflets are at their service; that from all the pulpits the clergy advocate their cause; let us suppose, moreover, that the poor workers

are engaged day after day in exhausting toil, that they have no meeting-places, that clever fellows circulate among them (agents of the bourgeoisie, lawyers, journalists, and other glib talkers) advocating what seem to be excellent watchwords, and thus confusing the workers' minds; let us remember the enormous financial resources of the trust magnates, which enable them to corrupt the workers' representatives — however honest these may have been at the outset — by offering comfortable jobs, by flattery in the daily press, and so on. Then we can understand why it is that even in such parliaments the majority always consists of the secret or declared agents of the bourgeoisie, of financial capital, of the bank kings.

It is, therefore, extraordinarily difficult for the working masses to elect any of their own folk as representatives.

Once a representative finds his way to parliament, the matter is finished; he can defy the electors; for three or four years his seat is secure. He is independent of them. He sells himself right and left. He cannot be recalled by the electors; the law makes no provision for anything of the kind.

Such is the state of affairs in a bourgeois democratic republic under parliamentarism. It is very different in the Soviet republic. Here the parasites — the traders and the factory owners, the prelates and the landlords, the military officers and the rich peasants — have no right to the vote. They can neither elect nor be elected. On the other hand, the exercise of the franchise by the workers and the poor peasants is simple and easy. Moreover, every delegate to the soviet can be recalled by the electors, who can send another in his place. If the delegate fulfils his duties badly, if he turns his coat, etc., he can be recalled. This right of recall has nowhere been so extensively adopted as in the Soviet republic.

In a bourgeois republic, parliament is a “talking shop”; the members do nothing but discuss and make speeches. The real work is done by officials, ministers of state, etc. Parliament passes laws; it “controls” the ministers by asking them various questions; it votes what the administration decides. In parliament is concentrated what is termed the legislative authority. But the executive authority is in the hands of the cabinet. Parliament, therefore, does nothing; parliament merely talks. In the soviet system, affairs are arranged quite differently. The highest and most important instrument of government is the congress of soviets. The constitution states: “The All-Russian Congress of Soviets is the supreme authority of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.” It must meet at least twice a year. Having reviewed the general situation, it makes suitable decisions, which become laws. The members of the congress are not professional talkers, but real workers, with something definite to do. In the intervals between the congresses the supreme authority is vested in the Central Executive

Committee, elected by the congress. The Central Executive Committee exercises at one and the same time legislative and executive functions; that is to say, it not only passes laws, but conducts public affairs. Its departments are known as the People's Commissariats, and its members work in these commissariats. Thus the Central Executive Committee is a real *working* committee.

Like the Central Executive Committee, the other soviet institutions are closely unified, and are based upon a whole series of organisations of the working masses. The soviet institutions are based on the Communist Party, the trade unions, the factory committees, and the cooperatives. These organisations comprise many millions of workers, who all combine to support the Soviet power. Through the instrumentality of these organisations, the toiling masses take an active part in the state administration. The Communist Party and the trade unions appoint their most trusted members to fill all the posts and to carry out all the functions. In this way the best among the workers are delegated, not merely to talk, but actually to administer. In the so-called democratic republic, nothing of this kind happens. There the working-class elector drops his ballot paper into the box, and then his part in the affair ends. The bourgeoisie assures him that he has fulfilled his "duties as a citizen"; he need trouble himself no longer about affairs of state.

These arrangements conceal one of the fundamental frauds of the bourgeois system of government. The fraud is of the same nature as those previously explained. On paper it seems as if the workers were "participating" in some way. In actual fact they are altogether outside the current of affairs. Everything is administered and all the work is done by a special caste of bourgeois officials, quite distinct from the masses, and constituting what is known as the bureaucracy. The administrative apparatus is out of reach of the masses; the masses have no contact with it whatever.

Down to the 16th or 17th century the state officials were drawn only from the nobility.

During the change to the capitalist system, a professional officialdom came into existence. Of late years, this professional officialdom has been mainly recruited from the ranks of the so-called intelligentsia or professional classes, but the higher posts have been filled by members of the wealthier bourgeoisie. Even the lesser officials, however, are trained in a spirit of devotion towards the robber state; the more talented among them look forward to a rise in rank, to orders and titles, to an "official career". The result is that most of these gentlemen are full of profound disdain for the "common people". The dimensions and growth of this officialdom may be learned from the following figures, which are taken from Olshevsky's book *Bureaucracy*. In *Austria*, in the year 1874, they numbered in round figures 27,000; in 1891, they numbered 36,000; in 1900, they numbered 169,000. In *France*, the number of officials in the year 1891 was 1,500,000,

this being approximately 4% of the population. In *Britain*, in the same year, there were about 1,000,000 officials [civil servants], this being approximately 2.6% of the population. In the *United States*, in the year 1890, there were 750,000 officials. Olshevsky, himself a bourgeois, tells us that the bureaucracy is characterised by the following traits: routinism, red-tapism, overbearing manners, pettiness. In all capitalist countries, administrative work is actually in the hands of an officialdom of this character. We must repeat that the highest officials are mainly recruited from the wealthier bourgeoisie, and from the circles of the nobility and the great landowners. This is inevitable in capitalist society, where the bourgeoisie rules.

In the Soviet republic, the masses do not merely elect (electing, not venal lawyers, but their own folk), but they participate in the work of administration, for the soviets and the other organisations of the working masses are actually engaged in administrative work.

As far as the soviets are concerned, the elections are of such a character as will retain close contact between these bodies and the masses. For the elections to the soviets are not territorial in the residential sense, but are based upon the places where people work (factories, workshops, etc.); they are based, as the phrase runs, upon “productive units”. Those who are united in their working life elect from among their number, as their delegates, the persons in whom they have the greatest confidence.

Thus the Soviet power realises an enormously higher form, a far more genuinely popular form, of democracy — proletarian democracy.

What, then, is the further task of our party? Our common course is clear. Our party has to realise proletarian democracy to a greater and ever greater extent; to bring about an increasingly close contact between delegates or elected persons (those deputed to perform various tasks) and the masses; to induce the workers to participate more and more effectively in the work of administration; finally, to ensure that millions of eyes shall watch the delegates and control their work. Everything possible must be done to see to it that all persons entrusted with authority shall be held responsible and shall frequently be called to account.

The carrying out of these tasks is a great undertaking. There are many obstacles to be overcome. The obstacles must be surmounted. We must achieve a full and inseparable union of three elements: the state apparatus; the active masses of the proletariat, the builders of communism; and the poor peasants.

## §52. The army & the Soviet power

Proletarian democracy, like every other state authority, has its armed forces — its army and its navy. In the bourgeois democratic state, the army is used to keep down

the workers and to defend the capitalists' money-bags. The proletarian army, the Red Army of the Soviet republic, is used for the class purposes of the proletariat and for the struggle against the bourgeoisie. Consequently, in respect of the conditions of service and in respect of political rights, there is a vast difference between a bourgeois army and a proletarian army. The bourgeoisie finds it expedient to pretend that its army is "above politics". In reality, it uses the army as a means for promoting its predatory and counterrevolutionary policy under the flag of the defence of "national interests". It does everything in its power to sow division between the army and the people. By a thousand subterfuges, it deprives soldiers of the possibility of utilising their political rights. Things are very different in the Soviet republic. In the first place, the proletariat frankly declares that the Red Army is an instrument for use in the political class struggle against the bourgeoisie. In the second place, the Soviet power uses all possible means to bring about an intimate union between the army and the people. The workers are solidarised in the soviets with the soldiers of the Red Army; these soviets are known as "Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates". The workers and the soldiers study in the same schools, and attend the same courses of lectures, they mingle at public meetings; they rub shoulders in demonstrations. Again and again, the workers have entrusted the fighting flag to the soldiers of the Red Army; and again and again the soldiers have entrusted the colours to the workers. In the Soviet state, which is nothing else than a great republic of workers, success can only be achieved in the fight against our enemies when there is an indestructible unity between the Red Army and the revolutionary working class.

The more intimate the solidarity of the working class with the army and of the army with the working class, the more durable will be our fighting revolutionary strength. Obviously, then, our party must sustain, develop, and strengthen this unity. Experience has shown that intimate association with proletarian organisations exercises a remarkable influence upon the army. We need only recall the resistance to Kolchak in the summer of 1919 and to Denikin in the autumn of the same year. These victories could not have been achieved had not the army been assisted by workers from the party, from the trade unions, etc., who flocked to the colours. For this reason the Red Army of the proletariat is in actual fact, and not merely in words, the first people's army, the first army created by the will of the workers, organised by the workers, solidarised with them, indissolubly united with them, and, by means of its representatives in the soviets, participating in the administration of the country. The Red Army is not something distinct from the people; it consists of the working class and the poor peasants; and it marches under the leadership of the working class. The army lives in the most intimate association with the workers at the rear. It is the

absolute duty of our party to be indefatigable in its endeavours to consolidate this unity.

### **§53. The leading role of the proletariat**

In our revolution, which is a communist revolution, the principal role, the role of leader, has been assigned to the proletariat. The proletariat is the most united and the best organised class. The proletariat is the only class whose conditions of life in capitalist society have been such as to lead to the acquirement of sound communist views; to it alone have these conditions disclosed the true goal and the right way of attaining it. Naturally, therefore, the proletariat has led the van in this revolution. The peasants (the middle peasants and even some of the poor peasants) were far from steadfast. They were only successful when they joined forces with the proletariat. Conversely, whenever the peasants took a different line from the proletarians, they were inevitably enslaved by Denikin, Kolchak, or some other representative of the landlords, the capitalists, or the military caste.

This leading role, this dominant mission of the proletariat, finds expression in the Soviet constitution. Our laws grant the proletariat certain preferential political rights. For example, the electoral arrangements of the congresses of soviets are of such a nature, that, proportionally to their numbers, the urban workers have more delegates than the peasants.

Here are the relevant paragraphs of the constitution.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets consists of representatives of the town soviets, which are entitled to send one delegate for every 25,000 electors, and of representatives of the provincial soviets, which are entitled to send one delegate for every 125,000 inhabitants. [Part III, Chapter 5, Par. 25.]

Congresses of soviets consist of: (a) Regional congresses, composed of representatives from the town soviets and from the county congresses of soviets, in the proportion of one delegate to 25,000 inhabitants, and from the towns in the proportion of one delegate to 5000 electors, with the proviso that there shall not be more than 500 delegates for the whole region — or composed of the representatives to the provincial congresses of soviets, elected on the same basis, when the provincial congress meets immediately before the regional congress of soviets. (b) Provincial congresses composed of representatives of the town soviets and of the rural district congresses of soviets, in the proportion of one delegate to 10,000 inhabitants, and from the towns in the proportion of one delegate to 2000 electors, with the proviso that there shall not be more than 300 delegates for the whole province — but when a county congress of soviets takes place immediately before the provincial congress of soviets, the elections

shall be held after the manner of those, not to the rural district congress of soviets, but to the county congress of soviets. [Part III, Chapter 10, Par. 53.]

In the towns, it will be seen, the delegates are elected proportionally to the number of electors, but in the villages, proportionally to the number of inhabitants (these comprising, not only the workers in the strict sense of the term, but also the rich peasants, the clergy, the rural bourgeoisie, etc., as well as the children, who have no electoral rights). It follows from this that the preference given to the urban workers as against the peasants is less extensive than might appear at first sight. But the preferential treatment is indubitable.

These constitutionally specified privileges merely give expression to what actually exists, namely that the solidly organised urban proletariat leads the disorganised rural masses.

It is the first duty of the Communist Party to do everything it can to make plain that these privileges are temporary. In proportion as the backward strata of the country dwellers grow more enlightened, when experience has convinced them that the measures adopted by the workers are right and profitable, when they realise that they must not walk with the bourgeoisie but only with the proletariat, obviously the above-described temporary inequality will cease to exist.

The Communist Party must utilise the privileges of the proletariat in order to influence the rural districts, in order to solidarise the more advanced workers with the peasants. Thus only will the revolutionary enlightenment of the poorer peasants be successfully achieved. The privileged position of the workers has not been given them that they may be exclusive or may separate themselves from the dwellers in the rural districts, but in order that they may make a good use of it, in order that, by their greater influence in the soviets and the administration, they may bring the working class into closer contact with village life, that they may inaugurate and sustain a comradely union of the proletariat with the middle peasants and the poor peasants. Thus the workers will be able to free the peasants from the influence of the rich peasants, the clergy, the sometime landlords, etc.

#### **§54. Bureaucracy & the Soviet power**

The Soviet power has been organised, as the power of a new class, the proletariat, upon the ruins of the old bourgeois power. Before the proletariat could organise its own power, it had to break the power of its adversaries. With the aid of the Soviet power, the proletariat seized and destroyed the vestiges of the old state. It broke up the old police force, abolished the remnants of the secret service, abolished the gendarmerie and the tsarist bourgeois law courts with their public prosecutors and

salaried defenders; it swept away many of the old government departments, annihilated the bourgeois ministries of state with their armies of officials, etc. What was the aim of all this? And what is now the general task of our party? We have referred to the matter already in Part One of the present work. The task is this, to replace the old officialdom by the masses themselves, to bring it to pass that the whole working population shall put its hand to the job of administration (working in some occupations by turns for brief spells, and in other occupations by turns for long spells). But we have had serious difficulties to encounter. The chief obstacles have been the following.

First of all came the imperfect development, the lack of enlightenment, the timidity, of the backward strata of the urban population and still more of the rural population. The vanguard, which consists of the bold spirits, of those who are active in body and in mind, of those who are well informed, constitutes a comparatively thin stratum. The others are very slow to move. A great many are still afraid to put their hands to the plough; a great many are still ignorant of their own rights, and have not yet realised that they are the masters of the country. This is not difficult to understand. The masses have been oppressed and enslaved for centuries; it is impossible that from their half-savage condition they should in a moment rise to a level at which they can govern the country. Those who first come to the front are those who belong to the most highly developed stratum; the workers of Petrograd, for instance. These we encounter everywhere. We find them as army commissars, as organisers of production, as executive committee delegates in the rural districts, as propagandists, as members of the highest soviet institutions, as teachers. By degrees even the backward masses are leavened; they cast the old things aside; they assimilate the new; little by little they teach themselves. It is, however, obvious that the low level of general culture must be a great hindrance to progress.

Secondly, we had the lack of experience in the work of administration. This is manifest even in the best of the comrades. The working class has for the first time taken power into its hands. It has never done any administrative work, and no one has ever taught it how to do anything of the kind. On the contrary, for decades during the tsarist regime, and also during the brief Guchkov-Kerensky administration, everything that was possible was done to prevent the proletariat from getting any such experience. Both the bourgeois and the feudal state were organisations for keeping the workers down, not organisations for educating them. Naturally, therefore, the workers, having risen to power, will, while learning by experience, make a great many mistakes. By these mistakes they learn, but inevitably they make them.

Thirdly, we had trouble with bourgeois specialists of the old school. The proletariat was forced to retain many of them in its service. It made them submit, set them to

work, got the better of their sabotage. In the end, it has turned them to successful account. But these bourgeois experts are apt to cling to their old customs. They look down upon the masses with contempt, and will not mix with them on equal terms; they often cling to the old and evil office routine; they dilly-dally; and their bad example tends to corrupt our own people.

Fourthly, we had the withdrawal of the best energies to the army. During the most critical periods of the Civil War, when the army was in urgent need of the most trusty and valiant fighters, it was often necessary to despatch the very best of our own people to the front. In consequence of this, there remained at the rear only a comparatively small number of the most advanced among the workers.

All these circumstances make our work extremely difficult, and tend to a certain degree to promote the reintroduction of bureaucracy into the soviet system. This is a grave danger for the proletariat. The workers did not destroy the old official-ridden state with the intention of allowing it to grow up again from new roots. Our party, therefore, must do its utmost to avert this danger. It can only be averted by attracting the masses to take part in the work. The fundamental matter, of course, is to raise the general cultural level of the workers and peasants, to make an end of illiteracy, to diffuse enlightenment. In addition, however, a whole series of other measures is essential. Among these, our party advocates the following.

It is absolutely indispensable that every member of a soviet should play some definite part in the work of state administration. It is incumbent upon every member of a soviet, not merely to pass opinions upon the matters that come up for discussion, but himself to take part in the common task, in his own person to fill some social office.

The next essential is that there should be a continuous rotation in these functions. This implies that every comrade must, after a definite time, change over from one occupation to another, so that by degrees he shall become experienced in all the important branches of administrative work. The comrade must not stick for years to one and the same job, for if he does this he will become a routinist official of the old type. As soon as he has learned the routine of one office, he must remove to another.

Finally, our party recommends, as far as concerns the general arrangement of the work, that by degrees the entire working population shall be induced to participate in the state administration. Here, in fact, is the true foundation of our political system. Certain steps in this direction have already been taken. For example, 10,000 proletarians participated in the house-to-house visitations of the Petrograd bourgeoisie. Again, nearly the whole of the working population of Petrograd took part in safeguarding the city. Yet again, to relieve the men for other duties, working women entered the militia service. In the soviet it is possible to train non-members as assistants. By looking on, at

first, they can learn the work of the executive committee and the sub-committees. The same thing can be done in the factory committees and in the trade unions, where all the members can take office by turns. In a word, in one way or another (practical experience will teach us the best methods), we must follow in the footsteps of the Paris Commune, must simplify the work of administration, attract the masses to participate in it, completely put an end to bureaucracy. The more extensive this participation of the masses is, the sooner will the dictatorship of the proletariat die out. As soon as all the adult and hale members of the population, all without exception, have come to participate in administration, the last vestiges of bureaucracy will disappear. Concurrently with the disappearance of our bourgeois antagonists, we shall be able to celebrate the obsequies of the state. The government of men will be replaced by the administration of things — the administration of machinery, buildings, locomotives, and other apparatus. The communist order of society will be fully installed.

The dying out of the state will proceed far more rapidly when a complete victory has been gained over the imperialists. Today, when a fierce civil war is still raging, all our organisations have to be on a war footing. The instruments of the Soviet power have had to be constructed on militarist lines. Often enough there is no time to summon the soviets, and as a rule, therefore, the executive committees have to decide everything.

This state of affairs is due to the military situation of the Soviet republic. What exists today in Russia is not simply the dictatorship of the proletariat; it is a militarist-proletarian dictatorship. The republic is an armed camp. Obviously, the above-described conditions will not pass away while the need persists for the militarisation of all our organisations. ■

# Notes

## Introduction

- 1 V.I. Lenin, “The Third International and Its Place in History”, in *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965), p. 308
- 2 K. Kautsky, “The Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, in J. Riddell (ed.), *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power* (Pathfinder Press: New York, 1986), p. 316
- 3 Cited in Lenin, *Marxism and the State* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1972), p. 68
- 4 K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto and its relevance for today* (Resistance Books: Sydney, 1998), p. 47
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 62
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 63
- 7 Marx, “The Civil War in France”, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1989), p. 217
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 220
- 9 Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Resistance Books: Sydney, 1999), pp. 42-43
- 10 *ibid.*, p. 43
- 11 Cited in Lenin, *Marxism and the State*, p. 78
- 12 Marx, “General Rules of the International Working Men’s Association”, in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 19
- 13 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, p. 35-36
- 14 Marx, “The Crisis and the Counter-Revolution”, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 431
- 15 Kautsky, “The Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, in *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power*, p. 316
- 16 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1975), p. 318
- 17 Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Program”, in *Selected Works*, Vol. 3. p. 26-27
- 18 Aristotle, *The Politics* (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1962), p. 155
- 19 *ibid.*, p. 160.
- 20 J-P. Marat, “The Objectives of the Revolution Completely Unattained by the People”,

*L'Ami du Peuple*, July 7, 1792, cited in P. Beik (ed.), *The French Revolution* (Macmillan: New York, 1970), p. 218

- 21 S. Maréchal, “Manifesto of the Equals” (April 1796), cited in D. Thomson, *The Babeuf Plot* (Greenwich Press: Westport, Conn., 1975), p. 30
- 22 Marx, *Capital* (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 280
- 23 Marx, “The Class Struggles in France from 1848 to 1850”, in *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 236
- 24 Engels, “A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Program of 1891”, in *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 435

### The State

- 25 The text is from Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).

### The Proletarian Revolution & the Renegade Kautsky

- 26 The text is from Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).
- 27 *Sotsial-Demokrat* — Central organ of the RSDLP, published from February 1908 to January 1917. From December 1911 it was edited by Lenin.
- 28 *Kommunist* — A magazine published in Geneva in 1915 by the editorial board of *Sotsial-Demokrat* together with G.L. Pyatakov and Y.B. Bosh, who financed it. N.I. Bukharin was one of the editors. Only one double issue appeared, containing three articles by Lenin. He had intended to make the journal an international organ of left social-democrats but serious disagreements arose between the editors of *Sotsial-Demokrat* and Pyatakov, Bosh and Bukharin and the project foundered.
- 29 This refers to the pamphlet *Socialism and War*, written by Lenin and Zinoviev (see Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964]). It was first published in September 1915 and distributed among the delegates to the Zimmerwald conference of antiwar socialists.
- 30 The original title of Lenin’s *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999).
- 31 Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1999).
- 32 See Marx, “Critique of the Gotha Program”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1970).
- 33 Engels, Letter to August Bebel, March 18-28, 1875, Marx & Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1975), p. 275.
- 34 This idea was expressed by Engels in his introduction to Marx’s “The Civil War in France” (see Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969]).
- 35 Engels, “On Authority”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 379.
- 36 Marx & Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, *The Communist Manifesto & Its*

*Relevance For Today* (Resistance Books: Chippendale, 1998).

- 37 On August 4, 1914, the Social-Democratic group in the German Reichstag voted for war credits for the government of Kaiser Wilhelm II.
- 38 Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 328.
- 39 Engels, Letter to August Bebel, March 18-28, 1875, Marx & Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 275.
- 40 Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 189
- 41 Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State”, Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 329.
- 42 Marx, “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 220.
- 43 This refers to the bloody reprisals of the British bourgeoisie against the participants in the Irish rebellion of 1916, a revolt against the British enslavement of Ireland. “In Europe ... there was a rebellion in Ireland, which the ‘freedom-loving’ English ... suppressed by executions”, wrote Lenin in 1916 (see “The Discussion on Self -Determination Summed Up”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964], p. 354). Ulster refers to Northern Ireland. The British and the counterrevolutionary big bourgeoisie and landlords of Ulster waged a savage fight against the Irish national liberation movement.
- 44 Marx, “Indifference to Politics” in Marx, Engels & Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1972), p. 97.
- 45 Engels, “On Authority”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 379.
- 46 Engels, Letter to August Bebel, March 18-28, 1875, Marx & Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 275.
- 47 Marx & Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, *The Communist Manifesto & Its Relevance For Today*, p. 62.
- 48 Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 188.
- 49 Lenin’s article “Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 24 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964]) was published in English in the newspaper the New York *Evening Post* on January 15, 1918, and was also put out as a separate pamphlet in New York.

*Evening Post* — A bourgeois American newspaper founded in 1801. For a number of years it followed a liberal policy. After the 1917 October Revolution it published the secret treaties between the Allies and the tsarist government. Later it became the organ of the most reactionary imperialist circles of the USA. It was later published under the title of the *New York Post*.

50 The All-Russia Democratic Conference was held in Petrograd from September 14 to 22 (September 27-October 5), 1917. It was convened by the Mensheviks-Socialist-Revolutionary Central Executive Committee of soviets with the aim of diverting people's attention from the mounting revolutionary upsurge. More than 1500 delegates attended. Taking part in the conference were representatives of petty-bourgeois parties, conciliatory soviets, trade unions, zemstvos, trading and industrial circles and military units. The Mensheviks and SRs took all steps to reduce to a minimum the representation of the soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies and increase the representation from various petty-bourgeois and bourgeois organisations, thereby securing a majority for themselves. The Bolsheviks took part in it in order to expose the designs of the Mensheviks and SRs.

The Democratic Conference set up a pre-parliament (Provisional Council of the Republic) by means of which the Mensheviks and SRs counted on halting the revolution and putting the country on the path of bourgeois parliamentarianism. Lenin emphatically insisted that the Bolsheviks should boycott the pre-parliament, as participating would create the impression that it could solve the tasks of the revolution. On Lenin's proposal, the CC of the party adopted a decision that the Bolsheviks should walk out of the pre-parliament. At the opening session on October 7 (20), the Bolsheviks read their declaration and walked out.

51 The First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies took place in Petrograd from June 3 to 24 (June 16 to July 7), 1917; over 1000 delegates attended. The Bolsheviks, who at that time were in the minority in the soviets, had 105 delegates. The majority consisted of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The agenda included: attitude to the Provisional Government; the war; preparations for a Constituent Assembly; and other items. On June 4 (17), Lenin spoke on the attitude to the Provisional Government and on June 9 (22), he spoke on the war. The Bolsheviks moved resolutions on all the main questions. They exposed the imperialist nature of the war and the fatal results of conciliation with the bourgeoisie, and demanded the transfer of all power to the soviets. The congress passed decisions supporting the Provisional Government, approved the latter's preparations for an offensive by Russian troops at the front, and opposed transfer of power to the soviets.

52 The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies opened on October 25 (November 7), 1917 in the Smolny Institute. Out of 649 delegates, 390 were Bolsheviks. The congress represented 318 provincial soviets; delegates from 241 soviets came to the congress with Bolshevik mandates. The Mensheviks, right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bundists left the congress after the opening, refusing to recognise the proletarian revolution. The congress declared the transfer of all power to the Soviets and adopted Lenin's appeal "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants". Lenin delivered reports at the congress on peace and on the land. The second congress of soviets adopted Lenin's decrees

on peace and on the land, and formed the first Soviet government, the Council of People's Commissars, to which Lenin was elected chairman. The congress elected the All-Russia Central Executive Committee consisting of 101 persons, including 62 Bolsheviks and 29 Left SRs.

- 53 The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies opened on January 10 (23), 1918. Represented at this congress were 317 soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies and 110 army, corps and divisional committees. Altogether there were 707 delegates. After three days the congress was joined by the representatives of more than 250 soviets of peasants' deputies — participants in the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, which opened on January 13 (26). Of this congress, 441 delegates were Bolsheviks. Y. M. Sverdlov reported on the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. Lenin delivered a report on the work of the Council of People's Commissars and replied to the debate, and made a speech before the congress closed. On the proposal of the Bolshevik group, the congress adopted a resolution fully approving the policy of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars. On January 12 (25), 1918, the congress endorsed the "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People", written by Lenin. During the congress, the number of delegates continually increased; at the last sitting 1587 delegates with the right to vote were present. The congress elected an All-Russia Central Executive Committee of 306 members. The congress ended on January 18 (31), 1918.
- 54 *Petrushka* — A serf servant in Gogol's novel *The Dead Souls*, who read books syllable by syllable without understanding them, being interested only in the mechanical process of reading.
- 55 *Judas Golovlyov* — A character in the book by Saltykov-Shchedrin, *The Golovlyov Family*. In the character of Judas, the author depicted the spiritual and physical decay of the historically doomed, obsolete class of feudal landlords with their parasitism, greed, bigotry, unbridled hypocrisy and treachery.
- 56 *Lieberdans* — An ironical nickname given to the Menshevik leaders Lieber and Dan and their supporters following the publication of an article by Demyan Bedny entitled "Lieberdan" in the Moscow Bolshevik newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat* of August 25 (September 7), 1917.
- 57 *Activists* — A group of Mensheviks who resorted to armed struggle against Soviet power and the Bolshevik Party after the October Revolution. They joined various counterrevolutionary conspiratorial organisations, supported Kornilov, Kaledin and the bourgeois nationalist Ukrainian Rada, actively participated in the revolt of the Czechoslovak troops and made common front with the foreign interventionists. In 1918, under the pretext of discussing the food situation, the "activists", supported by the Menshevik Party,

held a number of conferences of “workers” and their delegates which demanded the dissolution of the soviets.

- 58 Lenin is referring to Bebel’s speech on September 20, 1910 at the Magdeburg Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party.
- 59 *Frankfurter Zeitung* — A German daily, mouthpiece of the stock exchange, published in Frankfurt-on-Main from 1856 to 1943. In 1949 it resumed publication as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.
- 60 *Vorwärts* (Forward) — A daily newspaper, the central organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, issued in Berlin from 1891 by decision of the Halle Congress of the party as a continuation of the newspaper *Berliner Volksblatt* (Berlin People’s Gazette), which had been published since 1884. In the columns of *Vorwärts*, Engels waged a struggle against all manifestations of opportunism. From the second half of the 1890s, after the death of Engels, the editorial board of *Vorwärts* fell into the hands of the right wing of the party and systematically published opportunist articles. During the World War I, *Vorwärts* took up a social-chauvinist position; after the October Revolution the newspaper carried on anti-Soviet propaganda.
- 61 Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 179-180.
- 62 Lenin is referring to Marx’s article “The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution” (see Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1969]).
- 63 Two new parties — the Narodnik Communists and the Revolutionary Communists — split off from the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries after the provocative assassination of the German Ambassador Mirbach by Left SRs and their revolt on July 6-7, 1918.

The *Narodnik Communists* condemned the anti-soviet activity of the Left SRs and founded their own party at a conference in September 1918. Many of the Narodnik Communists were members of soviet bodies and one was a member of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee. At an extraordinary congress in November 1918, the party decided to dissolve and merge with the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

The *Party of Revolutionary Communism* was formed in September 1918. The decisions of the first congress of the party, held on September 25, stated that the new party, while remaining Narodnik in its ideology and program, would adopt a policy of “real and non-hypocritical collaboration with the Bolsheviks”. The party continued to exist as a small group until 1920. The sixth congress of the party held in September 1920 took a decision to join the RCP(B). In October 1920 the Central Committee of the RCP(B) proposed that party organisations should accept members of the former Party of Revolutionary Communism.

- 64 See Marx’s Letter to Kugelmann, dated April 12, 1871 (Marx & Engels, *Selected*

*Correspondence*).

- 65 The *July crisis* — Kulak counterrevolutionary revolts in the central districts of Russia, in the Volga area, the Urals and Siberia in the summer of 1918, which were organised by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries with the assistance of the foreign interventionists.
- 66 This refers to the Socialist-Revolutionary bill submitted by the Minister for Agriculture S.L. Maslov to the Provisional Government a few days before the October Revolution. It was called “Rules for the Regulation by Land Committees of Land and Agricultural Relations” and was published in part in the newspaper *Dyelo Naroda* (People’s Cause), organ of the Central Committee of the SR Party, on October 18 (31), 1917.

“This bill of Maslov’s”, Lenin wrote, “is downright betrayal of the peasants by the SR Party, and signifies its complete subservience to the landed proprietors” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 26 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1964], p.228). The bill set up a special rent fund in the land committees to which state-owned and monastery lands were to be transferred. Landed proprietorship was left intact. Landowners were to turn over to the fund only the land which they previously used to rent out and the peasants were to pay the rent for the “rented” land to the landowners.

The Provisional Government arrested members of the land committees in retribution for peasant revolts and seizures of landed estates.

- 67 Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Parts I, II and III (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1963-1971).

### **Theses on the Constituent Assembly**

- 68 The text is taken from Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26.

### **The Constituent Assembly Elections & the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**

- 69 The text is taken from Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965).
- 70 *Centrists* — A term describing currents in the social-democratic parties which claimed adherence to Marxism in words but which in practice were opportunist. This trend arose in the Second International before World War I. Kautsky became the most prominent theoretician of this current.
- 71 Marx, Letter to Kugelmann (December 13, 1870), *Selected Correspondence*, p. 238.
- 72 See Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 and “The Civil War in France”, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2.
- 73 The Decree on Land was adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets on October 26 (November 8), 1917, the day following the establishment of Soviet power in Russia. The

decree abolished the landed estates and all private ownership of land, and gave the land to the peasants for their use.

### Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy & the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

74 The text is from Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28.

75 See Engels, Introduction to “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 189.

76 Marx, “The Civil War in France”, Marx & Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2.

77 Lenin is referring to the resolution of the Seventh Congress of the RCP (B), held in March 1918, on changing the name of the party and its program. (See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1965], pp. 140-141.)

78 *Gazeta Pechatnikov* (Printers’ Newspaper) — The organ of the Moscow Printers’ Union, it appeared from December 8, 1918. At that time the union came under Menshevik influence. In March 1919 the paper was shut down because of its anti-Soviet propaganda.

79 Lenin is referring to Rosa Luxemburg’s article “Der Anfang” (The Beginning) published in *Die Rote Fahne*, November 18, 1918.

### Terrorism & Communism

80 Originally published in Britain in 1922 as *The Defence of Terrorism*. Excerpted here are chapters 2 and 3. For the full text see Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1961).

81 The reference is to Trotsky’s 1918 work *The History of the Russian Revolution to Brest-Litovsk*. An English translation can be found in *The Essential Trotsky* (Unwin Books: London, 1963).

### The Program of the Communist Party of Russia

82 Included as an appendix to *The ABC of Communism*, originally published in England in 1922 in a translation from the Russian by Eden and Cedar Paul. For the full text see Bukharin & Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, 1966).

### The ABC of Communism

83 *The ABC of Communism* is a popular exposition of the 1919 program of the RCP(B) by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky. ■

# Glossary

**Axelrod, Pavel** (1850-1928) — A Menshevik leader. After the February revolution of 1917 he was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

**Augean stables** — In Greek mythology, the stables of Augeas, king of Elis, in which he kept an enormous herd of cattle, and which had not been cleaned for 30 years; Hercules cleaned them in a single day by diverting two rivers through them.

**Basle Manifesto** — An antiwar manifesto adopted unanimously by the Extraordinary Congress of the Second International held in Basle, Switzerland on November 24-25, 1912. The manifesto pointed out the predatory aims of the war the imperialists were preparing and called upon the workers of all countries to wage a resolute struggle against it. The manifesto repeated the propositions of the resolution adopted by the 1907 Stuttgart Congress, moved by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, that if an imperialist war should break out, socialists should take advantage of the economic and political crisis created by the war to prepare for a socialist revolution. When World War I broke out in 1914, the leaders of the Second International — Kautsky, Vandervelde and others — who had voted for the manifesto, consigned it to oblivion and began to support their imperialist governments.

**Bauer, Otto** (1883-1938) — Pseudonym: Heinrich Weber. A leader of the right-wing Austrian Social-Democrats and the Second International; chief theorist of so-called Austro-Marxism, which used Marxist terminology to cover the non-Marxist, reformist politics of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. In 1918-19 Bauer was minister of foreign affairs of the Austrian bourgeois republic; was active in suppressing the revolutionary actions of the Austrian working class.

**Bebel, August** (1840-1913) — With Wilhelm Liebknecht, a founder in 1869 of the German Social-Democratic Workers Party (Eisenachers); later the leading figure in the German Social-Democratic Party and a leader of the Second International. Author of *Woman and Socialism* (1883). At the turn of the century waged a struggle against reformism and revisionism but towards the end of his life he began drifting to the right, aiming his attacks not against the revisionists but against the revolutionary

left (Luxemburg, Liebknecht, etc).

**Bernstein, Eduard** (1850-1932) — A leader of the extreme opportunist wing of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the Second International; after Engels' death in 1895 came forward as chief advocate of revising Marxism to accommodate the liberal bourgeois social-reformist practice of the right-wing of the SPD.

**Bismarck, Otto** (1815-98) — Prime minister of Prussia (1862-71) and then prime minister of the German Empire from 1871 to 1890; introduced anti-socialist law in 1878.

**Blanquism** — A trend in the French socialist movement headed by the outstanding revolutionary and prominent representative of French utopian communism, Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881). The Blanquists, Lenin wrote, 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" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 10 [Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1962], p. 392). Substituting actions by a secret clique of conspirators for the work of a revolutionary party, they did not take into account the actual situation required for a victorious uprising and neglected links with the masses.

**Bolsheviks** — Majority faction of Russian Social Democratic Labor Party formed at 1903 Second Congress; led by Lenin; became separate party in 1912; led the 1917 October Revolution that established first workers' state; later changed name to Communist Party.

**Branting, Karl** (1860-1925) — A founder of the Swedish Social Democratic Party in 1889; a right-winger and advocate of socialist participation in government; prime minister 1920, 1921-23, 1924-25.

**Brentano, Lujo** (1844-1931) — German economist; an academic "socialist" who advocated "class truce"; thought that capitalist contradictions could be overcome without class struggle through reformist trade unions which would allow capitalists and workers to reconcile their differences.

**Brest-Litovsk, Treaty of** — Signed in the Belorussian town of Brest-Litovsk (Brest) on March 3, 1918 by representatives of Soviet Russia on the one side and those of Imperial Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bulgaria and Turkey on the other. It brought an end to Russia's participation in the first world war; in exchange for vast territorial and economic concessions, Germany ceased military operations against Russia. The lead-up to the treaty saw a deep controversy in the Bolshevik party with the "lefts" wanting to fight on; Lenin's view was that resistance was impossible and that the revolution had to trade space to gain time to consolidate.

**Bukharin, Nikolai** (1888-1938) — Bolshevik publicist and economist, member of the RSDLP from 1906 onwards. In 1918 when the Brest peace was discussed he headed

the group of “Left Communists”; editor of Russian Communist Party central organ *Pravda* 1919-29; succeeded Zinoviev as president of the Comintern 1926-29; after 1923 became the major spokesperson for right-wing pro-kulak policies; formed Right Opposition 1928; expelled from party 1929; executed after March 1938 frame-up trial (“trial of the 21”).

**Cadets** — The popular name for the liberal-bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party formed in Russia in 1905.

**Chernov, Viktor** (1876-1952) — Founder and most prominent leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. In May-August 1917, was agriculture minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government, pursued a policy of brutal repressions against the peasants who were seizing the landed estates. After the 1917 October Revolution, he was one of the organisers of anti-Soviet revolts; emigrated from Russia in 1920.

**Clemenceau, Georges** (1841-1929) — French politician; a radical and briefly a socialist in his youth, he became a central bourgeois leader; prime minister 1906-09 and 1917-20; chief architect of the postwar imperialist Versailles settlement.

**Condorcet, Marie** (1743-94) — French aristocrat, philosopher and mathematician; believed in idea of progress and perfectability of the human race; Girondin during French revolution; condemned by Jacobins, found dead in prison.

**Constituent Assembly** — An assembly elected by direct and universal suffrage which, it was promised by the unelected Provisional Government, would determine the permanent constitution of the Russian state. On June 14 (27), 1917, the government decided to hold elections to the Constituent Assembly on September 17 (30), 1917. In August it postponed the elections until November 12 (25).

The elections took place on the appointed date, after the October Revolution. Deputies were elected according to the lists that had been drawn up before the revolution and in keeping with the regulations set down by the Provisional Government. The elections took place at a time when the mass of the people had not yet appreciated the import of the October Revolution. This put the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries at an advantage and as a result they secured a majority of votes in areas outside the capital and industrial centres.

The convocation of the Constituent Assembly became a focus for all those opposed to the October Revolution and Soviet power. It met in Petrograd on January 5 (18), 1918. By decree of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee on January 6 (19), 1918, the Constituent Assembly was dissolved because, through the reactionary majority, it had rejected the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People submitted by the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and had refused to approve the decrees of the Second Congress of Soviets on peace,

land and the transfer of power to the soviets. Its dissolution had no impact within Russia but provoked a furious storm abroad among enemies of the revolution.

**Czechoslovak Legion** — Armed force in Russia during World War I built up by Allies from prisoners of war; 30-40,000 strong; after October 1917 revolution used as counterrevolutionary instrument; while being transported east along the Trans-Siberian railroad, they seized towns along the way (May 1918) and for a time controlled much of Siberia.

**Dan, Fyodor I.** (1871-1947) — Menshevik leader; member of presidium of Petrograd Soviet after February 1917 revolution; emigrated to Berlin 1922 where he edited *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik*; died in the US.

**Denikin, Anton** (1872-1947) — Tsarist general; during the Russian Civil War (1918-21) commander-in-chief of the anti-Soviet armed forces in the south of Russia; defeated by the Reds at Orel 1919; went into exile in 1920, living in France and the USA and writing books on his military experiences.

**Dreyfus case** — In 1894 reactionary and monarchist circles of the French military organised a frame-up against a Jewish officer of the general staff, Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935), on charges of espionage and treason. Dreyfus was sentenced by court martial to life imprisonment and was incarcerated on Devil's Island in French Guiana. The trial provided an opportunity for reactionary circles to fan anti-semitism and campaign against the republic and democratic liberties. Socialists, especially Jean Jaurès, and progressive bourgeois democrats, such as Émile Zola and Anatole France, launched a campaign to review the case. The issue divided the country and led to a bitter struggle with socialists, republicans and democrats on one side and monarchists, nationalists, clericals, anti-semites and reactionaries on the other. Dreyfus was freed from prison in 1899 and finally vindicated in 1906.

**Ebert, Friedrich** (1871-1925) — Right-wing German social-democratic leader; with Scheidemann, inspirer of social-chauvinists during the war; entered the government in last days of Hohenzollern monarchy in order to try save it and head off the developing revolution; after fall of monarchy, premier of provisional social-democratic government responsible for crushing the revolution and murdering its leaders; elected first president of the counterrevolutionary Weimar republic (1919-25).

**Engels, Frederick** (1820-95) — Co-founder with Karl Marx of the modern socialist workers' movement; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), a leader of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Germany in 1848-49, outstanding theorist and populariser of scientific socialism.

**Erfurt Program** — New party program adopted by the German Social-Democratic

Party (SPD) at its congress in 1891 in the town of Erfurt to replace the 1875 Gotha Program. It was drafted by Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky.

**Gompers, Samuel** (1850-1924) — US trade unionist, a founder of the American Federation of Labor; president from 1886 to 1924, an advocate of class collaboration with the capitalists.

**Graber, Ernst Paul** (1875-1956) — Swiss social democrat; participated in 1916 Kienthal antiwar conference and signed left statement; supported right wing in Swiss party after 1917.

**Grimm, Robert** (1881-1958) — Leader of Swiss Social Democratic Party; centrist during World War I; participated in Zimmerwald (1915) and Kienthal (1916) antiwar conferences and headed International Socialist Commission elected at Zimmerwald 1915-17.

**Haase, Hugo** (1863-1919) — A central leader of German Social-Democratic Party; during World War I, held pacifist views and headed “moderate opposition” within SPD; in March 1917 founded Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) and was its main leader; participated in provisional government set up in November 1918 after Kaiser’s abdication; resigned in December in protest at counterrevolutionary policy; assassinated October 1919 on Reichstag steps by monarchist officer.

**Henderson, Arthur** (1863-1935) — A leader of the Labour Party and the British trade union movement; head of the Labour Party in parliament 1908-10 and 1914-17; secretary of the Labour Party from 1911 to 1932; cabinet minister during World War I.

**Hilferding, Rudolf** (1877-1941) — An opportunist leader and theoretician of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the Second International; in 1907 published his famous *Finance Capital*; a Kautskyite during World War I; from 1917 a prominent figure in the centrist Independent Social-Democratic Party (USPD); when USPD split in 1920 he headed the right-wing rump which rejected uniting with the communists; rejoined the SPD in 1922; became finance minister in the Stresemann government in 1923.

**Hohenzollern** — The ruling dynasty of Brandenburg-Prussia (1415-1918) and of Germany following 1871 unification by Bismarck. Hohenzollern rule ended when 1918 revolution established a republic and sent Kaiser Wilhelm II into exile in Netherlands.

**Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD)** — Formed in April 1917 as a pacifist breakaway from the pro-war SPD. Among its leaders were Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky. At its founding it had 120,000 members. It participated

in the bourgeois-republican provisional government headed by SPD leader Freidrich Ebert in November–December 1918. It attained a maximum membership of 750,000 by November 1919. In December 1920, following the party's Halle Congress in October, the USPD majority fused with the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), while the minority retained the party name until rejoining the SPD in 1922.

**Jesuits of Paraguay** — A reference to the theocratic state set up by the Jesuits in South America in the 16th and 17th centuries; it was mainly situated in what is now Paraguay.

**Kaledin, Alexei M.** (1861-1918) — Tsarist general; chief of Don Cossacks in 1917; raised revolt against Soviets in early 1918 but was defeated by Red Army and defections among Cossacks; committed suicide.

**Kant, Immanuel** (1724-1804) — Founder of German classical philosophy; an idealist; advocated theory of ethics based on a universal moral law, the categorical imperative.

**Kautsky, Karl** (1854-1938) — One of the leaders and theoreticians of the German Social Democrats and the Second International; in 1914, when World War I broke out, adopted a pacifist position; chief ideologist of centrism (Kautskyism), an opportunist trend that used Marxist terminology to justify the class-collaborationist reformism of the SPD; founding member of the centrist Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) in 1917; an undersecretary in Germany foreign ministry after November 1918 revolution; opponent of the 1917 October Revolution; rejoined the SPD in 1922.

**Kerensky, Aleksandr** (1881-1970) — A leading right-wing figure in the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party; during World War I he was a rabid social-chauvinist; after the February Revolution of 1917 he was successively, minister of justice, of war and then prime minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government (holding this office at the time of the October 1917 Bolshevik insurrection); emigrated from Russia in 1918.

**Kolchak, Aleksandr** (1873-1920) — Tsarist admiral, monarchist, head of the White armies in Siberia and “supreme ruler” of the White forces in 1918-19; tried and executed after his forces were defeated by the Red Army.

**Kolegayev, A.L.** (1887-1937) — Left SR leader; member of Council of People's Commissars December 1917-March 1918; opposed July 1918 Left SR uprising; member of Revolutionary Communists who later fused with Bolsheviks.

**Kornilov, Lavr** (1870-1918) — Tsarist general, monarchist; supreme commander-in-chief of the Russian army in 1917.

Relying on the top army officers, the conspirators planned to use officer cadet and

Cossack units to seize Petrograd, crush the Bolshevik Party, dissolve the soviets and establish military dictatorship in the country. The workers of Petrograd and revolutionary soldiers and sailors rose up in response to the appeal of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and crushed Kornilov's revolt. Subsequently the Bolsheviks' popularity grew massively, their influence in the soviets increased and they again raised the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!"

Popular pressure compelled the Provisional Government to order the arrest of Kornilov and his associates and bring them to court. Kornilov was imprisoned but managed to flee to the Don where he organised and subsequently commanded the Whiteguard "Volunteer Army"; he was killed in battle at Yekaterinodar (Krasnodar).

**Krupp, Friedrich Alfred** (1812-87) — German steel and arms magnate; founder of family industrial and financial group.

**Lafargue, Paul** (1842-1911) — Prominent leader of French workers movement; member of the General Council of the First International; a founder the French Workers Party (1879); collaborated closely with Marx and Engels; husband of Marx's daughter Laura.

**Lenin, V.I.** (1870-1924) — Founder and leader of the Bolshevik Party; principal leader of the October 1917 Russian revolution; founder of the Communist International; outstanding Marxist theorist of 20th century.

**Liebkecht, Karl** (1871-1919) — A leader of the left wing of German social-democracy; during World War I became a symbol of revolutionary opposition to the war; with Rosa Luxemburg and others helped organise and lead the Spartacus League; jailed in 1916 for antiwar activity; after November 1918 revolution in Germany, together with Luxemburg, headed the newly formed Communist Party of Germany; a leader of the Berlin workers' uprising in January 1919, he was brutally killed by counterrevolutionary officers of the social-democratic government on January 15.

**Lloyd-George, David** (1863-1945) — British Liberal politician from Wales, famous for his flamboyance and demagogy. Prominent in wartime governments, prime minister 1916-1922. After the war he co-authored the Versailles Treaty.

**Longuet, Jean** (1876-1938) — Prominent figure in the Second International, one of the leaders of the centrist wing in the French Socialist Party. During World War I, Longuet and his followers pursued a conciliatory policy toward the social-chauvinists, rejected revolutionary struggle and advocated "defence of the fatherland". After the October Revolution, the Longuetists declared that they supported the dictatorship of the proletariat but in practice they were against it; after the 1920 Tours congress where the communists gained a majority for joining the Third International, he split; later rejoined Second International.

**Ludendorff, Erich von** (1865-1937) — World War I German military leader; gave support to Hitler.

**Luxemburg, Rosa** (1871-1919) — Outstanding figure in the international working-class movement; author of a number of important works on economic theory, politics and culture; helped initiate Polish social-democratic movement; from 1897 actively participated in the German social-democratic movement and played a leading role in the struggle against Bernstein and the revisionists; from 1910 led the revolutionary opposition within German Social-Democratic Party; jailed February 1915 but played key role in formation of the Spartacus League; from prison authored the famous antiwar “Junius” pamphlet; freed by the 1918 revolution, she was a founder of the Communist Party of Germany and the editor of its paper, *Die Rote Fahne*; in January 1919 she was arrested and murdered by counterrevolutionary troops of the right-wing social-democratic government.

**Martov, Julius** (1873-1923) — A leader of the RSDLP and of the Mensheviks after 1903; after the February 1917 revolution he led the centrist “Menshevik Internationalist” group; opposed both Bolshevik revolution and counterrevolutionary White Guards; led Menshevik legal opposition to Bolshevik government 1918-20; emigrated from Russia in 1920 for Berlin where he founded the main publication of the Mensheviks in emigration, *Sotsialisticheskyy Vestnik*.

**Marx, Karl** (1818-83) — Co-founder with Frederick Engels of scientific socialism; leader of the Communist League 1847-52; co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*; central leader of the International Working Men’s Association (the First International) 1864-76; author of *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*.

**Maslov, Semyon L.** (1873-?) — Right SR; minister of agriculture in bourgeois Provisional Government from September 1917.

**Mensheviks** — Literally “of the minority”; originated in split at 1903 2nd congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in opposition to the Bolsheviks (literally, “of the majority”) led by Lenin. Afterwards, it was used to designate the pseudo-Marxist petty-bourgeois reformist current within the Russian socialist movement. The Mensheviks claimed allegiance to Marxism, but believed that the working class should combine with the liberal bourgeoisie to overthrow Tsarism and establish a bourgeois “democratic republic”. In 1912 the Bolshevik faction led by Lenin expelled the Mensheviks from the RSDLP. They supported and participated in the bourgeois Provisional Government in 1917. During the civil war that followed the Bolshevik-led overthrow of the Provisional Government by the soviets (councils) of workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ deputies in November 1917, one wing of the Mensheviks supported the counterrevolutionary White armies.

- Milyukov, Pavel N.** (1849-1943) — Russian historian and politician; leader of the Russian liberal bourgeoisie and its party, the Constitutional Democrats (Cadets); in 1917 he was minister of foreign affairs in the Provisional Government (until May) where he tried to continue the foreign policy of tsarism; after the October Revolution he emigrated to Paris where he edited the Cadet journal *Poslednie Novosti*.
- Muravyov, M.A.** (?-1918) — Former tsarist military officer; member of Left SR party; commander of Soviet troops on the Eastern Front facing the Czechoslovaks. In connection with the revolt of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in July 1918, Muravyov was to raise a revolt against Soviet power, join forces with the Czechs and march on Moscow. On July 10, he arrived in Simbirsk and stated that he did not recognise the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty and declared war on Germany. He sent messages to counterrevolutionary and interventionist forces to march on Moscow. But the Soviet authorities were able to win over troops which had initially backed him out of confusion; he was killed resisting arrest at a meeting of the executive committee of the Simbirsk soviet on July 11.
- Naine, Charles** (1874-1926) — Leading Swiss social-democrat; member of International Socialist Committee elected at Zimmerwald antiwar conference (1915); right-winger in Swiss party after 1917.
- Napoleon III** (Louis Napoleon) (1808-73) — Nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte; following 1848 revolutionary events, became president later that year; carried out a coup d'état in 1851 and assumed title of emperor; based on financial and industrial bourgeoisie, he carried out an anti-labour policy at home and supported reaction abroad; declared war on Prussia in 1870 but was crushed, especially at battle of Sedan; his defeat led to formation of republic.
- Nobs, Ernst** (1886-1957) — Leading Swiss social-democrat; supported left at Kienthal antiwar conference (1916); centrist in 1917; right-winger after 1920.
- Noske, Gustav** (1868-1946) — A right-wing leader of the German Social-Democratic Party; 1919-20 war minister in the SPD-led provisional government; organiser of the slaughter of Berlin workers and the assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.
- October Revolution** — See *Revolution, October*.
- Paris Commune** — The first example of a workers' government. It emerged out of the defeat of the imperial regime of Napoleon III in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. The radicalised workers held power in the city from March 18-May 28, 1871. The Commune was brutally crushed: tens of thousands of workers were massacred and many more suffered harsh repression at the hands of the victorious bourgeois

reaction.

**Plekhanov, Georgy** (1856-1918) — First propagandist of Marxism in Russia. After the 1903 Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, he took a conciliatory stand in the struggle between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions, and afterward joined the opportunist Mensheviks. During the World War I he adopted a national-chauvinist position. After the February 1917 revolution he headed the extreme right-wing of the Mensheviks and opposed the Bolshevik-led proletarian revolution of October 1917.

**Potresov, Aleksandr** (1869-1934) — An early Russian Marxist and after 1903 a leading Menshevik; social-chauvinist during World War I; emigrated from Russia after October 1917 Revolution.

**Preobrazhensky, Evgeny A.** (1886-1937) — Old Bolshevik; “Left Communist during Brest-Litovsk struggle; early supporter of Left Opposition; author of *From NEP to Socialism* and *The New Economics*; capitulated to Stalin 1929; named as a defendant in August 1936 show trial but did not appear; assumed executed 1937.

**Proshyan, P.P.** (1883-1918) — Left SR leader; member of Council of People’s Commissars in Bolshevik-Left SR government set up in December 1917; participated in Left SR revolt in July 1918. Despite this Lenin wrote a very positive obituary article in December 1918, “In Memory of Comrade Proshyan”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36 (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1966).

**Proudhon, Pierre-Joseph** (1809-65) — French economist and ideologist of petty-bourgeois socialism. Author of *What Is Property?* (1840) and *The Philosophy of Poverty* (1846). An opponent of Marxist communism, he opposed strikes and participation in the political struggle, advocating instead various schemes (such as a people’s bank) to overcome the contradictions of capitalist society.

**Renaudel, Pierre** (1871-1935) — Originally a leader of the left-wing of the French Socialist Party who defected to the party’s right-wing at the beginning of World War I; editor of the SP’s daily paper, *l’Humanité* 1914-18; part of right-wing split in 1920 that retained name SP.

**Revolution, 1848** (France) — The February Revolution overthrew the regime of French king Louis Philippe which represented, not the whole capitalist class, but the financial aristocracy. The Paris workers played the main role in the insurrection.

**Revolution, Finnish** (1918) — The revolution began in the middle of January 1918 in the southern industrial districts of the country. On January 15 (28) the Finnish Red Guard captured the capital, Helsinki and the bourgeois government of Pehr Svinhufvud was overthrown. The workers seized power and set up a revolutionary government, the Council of People’s Representatives based on workers’ councils.

Among the most important decisions of the new government were the adoption of a law on the transfer without compensation of the lands tilled by the peasants to their ownership, exemption from taxation of the poor sections of the population, expropriation of enterprises whose owners had fled the country, establishment of state control over private banks (their functions were transferred to the state bank).

On March 1, 1918, a treaty was signed in Petrograd between the Finnish Socialist Workers Republic and the RSFSR.

However the revolution was victorious only in the towns and countryside of the south of Finland. The Finnish social-democratic leaders (such as O. Kuusinen) were not really prepared for an all-out struggle. Furthermore, under the terms of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty, the Russian Red forces were obliged to withdraw and could no longer render direct aid. The Finnish bourgeoisie had been preparing for civil war for a long time and had organised special military units.

The Svinhufvud government established itself in the north and appealed to the German government for assistance. As a result of the intervention of German armed forces and the development of Finnish counterrevolutionary armed forces led by Carl Mannerheim, a former general in the tsarist army, the revolution was defeated in May 1918 after a bitter civil war. A White terror was imposed and tens of thousands were massacred; about a quarter of the Finnish proletariat was killed or jailed.

**Revolution, German** (1918-19) — In September 1918 the German military front in the West collapsed; in October sailors in Kiel mutinied; workers' and soldiers' councils spread across country; the SPD took over the government but plotted to contain the revolutionary upsurge; in January Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered by counterrevolutionary troops.

**Revolution, Great French** (1789-94) — The development of the bourgeoisie during the 1700s culminated in the overthrow of feudalism and the absolute monarchy; the revolution achieved its greatest scope and intensity in 1793 under the revolutionary dictatorship of Robespierre and the Jacobins; showing tremendous energy it managed to defeat all internal and external enemies; in July (Thermidor) 1794 Robespierre was overthrown and executed and a more conservative bourgeois regime (the Directory) was established.

**Revolution, October** (Russia) — The October 25-26 (November 7-8), 1917 insurrection which overthrew the capitalist Provisional Government and brought to power the Soviet regime led by the Bolsheviks.

**Richter, Eugen** (1838-1906) — German bourgeois liberal politician.

**Rodbertus, Karl Johann** (1805-75) — German economist; held socialist but non-

revolutionary views. Engels analyses Rodbertus' ideas in his preface to the first German edition of Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1955).

**Romanov** — The ruling dynasty of Russia 1613-1917; Nicholas II (1868-1918) was the last Russian tsar; reigned from 1894 until deposed by February 1917 revolution; executed with family by Red forces at Ekaterinburg.

**Rothschilds** — Dynasty of bankers who owned banks in many European countries.

**Savinkov, Boris** (1879-1925) — Began as Russian revolutionary; member of Socialist-Revolutionary Party; from 1903 directed SR terrorist organisation; chauvinist during World War I; an opponent of Bolsheviks and advocate of dictatorial authority; took part in Kornilov's revolt; after October Revolution played active role in White counterrevolution; later returned to Russia illegally and was arrested in 1924; sentenced to 10 years jail, he suicided in 1925.

**Scheidemann, Philip** (1865-1939) — A leader of the right-wing of German social-democracy; rabid patriot during war; entered last government under monarchy to try and stabilise the situation; member of SPD-led provisional government 1918-19; one of the organisers of the brutal suppression of the German working-class movement in early 1919; chancellor 1919.

**Socialist-Revolutionary Party** — SRs or Social Revolutionaries; founded in 1900; emerged as the political expression of the earlier Narodnik (populist) currents. They advocated a revolution to overthrow Tsarism and achieve "socialism", by which they meant not the abolition of capitalist ownership of industry by the proletariat but the "socialisation" (egalitarian distribution) of land by the labouring classes in general (wage workers, the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the peasantry). The Bolsheviks described the SRs as petty-bourgeois democrats expressing the outlook and interests of the peasantry. The right-wing of the SRs, which oriented toward an alliance with the liberal bourgeois Constitutional Democrats (Cadets), was led by Aleksandr Kerensky, who became head of the landlord-capitalist Provisional Government in 1917. Toward the end of 1917 the SR Party split into pro- and anti-Bolshevik wings. The Left SRs supported the October Revolution and participated in the Soviet government until July 1918 when they organised an attempted coup against the Bolsheviks. During the Russian Civil War both wings of the SRs aligned themselves with the monarchist-led White armies against the Soviet workers' and peasants' republic.

**Sombart, Werner** (1863-1941) — German economist; tried to refute Marx's labour theory of value.

**Soviets** — The word for "council" in Russian; first arose in the 1905 Russian revolution.

In 1917 they were the organs of working class and popular democracy. Under the leadership of the Bolsheviks they were the vehicle of the revolutionary overturn and the basis of the new government.

**Spartacists** — Originated as a revolutionary current in the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) during World War I, opposing the SPD leadership's pro-war position. Among its leaders were Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Leo Jogiches and Clara Zetkin.

In April 1915, Luxemburg and Mehring started publication of the magazine *Die Internationale*. In 1916 the *Internationale* group began to publish illegally and circulate "political letters" over the name Spartacus and assumed the name of the Spartacus group. On November 11, 1918 the group constituted itself as an independent organisation, the Spartacus League, operating as public faction within the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD). On January 1, 1919 the Berlin-based Spartacus League fused with other revolutionary groups in Germany to form the Communist Party (KPD). In January 1919 the best known leaders of the Spartacists, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, were arrested and murdered by troops of the SPD-led provisional government.

**Spartacus** (?-71 BC) — Thracian-born slave and gladiator; led biggest slave revolt in the history of Rome (73-71 BC); won numerous victories against Rome but finally defeated by Crassus; victors carried out mass crucifixions.

**Stein, A.** (1881-1948) — Pseudonym of Rubenstein; Menshevik; lived permanently in Germany; in December 1917 wrote articles calling for an anti-Bolshevik campaign.

**Struve, Pyotr** (1870-1944) — Russian bourgeois economist and liberal publicist. In the 1890s he was a leading representative of the reformist "legal Marxism", the Russian variety of Bernsteinian reformism; leading member of the liberal-monarchist Constitutional Democratic Party (Cadets) from its inception in 1905; after Bolshevik revolution, a member of the Wrangel counterrevolutionary government.

**Tolstoy, Leo** (1828-1910) — Famous Russian writer; author of *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*; advocated extreme ascetic and pacifist ideas in later life.

**Tories** — See *Whigs and Tories*.

**Trotsky, Leon** (1879-1940) — A leading member of the RSDLP. He aligned himself with the Mensheviks in 1903-04, after which he took an independent position within the RSDLP. In the 1905 revolution he became chairman of the St. Petersburg Soviet. He played a central role in organising the August 1912 conference of anti-Bolshevik Russian Social-Democrats in Vienna that set up the Organising Committee, which soon became dominated by the Mensheviks. During the first world war he took an anti-war position but opposed the Bolshevik party's policy of

calling for an organisational break with the Kautskyite “Centre” current in the socialist movement. In July 1917 he joined the Bolsheviks and became a central leader. Chief organiser of October insurrection; first commissar of foreign affairs after revolution; leader of Red Army (1918-25). After Lenin’s death, led communist opposition to Stalinism; exiled in 1929; founded Fourth International in 1938; assassinated in Mexico by Stalinist agent August 21, 1940.

**Tugan-Baranovsky, Mikhail** (1865-1919) — Russian bourgeois economist and prominent “legal Marxist”, subsequently a leader of the liberal-monarchist Constitutional-Democratic Party.

**Turati, Filippo** (1857-1932) — A founder of the Italian Socialist Party (1892); avowed reformist; opposed Russian Revolution and Comintern; led right-wing split away from SP in 1922.

**Versaillais** — The supporters of the bourgeois-republican government set up in Versailles after the popular overthrow of bourgeois rule in Paris in March 1870 and the establishment of the revolutionary Paris Commune (March 18-May 28, 1871). Its leader was the historian and monarchist politician, Adolphe Thiers (1797-1877). Following its military victory over the Commune, the Versaillais massacred between 20,000 and 30,000 Communards and subjected thousands more to prison and deportation.

**Vogel, First Lieutenant** — A leader of the counterrevolutionary military unit which murdered Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin on January 15, 1919.

**Webb, Beatrice** (1858-1943) and her husband, **Sidney** (1859-1947) — founders of the liberal bourgeois Fabian Society and authors of numerous books on the history of the English labour movement.

**Weber, Heinrich** — See *Bauer, Otto*.

**Weitling, Wilhelm** (1808-71) — German utopian communist, wrote *Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom* (1842). He believed communist society could be established by a small conspiratorial organisation, irrespective of actual social and economic conditions and the consciousness of the masses.

**Whigs and Tories** — Political parties in England which arose in the seventies and eighties of the 17th century. The Whig party voiced the interests of financial circles and the trading bourgeoisie as well as of that part of the aristocracy that had become bourgeois. The Whigs were the starting point of the Liberal Party. The Tory party represented the big landowners and upper strata of the Anglican Church; they defended feudal traditions and waged a struggle against liberal and progressive demands. Subsequently they were the starting point of the Conservative Party. Governmental power was alternately in the hands of the Whigs and the Tories.

**White guards** — Name applied to counterrevolutionary forces in Russian civil war; it derived from the White Guard organised in Finland in 1918 to combat the revolutionary forces there. White was the colour associated with monarchy ever since the French revolution; the Bourbon flag was white.

**Wilhelm** — See *Hohenzollern*.

**Zax, G.D.** (1882-1937) — A leader of Left SRs; member of Petrograd Military Committee 1917; opposed Left SR uprising in July 1918; helped organise Narodnik-Communists who fused with Bolsheviks in November 1918.

**Zimmerwald Conference** — Called on the initiative of the Swiss and Italian socialist parties to bring together the antiwar elements of the European socialist movement, it was held in the Swiss mountain village of Zimmerwald on September 5-8, 1915. It was the first international gathering of socialists during the war.

A struggle developed at the conference between the revolutionary internationalists headed by Lenin and the centrist, Kautskian majority. Lenin organised a “Zimmerwald left” group, but even in this only the Bolshevik Party held a consistent Marxist position.

Overall, the conference decisions were vague and semi-pacifist in character. The conference adopted a manifesto, drafted by Trotsky, which recognised that the world war was an imperialist one; it condemned the “socialists” who had voted war credits and had taken part in bourgeois governments; it called on the European workers to launch a struggle against the war and for a peace without annexations or indemnities.

For the significance of the Zimmerwald Conference see Lenin’s articles “The First Step” and “Revolutionary Marxists at the International Socialist Conference, September 5-8, 1915” (*Collected Works*, Vol. 21).

**Zinoviev, Gregory** (1883-1936) — Old Bolshevik; head of Comintern 1919-26; allied with Kamenev and Stalin against Trotsky 1923-25; formed United Opposition with Kamenev and Trotsky 1926-27; capitulated to Stalin 1928; executed following August 1936 Moscow show trial (“trial of the 16”). ■

**A radical democratisation of society is at the very heart of the socialist project. Real democracy is impossible in a society divided into rich and poor, between a tiny minority who own society's means of production and the vast majority forced to work for the capitalists in order to live.**

**In this collection of writings, V.I. Lenin, the founder and leader of the Bolshevik Party and the leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, explains the class basis of democracy under capitalism and its severe inherent limitations. Lenin's writings centre on his post-revolution polemic with Karl Kautsky, the one-time Marxist authority who opposed the revolution and the soviet form of power associated with it. An introduction by Doug Lorimer and several appendices round out this illuminating volume.**

***Resistance books***