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Lenin

LETTERS ON TACTICS



Workers of All Countries, Unite!

V. I. Lenin

Letters on Tactics

A Collection of Articles and Letters



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LETTERS ON TACTICS FOREWORD

On April 4, 1917, I had occasion to make a report on the subject indicated in the title, first, at a meeting of Bolsheviks in Petrograd. These were delegates to the All-Russia Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who had to leave for their homes and therefore could not allow me to postpone it. After the meeting, the chairman, Comrade G. Zinoviev, asked me on behalf of the whole assembly to repeat my report immediately at a joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates,¹ who wished to discuss the question of unifying the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Difficult though it was for me immediately to repeat my report, I felt that I had no right to refuse once this was demanded of me by *my comrades-in-ideas* as well as by the Mensheviks, who, because of their impending departure, really could not grant me a delay.

In making my report, I read the theses which were published in No. 26 of *Pravda*,² on April 7, 1917. *

Both the theses and my report gave rise to differences of opinion among the Bolsheviks themselves and the editors of *Pravda*. After a number of consultations, we unanimously concluded that it would be advisable *openly* to discuss our differences, and thus provide material for the All-Russia Conference of our Party (the Russian Social-Democratic

* I reprint these theses together with the brief comment from the same issue of *Pravda* as an appendix to this letter. (See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution", pp. 19-26.—*Ed.*)

Labour Party, united under the Central Committee) which is to meet in Petrograd on April 20, 1917.

Complying with this decision concerning a discussion, I am publishing the following *letters* in which I do not claim to have made an *exhaustive* study of the question, but wish merely to outline the principal arguments, which are especially essential for the *practical* tasks of the working-class movement.

FIRST LETTER
ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation. We Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement, which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation to policy.

"Our theory is not a dogma, but a guide to action", Marx and Engels always said, rightly ridiculing the mere memorising and repetition of "formulas", that at best are capable only of marking out *general* tasks, which are necessarily modifiable by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *period* of the historical process.

What, then, are the clearly established objective *facts* which the party of the revolutionary proletariat must now be guided by in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

Both in my first *Letter from Afar* ("The First Stage of the First Revolution") published in *Pravda* Nos. 14 and 15, March 21 and 22, 1917, and in my theses, I define "the specific feature of the present situation in Russia" as a period of *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second. I therefore considered the basic slogan, the "task of the day" at *this* moment to be: "Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution" (*Pravda* No. 15).*

* See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 306-07.—Ed.

What, then, is the first stage?

It is the passing of state power to the bourgeoisie.

Before the February-March revolution of 1917, state power in Russia was in the hands of one old class, namely, the feudal landed nobility, headed by Nicholas Romanov.

After the revolution, the power is in the hands of a *different* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

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

To this extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia is *completed*.

But at this point we hear a clamour of protest from people who readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks". Didn't we always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"? Is the agrarian revolution, which is also a bourgeois-democratic revolution, completed? Is it not a fact, on the contrary, that it has *not even* started?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *on the whole* have been confirmed by history; but *concretely* things have worked out *differently*; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected.

To ignore or overlook this fact would mean taking after those "old Bolsheviks" who more than once already have played so regrettable a role in the history of our Party by reiterating formulas senselessly *learned by rote* instead of *studying* the specific features of the new and living reality.

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" has *already* become a reality* in the Russian revolution, for this "formula" envisages only a *relation of classes*, and not a *concrete political institution implementing* this relation, this co-operation. "The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies"—there you have the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" already accomplished in reality.

This formula is already antiquated. Events have moved it from the realm of formulas into the realm of reality,

* In a certain form and to a certain extent.

clothed it with flesh and bone, concretised it and *thereby* modified it.

A new and different task now faces us: to effect a split *within* this dictatorship between the proletarian elements (the anti-defencist, internationalist, "communist" elements, who stand for a transition to the commune) and the *small-proprietor* or *petty-bourgeois* elements (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, the Socialist-Revolutionaries³ and the other revolutionary defencists, who are opposed to moving towards the commune and are in favour of "supporting" the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

The person who *now* speaks only of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is behind the times, consequently, he has in effect *gone over* to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle; that person should be consigned to the archive of "Bolshevik" pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already been realised, but in a highly original manner, and with a number of extremely important modifications. I shall deal with them separately in one of my next letters. For the present, it is essential to grasp the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognisance of real life, of the true facts of reality, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only comes near to embracing life in all its complexity.

"Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."⁴

To deal with the question of "completion" of the bourgeois revolution *in the old way* is to sacrifice living Marxism to the dead letter.

According to the old way of thinking, the rule of the bourgeoisie could and should be *followed* by the rule of the proletariat and the peasantry, by their dictatorship.

In real life, however, things have *already* turned out *differently*; there has been an extremely original, novel and unprecedented *interlacing of the one with the other*. We have side by side, existing together, simultaneously, *both* the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) *and* a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of

the proletariat and the peasantry, which is *voluntarily* ceding power to the bourgeoisie, voluntarily making itself an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that actually, in Petrograd, the power is in the hands of the workers and soldiers; the new government is *not* using and cannot use violence against them, because *there is no police, no army standing apart from the people, no officialdom standing all-powerful above the people.* This is a fact, the kind of fact that is characteristic of a state of the Paris Commune⁵ type. This fact does not fit into the old schemes. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, instead of reiterating the new meaningless words about a "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" *in general.*

To throw more light on this question let us approach it from another angle.

A Marxist must not abandon the ground of careful analysis of class relations. The bourgeoisie is in power. But is not the mass of the peasants *also* a bourgeoisie, only of a different social stratum, of a different kind, of a different character? Whence does it follow that *this* stratum *cannot* come to power, thus "completing" the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?

This is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

My reply is that it is quite possible. But, in assessing a given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not* from what is possible, but from what is real.

And the reality reveals the *fact* that freely elected soldiers' and peasants' deputies are freely joining the second, parallel government, and are freely supplementing, developing and completing it. And, just as freely, they are *surrendering* power to the bourgeoisie—a fact which does not in the least "contravene" the theory of Marxism, for we have always known and repeatedly pointed out that the bourgeoisie maintains itself in power not only by force but also by virtue of the lack of class-consciousness and organisation, the routinism and downtrodden state of the masses.

In view of this present-day reality, it is simply ridiculous to turn one's back on the fact and talk about "possibilities".

Possibly the peasantry may seize all the land and all the power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from confining myself to the present, I definitely and clearly formu-

late the agrarian programme, taking into account the *new* phenomenon, i.e., the deeper cleavage between the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants on the one hand, and the peasant proprietors on the other.

But there is also another possibility; it is possible that the peasants will take the advice of the petty-bourgeois party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, which has yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie, has adopted a defencist stand, and which advises waiting for the Constituent Assembly, although not even the date of its convocation has yet been fixed.*

It is possible that the peasants will *maintain* and prolong their deal with the bourgeoisie, a deal which they have now concluded through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies not only in form, but in fact.

Many things are possible. It would be a great mistake to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian programme. But it would be no less a mistake to forget the *reality*, which reveals the *fact* that an *agreement*, or—to use a more exact, less legal, but more class-economic term—*class collaboration* exists between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry separates from the bourgeoisie, seizes the land and power despite the bourgeoisie, that will be a new stage in the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and that matter will be dealt with separately.

A Marxist who, in view of the possibility of such a future stage, were to forget his duties in the present, when the peasantry is in agreement with the bourgeoisie, would turn petty bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat confidence in the petty bourgeoisie ("this petty bourgeoisie, this peasantry, must separate from the bourgeoisie while the bourgeois-democratic revolution is still on"). Because of the "possibility" of so pleasing and sweet a future, in which the peasantry would not be the tail of

* Lest my words be misinterpreted, I shall say at once that I am positively in favour of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants *immediately* taking over *all* the land; but they should *themselves* observe the strictest order and discipline, not permit the slightest damage to machines, structures, or livestock, and in no case disorganise agriculture and grain production, but rather *develop* them, for the soldiers need *twice* as much bread, and the people must not be allowed to starve.

the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis, and Steklovs would *not* be an appendage of the bourgeois government—because of the “possibility” of so pleasing a future, he would be forgetting *the unpleasant present*, in which the peasantry still forms the tail of the bourgeoisie, and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Social-Democrats have not yet given up their role as an appendage of the bourgeois government, as “His Majesty” Lvov’s Opposition.⁶

This hypothetical person would resemble a sweetish Louis Blanc, or a sugary Kautskyite, but certainly not a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to arrive at the socialist revolution by “skipping” the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which is not yet completed and has not yet exhausted the peasant movement?

I might be incurring this danger if I said: “No Tsar, but a *workers’* government.”⁷ But I did *not* say that, I said something else. I said that there *can be no* government (barring a bourgeois government) in Russia *other than* that of the Soviets of Workers’, Agricultural Labourers’, Soldiers’, and Peasants’ Deputies. I said that power in Russia now can pass from Guchkov and Lvov *only* to these Soviets. And in these Soviets, as it happens, it is the peasants, the soldiers, i.e., petty bourgeoisie, who preponderate, to use a scientific, Marxist term, a class characterisation, and not a common, man-in-the-street, professional characterisation.

In my theses, I absolutely ensured myself against skipping over the peasant movement, which has not outlived itself, or the petty-bourgeois movement in general, against any *playing* at “seizure of power” by a workers’ government, against any kind of Blanquist adventurism⁸; for I pointedly referred to the experience of the Paris Commune. And this experience, as we know, and as Marx proved at length in 1871 and Engels in 1891,⁹ absolutely excludes Blanquism, absolutely ensures the direct, immediate and unquestionable rule of the *majority* and the activity of the masses only to the extent that the majority itself acts *consciously*.

In the theses, I very definitely reduced the question to one of a *struggle for influence within* the Soviets of Workers’, Agricultural Labourers’, Peasants’, and Soldiers’ Deputies. To leave no shadow of doubt on this score, I *twice* empha-

sised in the theses the need for patient and persistent "explanatory" work "adapted to the *practical* needs of the masses".

Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, like Mr. Plekhanov, may shout about anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who want to think and learn cannot fail to understand that Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets are *admittedly* the direct and immediate organisation of the *majority* of the people. Work confined to a struggle for influence *within* these Soviets cannot, simply cannot, stray into the swamp of Blanquism. Nor can it stray into the swamp of anarchism, for anarchism denies *the need for a state and state power* in the period of *transition* from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat, whereas I, with a precision that precludes any possibility of misinterpretation, *advocate* the need for a state in this period, although, in accordance with Marx and the lessons of the Paris Commune, I advocate not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov, in his newspaper *Yedinstvo*,¹⁰ shouts with all his might that this is anarchism, he is merely giving further proof of his break with Marxism. Challenged by me in *Pravda* (No. 26) to tell us what Marx and Engels taught on the subject in 1871, 1872 and 1875,* Mr. Plekhanov can only preserve silence on the question at issue and shout out abuse after the manner of the enraged bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has *absolutely* failed to understand the Marxist doctrine of the state. Incidentally, the germs of this lack of understanding are also to be found in his German pamphlet on anarchism.¹¹

* * *

Now let us see how Comrade Y. Kamenev, in *Pravda* No. 27, formulates his "disagreements" with my theses and with the views expressed above. This will help us to grasp them more clearly.

* See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution", p. 26.—Ed.

"As for Comrade Lenin's general scheme," writes Comrade Kamenev, "it appears to us unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is *completed*, and builds on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution."

There are two big mistakes here.

First. The question of "completion" of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is *stated* wrongly. The question is put in an abstract, simple, so to speak one-colour, way, which does *not* correspond to the objective reality. To put the question *this way*, to ask *now* "whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed" and say *no more*, is to prevent oneself from seeing the exceedingly complex reality, which is at least two-coloured. This is in theory. In practice, it means surrendering helplessly to *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*.

Indeed, reality shows us *both* the passing of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie (a "completed" bourgeois-democratic revolution of the usual type) and, side by side with the real government, the existence of a parallel government which represents the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry". This "second-government" has *itself* ceded the power to the bourgeoisie, has chained *itself* to the bourgeois government.

Is this reality covered by Comrade Kamenev's old-Bolshevik formula, which says that "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed"?

It is not. The formula is obsolete. It is no good at all. It is dead. And it is no use trying to revive it.

Second. A practical question. Who knows whether it is still possible at present for a *special* "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry", *detached* from the bourgeois government, to emerge in Russia? Marxist tactics cannot be based on the unknown.

But *if* this is still possible, then there is one, and only one, way towards it, namely, an immediate, resolute, and irrevocable separation of the proletarian communist elements from the petty-bourgeois elements.

Why?

Because the entire petty bourgeoisie has, not by chance but of necessity, turned towards chauvinism (=defencism), towards "support" of the bourgeoisie, towards dependence

on it, towards the *fear* of having to do without it, etc., etc.

How can the petty bourgeoisie be "pushed" into power, if even now it can take the power, but *does not want to*?

This can be done only by separating the proletarian, the Communist, party, by waging a proletarian class struggle *free from* the timidity of those petty bourgeois. Only the consolidation of the proletarians who are free from the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in deed and not only in word can make the ground so hot under the feet of the petty bourgeoisie that it will be *obliged* under certain circumstances to take the power; it is even within the bounds of possibility that Guchkov and Milyukov—again under certain circumstances—will be for giving full and sole power to Chkheidze, Tsereteli, the S.R.s, and Steklov, since, after all, these are "*defencists*".

To separate the proletarian elements of the Soviets (i.e., the proletarian, Communist, party) from the petty-bourgeois elements right now, immediately and irrevocably, is to give correct expression to the interests of the movement in *either* of two possible events: in the event that Russia will yet experience a special "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" independent of the bourgeoisie, and in the event that the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to tear itself away from the bourgeoisie and will oscillate eternally (that is, until socialism is established) between us and it.

To be guided in one's activities merely by the simple formula, "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed", is like taking it upon oneself to guarantee that the petty bourgeoisie is definitely capable of being independent of the bourgeoisie. To do so is to throw oneself at the given moment on the mercy of the petty bourgeoisie.

Incidentally, in connection with the "formula" of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, it is worth mentioning that, in *Two Tactics* (July 1905), I made a point of emphasising (*Twelve Years*, p. 435) this:

"Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy, and privilege... Its future is the struggle

against private property, the struggle of the wage-worker against the employer, the struggle for socialism. . . .”*

Comrade Kamenev’s mistake is that even in 1917 he sees only *the past* of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. As a matter of fact its *future* has already begun, for the interests and policies of the wage-worker and the petty proprietor have *actually* diverged already, even in such an important question as that of “defencism”, that of the attitude towards the imperialist war.

This brings me to the second mistake in Comrade Kamenev’s argument quoted above. He criticises me, saying that my scheme “builds” on “the immediate transformation of this [bourgeois-democratic] revolution into a socialist revolution”.

This is incorrect. I not only do not “build” on the “immediate transformation” of our revolution into a *socialist* one, but I actually warn against it, when in Thesis No. 8 I state: “It is *not* our *immediate* task to ‘introduce’ socialism. . . .”**

Is it not clear that no person who builds on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a socialist revolution could be opposed to the immediate task of introducing socialism?

Moreover, even a “commune state” (i.e., a state organised along the lines of the Paris Commune) *cannot* be introduced in Russia “immediately”, because to do that it would be necessary for the *majority* of the deputies in all (or in most) Soviets to clearly recognise all the erroneous-ness and harm of the tactics and policy pursued by the S.R.s, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, etc. As for me, I declared unmistakably that in this respect I “build” only on “patient” explaining (does one have to be patient to bring about a change which can be effected “immediately”?).

Comrade Kamenev has somewhat overreached himself in his eagerness, and has repeated the bourgeois prejudice about the Paris Commune having wanted to introduce socialism “immediately”. This is not so. The Commune, unfortunately, was too slow in introducing socialism. The real essence of

* See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 84-85.—Ed.

** See “The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 24).—Ed.

the Commune is not where the bourgeois usually looks for it, but in the creation of a *state* of a special type. Such a state has *already* arisen in Russia, it is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!

Comrade Kamenev has not pondered on the *fact*, the significance of the *existing* Soviets, their identity, in point of type and socio-political character, with the commune state, and instead of studying the *fact*, he began to talk about something I was supposed to be "building" on for the "immediate" future. The result is, unfortunately, a repetition of the method used by many bourgeois: from the question as to *what are* the Soviets, whether they are of a *higher* type than a parliamentary republic, whether they are *more useful* for the people, *more democratic*, *more convenient* for the struggle, for combating, for instance, the grain shortage, etc.—from this real, urgent, vital issue, attention is diverted to the empty, would-be scientific, but actually hollow, professorially dead question of "building on an immediate transformation".

An idle question falsely presented. I "build" *only* on this, *exclusively* on this—that the workers, soldiers and peasants will deal better than the officials, better than the police, with the difficult *practical* problems of producing more grain, distributing it better and keeping the soldiers better supplied, etc., etc.

I am deeply convinced that the Soviets will make the independent activity of the *masses* a reality more quickly and effectively than will a parliamentary republic (I shall compare the two types of state in greater detail in another letter). They will more effectively, more practically and more correctly decide what *steps* can be taken towards socialism and how these steps should be taken. Control over a bank, the merging of all banks into one, is *not yet* socialism, but it is a *step towards* socialism. Today such steps are being taken in Germany by the Junkers and the bourgeoisie against the people. Tomorrow the Soviet will be able to take these steps more effectively for the benefit of the people if the whole state power is in its hands.

What *compels* such steps?

Famine. Economic disorganisation. Imminent collapse. The horrors of war. The horrors of the wounds inflicted on mankind by the war.

Comrade Kamenev concludes his article with the remark that "in a broad discussion he hopes to carry his point of view, which is the only possible one for revolutionary Social-Democracy if it wishes to and should remain to the very end the party of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat and not turn into a group of Communist propagandists".

It seems to me that these words betray a completely erroneous estimate of the situation. Comrade Kamenev contraposes to a "party of the masses" a "group of propagandists". But the "masses" have now succumbed to the craze of "revolutionary" defencism. Is it not more becoming for internationalists at this moment to show that they can resist "mass" intoxication rather than to "wish to remain" with the masses, i.e., to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how in all the belligerent countries of Europe the chauvinists tried to justify themselves on the grounds that they wished to "remain with the masses"? Must we not be able to remain for a time in the minority against the "mass" intoxication? Is it not the work of the propagandists at the present moment that forms the key point for *disentangling* the proletarian line from the defencist and petty-bourgeois "mass" intoxication? It was this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, regardless of the class differences within the masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak contemptuously of a "group of propagandists" advocating a *proletarian* line does not seem to be very becoming.

Written between April 8 and 13
(21 and 26), 1917

Collected Works, Vol. 24
pp. 42-54

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FROM "THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL"

But perhaps sincere socialists supported the Basle resolution¹² in the anticipation that war would create a revolutionary situation, the events rebutting them, as revolution has proved impossible?

It is by means of sophistry like this that Cunow (in a pamphlet *Collapse of the Party?* and a series of articles) has tried to justify his desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie. The writings of nearly all the other social-chauvinists, headed by Kautsky, hint at similar "arguments". Hopes for a revolution have proved illusory, and it is not the business of a Marxist to fight for illusions, Cunow argues. This Struvist,¹³ however, does not say a word about "illusions" that were shared by all signatories to the Basle Manifesto. Like a most upright man, he would put the blame on the extreme Leftists, such as Pannekoek and Radek!

Let us consider the substance of the argument that the authors of the Basle Manifesto sincerely expected the advent of a revolution, but were rebutted by the events. The Basle Manifesto says: (1) that war will create an economic and political crisis; (2) that the workers will regard their participation in war as a crime, and as criminal any "shooting each other down for the profit of the capitalists, for the sake of dynastic honour and of diplomatic secret treaties", and that war evokes "indignation and revolt" in the workers; (3) that it is the duty of socialists to take advantage of this crisis and of the workers' temper so as to "rouse the people and hasten the downfall of capitalism"; (4) that all "governments" without exception can start a war only at "their own peril"; (5) that governments "are afraid of a proletarian

revolution"; (6) that governments "should remember" the Paris Commune (i.e., civil war), the 1905 Revolution in Russia, etc. All these are perfectly clear ideas; they do not *guarantee* that revolution will take place, but lay stress on a precise characterisation of *facts* and *trends*. Whoever declares, with regard to these ideas and arguments, that the anticipated revolution has proved illusory, is displaying not a Marxist but a Struvist and police-renegade attitude towards revolution.

To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) When it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes", a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way. (2) When the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual. (3) When, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in "peace time", but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the "upper classes" themselves* into independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West; it also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century, and in Russia in 1859-61 and 1879-80, although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which

the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, "falls", if it is not toppled over.

Such are the Marxist views on revolution, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxists, and for us, Russians, were corroborated in a particularly striking fashion by the experience of 1905. What, then, did the Basle Manifesto assume in this respect in 1912, and what took place in 1914-15?

It assumed that a revolutionary situation, which it briefly described as "an economic and political crisis", would arise. Has such a situation arisen? Undoubtedly, it has. The social-chauvinist Lensch, who defends chauvinism more candidly, publicly and honestly than the hypocrites Cunow, Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co. do, has gone so far as to say: "What we are passing through is a kind of *revolution*" (p. 6 of his pamphlet, *German Social-Democracy and the War*, Berlin, 1915). A political crisis exists; no government is sure of the morrow, not one is secure against the danger of financial collapse, loss of territory, expulsion from its country (in the way the Belgian Government was expelled). All governments are sleeping on a volcano; all are *themselves* calling for the masses to display initiative and heroism. The entire political regime of Europe has been shaken, and hardly anybody will deny that we have entered (and are entering ever deeper—I write this on the day of Italy's declaration of war) a period of immense political upheavals. When, two months after the declaration of war, Kautsky wrote (October 2, 1914, in *Die Neue Zeit*¹⁴) that "never is government so strong, never are parties so weak as at the outbreak of a war", this was a sample of the falsification of historical science which Kautsky has perpetrated to please the Südekums and other opportunists. In the first place, never do governments stand in such need of agreement with all the parties of the ruling classes, or of the "peaceful" submission of the oppressed classes to that rule, as in the time of war. Secondly, even though "at the beginning of a war", and especially in a country that expects a speedy victory, the government *seems* all-powerful, nobody in the world has ever linked expectations of a revolutionary situation

exclusively with the "beginning" of a war, and still less has anybody ever identified the "seeming" with the *actual*.

It was generally known, seen and admitted that a European war would be more severe than any war in the past. This is being borne out in ever greater measure by the experience of the war. The conflagration is spreading; the political foundations of Europe are being shaken more and more; the sufferings of the masses are appalling, the efforts of governments, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to hush up these sufferings proving ever more futile. The war profits being obtained by certain groups of capitalists are monstrously high, and contradictions are growing extremely acute. The smouldering indignation of the masses, the vague yearning of society's downtrodden and ignorant strata for a kindly ("democratic") peace, the beginning of discontent among the "lower classes"—all these are facts. The longer the war drags on and the more acute it becomes, the more the governments themselves foster—and must foster—the activity of the masses, whom they call upon to make extraordinary effort and self-sacrifice. The experience of the war, like the experience of any crisis in history, of any great calamity and any sudden turn in human life, stuns and breaks some people, *but enlightens and tempers others*. Taken by and large, and considering the history of the world as a whole, the number and strength of the second kind of people have—with the exception of individual cases of the decline and fall of one state or another—proved greater than those of the former kind.

Far from "immediately" ending all these sufferings and all this enhancement of contradictions, the conclusion of peace will, in many respects, make those sufferings more keenly and immediately felt by the most backward masses of the population.

In a word, a revolutionary situation obtains in most of the advanced countries and the Great Powers of Europe. In this respect, the prediction of the Basle Manifesto has been *fully* confirmed. To deny this truth, directly or indirectly, or to ignore it, as Cunow, Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. have done, means telling a big lie, deceiving the working class, and serving the bourgeoisie. In *Sotsial-Demokrat*¹⁵ (Nos. 34, 40 and 41) we cited facts which

prove that those who *fear* revolution—petty-bourgeois Christian parsons, the General Staffs and millionaires' newspapers—are compelled to admit that symptoms of a revolutionary situation exist in Europe.

Will this situation last long? How much more acute will it become? Will it lead to revolution? This is something we do not know, and nobody can know. The answer can be provided only by the *experience* gained during the development of revolutionary sentiment and the transition to revolutionary action by the advanced class, the proletariat. There can be no talk in this connection about "illusions" or their repudiation, since no socialist has ever guaranteed that this war (and not the next one), that today's revolutionary situation (and not tomorrow's) will produce a revolution. What we are discussing is the indisputable and fundamental duty of all socialists—that of revealing to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, explaining its scope and depth, arousing the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary determination, helping it to go over to revolutionary action, and forming, for that purpose, organisations suited to the revolutionary situation.

No influential or responsible socialist has ever dared to feel doubt that this is the duty of the socialist parties. Without spreading or harbouring the least "illusions", the Basle Manifesto spoke specifically of this duty of the socialists—to rouse and to stir up the people (and not to lull them with chauvinism, as Plekhanov, Axelrod and Kautsky have done), to take advantage of the crisis so as to *hasten* the downfall of capitalism, and to be guided by the *examples* of the Commune and of October-December 1905. The present parties' failure to perform that duty meant their treachery, political death, renunciation of their own role and desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie.

Written in the second half
of May and the first half of
June, 1915

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No. 1-2, Geneva
Signed: *N. Lenin*

ON COMPROMISES

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

The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody.

The idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and revolution. Nevertheless, we must say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration: "No compromises!" This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account". The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises, but to be able, *through all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution.

To agree, for instance, to participate in the Third and Fourth Dumas¹⁶ was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But this was a compromise absolutely forced upon us, for the balance of forces made it impossible for us for the time being to conduct a mass

revolutionary struggle, and in order to prepare this struggle over a long period we *had* to be able to work even from *inside* such a "pigsty". History has proved that this approach to the question by the Bolsheviks as a party was perfectly correct.

Now the question is not of a forced, but of a voluntary compromise.

Our Party, like any other political party, is striving after political domination *for itself*. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved very clearly, forcefully and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of *this particular* revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, land for the peasants, or complete freedom (a fully democratic republic). This has been shown and proved by the course of events during the six months of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of April 20-21, June 9-10 and 18-19, July 3-5 and August 27-31.

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

We may offer a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, and only by virtue of the particular situation, which will obviously last only a very short time. And I think we should do so.

The compromise on our part is our return to the pre-July demand of all power to the Soviets and a government of S.R.s and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

Now, and only now, perhaps *during only a few days* or a week or two, such a government could be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. In all probability it could secure the peaceful *advance* of the whole Russian revolution, and provide exceptionally good chances for great strides in the world movement towards peace and the victory of socialism.

In my opinion, the Bolsheviks, who are partisans of world revolution and revolutionary methods, may and should consent to this compromise only for the sake of the revolution's

peaceful development—an opportunity that is *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, an opportunity that only occurs once in a while.

The compromise would amount to the following: the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government (which is impossible for the internationalists unless a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants has been realised), would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition that is self-evident and not new to the S.R.s and Mensheviks would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further delays or even at an earlier date.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s, being the government bloc, would then agree (assuming that the compromise had been reached) to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the “new” condition. I think the Bolsheviks would advance no other conditions, trusting that the revolution would proceed peacefully and party strife in the Soviets would be *peacefully overcome* thanks to really complete freedom of propaganda and to the immediate establishment of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning.

Perhaps this is *already* impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt at realising this opportunity is still worth while.

What would both “contracting” parties gain by this “compromise”, i.e., the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the S.R. and Menshevik bloc, on the other? If *neither* side gains anything, then the compromise must be recognised as impossible, and nothing more is to be said. No matter how difficult this compromise may be at present (after July and August, two months equivalent to two decades in “peaceful”, somnolent times), I think it stands a small chance of being realised. This chance has been created by the decision of the S.R.s and Mensheviks not to participate in a government together with the Cadets.¹⁷

The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely

advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy. In words, "everybody" now concedes the Bolsheviks this freedom. In reality, this freedom is *impossible* under a bourgeois government or a government in which the bourgeoisie participate, or under any government, in fact, other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be *possible* (we do not say it would be a certainty, but still it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility at such a difficult time, it would be worth compromising with the present majority in the Soviets. *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side, and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s would gain in that they would at once obtain every opportunity to carry out *their* bloc's programme with the support of the obviously overwhelming majority of the people and in that they would secure for themselves the "peaceful" use of their majority in the Soviets.

Of course, there would probably be two voices heard from this bloc, which is heterogeneous both because it is a bloc and because petty-bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

One voice would say: we cannot follow the same road as the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat. It will demand too much anyway and will entice the peasant poor by demagogy. It will demand peace and a break with the Allies. That is impossible. We are better off and safer with the bourgeoisie; after all, we have not parted ways with them but only had a temporary *quarrel*, and only over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled, but we shall make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not "ceding" us anything, for their attempts at insurrection are as doomed to defeat as was the Commune of 1871.

The other voice would say: the allusion to the Commune is very superficial and even foolish. For, in the first place, the Bolsheviks have learnt something since 1871; they would not fail to seize the banks, and would not refuse to advance on Versailles. Under such conditions even the Commune might have been victorious. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the

Bolsheviks will be able to offer if they come to power, namely, land to the peasants, an immediate offer of peace, real control over production, an honest peace with the Ukrainians, Finns, etc. The Bolsheviks, to put it bluntly, hold ten times more "trumps" than the Commune did. In the second place, the Commune, after all, means a strenuous civil war, a set-back to peaceful cultural development for a long time to come, an opportunity for all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs to operate and plot with greater ease—and such operations are a menace to our whole bourgeois society. Is it wise to risk a Commune?

Now a Commune is inevitable in Russia if we do not take power into our own hands, if things remain in as grave a state as they were between May 6 and August 31. Every revolutionary worker and soldier will inevitably think about the Commune and believe in it; he will inevitably attempt to bring it about, for he will argue: "The people are perishing; war, famine and ruin are spreading. Only the Commune can save us. So let us all perish, let us die, but let us set up the Commune." Such thoughts are inevitable with the workers, and it will not be as easy to crush the Commune now as it was in 1871. The Russian Commune will have allies throughout the world, allies a hundred times stronger than those the Commune had in 1871. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune? I cannot agree, either, that the Bolsheviks virtually cede us nothing by their compromise. For, in all civilised countries, civilised ministers value highly every agreement with the proletariat in war-time, however small. They value it very, very highly. And these are men of action, real ministers. The Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of repression, and the weakness of their press. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune?

We have a safe majority; the peasant poor will not wake up for some time to come; we are safe for our lifetime. I do not believe that in a peasant country the majority will follow the extremists. And against an obvious majority, no insurrection is possible in a really democratic republic. This is what the second voice would say.

There may also be a third voice coming from among the supporters of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: I am indignant, "comrades", that both of you, speaking

about the Commune and its likelihood, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you side with those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to campaign for the Commune and I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do, but I must say that *if* the Commune does start *in spite* of my efforts, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents.

The medley of voices in the "bloc" is great and inevitable, for a host of shades is represented among the petty-bourgeois democrats—from the complete bourgeois, perfectly eligible for a post in the government, down to the semi-pauper who is not yet capable of taking up the proletarian position. Nobody knows what will be the result of this medley of voices at any given moment.

* * *

The above lines were written on Friday, September 1, but due to unforeseen circumstances (under Kerensky, as history will tell, not all Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. After reading Saturday's and today's (Sunday's) papers, I say to myself: perhaps it is already too late to offer a compromise. Perhaps the few days in which a peaceful development was *still* possible have passed *too*. Yes, to all appearances, they have already passed. In one way or another, Kerensky will abandon both the S.R. Party and the S.R.s themselves, and will consolidate his position with the aid of the bourgeoisie *without* the S.R.s, and thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances, the days when by chance the path of peaceful development became possible have *already* passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled: "Belated Thoughts". Perhaps even belated thoughts are sometimes not without interest.

September 3, 1917

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1917

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September 19 (6), 1917
Signed: *N. Lenin*

ON COMPROMISES

In a talk with me, Comrade Lansbury laid particular stress on the following argument of the British opportunist leaders in the labour movement.

The Bolsheviks are compromising with the capitalists, agreeing, in the Peace Treaty with Estonia, for instance, to timber concessions; if that is the case, compromises with capitalists concluded by the moderate leaders of the British labour movement are equally legitimate.

Comrade Lansbury considers this argument, very widespread in Britain, of importance to the workers and urgently requiring examination.

I shall try to meet this desire.

I

May an advocate of proletarian revolution conclude compromises with capitalists or with the capitalist class?

This, apparently, is the question underlying the above argument. But to present it in this general way shows either the extreme political inexperience and low level of political consciousness of the questioner, or his chicanery in using a sophism to veil his justification of brigandage, plunder and every other sort of capitalist violence.

Indeed, it would obviously be silly to give a negative reply to this general question. Of course, an advocate of proletarian revolution may conclude compromises or agreements with capitalists. It all depends on *what kind* of

agreement is concluded and *under what circumstances*. Here and here alone can and must one look for the difference between an agreement that is legitimate from the angle of the proletarian revolution and one that is treasonable, treacherous (from the same angle).

To make this clear I shall first recall the argument of the founders of Marxism and then add some very simple and obvious examples.

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

Anybody acquainted with the fundamentals of Marx's teachings must inevitably draw this conclusion from the totality of those teachings. But since in Britain, due to a number of historical causes, Marxism has ever since Chartism¹⁸ (which in many respects was something preparatory to Marxism, the "last word but one" before Marxism) been pushed into the background by the opportunist, semi-bourgeois leaders of the trade unions and co-operatives, I shall try to explain the truth of the view expounded by means of typical examples drawn from among the universally known facts of ordinary, political, and economic life.

I shall begin with an illustration I gave once before in one of my speeches. * Let us suppose the car you are

* See "Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom and Equality", speech delivered at the First All-Russia Congress on Adult Education (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 347).—Ed.

travelling in is attacked by armed bandits. Let us suppose that when a pistol is put to your temple you surrender your car, money and revolver to the bandits, who proceed to use this car, etc., to commit other robberies.

Here is undoubtedly a case of compromising with highwaymen, of agreement with them. The agreement, though unsigned and tacitly concluded, is nevertheless quite a definite and precise one: "I give you, Mr. Robber, my car, weapon and money; you rid me of your pleasant company."

The question arises: do you call the man who concluded *such* an agreement with highwaymen an *accomplice* in banditry, an *accomplice* in a robbers' assault upon third persons despoiled by the bandits with the aid of the car, money and weapon received by them from the person who concluded this agreement?

No, you do not.

The matter is absolutely plain and simple, down to the smallest detail.

And it is likewise clear that under other circumstances the tacit surrender to the highwaymen of the car, money and weapon would be considered by every person of common sense to be complicity in banditry.

The conclusion is clear: it is just as silly to renounce the idea of literally all agreements or compromises with robbers as it is to acquit a person of complicity in banditry on the basis of the abstract proposition that, generally speaking, agreements with robbers are sometimes permissible and necessary.

Let us now take a political illustration. . . . *

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pp. 491-93

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* Here the manuscript breaks off.—Ed.

**SPEECH ON PARLIAMENTARIANISM
AT THE SECOND CONGRESS OF
THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
August 2, 1920**

Comrade Bordiga seems to have wanted to defend the Italian Marxists' point of view here, yet he has failed to reply to any of the arguments advanced by other Marxists in favour of parliamentary action.

Comrade Bordiga has admitted that historical experience is not created artificially. He has just told us that the struggle must be carried into another sphere. Is he not aware that every revolutionary crisis has been attended by a parliamentary crisis? True, he has said that the struggle must be carried into another sphere, into the Soviets. Bordiga, however, has himself admitted that Soviets cannot be created artificially. The example of Russia shows that Soviets can be organised either during a revolution or on the eve of a revolution. Even in the Kerensky period, the Soviets (which were Menshevik Soviets) were organised in such a way that they could not possibly constitute a proletarian government. Parliament is a product of historical development, and we cannot eliminate it until we are strong enough to disperse the bourgeois parliament. It is only as a member of the bourgeois parliament that one can, in the given historical conditions, wage a struggle against bourgeois society and parliamentarianism. The same weapon as the bourgeoisie employs in the struggle must also be used by the proletariat, of course, with entirely different aims. You cannot assert that that is not the case, and if you want to challenge it, you will have thereby to erase the experience of all revolutionary developments in the world.

You have said that the trade unions are also opportunist, that they, too, constitute a danger. On the other hand, however, you have said that an exception must be made in the case of trade unions, because they are workers'

organisations. But that is true only up to a certain point. There are very backward elements in the trade unions too: a section of the proletarianised petty bourgeoisie, the backward workers, and the small peasants. All these elements really think that their interests are represented in parliament. This idea must be combated by work within parliament and by citing the facts, so as to show the masses the truth. Theory will have no effect on the backward masses; they need practical experience.

This was to be seen in the case of Russia too. We were obliged to convene the Constituent Assembly even after the victory of the proletariat, so as to prove to the backward proletarians that they had nothing to gain from that Assembly. To bring home the difference between the two, we had to concretely contrapose the Soviets and the Constituent Assembly and to show the Soviets as the only solution.

Comrade Souchy, a revolutionary syndicalist, advocated the same theory, but he had no logic on his side. He said that he was not a Marxist, so everything can be readily understood. But you, Comrade Bordiga, assert that you are a Marxist, so we must expect more logic from you. You must know how parliament can be smashed. If you can do it by an armed uprising in all countries, well and good. You are aware that we in Russia proved our determination to destroy the bourgeois parliament, not only in theory, but in practice as well. You, however, have lost sight of the fact that this is impossible without fairly long preparations, and that in most countries it is as yet impossible to destroy parliament at one stroke. We are obliged to carry on a struggle within parliament for the destruction of parliament. For the conditions determining the political line of all classes in modern society you substitute your revolutionary determination; that is why you forget that to destroy the bourgeois parliament in Russia we were first obliged to convene the Constituent Assembly, even after our victory. You say: "It is a fact that the Russian revolution is a case that is not in accord with conditions in Western Europe", but you have not produced a single weighty argument to prove that to us. We went through a period of bourgeois democracy. We went through it rapidly at a time when we had to agitate for elections to the Constituent Assembly. Later, when the working class was able to seize power, the peas-

ants still believed in the necessity of a bourgeois parliament.

Taking account of these backward elements, we had to proclaim the elections and show the masses, by example and by facts, that the Constituent Assembly, which was elected at a time of dire and universal need, did not express the aspirations and demands of the exploited classes. In this way the conflict between Soviet and bourgeois government became quite clear, not only to us, the vanguard of the working class, but also to the vast majority of the peasantry, to the petty office employees, the petty bourgeoisie, etc. In all capitalist countries there are backward elements in the working class who are convinced that parliament is the true representative of the people and do not see the unscrupulous methods employed there. You say that parliament is an instrument with the aid of which the bourgeoisie deceive the masses. But this argument should be turned against you, and it does turn against your theses. How will you reveal the true character of parliament to the really backward masses, who are deceived by the bourgeoisie? How will you expose the various parliamentary manoeuvres, or the positions of the various parties, if you are not in parliament, if you remain outside parliament? If you are Marxists, you must admit that, in capitalist society, there is a close link between the relations of classes and the relations of parties. How, I repeat, will you show all this if you are not members of parliament, and if you renounce parliamentary action? The history of the Russian revolution has clearly shown that the masses of the working class, the peasantry, and petty office employees could not have been convinced by any arguments, unless their own experience had convinced them.

It has been claimed here that it is a waste of time to participate in the parliamentary struggle. Can one conceive of any other institution in which all classes are as interested as they are in parliament? This cannot be created artificially. If all classes are drawn into the parliamentary struggle, it is because the class interests and conflicts are reflected in parliament. If it were possible everywhere and immediately to bring about, let us say, a decisive general strike so as to overthrow capitalism at a single stroke, the revolution would have already taken place in a number of countries. But we must reckon with the facts, and parliament is a scene of

the class struggle. Comrade Bordiga and those who share his views must tell the masses the truth. Germany provides the best example that a Communist group in parliament is possible. That is why you should have frankly said to the masses: "We are too weak to create a party with a strong organisation." That would be the truth that ought to be told. But if you confessed your weakness to the masses, they would become your opponents, not your supporters; they would become supporters of parliamentarianism.

If you say: "Fellow workers, we are so weak that we cannot form a party disciplined enough to compel its members of parliament to submit to it", the workers would abandon you, for they would ask themselves: "How can we set up a dictatorship of the proletariat with such weaklings?"

You are very naïve if you think that the intelligentsia, the middle class, and the petty bourgeoisie will turn Communist the day the proletariat is victorious.

If you do not harbour this illusion you should begin right away to prepare the proletariat to pursue its own line. You will find no exceptions to this rule in any branch of state affairs. On the day following the revolution, you will everywhere find advocates of opportunism who call themselves Communists, i.e., petty bourgeois who refuse to recognise the discipline of the Communist Party or of the proletarian state. Unless you prepare the workers for the creation of a really disciplined party, which will compel its members to submit to its discipline, you will never prepare for the dictatorship of the proletariat. I think that this accounts for your unwillingness to admit that the repudiation of parliamentary action by a great many of the new Communist parties stems from their weakness. I am convinced that the vast majority of the really revolutionary workers will follow us and speak up against your anti-parliamentary theses.

Brief newspaper report
published in *Krasnaya Gazeta*
(Petrograd) No. 170, August 3

Collected Works, Vol. 31,
pp. 253-56

First published in full
in 1921 in the book
*The Second Congress of the
Communist International.*
Verbatim Report, Petrograd

LETTER TO THE AUSTRIAN COMMUNISTS¹⁹

The Austrian Communist Party has decided to boycott the elections to the bourgeois-democratic parliament. The Second Congress of the Communist International which ended recently recognised as the correct tactics Communist *participation* in elections to and the activities in bourgeois parliaments.

Judging by reports of the Austrian Communist Party's delegates, I have no doubt that it will set a decision by the Communist International above that of one of the parties. Neither can it be doubted that the Austrian Social-Democrats, those traitors to socialism who have gone over to the bourgeoisie, will gloat over the Communist International decision, which is at variance with the Austrian Communist Party's boycott decision. However, politically-conscious workers will, of course, pay no heed to the malicious glee of people like the Austrian Social-Democrats, those confederates of the Scheidemanns and Noskes, Thomases and Gomperses. The Renners' servility to the bourgeoisie has revealed itself sufficiently, and in all countries the workers' indignation at the heroes of the yellow Second International²⁰ is ever mounting and spreading.

The Austrian Social-Democrats are behaving in the bourgeois parliament, as in all spheres of their "work", including their own press, in the manner of petty-bourgeois democrats who are capable only of spineless vacillation, while in fact they are totally dependent on the capitalist class. We Communists enter bourgeois parliaments in order to unmask from their rostrums the deception practised by these

thoroughly corrupt capitalist institutions, which dupe the workers and all working people.

One of the Austrian Communists' arguments against participation in the bourgeois parliaments deserves somewhat more careful consideration. Here it is:

"Parliament is of importance to Communists only as a platform for agitation. We in Austria have the Council of Workers' Deputies as a platform for agitation. We therefore refuse to take part in elections to the bourgeois parliament. In Germany there is no Council of Workers' Deputies which can be taken in earnest. That is why the German Communists pursue different tactics."

I consider this argument erroneous. As long as we are unable to disband the bourgeois parliament, we must work against it both from without and within. As long as a more or less appreciable number of working people (not only proletarians, but also semi-proletarians and small peasants) still have confidence in the bourgeois-democratic instruments employed by the bourgeoisie for duping the workers, we must expose that deception *from the very platform* which the backward sections of the workers, particularly of the non-proletarian working people, consider most important, and authoritative.

As long as we Communists are unable to take over state power and hold elections, with working people alone voting for *their* Soviets against the bourgeoisie; as long as the bourgeoisie exercise state power and call upon the different classes of the population to take part in the elections, we are in duty bound to take part in the elections with the purpose of conducting agitation among all working people, not only among proletarians. As long as the bourgeois parliament remains a means of duping the workers, and phrases about "democracy" are used to cover up financial swindling and every kind of bribery (the particularly "subtle" brand of bribery the bourgeoisie practise with regard to writers, M.P.s, lawyers, and others is nowhere to be seen on so wide a scale as in the bourgeois parliament), we Communists are in duty bound to be in this very institution (which is supposed to *express the people's will* but actually covers up the *deception of the people by the wealthy*) to untiringly expose this deception, and expose each and every case of the Renners and Co.'s desertion to the capitalists, against the workers. It is in parliament that the relations

between bourgeois parties and groups manifest themselves most frequently and reflect the relations between all the classes of bourgeois society. That is why it is in the bourgeois parliament, from within it, that we Communists must tell the people the *truth* about the relation between classes and parties, and the attitude of the landowners to the farm labourers, of the rich peasants to the poor peasants, of big capital to employees and petty proprietors, etc.

The proletariat *must* know all this, so as to learn to see through all the vile and refined machinations of the capitalists, and to learn to influence the petty-bourgeois masses, the non-proletarian masses of the working people. Without this "schooling" the proletariat cannot cope successfully with the tasks of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, for even then the bourgeoisie, operating from its new position (that of a deposed class), will carry on, in different forms and in different fields, its policy of duping the peasants, of bribing and intimidating employees, of covering up its self-seeking and unsavoury aspirations with phrases about "democracy".

No, the Austrian Communists will not be frightened by the malicious glee of the Renners and similar lackeys of the bourgeoisie. The Austrian Communists will not be afraid to declare their open and forthright recognition of international proletarian discipline. We are proud that we settle the great problems of the workers' struggle for their emancipation by submitting to the international discipline of the revolutionary proletariat, with due account of the experience of the workers in different countries, reckoning with their knowledge and their will, and thus giving effect in deed (and not in word, as the Renners, Fritz Adlers and Otto Bauers do) to the unity of the workers' class struggle for communism throughout the world.

N. Lenin

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**TO THE COMRADES COMMUNISTS
OF AZERBAIJAN, GEORGIA, ARMENIA,
DAGHESTAN, AND THE MOUNTAINEER REPUBLIC**

I send my warmest greetings to the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus, and should like to express the hope that their close alliance will serve as a model of national peace, unprecedented under the bourgeoisie and impossible under the capitalist system.

But important as national peace among the workers and peasants of the Caucasian nationalities is, the maintenance and development of the Soviet power, as the transition to socialism, are even more important. The task is difficult, but fully feasible. The most important thing for its successful fulfilment is that the Communists of the Transcaucasus should be fully alive to the *singularity* of their position, and of the position of their Republics, as distinct from the position and conditions of the R.S.F.S.R.; that they should appreciate the need to refrain from copying our tactics, and thoughtfully vary them in adaptation to the differing concrete conditions.

The Soviet Republic of Russia had no outside political or military assistance. On the contrary, for years and years it fought the Entente²¹ military invasions and blockade.

The Soviet Republics of the Caucasus have had political and some military assistance from the R.S.F.S.R. This alone has made a vast difference.

Second, there is now no cause to fear any Entente invasion or military assistance to the Georgian, Azerbaijan, Armenian, Daghestan and mountaineer whiteguards. The Entente powers "burnt their fingers" in Russia and that will probably compel them to be more cautious for some time.

Third, the Caucasian Republics have an even more pronounced peasant character than Russia.

Fourth, Russia has been, and to a considerable extent still is, economically isolated from the advanced capitalist countries. The Caucasus is in a position to start trading and "living together" with the capitalist West sooner and with greater ease.

These are not all the differences, but they are sufficient to demonstrate the need for different tactics.

You will need to practise more moderation and caution, and show more readiness to make concessions to the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and particularly the peasantry. You must make the swiftest, most intense and all possible economic use of the capitalist West through a policy of concessions and trade. Oil, manganese, coal (Tkvarcheli mines) and copper are some of your immense mineral resources. You have every possibility to develop an extensive policy of concessions and trade with foreign countries.

This must be done on a wide scale, with firmness, skill and circumspection, and it must be utilised to the utmost for improving the condition of the workers and peasants, and for enlisting the intelligentsia in the work of economic construction. Through trade with Italy, America and other countries, you must exert every effort to develop the productive forces of your rich land, your water resources and irrigation which is especially important as a means of advancing agriculture and livestock farming.

What the Republics of the Caucasus can and must do, as distinct from the R.S.F.S.R., is to effect a slower, more cautious and more systematic transition to socialism. That is what you must understand, and what you must be able to carry out, as distinct from our own tactics.

We fought to make the first breach in the wall of world capitalism. The breach has been made. We have maintained our positions in a fierce and superhuman war against the Whites, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who were supported by the Entente countries, their blockade and military assistance.

You, Comrades Communists of the Caucasus, have no need to force a breach. You must take advantage of the favourable international situation in 1924, and learn to build the new with greater caution and more method. In

1921, Europe and the world are not what they were in 1917 and 1918.

Do not copy our tactics, but analyse the reasons for their peculiar features, the conditions that gave rise to them, and their results; go beyond the letter, and apply the spirit, the essence and the lessons of the 1917-21 experience. You must make trade with the capitalist countries your economic foundation right away. The cost should be no object even if it means letting them have tens of millions' worth of valuable minerals.

You must make immediate efforts to improve the condition of the peasants and start on extensive electrification and irrigation projects. What you need most is irrigation, for more than anything else it will revive the area and regenerate it, bury the past and make the transition to socialism more certain.

I hope you will pardon my slipshod style: I have had to write the letter at very short notice, so as to send it along with Comrade Myasnikov. Once again I send my best greetings and wishes to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Republics of the Caucasus.

N. Lenin

Moscow, April 14, 1921

Pravda Grazii No. 55,
May 8, 1921

Collected Works, Vol. 32,
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**SPEECH IN DEFENCE OF THE TACTICS
OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
AT THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL**

July 1, 1921

Comrades! I deeply regret that I must confine myself to self-defence. (*Laughter.*) I say deeply regret, because after acquainting myself with Comrade Terracini's speech and the amendments introduced by three delegations, I should very much like to take the offensive, for, properly speaking, offensive operations are essential against the views defended by Terracini and these three delegations.²² If the Congress is not going to wage a vigorous offensive against such errors, against such "Leftist" stupidities, the whole movement is doomed. That is my deep conviction. But we are organised and disciplined Marxists. We cannot be satisfied with speeches against individual comrades. We Russians are already sick and tired of these Leftist phrases. We are men of organisation. In drawing up our plans, we must proceed in an organised way and try to find the correct line. It is, of course, no secret that our theses are a compromise. And why not? Among Communists, who have already convened their Third Congress and have worked out definite fundamental principles, compromises under certain conditions are necessary. Our theses, put forward by the Russian delegation, were studied and prepared in the most careful way and were the result of long arguments and meetings with various delegations. They aim at establishing the basic line of the Communist International and are especially necessary now after we have not only formally condemned the real Centrists but have expelled them from the Party. Such are the facts. I have to stand up for these theses. Now, when Terracini comes forward and says that we must continue the fight against the

Centrists, and goes on to tell how it is intended to wage the fight, I say that if these amendments denote a definite trend, a relentless fight against this trend is essential, for otherwise there is no communism and Communist International. I am surprised that the German Communist Workers' Party²³ has not put its signature to these amendments. (*Laughter.*) Indeed, just listen to what Terracini is defending and what his amendments say. They begin in this way: "On page 1, column 1, line 19, the word 'majority' should be deleted." Majority! That is extremely dangerous! (*Laughter.*) Then further: instead of the words "'basic propositions' insert 'aims'". Basic propositions and aims are two different things; even the anarchists will agree with us about aims, because they too stand for the abolition of exploitation and class distinctions.

I have met and talked with few anarchists in my life, but all the same I have seen enough of them. I sometimes succeeded in reaching agreement with them about aims, but never as regards principles. Principles are not an aim, a programme, a tactic or a theory. Tactics and theory are not principles. How do we differ from the anarchists on principles? The principles of communism consist in the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and in the use of state coercion in the transition period. Such are the principles of communism, but they are not its aim. And the comrades who have tabled this proposal have made a mistake.

Secondly, it is stated there: "the word 'majority' should be deleted." Read the whole passage:

"The Third Congress of the Communist International is setting out to review questions of tactics under conditions when in a whole number of countries the objective situation has become aggravated in a revolutionary sense, and when a whole number of communist mass parties have been organised, which, incidentally, in their actual revolutionary struggle have nowhere taken into their hands the virtual leadership of the majority of the working class."

And so, they want the word "majority" deleted. If we cannot agree on such simple things, then I do not understand how we can work together and lead the proletariat to victory. Then it is not at all surprising that we cannot reach agreement on the question of principles either. Show me a party which has already won the majority of the work-

ing class. Terracini did not even think of adducing any example. Indeed, there is no such example.

And so, the word "aims" is to be put instead of "principles", and the word "majority" is to be deleted. No, thank you! We shall not do it. Even the German party—one of the best—does not have the majority of the working class behind it. That is a fact. We, who face a most severe struggle, are not afraid to utter this truth, but here you have three delegations who wish to begin with an untruth, for if the Congress deletes the word "majority" it will show that it wants an untruth. That is quite clear.

Then comes the following amendment: "On page 4, column 1, line 10, the words 'Open Letter', etc., should be deleted."²⁴ I have already heard one speech today in which I found the same idea. But there it was quite natural. It was the speech of Comrade Hempel, a member of the German Communist Workers' Party. He said: "The 'Open Letter' was an act of opportunism." To my deep regret and shame, I have already heard such views privately. But when, at the Congress, after such prolonged debate, the "Open Letter" is declared opportunist—that is a shame and a disgrace! And now Comrade Terracini comes forward on behalf of the three delegations and wants to delete the words "Open Letter". What is the good then of the fight against the German Communist Workers' Party? The "Open Letter" is a model political step. This is stated in our theses and we must certainly stand by it. It is a model because it is the first act of a practical method of winning over the majority of the working class. In Europe, where almost all the proletarians are organised, we must win the majority of the working class, and anyone who fails to understand this is lost to the communist movement; he will never learn anything if he has failed to learn that much during the three years of the great revolution.

Terracini says that we were victorious in Russia although the Party was very small. He is dissatisfied with what is said in the theses about Czechoslovakia. Here there are 27 amendments, and if I had a mind to criticise them I should, like some orators, have to speak for not less than three hours. . . . We have heard here that in Czechoslovakia the Communist Party has 300,000-400,000 members, and that it is essential to win over the majority, to create

an invincible force and continue enlisting fresh masses of workers. Terracini is already prepared to attack. He says: if there are already 400,000 workers in the party, why should we want more? Delete! (*Laughter.*) He is afraid of the word "masses" and wants to eradicate it. Comrade Terracini has understood very little of the Russian revolution.

In Russia, we were a small party, but we had with us in addition the majority of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country. (*Cries: "Quite true!"*) Do you have anything of the sort? We had with us almost half the army, which then numbered at least ten million men. Do you really have the majority of the army behind you? Show me such a country! If these views of Comrade Terracini are shared by three other delegations, then something is wrong in the International! Then we must say: "Stop! There must be a decisive fight! Otherwise the Communist International is lost." (*Animation.*)

On the basis of my experience I must say, although I am taking up a defensive position (*laughter*), that the aim and the principle of my speech consist in defence of the resolution and theses proposed by our delegation. It would, of course, be pedantic to say that not a letter in them must be altered. I have had to read many resolutions and I am well aware that very good amendments could be introduced in every line of them. But that would be pedantry. If, nevertheless, I declare now that in a political sense not a single letter can be altered, it is because the amendments, as I see them, are of a quite definite political nature and because they lead us along a path that is harmful and dangerous to the Communist International. Therefore, I and all of us and the Russian delegation must insist that not a single letter in the theses is altered. We have not only condemned our Right-wing elements—we have expelled them. But if, like Terracini, people turn the fight against the Rightists into a sport, then we must say: "Stop! Otherwise the danger will become too grave!"

Terracini has defended the theory of an offensive struggle.²⁵ In this connection the notorious amendments propose a formula two or three pages long. There is no need for us to read them. We know what they say. Terracini has stated the issue quite clearly. He has defended the

theory of an offensive, pointing out "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". We in Russia have already had adequate political experience in the struggle against the Centrists. As long as fifteen years ago, we were waging a struggle against our opportunists and Centrists, and also against the Mensheviks, and we were victorious not only over the Mensheviks, but also over the semi-anarchists.

If we had not done this, we would not have been able to retain power in our hands for three and a half years, or even for three and a half weeks, and we would not have been able to convene communist congresses here. "Dynamic tendencies", "transition from passivity to activity"—these are all phrases the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries had used against us. Now they are in prison, defending there the "aims of communism" and thinking of the "transition from passivity to activity". (*Laughter.*) The line of reasoning followed in the proposed amendments is an impossible one, because they contain no Marxism, no political experience, and no reasoning. Have we in our theses elaborated a general theory of the revolutionary offensive? Has Radek or anyone of us committed such a stupidity? We have spoken of the theory of an offensive in relation to a quite definite country and at a quite definite period.

From our struggle against the Mensheviks we can quote instances showing that even before the first revolution there were some who doubted whether the revolutionary party ought to conduct an offensive. If such doubts assailed any Social-Democrat—as we all called ourselves at that time—we took up the struggle against him and said that he was an opportunist, that he did not understand anything of Marxism and the dialectics of the revolutionary party. Is it really possible for a party to dispute whether a revolutionary offensive is permissible in general? To find such examples in this country one would have to go back some fifteen years. If there are Centrists or disguised Centrists who dispute the theory of the offensive, they should be immediately expelled. That question cannot give rise to disputes. But the fact that even now, after three years of the Communist International, we are arguing about "dynamic tendencies", about the "transition from passivity to activity"—that is a shame and a disgrace.

We do not have any dispute about this with Comrade Radek, who drafted these theses jointly with us. Perhaps it was not quite correct to begin talking in Germany *about the theory* of the revolutionary offensive when an actual offensive had not been prepared. Nevertheless the March action was a great step forward in spite of the mistakes of its leaders.²⁶ But this does not matter. Hundreds of thousands of workers fought heroically. However courageously the German Communist Workers' Party fought against the bourgeoisie, we must repeat what Comrade Radek said in a Russian article about Hölz. If anyone, even an anarchist, fights heroically against the bourgeoisie, that is, of course, a great thing; but it is a real step forward if hundreds of thousands fight against the vile provocation of the social-traitors and against the bourgeoisie.

It is very important to be critical of one's mistakes. We began with that. If anyone, after a struggle in which hundreds of thousands have taken part, comes out against this struggle and behaves like Levi, then he should be expelled. And that is what was done. But we must draw a lesson from this. Had we really prepared for an offensive? (*Radek*: "We had not even prepared for defence.") Indeed only newspaper articles talked of an offensive. This theory as applied to the March action in Germany in 1921 was incorrect—we have to admit that—but, in general, the theory of the revolutionary offensive is not at all false.

We were victorious in Russia, and with such ease, because we prepared for our revolution during the imperialist war. That was the first condition. Ten million workers and peasants in Russia were armed, and our slogan was: an immediate peace at all costs. We were victorious because the vast mass of the peasants were revolutionarily disposed against the big landowners. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, the adherents of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals,²⁷ were a big peasant party in November 1917. They demanded revolutionary methods but, like true heroes of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, lacked the courage to act in a revolutionary way. In August and September 1917 we said: "Theoretically we are fighting the Socialist-Revolutionaries as we did before, but practically we are ready to accept their programme be-

cause only we are able to put it into effect." We did just what we said. The peasantry, ill-disposed towards us in November 1917, after our victory, who sent a majority of Socialist-Revolutionaries into the Constituent Assembly, were won over by us, if not in the course of a few days—as I mistakenly expected and predicted—at any rate in the course of a few weeks. The difference was not great. Can you point out any country in Europe where you could win over the majority of the peasantry in the course of a few weeks? Italy perhaps? (*Laughter.*) If it is said that we were victorious in Russia in spite of not having a big party, that only proves that those who say it have not understood the Russian revolution and that they have absolutely no understanding of how to prepare for a revolution.

Our first step was to create a real Communist Party so as to know whom we were talking to and whom we could fully trust. The slogan of the First and Second congresses was "Down with the Centrists!" We cannot hope to master even the ABC of communism, unless all along the line and throughout the world we make short shrift of the Centrists and semi-Centrists, whom in Russia we call Mensheviks. Our first task is to create a genuinely revolutionary party and to break with the Mensheviks. But that is only a preparatory school. We are already convening the Third Congress, and Comrade Terracini keeps saying that the task of the preparatory school consists in hunting out, pursuing and exposing the Centrists and semi-Centrists. No, thank you! We have already done this long enough. At the Second Congress we said that the Centrists are our enemies. But, we must go forward really. The second stage, after organising into a party, consists in learning to prepare for revolution. In many countries we have not even learned how to assume the leadership. We were victorious in Russia not only because the undisputed majority of the working class was on our side (during the elections in 1917 the overwhelming majority of the workers were with us against the Mensheviks), but also because half the army, immediately after our seizure of power, and nine-tenths of the peasants, in the course of some weeks, came over to our side; we were victorious because we adopted the agrarian programme of the Socialist-Revolutionaries instead of our own,

and put it into effect. Our victory lay in the fact that we carried out the Socialist-Revolutionary programme; that is why this victory was so easy. Is it possible that you in the West can have such illusions? It is ridiculous! Just compare the concrete economic conditions, Comrade Terracini and all of you who have signed the proposed amendments! In spite of the fact that the majority so rapidly came to be on our side, the difficulties confronting us after our victory were very great. Nevertheless we won through because we kept in mind not only our aims but also our principles, and did not tolerate in our Party those who kept silent about principles but talked of aims, "dynamic tendencies" and the "transition from passivity to activity". Perhaps we shall be blamed for preferring to keep such gentlemen in prison. But dictatorship is impossible in any other way. We must prepare for dictatorship, and this consists in combating such phrases and such amendments. (*Laughter.*) Throughout, our theses speak of the masses. But, comrades, we need to understand what is meant by masses. The German Communist Workers' Party, the Left-wing comrades, misuse this word. But Comrade Terracini, too, and all those who have signed these amendments, do not know how the word "masses" should be read.

I have been speaking too long as it is; hence I wish to say only a few words about the concept of "masses". It is one that changes in accordance with the changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses. If the party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it also succeeds in arousing non-party people, it is well on the way to winning the masses. During our revolutions there were instances when several thousand workers represented the masses. In the history of our movement, and of our struggle against the Mensheviks, you will find many examples where several thousand workers in a town were enough to give a clearly mass character to the movement. You have a mass when several thousand non-party workers, who usually live a philistine life and drag out a miserable existence, and who have never heard anything about politics, begin to act in a revolutionary way. If the movement spreads and intensifies, it gradually develops into a

real revolution. We saw this in 1905 and 1917 during three revolutions, and you too will have to go through all this. When the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept "masses" becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the masses. This word begins to denote something else. The concept of "masses" undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of the workers alone, but the majority of all the exploited. Any other kind of interpretation is impermissible for a revolutionary, and any other sense of the word becomes incomprehensible. It is possible that even a small party, the British or American party, for example, after it has thoroughly studied the course of political development and become acquainted with the life and customs of the non-party masses, will at a favourable moment evoke a revolutionary movement (Comrade Radek has pointed to the miners' strike as a good example²⁸). You will have a mass movement if such a party comes forward with its slogans at such a moment and succeeds in getting millions of workers to follow it. I would not altogether deny that a revolution can be started by a very small party and brought to a victorious conclusion. But one must have a knowledge of the methods by which the masses can be won over. For this thoroughgoing preparation of revolution is essential. But here you have comrades coming forward with the assertion that we should immediately give up the demand for "big" masses. They must be challenged. Without thoroughgoing preparation you will not achieve victory in any country. Quite a small party is sufficient to lead the masses. At certain times there is no necessity for big organisations.

But to win, we must have the sympathy of the masses. An absolute majority is not always essential; but what is essential to win and retain power is not only the majority of the working class—I use the term "working class" in its West-European sense, i.e., in the sense of the industrial proletariat—but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you thought about this? Do we find in Terracini's speech even a hint at this thought? He speaks only of "dynamic tendency" and the "transition from passivity to activity". Does he devote even a single word to the food question? And yet the workers demand

their victuals, although they can put up with a great deal and go hungry, as we have seen to a certain extent in Russia. We must, therefore, win over to our side not only the majority of the working class, but also the majority of the working and exploited rural population. Have you prepared for this? Almost nowhere.

And so, I repeat: I must unreservedly defend our theses and I feel I am bound to do it. We not only condemned the Centrists but expelled them from the Party. Now we must deal with another aspect, which we also consider dangerous. We must tell the comrades the truth in the most polite form (and in our theses it is told in a kind and considerate way) so that no one feels insulted: we are confronted now by other, more important questions than that of attacks on the Centrists. We have had enough of this question. It has already become somewhat boring. Instead, the comrades ought to learn to wage a real revolutionary struggle. The German workers have already begun this. Hundreds of thousands of proletarians in that country have been fighting heroically. Anyone who opposes this struggle should be immediately expelled. But after that we must not engage in empty word-spinning but must immediately begin to learn, on the basis of the mistakes made, how to organise the struggle better. We must not conceal our mistakes from the enemy. Anyone who is afraid of this is no revolutionary. On the contrary, if we openly declare to the workers: "Yes, we have made mistakes", it will mean that they will not be repeated and we shall be able better to choose the moment. And if during the struggle itself the majority of the working people prove to be on our side—not only the majority of the workers, but the majority of all the exploited and oppressed—then we shall really be victorious, (*Prolonged, stormy applause.*)

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**SPEECHES AT A MEETING
OF MEMBERS OF THE GERMAN, POLISH,
CZECHOSLOVAK, HUNGARIAN AND ITALIAN DELEGATIONS
AT THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
July 11, 1921**

1

I read certain reports yesterday in *Pravda* which have persuaded me that the moment for an offensive is perhaps nearer than we thought at the Congress, and for which the young comrades attacked us. I shall deal with these reports later, however. Just now I want to say that the nearer the general offensive is, the more "opportunistically" must we act. You will now all return home and tell the workers that we have become more reasonable than we were before the Third Congress. You should not be put out by this; you will say that we made mistakes and now wish to act more carefully; by doing so we shall win the masses over from the Social-Democratic and Independent Social-Democratic parties, masses, who objectively, by the whole course of events, are being pushed towards us, but who are afraid of us. I want to cite our own example to show you that we must act more carefully.

At the beginning of the war we Bolsheviks adhered to a single slogan—that of civil war, and a ruthless one at that. We branded as a traitor everyone who did not support the idea of civil war. But when we came back to Russia in March 1917 we changed our position entirely. When we returned to Russia and spoke to the peasants and workers, we saw that they all stood for defence of the homeland, of course in quite a different sense from the Mensheviks, and we could not call these ordinary workers and peasants scoundrels and traitors. We described this as "honest defencism". I intend to write a big article about this and publish all the material. On April 7 I published

my theses, in which I called for caution and patience.* Our original stand at the beginning of the war was correct: it was important then to form a definite and resolute core. Our subsequent stand was correct too. It proceeded from the assumption that the masses had to be won over. At that time we already rejected the idea of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government. I wrote: "It should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, and not a people's government, and is unable to provide peace or bread. But it cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by the workers' Soviets and so far enjoys the confidence of the workers. We are not Blanquists, we do not want to rule with a minority of the working class against the majority."** The Cadets, who are shrewd politicians, immediately noticed the contradiction between our former position and the new one, and called us hypocrites. But as, in the same breath, they had called us spies, traitors, scoundrels and German agents, the former appellation made no impression. The first crisis occurred on April 20. Milyukov's Note on the Dardanelles showed the government up for what it was—an imperialist government. After this the armed masses of the soldiery moved against the building of the government and overthrew Milyukov. They were led by a non-party man named Linde. This movement had not been organised by the Party. We characterised that movement at the time as follows: something more than an armed demonstration, and something less than an armed uprising. At our conference on April 22 the Left trend demanded the immediate overthrow of the government. The Central Committee, on the contrary, declared against the slogan of civil war, and we instructed all agitators in the provinces to deny the outrageous lie about the Bolsheviks wanting civil war. On April 22 I wrote that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" was incorrect, since if we did not have the majority of the people behind us the slogan would be either an empty phrase or adventurism.***

* "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 19-26).—*Ed.*

** "The Dual Power" (*ibid.*, p. 40).—*Ed.*

*** See "Resolution of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) Adopted in the Morning of April 22 (May 5), 1917" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 210-11).—*Ed.*

We did not hesitate in face of our enemies to call our Leftists "adventurists". The Mensheviks crowed over this and talked about our bankruptcy. But we said that any attempt to be slightly, if only a wee bit, left of the C.C. was folly, and those who stood left of the C.C. had lost ordinary common sense. We refuse to be intimidated by the fact that our enemies rejoice at our slips.

Our sole strategy now is to become stronger, hence cleverer, more sensible, more "opportunistic", and that is what we must tell the masses. But after we have won over the masses by our reasonableness, we shall use the tactic of offensive in the strictest sense of that word.

Now about the three reports:

1) The strike of Berlin's municipal workers. Municipal workers are mostly conservative people, who belong to the Social-Democrats of the majority and to the Independent Social-Democratic Party; they are well off, but are compelled to strike.²⁹

2) The strike of the textile workers in Lille.³⁰

3) The third fact is the most important. A meeting was held in Rome to organise the struggle against the fascists, in which 50,000 workers took part—representing all parties—Communists, socialists and also republicans. Five thousand ex-servicemen came to the meeting in their uniforms and not a single fascist dared to appear on the street.³¹ This shows that there is more inflammable material in Europe than we thought. Lazzari praised our resolution on tactics. It is an important achievement of our Congress. If Lazzari admits it, then the thousands of workers who back him are bound to come to us, and their leaders will not be able to scare them away from us. "*Il faut reculer, pour mieux sauter*" (you have to step back to make a better jump.) This jump is inevitable, since the situation, objectively, is becoming insufferable.

So we are beginning to apply our new tactic. We mustn't get nervy, we cannot be late, rather we may start too early, and when you ask whether Russia will be able to hold out so long, we answer that we are now fighting a war with the petty bourgeoisie, with the peasantry, an economic war, which is much more dangerous for us than the last war. But, as Clausewitz said, the element of war is a danger

and we have never been out of that danger for a moment. I am sure that if we act more cautiously, if we make concessions in time, we shall win this war too, even if it lasts over three years.

Summing up:

1) All of us, unanimously throughout Europe, shall say that we are applying the new tactic, and in this way we shall win the masses.

2) Co-ordination of the offensive in the most important countries: Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy. We need here preparation, constant co-ordination. Europe is pregnant with revolution, but it is impossible to make up a calendar of revolution beforehand. We in Russia will hold out, not only five years, but more. The only correct strategy is the one we have adopted. I am confident that we shall win positions for the revolution which the Entente will have nothing to put up against, and that will be the beginning of victory on a world scale.

2

Šmeral seemed to be pleased with my speech, but he interprets it one-sidedly. I said in the Committee that in order to find the correct line Šmeral had to make three steps to the left, and Kreibich one step to the right. Šmeral, unfortunately, said nothing about taking these steps. Nor did he say anything about his views on the situation. Concerning the difficulties, Šmeral merely repeated the old arguments and said nothing new. Šmeral said that I had dispelled his fears. In the spring he was afraid that the communist leadership would demand of him untimely action, but events dispelled these fears. But what worries us now is this: will things really come to the stage of preparation for the offensive in Czechoslovakia, or will they be confined merely to talk about difficulties. The Left mistake is simply a mistake, it isn't big and is easily rectified. But if the mistake pertains to the resolution to act, then this is by no means a small mistake, it is a betrayal. These mistakes do not bear comparison. The theory that we shall make a revolution, but only after others have acted first, is utterly fallacious,

The retreat made at this Congress can, I think, be compared with our actions in 1917 in Russia, and therefore prove that this retreat must serve as preparation for the offensive. Our opponents will say that we are not saying today that we said before. It will do them little good, but the working-class masses will understand us if we tell them in what sense the March action is to be considered a success and why we criticise its mistakes and say that we should make better preparations in future. I agree with Terracini when he says that the interpretations of Šmeral and Burian are wrong. If co-ordination is to be understood as our having to wait until another country has started, a country that is richer and has a bigger population, then this is not a communist interpretation, but downright deception. Co-ordination should consist in comrades from other countries knowing exactly what moments are significant. The really important interpretation of co-ordination is this: the best and quickest imitation of a good example. That of the workers of *Rome* is a good example.

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 first speech in full,
 second and third in abridged
 form in the journal
Voprosi Istorii K.P.S.S. No. 5

Collected Works, Vol. 42,
 pp. 324-28

A LETTER TO THE GERMAN COMMUNISTS

Dear comrades,

I had intended to state my view of the lessons of the Third Congress of the Communist International in a detailed article. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to start on this work because of ill-health. The fact that a Congress of your Party, the United Communist Party of Germany (V.K.P.D.),³² has been called for August 22, compels me to hasten with this letter, which I have to finish within a few hours, if I am not to be late in sending it to Germany.

So far as I can judge, the position of the Communist Party in Germany is a particularly difficult one. This is understandable.

Firstly, and mainly, from the end of 1918, the international position of Germany very quickly and sharply aggravated her internal revolutionary crisis and impelled the vanguard of the proletariat towards an immediate seizure of power. At the same time, the German and the entire international bourgeoisie, excellently armed and organised, and taught by the "Russian experience", hurled itself upon the revolutionary proletariat of Germany in a frenzy of hate. Tens of thousands of the best people of Germany—her revolutionary workers—were killed or tortured to death by the bourgeoisie, its heroes, Noske and Co., its servants, the Scheidemanns, etc., and by its indirect and "subtle" (and therefore particularly valuable) accomplices, the knights of the "Two-and-a-Half International", with their despicable spinelessness, vacillations, pedantry and philistinism. The armed capitalists set traps

for the unarmed workers; they killed them wholesale, murdered their leaders, ambushing them one by one, and making excellent use to this end of the counter-revolutionary howling of both shades of Social-Democrats, the Scheide-mannites and the Kautskyites. When the crisis broke out, however, the German workers lacked a genuine revolutionary party, owing to the fact that the split was brought about too late, and owing to the burden of the accursed tradition of "unity" with capital's corrupt (the Scheide-manns, Legiens, Davids and Co.) and spineless (the Kauts-kys, Hilferdings and Co.) gang of lackeys. The heart of every honest and class-conscious worker who accepted the Basle Manifesto of 1912 at its face value and not as a "gesture" on the part of the scoundrels of the "Second" and the "Two-and-a-Half" grades, was filled with incredibly bitter hatred for the opportunism of the old German Social-Democrats, and this hatred—the greatest and most noble sentiment of the best people among the oppressed and exploited masses—blinded people and prevented them from keeping their heads and working out a correct strategy with which to reply to the excellent strategy of the Entente capitalists, who were armed, organised and schooled by the "Russian experience", and supported by France, Britain and America. This hatred pushed them into premature insurrections.

That is why the development of the revolutionary working-class movement in Germany has since the end of 1918 been treading a particularly hard and painful road. But it has marched and is marching steadily forward. There is the incontrovertible fact of the gradual swing to the left among the masses of workers, the real majority of the labouring and exploited people in Germany, both those organised in the old, Menshevik trade unions (i.e., the unions serving the bourgeoisie) and those entirely, or almost entirely, unorganised. What the German proletariat must and will do—and this is the guarantee of victory—is keep their heads; systematically rectify the mistakes of the past; steadily win over the mass of the workers both inside and outside the trade unions; patiently build up a strong and intelligent Communist Party capable of giving real leadership to the masses at every turn of events; and work out a strategy that is on a level with the best international

strategy of the most advanced bourgeoisie, which is "enlightened" by age-long experience in general, and the "Russian experience" in particular.

On the other hand, the difficult position of the Communist Party of Germany is aggravated at the present moment by the break-away of the not very good Communists on the left (the Communist Workers' Party of Germany, K.A.P.D.) and on the right (Paul Levi and his little magazine *Unser Weg* or *Sowjet*).

Beginning with the Second Congress of the Communist International, the "Leftists" or "K.A.P.-ists"³³ have received sufficient warning from us in the international arena. Until sufficiently strong, experienced and influential Communist Parties have been built, at least in the principal countries, the participation of semi-anarchist elements in our international congresses has to be tolerated, and is to some extent even useful. It is useful insofar as these elements serve as a clear "warning" to inexperienced Communists, and also insofar as they themselves are still capable of learning. All over the world, anarchism has been splitting up—not since yesterday, but since the beginning of the imperialist war of 1914-18—into two trends: one pro-Soviet, and the other anti-Soviet; one in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the other against it. We must allow this process of disintegration among the anarchists to go on and come to a head. Hardly anyone in Western Europe has experienced anything like a big revolution. There, the experience of great revolutions has been almost entirely forgotten, and the transition from the desire to be revolutionary and from talk (and resolutions) about revolution to real revolutionary work is very difficult, painful and slow.

It goes without saying, however, that the semi-anarchist elements can and should be tolerated only within certain limits. In Germany, we tolerated them for quite a long time. The Third Congress of the Communist International faced them with an ultimatum and fixed a definite time limit. If they have now voluntarily resigned from the Communist International, all the better. Firstly, they have saved us the trouble of expelling them. Secondly, it has now been demonstrated most conclusively and most graphically, and proved with precise facts to all vacillating workers,

and all those who have been inclined towards anarchism because of their hatred for the opportunism of the old Social-Democrats, that the Communist International has been patient, that it has not expelled anarchists immediately and unconditionally, and that it has given them an attentive hearing and helped them to learn.

We must now pay less attention to the K.A.P.-ists. By polemising with them we merely give them publicity. They are too unintelligent; it is wrong to take them seriously; and it is not worth being angry with them. They have no influence among the masses, and will acquire none, unless we make mistakes. Let us leave this tiny trend to die a natural death; the workers themselves will realise that it is worthless. Let us propagate and implement, with greater effect, the organisational and tactical decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, instead of giving the K.A.P.-ists publicity by arguing with them. The infantile disorder of "Leftism" is passing and will pass away as the movement grows.

Similarly we are now needlessly helping Paul Levi, we are needlessly giving him publicity by polemising with him. That we should argue with him is exactly what he wants. Now, after the decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International, we must forget about him and devote all our attention, all our efforts, to peaceful, practical and constructive work (without any squabbling, polemics, or bringing up of the quarrels of yesterday), in the spirit of the decisions of the Third Congress. It is my conviction that Comrade K. Radek's article, "The Third World Congress on the March Action, and Future Tactics" (in *Die Rote Fahne*, the Central Organ of the United Communist Party of Germany, issues of July 14 and 15, 1921), sins quite considerably against this general and unanimously adopted decision of the Third Congress. This article, a copy of which was sent me by one of the Polish Communists, is quite unnecessarily—and in a way that positively harms our work—directed not only against Paul Levi (that would be very unimportant), but also against Clara Zetkin. And yet Clara Zetkin herself concluded a "peace treaty" in Moscow, during the Third Congress, with the C.C. (the "Centrale") of the United Communist Party of Germany, providing for joint, non-factional work! And we all approved

of the treaty. In his misplaced polemical zeal, Comrade K. Radek has gone to the length of saying something positively untrue, attributing to Zetkin the idea of "putting off" (*verlegt*) "every general action by the Party" (*jede allgemeine Aktion der Partei*) "until the day when large masses rise" (*auf den Tag, wo die grossen Massen aufstehen werden.*) It goes without saying that by such methods Comrade K. Radek is rendering Paul Levi the best service the latter could wish for. There is nothing Paul Levi wants so much as a controversy endlessly dragged out, with as many people involved in it as possible, and efforts to drive Zetkin away from the party by polemical breaches of the "peace treaty" which she herself concluded, and which was approved by the entire Communist International. Comrade K. Radek's article serves as an excellent example of how Paul Levi is assisted from the "Left".

Here I must explain to the German comrades why I defended Paul Levi so long at the Third Congress. Firstly, because I made Levi's acquaintance through Radek in Switzerland in 1915 or 1916. At that time Levi was already a Bolshevik. I cannot help entertaining a certain amount of distrust towards those who accepted Bolshevism *only after* its victory in Russia, and after it had scored a number of victories in the international arena. But, of course, this reason is relatively unimportant, for, after all, my personal knowledge of Paul Levi is very small. Incomparably more important was the second reason, namely, that *essentially* much of Levi's criticism of the March action in Germany in 1921 was *correct* (not, of course, when he said that the uprising was a "putsch"; that assertion of his was absurd).

It is true that Levi did all he possibly could, and much besides, to weaken and spoil his criticism, and make it difficult for himself and others to understand the *essence* of the matter, by bringing in a mass of details in which he was obviously wrong. Levi couched his criticism in an impermissible and harmful form. While urging others to pursue a cautious and well-considered strategy, Levi himself committed worse blunders than a schoolboy, by rushing into battle so prematurely, so unprepared, so absurdly and wildly that he was certain to lose any "battle" (spoiling or hampering his work for many years), although the "battle" could and should have been won. Levi behaved like

an "anarchist intellectual" (if I am not mistaken, the German term is *Edelanarchist*), instead of behaving like an organised member of the proletarian Communist International. Levi committed a breach of discipline.

By this series of incredibly stupid blunders Levi made it difficult to concentrate attention on the essence of the matter. And the essence of the matter, i.e., the appraisal and correction of the innumerable mistakes made by the United Communist Party of Germany during the March action of 1921, has been and continues to be of enormous importance. In order to explain and correct these mistakes (which some people enshrined as gems of Marxist tactics) *it was necessary* to have been on the *Right* wing during the Third Congress of the Communist International. Otherwise the *line* of the Communist International would have been a *wrong* one.

I defended and had to defend Levi, insofar as I saw before me opponents of his who merely shouted about "Menshevism" and "Centrism" and refused to see the mistakes of the March action and the need to explain and correct them. These people made a caricature of revolutionary Marxism, and a pastime of the struggle against "Centrism". They might have done the greatest harm to the whole cause, for "no one in the world can compromise the revolutionary Marxists, if they do not compromise themselves".

I said to these people: Granted that Levi has become a Menshevik. As I have scant knowledge of him personally, I will not insist, if the point is proved to me. But it has not yet been proved. All that has been proved till now is that he *has lost his head*. It is childishly stupid to declare a man a Menshevik merely on these grounds. The training of experienced and influential party leaders is a long and difficult job. And without it the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its "unity of will", remain a phrase. In Russia, it took us fifteen years (1903-17) to produce a group of leaders—fifteen years of fighting Menshevism, fifteen years of tsarist persecution, fifteen years, which included the years of the first revolution (1905), a great and mighty revolution. Yet we have had our sad cases, when even fine comrades have "lost their heads". If the West-European comrades imagine that they are insured against

such "sad cases" it is sheer childishness, and we cannot but combat it.

Levi had to be expelled for breach of discipline. Tactics had to be determined *on the basis* of a most detailed explanation and correction of the mistakes made during the March 1921 action. If, *after* this, Levi wants to behave in the old way, he will show that his expulsion was justified; and the wavering or hesitant workers will be given all the more forceful and convincing proof of the absolute correctness of the Third Congress decisions concerning Paul Levi.

Having made a cautious approach at the Congress to the appraisal of Levi's mistakes, I can now say with all the more assurance that Levi has hastened to confirm the worst expectations. I have before me No. 6 of his magazine *Unser Weg* (of July 15, 1921). It is evident from the editorial note printed at the head of the magazine that the decisions of the Third Congress are known to Paul Levi. What is his reply to them? Menshevik catchwords such as "a great excommunication" (*grosser Bann*), "canon law" (*kanonisches Recht*), and that he will "quite freely" (*in vollständiger Freiheit*) "discuss" these decisions. What greater freedom can a man have if he has been freed of the title of party member and member of the Communist International! And please note that he expects party members to write for him, for Levi, anonymously!

First—he plays a dirty trick on the party, hits it in the back, and sabotages its work.

Then—he discusses the essence of the Congress decisions.

That is magnificent.

But by doing this Levi puts paid to himself.

Paul Levi wants to continue the fight.

It will be a great strategic error to satisfy his desire. I would advise the German comrades to prohibit all controversy with Levi and his magazine in the columns of the daily party press. He must not be given publicity. He must not be allowed to divert the fighting party's attention from important matters to unimportant ones. In cases of extreme necessity, the controversy could be conducted in weekly or monthly magazines, or in pamphlets, and as far as possible care must be taken not to afford the K.A.P.-ists and Paul Levi the pleasure they feel when they are men-

tioned by name; reference should simply be made to "certain not very clever critics who at all costs want to regard themselves as Communists".

I am informed that at the last meeting of the enlarged C.C. (*Ausschuss*), even the Left-winger Friesland was compelled to launch a sharp attack on Maslow, who is playing at Leftism and wishes to exercise himself in "hunting Centrists". The unreasonableness (to put it mildly) of this Maslow's conduct was also revealed over here, in Moscow. Really, this Maslow and two or three of his supporters and confederates, who obviously do not wish to observe the "peace treaty" and have more zeal than sense, should be sent by the German party to Soviet Russia for a year or two. We would find useful work for them. We would make men of them. And the international and German movement would certainly gain thereby.

The German Communists must at all costs end the internal dissension, get rid of the quarrelsome elements on both sides, forget about Paul Levi and the K.A.P.-ists and get down to real work.

There is plenty to be done.

In my opinion, the tactical and organisational resolutions of the Third Congress of the Communist International mark a great step forward. Every effort must be exerted to really put both resolutions into effect. This is a difficult matter, but it can and should be done.

First, the Communists had to proclaim their principles to the world. That was done at the First Congress. It was the first step.

The second step was to give the Communist International organisational form and to draw up conditions for affiliation to it—conditions making for real separation from the Centrists, from the direct and indirect agents of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement. That was done at the Second Congress.

At the Third Congress it was necessary to start practical, constructive work, to determine concretely, taking account of the practical experience of the communist struggle

already begun, *exactly what* the line of further activity should be in respect of tactics and of organisation. We have taken this third step. We have an army of Communists all over the world. It is still poorly trained and poorly organised. It would be extremely harmful to forget this truth or be afraid of admitting it. Submitting ourselves to a most careful and rigorous test, and studying the experience of our own movement, we must train this army efficiently; we must organise it properly, and test it in all sorts of manoeuvres, all sorts of battles, in attack and in retreat. We cannot win without this long and hard schooling.

The "crux" of the situation in the international communist movement in the summer of 1921 was that some of the best and most influential sections of the Communist International did not quite properly understand this task; they *exaggerated* the "struggle against Centrism" *ever so slightly*; they *went ever so slightly beyond* the border line at which this struggle turns into a pastime and revolutionary Marxism begins to be compromised.

That was the "crux" of the Third Congress.

The exaggeration was a slight one; but the danger arising out of it was enormous. It was difficult to combat it, because the exaggerating was done by really the best and most loyal elements, without whom the formation of the Communist International would, perhaps, have been impossible. In the tactical amendments published in the newspaper *Moskau*³⁴ in German, French and English and signed by the German, Austrian and Italian delegations, this exaggeration was definitely revealed—the more so because these amendments were proposed to a draft resolution that was already final (following long and all-round preparatory work). The rejection of these amendments was a *straightening out* of the line of the Communist International; it was a victory over the danger of exaggeration.

Exaggeration, if not corrected, was sure to kill the Communist International. For "no one in the world can compromise the revolutionary Marxists, if they do not compromise themselves". No one in the world will be able to prevent the victory of the Communists over the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals (and under the conditions prevailing in twentieth-century Western Europe and America, after the first imperialist war, this means victory

over the bourgeoisie) *unless* the Communists prevent it themselves.

Exaggeration, however slight, means preventing victory.

Exaggeration of the struggle against Centrism means *saving* Centrism, means *strengthening* its position, its influence over the workers.

In the period between the Second and the Third Congresses, we learned to wage a victorious struggle against Centrism on an international scale. This is proved by the facts. We will continue to wage this struggle (expulsion of Levi and of Serrati's party) to the end.

We have, however, *not yet* learned, on an international scale, to combat wrong exaggerations in the struggle against Centrism. But we have become conscious of this defect, as has been proved by the course and outcome of the Third Congress. And precisely because we have become conscious of our defect *we will rid ourselves of it.*

And then we shall be invincible, because without support inside the proletariat (through the medium of the bourgeois agents of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals) the bourgeoisie in Western Europe and America *cannot* retain power.

More careful, more thorough preparation for fresh and more decisive battles, both defensive and offensive—that is the fundamental and principal thing in the decisions of the Third Congress.

“...Communism will become a mass force in Italy if the Italian Communist Party unceasingly and steadily fights the opportunist policy of Serratism and at the same time is able to maintain close contact with the proletarian masses in the trade unions, during strikes, during clashes with the counter-revolutionary fascist organisations; if it is able to merge the movements of all the working-class organisations and to transform the spontaneous outbreaks of the working class into carefully prepared battles...”

“The United Communist Party of Germany will be the better able to carry out mass action, the better it adapts its fighting slogans to the actual situation in future, the more thoroughly it studies the situation, and the more co-ordinated and disciplined the action it conducts...”

Such are the most pertinent passages of the tactical resolution of the Third Congress.

To win over the majority of the proletariat to our side—

such is the "principal task" (the heading of Point 3 of the resolution on tactics).

Of course, we do not give the winning of the majority a formal interpretation, as do the knights of philistine "democracy" of the Two-and-a-Half International. When in Rome, in July 1921, the entire proletariat—the reformist proletariat of the trade unions and the Centrists of Serrati's party—*followed* the Communists against the fascists, that was *winning over the majority* of the working class to our side.

This was far, very far, from winning them decisively; it was doing so only partially, only momentarily, only locally. But it was winning over the majority, and that is possible even if, formally, the majority of the proletariat follow bourgeois leaders, or leaders who pursue a bourgeois policy (as do all the leaders of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals), or if the majority of the proletariat are wavering. This winning over is gaining ground steadily in every way throughout the world. Let us make more thorough and careful preparations for it; let us not allow a single serious opportunity to slip by when the bourgeoisie compels the proletariat to undertake a struggle; let us learn to correctly determine the moment when the *masses* of the proletariat *cannot but* rise together with us.

Then victory will be assured, no matter how severe some of the defeats and transitions in our great campaign may be.

Our tactical and strategic methods (if we take them on an international scale) still lag behind the excellent strategy of the bourgeoisie, which has learned from the example of Russia and will not let itself be "taken by surprise". But our forces are greater, immeasurably greater; we are learning tactics and strategy; we have advanced this "science" on the basis of the mistakes of the March 1921 action. We shall completely master this "science".

In the overwhelming majority of countries, our parties are still very far from being what real Communist Parties should be; they are far from being real vanguards of the genuinely revolutionary and only revolutionary class, with every single member taking part in the struggle, in the movement, in the everyday life of the masses. But we are aware of this defect, we brought it out most strikingly in

the Third Congress resolution on the work of the Party. And we shall overcome this defect.

Comrades, German Communists, permit me to conclude by expressing the wish that your party Congress on August 22 will with a firm hand put a stop once and for all to the trivial struggle against those who have broken away on the left and the right. Inner-party struggles must stop! Down with everyone who wants to drag them out, directly or indirectly. We know our tasks today much more clearly, concretely and thoroughly than we did yesterday; we are not afraid of pointing openly to our mistakes in order to rectify them. We shall now devote all the Party's efforts to improving its organisation, to enriching the quality and content of its work, to creating closer contact with the masses, and to working out increasingly correct and accurate working-class tactics and strategy.

With communist greetings,

N. Lenin

August 14, 1921

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Committee of the Communist
International* No. 3,
October 21, 1921

A LETTER TO THE POLISH COMMUNISTS

19.X.1921

Dear Comrades,

Judging by the scrappy information concerning the growth of the communist movement in Poland that reaches our newspapers, and judging (still more) by the reports of some very prominent Polish comrades, the revolution in Poland is coming to a head.

A workers' revolution is brewing: the complete collapse of the P.P.S.³⁵ (in Russian—S.R.s and Mensheviks; in European—the II and II^{1/2} Internationals). The trade unions, one after another, are joining the Communists. The growth of demonstrations, and so on. Imminent and inevitable financial collapse. The gigantic failure of bourgeois democracy (and of the petty bourgeoisie) in Poland with the agrarian reform, a failure that is foredoomed, inevitable and bound to push the majority of the rural population—the whole poor section of the peasantry—towards the Communists.

Financial collapse and shameless plunder of Poland by Entente capital (France and other countries) are bringing with them a practical exposure of national and Great Power illusions, an exposure that is strikingly clear and tangible to the masses, to the rank-and-file worker, to the rank-and-file peasant.

If this is so, then the revolution (Soviet revolution) in Poland is bound to win, and win soon. That being the case, the government and the bourgeoisie must be prevented from strangling the revolution by bloody suppression of a premature uprising. You must not be provoked. You must wait for the tide to rise to its highest: it will sweep everything away and give victory to the Communists.

If the bourgeoisie kills 100-300 people, this will not ruin the cause. But if it is able to provoke a massacre, to kill 10-30 *thousand* workers, this *may* delay the revolution *even for several years*.

If it is important for the government to hold elections to the Sejm, then an effort should be made for the *Sejm to be won* by the wave of the workers' revolution and the peasants' discontent.

Do not yield to provocation.

The revolution must be allowed to *grow to full ripening* of the fruit. The victory of Soviet power *from within* in Poland will be a gigantic *international* victory. If Soviet power has, in my opinion, now won an international victory to the extent of 20-30 per cent, then with the victory of Soviet power *from within* in Poland, we shall have a 40-50, perhaps even 51 per cent *international* victory of the communist revolution. For Poland is next door to Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and a Soviet Poland will undermine the *whole* regime built up on the peace of Versailles.

That is why the Polish Communists bear a responsibility before the whole world—that of keeping a firm grip on the helm of their ship and steering clear of provocations.

Is it worth while retaliating for the beating up of Dąbal by Daszynski & Co.? Retaliation, if any, should be by beating up Daszynski, just like that, without any shooting or wounding. It may be worth while if it has the effect of teaching an insolent fellow a lesson at the hands of the workers, and stiffening the workers' spirit at the cost of a sacrifice of 5-10 of them (by imprisonment or execution). But maybe it is not worth while: would not the fact that *our* Dąbal had been brutally beaten up be *more useful* for the purpose of agitation among the *peasants*? Would it not be *more effective* in turning the sympathy of the *backward* peasants towards us than the thrashing of Daszynski? This should be weighed more carefully.

With communist greetings,

Lenin

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOLD NOW AND AFTER THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM

The best way to celebrate the anniversary of a great revolution is to concentrate attention on its unsolved problems. It is particularly appropriate and necessary to celebrate the revolution in this way at a time when we are faced with fundamental problems that the revolution has not yet solved, and when we must master something new (from the point of view of what the revolution has accomplished up to now) for the solution of these problems.

What is new for our revolution at the present time is the need for a "reformist", gradual, cautious and round-about approach to the solution of the fundamental problems of economic development. This "novelty" gives rise to a number of questions, perplexities and doubts in both theory and practice.

A theoretical question. How can we explain the transition from a series of extremely revolutionary actions to extremely "reformist" actions in the same field at a time when the revolution as a whole is making victorious progress? Does it not imply a "surrender of positions", an "admission of defeat", or something of that sort? Of course, our enemies—from the semi-feudal type of reactionaries to the Mensheviks or other knights of the Two-and-a-Half International—say that it does. They would not be enemies if they did not shout something of the sort on every pretext, and even without any pretext. The touching unanimity that prevails on this question among all parties, from the feudal reactionaries to the Mensheviks, is only further proof that all these parties constitute "one reactionary mass" opposed to the proletarian revolution (as Engels foresaw

in his letters to Bebel of 1875 and 1884—be it said in parenthesis).³⁶

But there is “perplexity”, shall we say, among friends, too.

Restore large-scale industry, organise the direct exchange of its goods for the produce of small-peasant farming, and thus assist the socialisation of the latter. For the purpose of restoring large-scale industry, borrow from the peasants a certain quantity of foodstuffs and raw materials by requisitioning—this was the plan (or method, system) that we followed for more than three years, up to the spring of 1921. This was a revolutionary approach to the problem—to break up the old social-economic system completely at one stroke and to substitute a new one for it.

Since the spring of 1921, instead of this approach, plan, method, or mode of action, we have been adopting (we have not yet “adopted” but are still “adopting”, and have not yet fully realised it) a totally different method, a reformist type of method: not to *break up* the old social-economic system—trade, petty production, petty proprietorship, capitalism—but to *revive* trade, petty proprietorship, capitalism, while cautiously and gradually getting the upper hand over them, or making it possible to subject them to state regulation *only to the extent* that they revive.

That is an entirely different approach to the problem.

Compared with the previous, revolutionary, approach, it is a reformist approach (revolution is a change which breaks the old order to its very foundations, and not one that cautiously, slowly and gradually remodels it, taking care to break as little as possible).

The question that arises is this. If, after trying revolutionary methods, you find they have failed and adopt reformist methods, does it not prove that you are declaring the revolution to have been a mistake in general? Does it not prove that you should not have started with the revolution but should have started with reforms and confined yourselves to them?

That is the conclusion which the Mensheviks and others like them have drawn. But this conclusion is either sophistry, a mere fraud perpetrated by case-hardened politicians, or it is the childishness of political tyros. The greatest, perhaps the only, danger to the genuine revolutionary

is that of exaggerated revolutionism, ignoring the limits and conditions in which revolutionary methods are appropriate and can be successfully employed. True revolutionaries have mostly come a cropper when they began to write "revolution" with a capital R, to elevate "revolution" to something almost divine, to lose their heads, to lose the ability to reflect, weigh and ascertain in the coolest and most dispassionate manner at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere of action you must act in a revolutionary manner, and at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere you must turn to reformist action. True revolutionaries will perish (not that they will be defeated from outside, but that their work will suffer internal collapse) only if they abandon their sober outlook and take it into their heads that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action. If they do this, their doom is certain.

Whoever gets such ideas into his head is lost because he has foolish ideas about a fundamental problem; and in a fierce war (and revolution is the fiercest sort of war) the penalty for folly is defeat.

What grounds are there for assuming that the "great, victorious, world" revolution can and must employ only revolutionary methods? There are none at all. The assumption is a pure fallacy; this can be proved by purely theoretical propositions if we stick to Marxism. The experience of our revolution also shows that it is a fallacy. From the theoretical point of view—foolish things are done in time of revolution just as at any other time, said Engels,³⁷ and he was right. We must try to do as few foolish things as possible, and rectify those that are done as quickly as possible, and we must, as soberly as we can, estimate which problems can be solved by revolutionary methods at any given time and which cannot. From the point of view of our practical experience the Brest peace³⁸ was an example of action that was not revolutionary at all; it was reformist, and even worse, because it was a retreat, whereas, as a general rule, reformist action advances slowly, cautiously, gradually, and does not move backward. The proof that our tactics in concluding the Brest peace were correct is now

so complete, so obvious to all and generally admitted, that there is no need to say any more about it.

Our revolution has completed only its bourgeois-democratic work; and we have every right to be proud of this. The proletarian or socialist part of its work may be summed up in three main points: (1) The revolutionary withdrawal from the imperialist world war; the exposure and *halting* of the slaughter organised by the two world groups of capitalist predators—for our part we have done this in full; others could have done it only if there had been a revolution in a number of advanced countries. (2) The establishment of the Soviet system, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. An epoch-making change has been made. The era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to an end. A new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has been opened. The Soviet system and all forms of proletarian dictatorship will have the finishing touches put to them and be completed only by the efforts of a number of countries. There is still a great deal we have not done in this field. It would be unpardonable to lose sight of this. Again and again we shall have to improve the work, redo it, start from the beginning. Every step onward and upward that we take in developing our productive forces and our culture must be accompanied by the work of improving and altering our Soviet system—we are still low in the scale of economics and culture. Much will have to be altered, and to be “embarrassed” by this would be absurd (if not worse). (3) The creation of the economic basis of the socialist system; the main features of what is most important, most fundamental, have not yet been completed. This, however, is our soundest basis, soundest from the point of view of principle and from the practical point of view, from the point of view of the R.S.F.S.R. today and from the international point of view.

Since the main features of this basis have not yet been completed we must concentrate all our attention upon it. The difficulty here lies in the form of the transition.

In April 1918, in my *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, I wrote:

“It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able

at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link; the order of the links, their form, the manner in which they are linked together, their difference from each other in the historical chain of events are not as simple and not as senseless as those in an ordinary chain made by a smith." *

At the present time, in the sphere of activity with which we are dealing, this link is the revival of home *trade* under proper state regulation (direction). Trade is the "link" in the historical chain of events, in the transitional forms of our socialist construction in 1921-22, which we, the proletarian government, we, the ruling Communist Party, "*must grasp with all our might*". If we "grasp" this link firmly enough *now* we shall certainly control the *whole* chain in the very near future. If we do not, we shall not control the whole chain, we shall not create the foundation for socialist social and economic relations.

Communism and trade?! It sounds strange. The two seem to be unconnected, incongruous, poles apart. But if we study it from the point of view of *economics*, we shall find that the one is no more remote from the other than communism is from small-peasant, patriarchal farming.

When we are victorious on a world scale I think we shall use gold for the purpose of building public lavatories in the streets of some of the largest cities of the world. This would be the most "just" and most educational way of utilising gold for the benefit of those generations which have not forgotten how, for the sake of gold, ten million men were killed and thirty million maimed in the "great war for freedom", the war of 1914-18, the war that was waged to decide the great question of which peace was the worst, that of Brest or that of Versailles; and how, for the sake of this same gold, they certainly intend to kill twenty million men and to maim sixty million in a war, say, in 1925, or 1928, between, say, Japan and the U.S.A., or between Britain and the U.S.A., or something like that.

But however "just", useful, or humane it would be to utilise gold for this purpose, we nevertheless say that we

* See Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 274.—Ed.

must work for another decade or two with the same intensity and with the same success as in the 1917-21 period, only in a much wider field, in order to reach this stage. Meanwhile, we must save the gold in the R.S.F.S.R., sell it at the highest price, buy goods with it at the lowest price. When you live among wolves, you must howl like a wolf, while as for exterminating all the wolves, as should be done in a rational human society, we shall act up to the wise Russian proverb: "Boast not before but after the battle."

Trade is the only possible economic link between the scores of millions of small farmers and large-scale industry *if . . . if* there is not alongside these farmers an excellently equipped large-scale machine industry with a network of power transmission lines, an industry whose technical equipment, organisational "superstructures" and other features are sufficient to enable it to supply the small farmers with the best goods in larger quantities, more quickly and more cheaply than before. On a world scale this "if" *has already been achieved*, this condition already exists. But the country, formerly one of the most backward capitalist countries, which tried alone directly and at one stroke to create, to put into use, to organise practically the *new* links between industry and agriculture, failed to achieve this task by "direct assault", and must now try to achieve it by a number of slow, gradual, and cautious "siege" operations.

The proletarian government can control trade, direct it into definite channels, keep it within certain limits. I shall give a small, a very small example. In the Donets Basin a slight, still very slight, but undoubted revival in the economy has commenced, partly due to a rise in the productivity of labour at the large state mines, and partly due to the leasing of small mines to peasants. As a result, the proletarian government is receiving a small additional quantity (a miserably small quantity compared with what is obtained in the advanced countries, but an appreciable quantity considering our poverty-stricken condition) of coal at a cost of, say, 100; and it is selling this coal to various government departments at a price of, say, 120, and to private individuals at a price of, say, 140. (I must say in parenthesis that my figures are quite arbitrary, first, because I do not know the exact figures, and, secondly, I would not

now make them public even if I did.) This looks as if we are *beginning*, if only in very modest dimensions, to control *exchange* between industry and agriculture, to control wholesale trade, to cope with the task of taking in hand the available, small, backward industry, or large-scale but weakened and ruined industry; of reviving trade on the *present* economic basis; of making the ordinary middle peasant (and that is the typical peasant, the peasant in the mass, the true representative of the petty-bourgeois milieu) feel the benefit of the economic revival; of taking advantage of it for the purpose of more systematically and persistently, more widely and successfully restoring large-scale industry.

We shall not surrender to "sentimental socialism", or to the old Russian, semi-aristocratic, semi-muzhik and patriarchal mood, with their supreme contempt for trade. We can use, and since it is necessary, we *must* learn to use, all transitional economic forms for the purpose of strengthening the link between the peasantry and the proletariat, for the purpose of immediately reviving the economy of our ruined and tormented country, of improving industry, and facilitating such future, more extensive and more deep-going, measures as electrification.

Marxism alone has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution, although Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect—under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in one country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. Throughout the capitalist world this relation is the foundation of the revolutionary tactics of the proletariat—the ABC, which is being distorted and obscured by the corrupt leaders of the Second International and the half-pedantic and half-finicky knights of the Two-and-a-Half International. After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism. Why were we able to carry out the Brest retreat successful-

ly? Because we had advanced so far that we had room in which to retreat. At such dizzy speed, *in a few weeks*, from October 25, 1917, to the Brest peace, we built up the Soviet state, withdrew from the imperialist war in a revolutionary manner and completed the bourgeois-democratic revolution so that *even* the great backward movement (the Brest peace) left us sufficient room in which to take advantage of the "respite" and to march forward victoriously against Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, Pilsudski and Wrangel.

Before the victory of the proletariat, reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle. After the victory (while still remaining a "by-product" on an international scale) they are, in addition, for the country in which victory has been achieved, a necessary and legitimate breathing space when, after the utmost exertion of effort, it becomes obvious that sufficient strength is lacking for the revolutionary accomplishment of some transition or another. Victory creates such a "reserve of strength" that it is possible to hold out even in a forced retreat, hold out both materially and morally. Holding out materially means preserving a sufficient superiority of forces to prevent the enemy from inflicting utter defeat. Holding out morally means not allowing oneself to become demoralised and disorganised, keeping a sober view of the situation, preserving vigour and firmness of spirit, even retreating a long way, but not too far, and in such a way as to stop the retreat in time and revert to the offensive.

We retreated to state capitalism, but we did not retreat too far. We are now retreating to the state regulation of trade, but we shall not retreat too far. There are visible signs that the retreat is coming to an end; there are signs that we shall be able to stop this retreat in the not too distant future. The more conscious, the more unanimous, the more free from prejudice we are in carrying out this necessary retreat, the sooner shall we be able to stop it, and the more lasting, speedy and extensive will be our subsequent victorious advance.

November 5, 1921

Pravda No. 251,
November 6-7, 1921
Signed: *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 33,
pp. 109-16

NOTES

¹ *Mensheviks*—opportunist trend among the Russian Social-Democrats.

In 1903 at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. the revolutionary Social-Democrats headed by Lenin gained a majority in the elections to the central Party organs. The Russian for majority is *bolshinstvo*, hence the name Bolsheviks. The opportunists who were in the minority (*menshinstvo*) received the name of Mensheviks.

During the 1905-07 revolution the Mensheviks opposed the leading role of the working class in the revolution and the alliance of the working class with the peasantry. They demanded conciliation with the liberal bourgeoisie, which they thought should lead the revolution. In the years of reaction following the defeat of the 1905-07 revolution most of the Mensheviks became liquidators: they demanded that the illegal revolutionary party of the working class be liquidated. After the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917 the Mensheviks entered the bourgeois Provisional Government, supported its imperialist policy and fought against the impending socialist revolution. Following the victory of the October Socialist Revolution of 1917 the Mensheviks became an openly counter-revolutionary party which organised and participated in conspiracies and revolts aimed at the overthrow of Soviet power.

p. 5

² *Pravda* (The Truth)—a Bolshevik daily newspaper first issued in St. Petersburg on April 22 (May 5), 1912.

The decision to issue a mass revolutionary newspaper was adopted by the 6th (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.

Lenin, who guided *Pravda* ideologically, contributed to the paper almost daily. He advised its editors with a view to making it a militant, revolutionary paper. A great deal of the Party's organising work was done through *Pravda*. Conferences with representatives of local Party organisations were held in its offices, which also received information on Party work in factories

and passed on directives of the Party's Central and St. Petersburg Committees.

Pravda was doggedly persecuted by the police and was closed down on July 8 (21), 1914.

It resumed publication after the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917. From March 5 (18), 1917 onwards it was brought out as the paper of the Central and St. Petersburg Committees of the R.S.D.L.P.

From July to October 1917 as a result of persecution by the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government, the paper was compelled to change its name several times. It appeared as *Listok "Pravdy"*, *Proletary*, *Rabochy* and *Rabochy Put*. Since October 27 (November 9), 1917, following the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, it has been published under its original title, *Pravda*.

p. 5

- ³ *Socialist-Revolutionaries* (S.R.s)—a petty-bourgeois party formed in Russia at the end of 1901 and beginning of 1902 through the amalgamation of various Narodnik groups and circles. The views of the S.R.s were an eclectic mixture of Narodism and revisionism. The First World War found most of the S.R.s taking a social-chauvinist stand.

After the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917, the S.R.s together with the Mensheviks and Cadets were the mainstay of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government of the bourgeoisie and landowners, and the leaders of the S.R. Party (Kerensky, Avksentyev, Chernov) were members of the government. The party refused to support the peasants' demand to abolish the landed estates and defended the interests of the landowners. The S.R. ministers in the Provisional Government sent punitive detachments against the peasants who had seized landowners' estates. On the eve of the October armed uprising the party openly sided with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in defence of the capitalist system and found itself isolated from the revolutionary masses.

At the end of November 1917 the Left wing of the party founded an independent party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. In an endeavour to maintain their influence among the peasants, the Left S.R.s formally recognised the Soviet Government and entered into an agreement with the Bolsheviks but very soon turned against Soviet power.

During the years of foreign military intervention and civil war the S.R.s engaged in subversive counter-revolutionary activities, zealously supported the interventionists and whiteguards, took part in counter-revolutionary plots and organised acts of terrorism against leaders of the Soviet state and Communist Party. After the Civil War they continued their anti-Soviet activities within the country and as whiteguard émigrés abroad.

p. 9

- ⁴ Lenin is quoting Mephistopheles from Goethe's *Faust*.

p. 9

⁵ *The Paris Commune of 1871*—revolutionary working-class government, which lasted for 72 days from March 18 to May 28, 1871 and was set up by the proletarian revolution in Paris. It was the first government of proletarian dictatorship.

p. 10

⁶ The expression "*His Majesty's Opposition*" belongs to P. N. Milyukov, the leader of the Cadet Party. In a speech made at a luncheon given by the Lord Mayor of London on June 19 (July 2), 1909, Milyukov said: "So long as there is a legislative chamber in Russia, which controls the budget, the Russian Opposition will remain the Opposition of His Majesty, not to His Majesty" (*Rech* No. 167, June 21 [July 4], 1909).

p. 12

⁷ "*No Tsar, but a workers' government*"—anti-Bolshevik slogan, first proclaimed by Parvus in 1905. This slogan constituted a basic proposition of the Trotskyite "theory" of permanent revolution—revolution without the peasantry, which was counterposed to Lenin's theory of the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a socialist revolution with the proletariat being the leader of the mass popular movement.

p. 12

⁸ *Blanquists*—supporters of a trend in the French socialist movement, headed by Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), the outstanding French revolutionary and utopian Communist. The Blanquists thought that "mankind will be emancipated from wage slavery not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy of a small minority of intellectuals" (Lenin). By substituting the actions of a small group of conspirators for those of a revolutionary party, they ignored the actual preconditions necessary for a victorious insurrection and rejected contact with the masses.

p. 12

⁹ See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France. Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association*; Frederick Engels, "Introduction" (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, pp. 217-30).

p. 12

¹⁰ *Yedinstvo* (Unity)—a newspaper published in Petrograd, the organ of the extreme Right-wing group of the defencist Mensheviks headed by Plekhanov. In May-June 1914 four issues appeared. From March to November 1917 it was published daily. From December 1917 to January 1918 it appeared under the title *Nashe Yedinstvo*. The paper supported the Provisional Government, advocated coalition with the bourgeoisie and "firm authority" and waged a struggle against the Bolsheviks, often resorting to the methods of the gutter press.

p. 13

- ¹¹ Lenin is referring to Plekhanov's pamphlet *Anarchism and Socialism* first published in German in 1894 in Berlin.

p. 13

- ¹² A reference to the *Basle Manifesto*—a manifesto on the war, adopted by the Extraordinary International Socialist Congress which was held in Basle on November 24 and 25, 1912. It warned the nations of the imminent threat of an imperialist world war, revealed the aggressive aims of the war and called on the workers of all countries to fight resolutely for peace and to pit "against capitalist imperialism the might of the international solidarity of the proletariat". The Manifesto included a clause drafted by Lenin on the basis of the resolution of the Stuttgart Congress (1907), to the effect that in the event of an imperialist war the socialists should take advantage of the ensuing economic and political crisis to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule and fight for socialist revolution.

p. 19

- ¹³ *Struvism*—a liberal-bourgeois distortion of Marxism, so named after P.B. Struve, the chief exponent of "legal Marxism" in Russia. "Legal Marxism" arose in Russia in the 1890s as a socio-political trend among the liberal-bourgeois intellectuals. The "legal Marxists" headed by Struve attempted to utilise Marxism in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Lenin pointed out that Struvism borrowed from Marxism everything which suited the liberal bourgeoisie and rejected the true essence of Marxism—its revolutionary spirit, the doctrine of the inevitable downfall of capitalism, of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Struve extolled the capitalist order and advocated "learning from capitalists".

p. 19

- ¹⁴ *Die Neue Zeit* (New Times)—theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. It published some of Marx's and Engels's works for the first time. Engels offered advice to its editors and often criticised them for departures from Marxism. In the second half of the nineties, following Engels's death, the journal began to publish revisionist articles systematically. During the First World War (1914-18) the journal adopted a Centrist stand and virtually backed the social-chauvinists.

p. 21

- ¹⁵ *Sotsial-Demokrat*—an illegal newspaper, the Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P., published from February 1908 to January 1917. Altogether 58 issues appeared, five of them with supplements. From December 1911 the paper was edited by Lenin, who contributed over 80 articles and other items.

During the First World War *Sotsial-Demokrat* played a prominent role in the struggle against international opportunism, nationalism and chauvinism, in the propaganda of Bolshevik slogans, and in arousing the working class and all working people to fight

against the imperialist war and its inspirers, against autocracy and capitalism.

Sotsial-Demokrat did much to unify the internationalist elements in the world Social-Democratic movement.

p. 22

- ¹⁶ *The Duma*—a representative assembly in tsarist Russia, which was convened as a result of the 1905-07 revolution. Formally the Duma was a legislative body, but in fact it had no real authority. Elections to the Duma were not direct, equal, or universal. In the case of the working classes as well as of the non-Russian nationalities of the country, the suffrage was greatly curtailed, a considerable section of the workers and peasants lacking any voting rights.

The First and Second Dumas (April-July 1906 and February-June 1907 respectively) were dissolved by the tsarist government. In the Third Duma (1907-12) and in the Fourth Duma (1912-17) Black-Hundred deputies, supporters of tsarist autocracy, gained supremacy.

p. 24

- ¹⁷ *Cadet Party* (Constitutional-Democratic Party)—the leading party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia. Founded in October 1905, it consisted of members of the bourgeoisie, landowners and bourgeois intellectuals. Subsequently the Cadets became a party of the imperialist bourgeoisie. During the First World War they fully supported the tsarist government's aggressive foreign policy. During the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 they did their best to save the monarchy. Taking advantage of their key position in the bourgeois Provisional Government, they pursued an anti-popular, counter-revolutionary policy.

After the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution the Cadets came out as implacable enemies of Soviet power and took part in all the armed counter-revolutionary actions and campaigns of the interventionists. The Cadets continued their anti-Soviet, counter-revolutionary activities in emigration after the defeat of the interventionists and whiteguards.

p. 26

- ¹⁸ *Chartism*—mass revolutionary movement of the English workers, which arose as a result of difficult economic conditions and lack of political rights. The movement began in the late 1830s with large-scale meetings and demonstrations and continued with some interruptions till the early 1850s.

The main cause of the failure of the Chartist movement was the absence of consistent revolutionary proletarian leadership and a clear-cut programme.

p. 31

- ¹⁹ "*Letter to the Austrian Communists*" was written by Lenin in connection with the decision of the Communist Party of Austria to boycott elections to the Parliament. On August 31, 1920, the day before the general party conference convened, it was published in

Die Rote Fahne (The Red Banner), Central Organ of the Communist Party of Austria. Lenin's letter helped the Austrian Communists rectify their error and take the correct stand. On September 1, 1920, in compliance with the resolution of the Second Congress of the Communist International, the conference adopted a decision on participation in the parliamentary elections. The Austrian Communists adopted the slogan of the revolutionary unity of the working class for their election campaign.

p. 37

²⁰ *The Yellow, or Berne, International*—the name given to the Second (Berne) International founded at the conference of socialist parties in Berne in February 1919 by West-European leaders in place of the Second International which ceased to exist when the First World War broke out. The Berne International was the flunkey of the international bourgeoisie.

p. 37

²¹ *Entente*—a bloc of imperialist powers (Britain, France and Russia) which took final shape in 1907 and was directed against the imperialist Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy). It got its name from the Anglo-French agreement of 1904—*Entente cordiale*. During the 1914-18 imperialist world war the Entente was joined by the U.S.A., Japan and other countries. After the Great October Socialist Revolution the principal members of this bloc—Britain, France, the U.S.A. and Japan—organised and participated in armed intervention against Soviet Russia.

p. 40

²² The reference is to the amendments made by the German, Austrian and Italian delegations to the draft theses on tactics motioned by the Russian delegation at the Third Congress of the Communist International.

p. 43

²³ *C.W.P.G.*—the Communist Workers' Party of Germany—was formed in April 1920 by the "Left-wing" Communists expelled from the Communist Party of Germany at the Heidelberg Congress in 1919. In November 1920, to promote the unity of all the Communist forces of Germany and to meet the aspirations of the best proletarian elements in the C.W.P.G., it was temporarily admitted to the Communist International as a sympathising member. Nevertheless the Executive Committee of the Comintern considered the United Communist Party of Germany to be the only competent section. The representatives of the C.W.P.G. were admitted to the Comintern on condition that they merge with the United Communist Party of Germany and give their support to all its activities. The leaders of the C.W.P.G. did not comply with the instructions of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. In an effort to win over the workers still supporting the C.W.P.G., the Third Congress of the Comintern resolved to give it two or three months to convene a congress and decide the question of unification. If this congress were to reject the unification of the German Communists, the

resolution of the Third Congress said, the C.W.P.G. would be expelled from the Comintern. On behalf of the Third Congress, the Executive Committee of the Comintern issued an appeal "To the Members of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany" setting forth the Congress decision and pointing to the necessity for the C.W.P.G. to repudiate sectarianism and to unite with the U.C.P.G. As the leaders of the C.W.P.G. did not carry out the decisions of the Third Congress and persisted in sowing disunity, the Executive Committee of the Comintern was compelled to break off all relations with it. The C.W.P.G. found itself outside the Communist International and subsequently became an insignificant sectarian group which met with no support among the workers and was hostile to the working class of Germany.

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- ²⁴ The reference is to the Open Letter (*Offener Brief*) of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany to the Socialist Party of Germany, the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Communist Workers' Party of Germany and all the trade unions, which was published in the newspaper *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Banner) on January 8, 1921. The U.C.P.G. called upon the workers', trade union and socialist organisations to wage a joint struggle against the intensifying reaction and the capitalists' offensive against the working people's inalienable rights. The Communists' programme of combined action included demands for higher pensions for disabled war veterans, elimination of unemployment, improvement of the country's financial position at the expense of the monopolies, the introduction of factory committee control over all stocks of food, raw materials and fuel, re-opening of all closed enterprises, control over the sowing, harvesting and marketing of farm produce by the Peasants' Councils together with the agricultural labourers' organisations, immediate disarmament and dissolution of all bourgeois militarised organisations, establishment of workers' self-defence, amnesty to all political prisoners, immediate restoration of trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

The Right-wing leaders of the organisations to whom the Open Letter was addressed rejected the proposal for joint action with the Communists, despite the fact that the workers came out for a united front of the proletariat.

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- ²⁵ *The theory of an offensive struggle* or "theory of the offensive", proclaimed in December 1920 at the Unity Congress of the Communist Party of Germany and the Left wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, envisaged that the party should conduct offensive tactics regardless of whether there were any objective conditions for revolutionary activity or whether the working people supported the Communist Party. The "theory of the offensive" had followers among the Leftists in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Austria and France. It was the basis of the March 1921 uprising of the proletariat in Germany and one of the causes of its defeat. After that the Leftists tried to justify

the mistakes of the Central Committee of the U.C.P.G. Its theses on the March uprising, adopted on April 8, 1921, stated that the U.C.P.G. should always "adhere to the line of revolutionary offensive", which was the basis for the March uprising; that offensive actions "even if they suffer defeat are an essential step towards future victory and the only possible means for the revolutionary party to win over the masses...". At the Third Congress of the Communist International the advocates of this theory strove to make it the basis of the Communist International's resolutions on tactics. In his speeches at the Congress, Lenin showed the erroneous and adventurist nature of this "theory". The Congress approved his line of patient preparation and winning over of the majority of the working class to the communist movement.

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²⁶ The reference is to the armed uprising of the German proletariat in March 1921.

The German bourgeoisie, frightened by the increased influence of the Communists among the masses, resolved to defeat the workers' revolutionary organisations by inciting the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat to a premature and unprepared armed uprising. On March 16, under the pretext of suppressing criminal elements who were allegedly causing strikes, the head of the Prussian police, Social-Democrat Hersing, ordered the police to bring its patrols to factories in Central Germany. The authorities' provocative actions aroused deep resentment among the workers, and there were bitter clashes with the police.

Proceeding from the "theory of the offensive", the Left-wing majority of the Central Committee of the United Communist Party of Germany encouraged the workers to a premature uprising. On March 17, the C.C. of the U.C.P.G. resolved that "the proletariat must accept battle" and urged the German proletariat to hold a general strike in support of the workers of Central Germany. The majority of the working class was not ready for the uprising and did not join in; it was only in Central Germany that the unrest assumed the character of an armed struggle. During the March uprising the young Communist Party made a number of mistakes.

Despite the workers' heroic struggle the March uprising was crushed; the Communist Party and the working class were dealt a heavy blow. The perfidious policy of the Social-Democrats and the reformist trade union bosses aimed at dividing and scattering forces was the principal cause of the failure of the uprising. Paul Levi in particular did great harm to the uprising and the Communist Party.

The March battles were a great landmark in the revolutionary working-class movement in Germany.

The Third Congress made a careful review of the March uprising. Pointing to a number of mistakes committed by the Communists in this great battle the Congress resolution stated that it considered "the March uprising a step forward. It was a heroic struggle of hundreds of thousands of proletarians against the bourgeoisie. And by guiding the defence of the workers in Central

Germany, the United Communist Party of Germany has proved that it is the party of the revolutionary proletariat of Germany" (*Communist International in Documents. Decisions, Theses and Appeals of the Congresses of the Communist International and the Plenary Meetings of its Executive Committee. 1919-32*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1933, p. 194).

p. 48

- ²⁷ *Two-and-a-Half International* (its official name is the International Association of Socialist Parties)—an international organisation of Centrist socialist parties and groups which withdrew from the Second International under the pressure of the revolutionary masses. It took shape at the Vienna conference in February 1921. While criticising the Second International in words, the leaders of the Two-and-a-Half International actually pursued an opportunist and divisionist policy within the working class on all the principal questions of the proletarian movement. They tried to make use of this association to counterbalance the Communists' growing influence on the working masses.

In May 1923 the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals united in the so-called Socialist Workers' International.

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- ²⁸ The reference is to the strike of English miners which lasted from April to June 1921. On March 24, 1921 the British Government adopted a bill removing state control over the mines which had been introduced during war years. A week later, on March 31, under the threat of a lock-out, the mine owners presented the workers with an ultimatum which boiled down to a reduction of wages by 30 per cent and in some regions by 50 per cent. On April 1, the miners went on strike which embraced over a million people. On the very first day of the strike a state of emergency was introduced throughout the country and troops were sent to the mining districts.

On April 15 industrial and transport workers came out on strike in support of the miners. However, the reformist trade union leaders revoked the strike. The English workers called the day on which the reactionary trade union bosses broke up the strike Black Friday. The miners continued their struggle for another nine weeks but at the end of June were forced to return to work.

p. 51

- ²⁹ Early in July 1921 workers and employees at municipal enterprises in Berlin decided to go on strike and demand higher wages. The majority of the workers (about 80 thousand) were in favour of a strike. The reformists, however, managed to prevent it: negotiations between the workers' and employees' representatives and the Berlin municipal council which included Social-Democrats resulted in a slight rise in workers' and employees' wages.

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- ³⁰ In the early days of July 1921 the workers at the cotton factories in Lille (France) declared a strike because the factory owners

had reduced their wages. The strike spread to Nord and Vosges Departments and the number of strikers reached 60 thousand. In the first half of September a general strike was declared in the Northern district of France which for a time was joined by the workers of other districts. The government sent troops to the Northern district and at the same time acted as a mediator in the negotiations between workers and factory owners. Despite the staunchness of the workers who fought for two months, the strike was a failure because of the reformist tactics of the trade union leaders and unfavourable economic conditions.

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³¹ The reference is to a workers' mass meeting in Rome on July 8, 1921.

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³² *V.K.P.D. (Vereinigte Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands)*—United Communist Party of Germany—was founded at the Unity Congress of the Communist Party of Germany and the Left wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany which took place in Berlin between December 4 and 7, 1920. The unification occurred after the split in the Independent Social-Democratic Party at the Halle Congress (October 1920), where the majority of the delegates demanded immediate affiliation to the Third International and complete recognition of the 21 conditions of entry to the Comintern which were drawn up by the Second Congress of the Communist International. The Right wing of the Party left the Congress and formed a separate party which existed under the old name up to September 1922 when it merged with the Social-Democratic Party.

The Congress of the U.C.P.G. to which Lenin's letter was addressed (the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Germany) took place in Jena between August 22 and 26, 1921. The Congress discussed reports on the Third Congress of the Communist International, on the immediate tasks facing the Party, on work in trade unions, on the situation in Soviet Russia and ways of helping it, etc. The Congress adopted a resolution by an overwhelming majority, which approved the decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International and accepted the criticism of mistakes committed by the C.C. of the U.C.P.G. during the March uprising of 1921 contained in the theses of the Third Congress. The Party assumed its old name: the Communist Party of Germany.

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³³ *K.A.P.-ists*—participants in the military-monarchist "Kapp putsch", named after its leader Wolfgang Kapp. The putsch was prepared with the open connivance of the Social-Democratic government. On March 13, 1920 the conspirators dispatched troops to Berlin and meeting with no resistance from the government declared it overthrown and formed a new government. The workers of Berlin responded to the putsch by organising a general strike. Under pressure from the workers the Kapp government fell on March 17; and

again Right-wing Social-Democrats came to power and pursued a policy of repression against the workers.

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³⁴ *Moskau*—newspaper, organ of the Third Congress of the Communist International, published in Moscow in three languages: German (Nos. 1-50), French (Nos. 1-44), and English (Nos. 1-41).

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³⁵ *P.P.S.*—Polish Socialist Party—a reformist nationalist party founded in 1892.

p. 70

³⁶ See Frederick Engels's letters to August Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875 and December 11, 1884.

p. 73

³⁷ Frederick Engels, "Flüchtlings literatur".

p. 74

³⁸ *The Brest Peace Treaty* was concluded in Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 between Soviet Russia and member-countries of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey) imposing exceedingly harsh terms on Russia. The Soviet Government was forced to sign it, because the old tsarist army had disintegrated and the Red Army was just beginning to take shape. However, the Treaty gave Soviet Russia a much needed respite, enabling it to withdraw from the war for a time and muster forces for smashing the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and interventionists in the Civil War that started shortly afterwards.

After the revolution in Germany (November 1918) the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was annulled.

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NAME INDEX

A

ADLER, Friedrich (1879-1960)—leader of the Right wing of the Austrian Social-Democrats. After the 1918 revolution in Austria, went over to the counter-revolutionary camp. Characterised by V. I. Lenin as one of the most shameful traitors to socialism. One of the organisers of the Centrist Two-and-a-Half International (1921-23), and later a leader of the so-called Labour and Socialist International—39

AXELROD, Pavel Borisovich (1850-1928)—a Russian Social-Democrat, one of the leaders of Menshevism. Active Menshevik after the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. During the years of reaction and the new revolutionary upswing one of the liquidator leaders and member of the editorial board of the Menshevik-liquidator newspaper *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* (Voice of the Social-Democrat). Used Centrist phraseology as a cover for his social-chauvinist views

during the world imperialist war. Was member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 and supported the bourgeois Provisional Government. Was hostile to the October Socialist Revolution; in emigration, he campaigned for armed intervention against Soviet Russia—23

B

BAUER, Otto (1882-1938)—one of the leaders of the Right wing of Austrian Social-Democracy and of the Second International; an ideologist of so-called "Austro-Marxism". Was hostile to the October Socialist Revolution. Was Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Austrian bourgeois republic in 1918-19. Actively participated in crushing the revolutionary working-class actions in Austria in 1919, 1927 and 1934. Was close to fascism in his anti-Communist speeches, and supported pan-German propaganda—39

BEBEL, August (1840-1913)—one of the most prominent leaders of German Social-Democracy and the international working-class movement—73

BLANC, Louis (1811-1882)—a French petty-bourgeois socialist, historian. Denying the irreconcilability of class contradictions under capitalism, opposed the proletarian revolution and advocated conciliation with the bourgeoisie. By advocating conciliatory tactics helped the bourgeoisie to divert the workers from the revolutionary struggle—12

BORDIGA, Amadeo (b. 1889)—an Italian political leader. From 1910 was member of the Italian Socialist Party, and from 1912 headed a trend that was close to anarchism. Came out in 1919 with a programme of boycotting bourgeois parliaments, and headed a group of so-called "Communists-boycotters". Was delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International; took part in founding the Italian Communist Party in 1921 and was a member of its leading organs up to 1926; pursued a left-sectarian policy and came out against the Comintern tactics of organising a united anti-fascist front—33, 34, 36

BURIAN, Edmund (1878-1935)—a Czech Social-Democrat. Member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 1920 and of its Central Committee. Czechoslovakia's Communist Party representative in the Communist International in 1922. Was expelled from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1929 for

his Right deviation and liquidationist tactics—57

C

CHKHEIDZE, Nikolai Semyonovich (1864-1926)—a Russian Social-Democrat, one of the Menshevik leaders. Actively supported the bourgeois Provisional Government after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917. Following the October Socialist Revolution, was Chairman of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (counter-revolutionary Menshevik government). Emigrated to France in 1921—9, 12, 15, 16

CLAUSEWITZ, Karl (1780-1831)—a Prussian general, prominent bourgeois military theoretician, author of a number of works on the history of the Napoleonic and other wars—55

CUNOW, Heinrich (1862-1936)—a German Right Social-Democrat, historian, sociologist and ethnographer. Editor-in-chief of *Die Neue Zeit* (organ of the German Social-Democratic Party) from 1917 to 1923. At first close to the Marxists, then became a revisionist and falsifier of Marxism. A theoretician of social-imperialism during the imperialist world war—19, 21, 22

D

DĄBAL (1890-1937)—leader of the Polish and international peasant movement. Elected to the Sejm in 1919, was one of the leaders of the Left wing of the Polish Peasant Party. Repeatedly arrested and jailed for his propaganda against war with Soviet Russia. Be-

came member of the Communist Party of Poland in 1922—71

DASZYNSKI, Ignazi (1866-1936)—a Polish political leader. Headed the Social-Democratic Party in Galicia in 1892-1919, became one of the leaders of the united P.S.P. (Right). Three times elected deputy to the Polish Sejm from 1919; chairman of the P.S.P. Sejm group. Was Deputy Prime Minister in the Polish bourgeois-landlord government in 1920. Supported the fascist coup and the Pilsudski fascist regime in Poland—71

DAVID, Eduard (1863-1930)—one of the Right-wing leaders of German Social-Democracy, revisionist. In 1919 entered the first coalition government of the German Republic; Minister of the Interior (1919-20); supported the revanchist aspirations of German imperialism—59

DENIKIN, Anton Ivanovich (1872-1947)—a general in the tsarist army; a hireling of the Anglo-French and American imperialists, Commander-in-Chief of the white-guard armed forces in the south of Russia during the foreign military intervention and civil war (1918-20). Fled abroad after his troops were defeated by the Soviet army (March 1920)—79

E

ENGELS, Friedrich (1820-1895)—7, 12, 13, 24, 31, 72, 74

F

FRIESLAND (real name Reiter, Ernst) (1889-1953)—one of the Right leaders of the Social-Democratic Party of Germa-

ny, unprincipled adventurist, henchman of the fascists. Joined the Communist Party of Germany in 1919 but was expelled in 1922 for his anti-Party activities—65

G

GOMPERS, Samuel (1850-1924)—leader of the American trade union movement. One of the founders of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) and its permanent president from 1895. Advocated class collaboration with the capitalists and was against the revolutionary struggle of the working class. A social-chauvinist during the imperialist world war. Was hostile towards the October Socialist Revolution and the Soviet state—37

GUCHKOV, Alexander Ivanovich (1862-1936)—a big Russian capitalist, organiser and leader of the Octobrist Party. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was War and Navy Minister in the first cabinet of the bourgeois Provisional Government. Shared in organising the Kornilov revolt in August 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution, fought against Soviet power, a white émigré—9, 12, 15

H

HÖLZ, Max (1889-1933)—a German Left Communist. Headed the armed struggle of the workers of Vogtland (Central Germany) against the Kapp putsch in 1920. Expelled from the Communist Party of Germany for his anarchist leanings. Was at the head of

the armed struggle of the workers' detachments in March 1921 in Bitterfeld-Merseburg-Halle (Central Germany) and was sentenced by a special court to imprisonment for life. Again joined the Communist Party of Germany while in prison in 1922—48

HEMPEL—one of the representatives of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany at the Third Congress of the Communist International—45

HILFERDING, Rudolf (1877-1941)—one of the opportunist leaders of German Social-Democracy and of the Second International; theoretician of so-called "Austro-Marxism". Was a Centrist during the world imperialist war and upheld unity with the social-imperialists. Leader of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany from 1917. Was repeatedly a member of the bourgeois government of the Weimar Republic—59

K

KAMENEV (Rosenfeld), Lev Borisovich (1833-1936)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1901. Took up a semi-Menshevik attitude towards the Provisional Government and the war following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917, and opposed the Leninist Party policy aimed at the socialist revolution. Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee after the October Socialist Revolution. Repeatedly opposed the Leninist Party policy. Expelled

from the Party by the Fifteenth Congress in 1927 for his activities as leader of the Trotskyite opposition. Openly admitted his mistakes in 1928 and was reinstated in the Party, but did not cease his anti-Party activities and was again expelled in 1932; again reinstated in 1933. Was expelled from the Party for the third time for his anti-Party activities in 1934—13, 14, 16, 17, 18

KAUTSKY, Karl (1854-1938)—one of the leaders of German Social-Democracy and of the Second International. A Marxist at the beginning of his political career, then a renegade to Marxism, an ideologist of the most dangerous and harmful variety of opportunism—Centrism (Kautskyism). A Centrist during the imperialist world war, Kautsky disguised his social-chauvinist views with phrases about internationalism. Openly came out against the proletarian revolution and Soviet power after the October Socialist Revolution—19, 21, 22, 23, 59

KERENSKY, Alexander Fyodorovich (b. 1881)—a Russian Socialist-Revolutionary. A rabid social-chauvinist during the imperialist world war. Minister of Justice, Minister of War and Navy, head of the bourgeois Provisional Government and supreme Commander-in-Chief after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917. Fought against Soviet power after the October Socialist Revolution; fled abroad in 1918—29, 33

KOLCHAK, Alexander Vasilyevich (1873-1920)—an admiral

in the tsarist navy, monarchist. In 1918-20 one of the chief leaders of the counter-revolutionary forces in Russia. Entente placeman. In 1918, supported by the imperialists of the U.S.A., Britain and France, proclaimed himself supreme ruler of Russia and headed the military bourgeois-landlord dictatorship in the Urals, Siberia and the Far East. The blows of the Red Army and the rapidly growing revolutionary partisan movement put an end to the Kolchak regime—79

KORNILOV, Lavr Georgiyevich (1870-1918)—a general in the tsarist army, monarchist. Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army from July 1917. Headed the counter-revolutionary revolt in August. After it was crushed, he was arrested and sent to jail, from which he escaped and fled to the Don region, where he became one of the organisers and then the commander of the whiteguard "Volunteer Army". Was killed in battle, near Yekaterinodar—27, 28

KREIBICH, Karel (b. 1883)—a prominent leader of the Czechoslovak and international Communist movement. Participant of the Social-Democratic movement since 1902; was close to its Left wing. One of the founders of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, delegate to the Third Congress of the Communist International; during that period held "left" views. Member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (1922, 1924 and 1925)—56

L

LANSBURY, George (1859-1940)—one of the leaders of the British Labour Party. Joined the Social-Democratic Federation in 1892, and the Labour Party in 1906. M. P. (1910-12 and 1922-40). Publisher and editor of *The Daily Herald* (1912-1922)—80

LAZZARI, Constantino (1857-1927)—a prominent leader of the working-class movement in Italy, one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party, a member of its Central Committee. General Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party (1912-19). One of the leaders of the "Maximalist" (Centrist) trend in the Party during the world imperialist war. Took part in the Second and Third congresses of the Communist International. Abandoned the reformists in 1922, but could not dissociate himself from them entirely. Was arrested in 1926 and died soon after his release from prison—55

LEGIEN, Karl (1861-1920)—a German Right Social-Democrat, one of the leaders of the trade union movement, revisionist. Chairman of the General Commission of the Trade Unions of Germany (Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands) from 1890, its Secretary from 1903 and Chairman of the International Secretariat of the Trade Unions from 1913. Held extreme social-chauvinist views during the world imperialist war. Member of the National Assembly of the Weimar Republic (1919-20). Fought against the revolutionary movement of the proletariat—59

LENIN, Vladimir Ilyich (1870-1924)—14

LENSCH, Paul (1873-1926)—a German Social-Democrat. Editor of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (organ of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany) in 1905-13. At the outbreak of the world imperialist war became a social-chauvinist. After the war, editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (organ of the Ruhr industrial magnates). Was expelled from the Social-Democratic Party on the demand of its rank-and-file members in 1922—21

LEVI (Hartstein), Paul (1883-1930)—a German Social-Democrat, lawyer. Participant of the Zimmerwald Conference (1915), member of the Swiss group of the Zimmerwald Lefts and of the Spartacus League. Was elected to the Central Committee at the Inaugural Congress of the Communist Party of Germany. Withdrew from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany in February 1921, and was expelled from the Communist Party in April for grossly violating Party discipline. Subsequently rejoined the Social-Democratic Party—48, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64 65, 67

LVOV, Georgi Yevgenyevich (1861-1925)—a Russian prince, big landowner, Cadet. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917—from March to July—was Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution became a white émigré; participated

in the organisation of foreign military intervention against Soviet Russia—9, 12

M

MAC-MAHON, Patrice (1808-1893)—a French statesman and military figure, monarchist. During the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71) he was commander of one of the chief armies at Sedan, was defeated and taken prisoner. Being the commander of the Versailles counter-revolutionary army, he brutally dealt with the heroic defenders of the Paris Commune of 1871. During the period 1873-79 he was President of France. After the failure to carry through a monarchist coup d'état, that was prepared with his participation, he resigned—28

MARTOV, L. (Tserbaum, Yuli Osipovich) (1873-1923)—one of the Menshevik leaders. During the years of reaction (1907-10) was a liquidator, edited the newspaper *Golos Sotsial-Demokrata* (Voice of the Social-Democrat). During the imperialist world war took a Centrist stand. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 headed the Menshevik internationalists' group, was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. After the October Socialist Revolution came out against Soviet power. In 1920 emigrated to Germany. Published in Berlin the counter-revolutionary Menshevik *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik* (Socialist News)—28

MARX Karl (1818-1883)—7, 12, 13, 31, 78

MASLOW, A. (b. 1891)—one of

the leaders of the "ultra-Left" group in the Communist Party of Germany. From 1921 headed the so-called Berlin opposition, which in 1924 seized the leadership in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany. At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International was elected to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. At the end of 1925 was removed from his leading posts for factional and splitting activities and very soon expelled from the Communist Party of Germany and the Communist International. Later on withdrew from political life—65

MILYUKOV, Pavel Nikolayevich (1895-1943)—an ideologist of the Russian imperialist bourgeoisie, historian and publicist. One of the founders of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, chairman of its Central Committee and editor of its central organ, the newspaper *Rech* (Speech); deputy to the Third and Fourth Dumas. In 1917 Minister of Foreign Affairs in the first bourgeois Provisional Government; pursued the policy of continuing the imperialist war to the "victorious conclusion". Following the October Socialist Revolution was one of the organisers of foreign military intervention against Soviet Russia and an active white émigré figure—15, 54

MYASNIKOV, Alexander Fyodorovich (1886-1925)—a Russian Social-Democrat, member of the Bolshevik Party from 1906. Following the October Socialist Revolution held responsible posts. Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars and People's

Commissar for Military Affairs in Armenia in 1921. Chairman of the Union Council of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1922—42

N

NOSKE, Gustav (1868-1946)—an opportunist leader of the German Social-Democratic Party. One of the leaders who suppressed the revolutionary sailors' movement in Kiel in 1918 during the November Revolution. Minister of War in 1919-20, organiser of a massacre of the Berlin workers and assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Subsequently president of the Prussian province of Hanover—37, 58

P

PANNEKOEK, Anton (1873-1960)—a Dutch Social-Democrat. In 1907 was one of the founders of the newspaper *De Tribune*—organ of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Holland which shaped into the Social-Democratic Party of Holland (the Party of "Tribunists") in 1909. From 1910 was closely connected with the German Left Social-Democrats and actively collaborated in their press. During the imperialist world war was an internationalist, participated in putting out the journal *Uorbote*, the theoretical organ of the Zimmerwald Left. In 1918-21 was a member of the Communist Party of Holland and participated in the work of the Communist International. Adhered to an ultra-Left, sectarian position—19

PILSUDSKI, Joseph (1867-1935)—a reactionary statesman of bourgeois-landowner Poland; fascist dictator. During the First World War he was commander of the Polish army formations on Germany's side. Head of the Polish state (1918-22), cruelly persecuted the revolutionary movement of the working people. One of the organisers of the war of the squire-ruled Poland against the Soviet state (1920). Undertook a coup d'état in May 1926 and established a regime of fascist dictatorship. Concluded an alliance with Hitlerite Germany in 1934—79

PLEKHANOV, Georgi Valentinovich (1856-1918)—a prominent leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, first spread Marxism in Russia. In 1883 founded in Geneva the first Russian Marxist organisation—the Emancipation of Labour group. Following the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. preached conciliation with opportunism, and later sided with the Mensheviks. During the First Russian Revolution held Menshevik views on all main questions. During the First World War became a social-chauvinist. Upon his return to Russia after the February bourgeois revolution of 1917 headed an extreme Right group of Menshevik defencists named "Yedinstvo"; came out against the Bolsheviks and the socialist revolution, considering that Russia was not yet ripe for the transition to socialism. Was unsympathetic towards the October Socialist Revolution, but did not take part in the struggle

against Soviet power—13, 19, 21, 22, 23

R

RADEK, Karl Berngardovich (1885-1939)—from the nineties he took part in the Social-Democratic movement in Galicia, Poland and Germany. Member of the Bolshevik Party from 1917. After the October Socialist Revolution worked in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, was Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. At the Party congresses (8-12) was elected member of the Central Committee. Repeatedly opposed the Leninist Party policy. In 1918 was a "Left Communist", and was one of the leaders of the Trotskyite opposition from 1923. Was expelled from the Party at the Fifteenth Congress in 1927 for his factional activity. Admitted his mistakes in 1929 and was reinstated in the Party, but did not cease his anti-Party activities and was again expelled in 1936—19, 47, 48, 51, 61, 62

RENNER, Karl (1870-1950)—an Austrian political figure and leader and theoretician of the Austrian Right Social-Democrats. One of the ideologists of so-called "Austro-Marxism". Social-chauvinist during the First World War. Chancellor (1919-20), and President of Austria (1945-1950)—37, 38, 39

ROMANOV, Nicholas (Nicholas II) (1868-1918)—the last Russian tsar, reigned from 1894 till the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917—8

S

SCHEIDEMANN, Philipp (1865-1939)—one of the leaders of the extreme right, opportunist wing of German Social-Democracy. During the November Revolution of 1918 in Germany was member of the so-called Council of People's Representatives, the activity of which was in line with the interests of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. Headed the coalition government of the Weimar Republic in February-June 1919, one of the organisers of the fierce suppression of the German working-class movement (1918-21). Subsequently withdrew from active political life—37, 58, 59

SERRATI, Giacinto Menotti (1872-1926)—an outstanding leader of the Italian working-class movement, one of the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party, subsequently a Communist. Director of the newspaper *Avanti!* (central organ of the Socialist Party) in 1915-23. An internationalist during the First World War. Took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences. Insisted on the affiliation of the Italian Socialist Party to the Communist International. Headed the Italian delegation to the Second Congress of the Comintern, opposed unconditional rupture with the reformists. Subsequently overcame his Centrist mistakes and joined the Communist Party of Italy in 1924 and was active in it to the last days of his life—67, 68

ŠMERAL, Bohumir (1880-1941)—an outstanding leader of the Czechoslovak and international working-class

movement, one of the founders of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Was member of the Czech Social-Democratic Party from 1897 and one of its leading figures. Leader of the revolutionary and national liberation movement of the Czechoslovak working class. From 1918 headed the struggle of the Left-wing Social-Democrats for the creation of a Marxist-Leninist Party of the working class. After the foundation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1921) was a member of its Central Committee. Member of the Comintern Executive Committee in 1921-29 and from 1935—56, 57

SPIRIDONOVA, Maria Alexandrovna (1884-1941)—one of the leaders of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was an organiser of the Left-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries, and after the formation of the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in November 1917 became member of its Central Committee. Opposed the Brest Peace. Actively participated in the counter-revolutionary Left Socialist-Revolutionary revolt organised in July 1918. After its suppression, continued hostile activities against Soviet power. Subsequently withdrew from political life—28

SOUCHY, Augustin—one of the leaders of the German anarcho-syndicalists, publicist. Visited Soviet Russia in April-October 1920 as a representative of the revolutionary syndicalists of Germany; delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist Interna-

tional. Subsequently was hostile to the communist movement—34

STEKLOV, Yuri Mikhailovich (1873-1941)—a Russian professional revolutionary, participated in the Social-Democratic movement from 1893. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (1903) sided with the Bolsheviks. During the years of reaction (1907-10) and the new revolutionary upsurge contributed to the newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat* (Social-Democrat) (central organ of the R.S.D.L.P.), the Bolshevik newspapers *Zvezda* (Star) and *Pravda* (The Truth). Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 adopted a "revolutionary defencist" position; subsequently joined the Bolsheviks—9, 12, 15, 16

SÜDEKUM, Albert (1871-1944)—one of the opportunist leaders of German Social-Democracy, revisionist. Reichstag deputy (1900-1918); rabid social-chauvinist during the imperialist world war; preached imperialist views on the colonial question, fought the revolutionary working-class movement; Minister of Finance of Prussia (1918-20)—21

T

TERRACINI, Umberto (b. 1895)—an outstanding leader of the working-class movement in Italy, one of the founders of the Italian Communist Party. Belonged to the Left wing of the Italian Socialist Party at the beginning of his activities. He was member of its Central Committee from 1920. Advocated the affiliation of the Party to the Comintern, was irreconcilable

towards the reformist wing. From 1919 he was one of the organisers and leaders of the revolutionary Turin Socialists' group "L'ordine Nuovo" (New Order), which formed the nucleus of the Communist Party. Member of the Central Committee and of the Executive Committee of the Italian Communist Party from its foundation (1921). Committed Left-sectarian errors, which were condemned by Lenin at the Third Congress of the Comintern. Under the influence of this criticism he managed very soon to overcome his mistakes. Delegate to the Third Congress of the Comintern at which he was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International—43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 57

THOMAS, Albert (1878-1932)—a French politician, Right socialist. One of the leaders of the Socialist Party parliamentary group from 1910. Social-chauvinist during the First World War. Member of the French bourgeois government and Minister for Munitions. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 came to Russia to agitate for the continuation of the war. One of the organisers of the Berne (II) International in 1919. Headed the International Labour Office at the League of Nations in 1919-32—37

TSERETELI, Irakly Georgiyevich (1882-1959)—a Russian Menshevik leader, one of the Menshevik leaders. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet; a defencist.

Entered the bourgeois Provisional Government in May 1917; one of the inspirers of the harassment of Bolsheviks. Tsereteli was one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik government of Georgia after the October Socialist Revolution. Emigrated after the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia—9, 12, 15, 16

W

WRANGEL, Pyotr Nikolayevich (1878-1928)—a general in the tsarist army, baron and an out-and-out monarchist. Anglo-French and American imperialists' hireling during the foreign military intervention and civil war; one of the counter-revolutionary leaders in the south of Russia. Commander-in-Chief of the whiteguard "armed forces in the south of Russia" in April-November 1920; fled abroad following their rout by the Red Army—79

Y

YUDENICH, Nikolai Nikolayevich (1862-1933)—a tsarist general. After the October Socialist Revolution member of the counter-revolutionary "Northwestern government". Commander-in-Chief of the whiteguard Northwestern army. Twice attempted and failed to capture Petrograd in 1919. Routed by the Red Army in November 1919. Re-

treated to Estonia and then fled to England—79

Z

ZETKIN, Clara (1857-1933)—a prominent leader of the German and international working-class and Communist movement. One of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany. Was elected to the Executive Committee by the Third Congress of the Communist International. Headed the International Women's Secretariat. Permanent Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Workers' Aid from 1924—61, 62

ZINOVIEV (Radomyslsky), Grigory Yevseyevich (1883-1936)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1901. In the years of reaction (1907-10) took a conciliatory attitude towards the liquidators, otzovists and Trotskyites. During the imperialist world war held internationalist views. In the period of preparations for the October Socialist Revolution betrayed vacillation, came out against the armed uprising. Following the October Socialist Revolution held a number of responsible posts. Repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy and for this was expelled in 1927; was reinstated in 1928, again expelled in 1932 and then reinstated in 1933. In 1934 was again expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities—5

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