

Study Handbook

**OF
MARXISM-
LENINISM-
MAO TSETUNG
THOUGHT**

Editor's Note

The excerpts contained in this book are facsimile reproductions from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung. References are included at the beginning of each text. The date given in parentheses is the date of publication of the original work.

The reader should note that page numbers indicated in references may vary considerably according to the year of publication of the edition concerned.

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PREFACE

MARXISM-LENINISM AND MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT

Marxism-Leninism synthesizes the historical experience of the international proletariat and the oppressed peoples over the last 130 years. It is the science and the ideology of the proletariat, the most revolutionary class in present-day society. In 1848 Marx and Engels wrote the **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, a key work of scientific socialism. Since that time, Marxism-Leninism has been the guide for the revolutionary movement, and has proven that the principles it is based on are correct. The Russian and Chinese revolutions and 130 years of struggle all show that only Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought can light the way forward to socialism and communism.

What is class struggle? What is the nature of the state? What are the characteristics of a true communist party? What is the origin of imperialism? How can we do away with the oppression of women and national oppression? How can we become communists? Marxism-Leninism answers all these questions and many more. The aim of this study guide is to give basic answers to these questions for those who are just beginning to study communism.

Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought has always developed through the struggle against revisionism, which is the attempt made by the bourgeoisie's agents to pervert communist theory, to deform the basic principles of Marxism and have the workers' movement follow passively behind the capitalist class.

Modern revisionism, led by the Soviet Union, is today the main danger for the communist movement. The modern revisionists are trying to convert Marxism-Leninism into a cover for Soviet social-imperialism's dreams of world domination, using theses like, "party of the whole people", "state of the whole people", "peaceful transition", "limited sovereignty", and "the natural ally of struggling peoples".

The necessity of unmasking and destroying these falsifiers of Marxism and enemies of the proletariat and the peoples of the world makes it even more important to carefully study communist theory. This is one of the purposes of this guide.

Study groups will not necessarily make use of the whole guide, and they can study certain chapters on their own or in another con-

text. However, on the whole the guide should be studied collectively, in groups which have been set up for this purpose.

The texts cited in this manual were written by the world's greatest communists, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, who showed themselves to be the best educators and leaders of the working class and the oppressed peoples. Their works are invaluable contributions to the international revolutionary movement. The principles they formulated are universally applicable to the concrete conditions of the revolution in every country.

Karl Marx (1818-1883) and his close associate and comrade, Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), were the founders of communism. The credit for having uncovered the "secret" of capitalist profit in the capitalists' exploitation of the workers goes to Marx. He studied all the laws of capitalist development and arrived at the scientific conclusion that the fall of capitalism is inevitable, and that this corrupt system of exploitation of man by man must necessarily be replaced by the communist system, where classes no longer exist and where all exploitation and oppression in the world is done away with once and for all. He showed that this will take place when the working class seizes power through socialist revolution and advances towards the final goal, communist society. Thus the scientific theory of socialism is called Marxism, after the great scientific and militant revolutionary.

Marx and Engels took an active part in the 1848 revolutionary movements, when all of Europe was shaken by the masses' struggles to overthrow absolute monarchy. Later they created the **International Workingmen's Association*** to organize and coordinate

* (Ed. note): *The First International — the International Workingmen's Association (1864-1873)—was founded by Marx and Engels to unite revolutionary workers of different countries, to support strikes, to propagate Marxism and to found communist parties. It was dissolved after the failure of the Paris Commune. Engels himself participated in the founding of the Second International (in 1889), which brought together social-democratic (Marxist) parties of several European countries. But the Second International degenerated into an opportunist movement during the First World War (1914-1918). Most of the member parties supported their "own" imperialist bourgeoisies during the war. Lenin and the Bolsheviks therefore founded the Third International (1919-1943) in order to unite the real revolutionary forces, fight the*

the revolutionary workers' movement in various countries. Their works, including the **Manifesto of the Communist Party; Capital; Socialism: Utopian and Scientific; Dialectics of Nature**, and others, laid the basis of scientific socialism.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870-1924) was the great leader of the Russian Revolution, the world's first socialist revolution. Marx and Engels had studied capitalism in its competitive stage, before whole sectors of the economy became dominated by one or a few monopolies. Lenin studied monopoly capitalism, and formulated the laws determining the development of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, as well as the theory of proletarian revolution in the era of imperialism. Lenin fought the opportunists of the **Second International**^{*}, made up of social-democratic parties, and after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, founded the **Third International**[†], made up of communist parties, in order to help lead and develop the worldwide revolution. It was Lenin who developed the theory and practice of the communist party as the vanguard and general staff of the working class.

Because of his analysis of imperialism, proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin's name is added to that of Marx, and thus scientific socialism is known as Marxism-Leninism.

After the death of Lenin, Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) carried on his work. He defended Leninism against opportunists of all types, and developed it around the question of building socialism in one country and in other areas, such as the national question. For thirty years Stalin led the building of socialism in the USSR; during the Second World War, he stood at the head of the Soviet army and people, leading them to victory over Nazi aggression; he helped set up the socialist camp during the '40s and early '50s. Thus despite errors, his contribution was a positive one.[‡] It was only after his

revisionists and lead the new communist parties of all countries. The Third International was dissolved during the Second World War (1939-1945).

^{*} (Ed. note): See previous note.

[†] (Ed. note): See first note.

[‡] (Ed. note): Cf. pp. 106 to 129 of this guide. Mao Tsetung here explains why the Communist Party of China defends Stalin against the

death in 1953 that renegades like Khrushchev and Brezhnev were able to seize power in the Soviet party and state and restore capitalism in the USSR.

After the leadership of the Soviet party betrayed Marxism-Leninism in 1956, the banner of Marxism-Leninism was taken up by Mao Tsetung, who led the international communist movement's fight against modern revisionism. Mao Tsetung (1893-1976) distinguished himself as leader of the Chinese revolution, a revolution by 800 million men and women in the world's most populous country. His works like **On Practice** and **On Contradiction** synthesize the basic principles of Marxist philosophy and the materialist world view. In **On New Democracy** he explained the role of national liberation struggles in the world proletarian revolution and their transformation into socialist revolutions when led by a communist party. Lastly, he developed the theory of the continuation of the class struggle under socialism, showing that classes, class contradictions and class struggle continue to exist under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These are but a few of the achievements of these great leaders and educators of the proletariat. On the basis of their contributions communist theory is called Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. That is why this study guide is made up solely of excerpts from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, even though millions of men and women have contributed to the international communist movement. Their works are the most clear, the most scientific, the most revolutionary; that is why we must study them first and foremost.

THE CANADIAN COMMUNIST LEAGUE (MARXIST-LENINIST)

Today the League, founded in 1975, is the only organization in Canada that defends Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. It is taking up the revolutionary role and traditions of the "Communist"

revisionists. As well, in On the Ten Great Relationships. Collected Works, Vol. V, Mao analyzes Stalin's contributions to Marxism-Leninism and concludes that, despite certain errors, for example in his evaluation of the Chinese revolution. Stalin must be considered a great Marxist.

Party of Canada, which was once revolutionary, but degenerated into a revisionist party during the '50s. All other groups and organizations were either created with the express aim of disorganizing and destroying the communist movement in Canada, like the "CPCML", or degenerated into opportunist, revisionist and counter-revolutionary groups, like In Struggle. All of these opportunists claim to follow Marxism, but none of them apply it.

This has shown up in their practice; a sorry history of betrayal of principles and sabotage of working class struggles. Today all of them, whether they be Trotskyists or revisionists, In Struggle or the "CPCML", are united in their attacks on socialist China and Mao Tsetung Thought.

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. And without a communist party to lead it, the revolutionary movement cannot achieve socialism and the classless communist society. These are basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

As the only organization defending the purity of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, only the League is capable of successfully waging the struggle to create the authentic communist party of the Canadian working class. For this reason we invite all conscious and determined workers and working people, both men and women, to read this study guide, to take part in League study groups, and to join the ranks of the League.

STUDY GUIDE

The study guide contains selections from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, and is divided into 13 chapters organized around key themes like class struggle and proletarian revolution, political economy, the communist party, unions, imperialism and proletarian revolution, Marxist work-style and others.

The study guide is designed to fulfill an urgent need: 1) to have a short summary, based on the classics, of the basic principles of scientific socialism; 2) to make these selections easily available to workers and revolutionary intellectuals, and 3) to have a single study plan for all study groups.

The manual has been designed for collective study in the League's study groups. This is where sympathizers can ask their questions and discuss the principles. They can also benefit from leadership given by the League's comrades and from the help of

other sympathizers working in the same place. Study groups help sympathizers develop their revolutionary practice and apply theory to practice. This is necessary since Marxism is assimilated, not in a vacuum, but through the experience of class struggle.

The organization of the study guide and the functioning of study groups have been designed to take into account the needs of factory workers, men and women involved in community work, small-scale producers, revolutionary intellectuals, and all working people. But the League's priority is given to the proletariat because it is the most revolutionary class in our society and the leading class in the fight for socialism.

This priority is reflected in the study guide; for example, in the inclusion of the chapters on the unions, and it is reflected in the study groups themselves, which advance at the pace of the worker-sympathizers.

The study guide also encourages readers to read the classics from which the excerpts were taken. A study guide of selections can never replace the integral texts in which the ideas are more fully developed, which explain the historical background of the ideas and denounce the opportunist conceptions that oppose them. Integral texts, providing a more systematic understanding of Marxist ideas, are indispensable for all sympathizers. For example, there is much more to Engels' **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific** than the selection on political economy included in Chapter Two of the study guide. The book also contains the Marxist point of view on the theory of socialism and philosophy.

In studying the selections in the study guide, readers should try to grasp the essential points in the text. They should stay faithful to the spirit of the texts and bring out the principles they contain. It is wrong and anti-Marxist to read texts in a rigid mechanical way, not taking into account the time, place and the historical conditions in which the texts were written. Marxism is not a dead, stagnant dogma; it is a living theory based on practice and must be constantly enriched through practice. Marxism is the guide for our revolutionary practice.

Thus, Lenin was able to develop the Marxist analysis in order to take into account its development into the monopoly stage and its transformation into imperialism. And it was by basing himself on the practice of the socialist revolution in China, and on the negative experience of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, that Mao suc-

cessfully pushed forward the Leninist theory of proletarian revolution and formulated the theory of the continuation of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lastly, we must combine the study of the fundamental line of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with the study of the League's political line. The League's political line is the application of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the concrete situation of the Canadian revolution. This application enabled the League to correctly identify the principal contradiction in Canada as well as the other main contradictions, analyse the present international situation in the light of the theory of three worlds, and define our tasks in relation to the struggle to bring about the Canadian revolution and to help the world revolution.

This explains why the League was able to play a major role in the October 14, 1976 general strike, the support campaign for the millworkers' battle, the PAC tour and in other instances. It also explains why the League was able to establish close ties with communist parties of the international communist movement, including those of China, Kampuchea, and others the world over.

The need to deepen our understanding of the theoretical basis of our political line should motivate us to study Marxism, and this study should in turn confirm the correctness of the political line.

We are publishing this handbook for all the above reasons. We hope everyone will use it in order to assimilate the principles it presents and put them into practice. We welcome criticisms and comments regarding the selection of texts and the overall organization of the study guide so that we can improve it to meet the needs of the masses.

The study of Marxism is not made easy in our society. The bourgeoisie goes out of its way to stop the dissemination of communist ideas and to discourage workers from taking them up. The revisionists work hard at removing the revolutionary nature of Marxism and slandering Mao Tsetung Thought. Nevertheless, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought belongs to us because it is the synthesis of the revolutionary experience gained by the working class and peoples throughout the world. Its study and application guides us in the class struggle and shows us the way towards socialism and communism. Nothing can stop those who are willing to fight from assimilating and putting it to work.

**LONG LIVE MARXISM-LENINISM-MAO TSETUNG
THOUGHT!**

JOIN THE LEAGUE, FORGE OUR PARTY!

**SOCIALISM, OUR ONLY ROAD! COMMUNISM, OUR
FINAL GOAL!**

1 Class Struggle and Proletarian Revolution

INTRODUCTION

“The (written) history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” With these words Marx and Engels began one of the key works of scientific socialism, the **Manifesto of the Communist Party**. After showing that, since the division of society into classes, the motive force of all productive systems is the struggle between the exploited and the exploiters, Marx and Engels studied the class struggle that the proletariat wages against the bourgeoisie under capitalism. Although formulated in 1848, the Marxist principles of class struggle are still valid today.

Marx and Engels showed that the capitalists are unproductive parasites who live by exploiting those who work. Their wealth and sumptuous life styles are gained at the price of the misery and poverty of the masses. The capitalist system is a criminal regime kept in place by the repression of the working class; it is an economic system characterised by crises, inflation and unemployment. Every day these facts are confirmed in Canada and around the world.

The historical importance of Marx and Engels lies in the fact that they studied class struggle under capitalism and formulated the theory of communism, “the doctrine of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat” (Engels, **The Principles of Communism**). Because, where there is oppression there is also resistance. Exploitation and the capitalist crisis necessarily provoke the workers’ active resistance and this class struggle is the basis of day-to-day political and economic life.

Capitalism has created large-scale industry and immense factories in order to develop production and make fabulous profits. But with the creation of large-scale industry, the bourgeoisie had to create the proletariat to run its factories and produce the profits.

The workers are not simple beasts of labour, unaware of their miserable living conditions and incapable of changing anything. Subject to shameless exploitation and repression the proletariat organized itself initially into unions, to fight capitalist exploitation and then under the leadership of a communist party, it organized to rid itself once and for all of this class of bandits, the capitalists.

This is why Marx and Engels were able to write the following conclusion to the chapter of the **Manifesto** which is included in this

first part of the guide: “What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.”

The historic mission of the proletariat is to unite all the people, all those who are oppressed by capital, in order to overthrow it and establish socialism and then communism. The proletariat has no interest in exploiting the people, its only interest is the liberation of all humanity. We shall recall these inspiring words of Marx and Engels throughout our readings and studies: “Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. “Working men of all countries, unite!”

• MARXIST DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNISM, PROLETARIAT, BOURGEOISIE*

Engels, **Principles of Communism**, (1847), Marx and Engels Selected Works, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 81-82

Question 1: What is Communism?

Answer: Communism is the doctrine of the conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat.

Question 2: What is the proletariat?

* The work *Principles of Communism* (Grundsätze des Kommunismus) is the draft programme of the Communist League drawn up by Engels on instructions from the League’s District Committee in Paris. Considering it a preliminary draft, Engels suggested, in a letter to Marx written on November 23-24, 1847, that they should give up the catechistical form and draw up the League’s programme as the “Communist Manifesto”. At the second congress of the Communist League, held from November 29 to December 8, Marx’s and Engels’s views were given full support and they were charged with writing the League’s programme—“Manifesto of the Communist Party”. When writing the Manifesto, the founders of Marxism made use of some of the propositions put forward in the *Principles of Communism*.

In the *Principles of Communism* Engels theoretically substantiated some most important programme and tactical principles of the proletarian party, and indicated measures that would enable the victorious proletariat to prepare for a transition from capitalism to socialism.

Answer: The proletariat is that class of society which procures its means of livelihood entirely and solely from the sale of its labour and not from the profit derived from some capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose whole existence depend on the demand for labour, hence, on the alternations of times of good business and times of bad business, on the fluctuations resulting from unbridled competition. The proletariat, or class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the nineteenth century.

Question 3: Thus, have there not always been proletarians?

Answer: No. Poor folk and working classes have always existed, and the working classes have for the most part been poor. But such poor, such workers who lived under the just mentioned conditions, that is, proletarians, have not always existed, any more than competition has always been free and unbridled.

Question 4: How did the proletariat arise?

Answer: The proletariat arose as a result of the industrial revolution which unfolded in England in the latter half of the last century and which has repeated itself since then in all the civilised countries of the world. This industrial revolution was brought about by the invention of the steam-engine, of various spinning machines, of the power-loom, and of a great number of other mechanical devices. These machines which were very expensive and, consequently, could only be purchased by big capitalists altered the entire hitherto existing mode of production and ousted the hitherto existing workers because machines produced cheaper and better commodities than could the workers with their imperfect spinning-wheels and hand-loom. Thus, these machines handed over industry entirely to the big capitalists and rendered the workers' scanty property (tools, hand-loom, etc.) worthless, so that the capitalists soon owned everything and nothing was left to the workers. In this way the factory system was introduced in the realm of textile production.—The impetus to the introduction of machinery and the factory system once having been given, the latter rapidly invaded all the other branches of industry, notably the textile- and book-printing trades, pottery, and hardware industry. More and more did labour come to be divided among many workers, so that the worker who formerly had made the entire article, now merely produced a part of the article. This division of labour made it possible to supply products more speedily and therefore cheaper. It reduced the labour of each worker to a very simple, constantly repeating mechanical op-

eration, which could be performed by the machine not only equally well, but even a good deal better. In this way, all these branches of industry one after another fell under the dominion of steam-power, machinery, and the factory system, just like the spinning and weaving industries. But thereby all of them fell into the hands of the big capitalists, and here too the workers were deprived of the last shred of independence. Gradually, in addition to actual manufacture, the handicrafts likewise fell increasingly under the dominion of the factory system, because here too big capitalists pushed small masters more and more aside by erecting large workshops, in which much expense was spared and the labour could also be conveniently divided among the workers. In this way it has come about that in all civilised countries almost all branches of labour are carried on under the factory system, that in almost all these branches handicraft and manufacture have been ousted by large-scale industry.—As a result, the former middle classes, especially the smaller master handicraftsmen, have been increasingly driven to ruin, the former position of the workers has completely changed, and two new classes which are gradually absorbing all other classes have come into being, namely:

I. The class of big capitalists who, in all civilised countries, already now almost exclusively own all the means of subsistence and the raw materials and instruments (machinery, factories, etc.) needed for the production of these means of subsistence. This class is the bourgeois class or bourgeoisie.

II. The class of those who own absolutely nothing, who are compelled therefore to sell their labour to the bourgeois in order to obtain the necessary means of subsistence in exchange. This class is called the proletarian class or proletariat.

• UNITY OF THE PEOPLE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE

Stalin, **The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata**, (1923), Works, Vol. 5, Red Star Press, London, pp. 349-351

The question of the middle strata is undoubtedly one of the basic questions of the workers' revolution. The middle strata are the

peasantry and the small urban working people. The oppressed nationalities, nine-tenths of whom consist of middle strata, should also be put in this category. As you see, these are the strata whose economic status puts them midway between the proletariat and the capitalist class. The relative importance of these strata is determined by two circumstances: firstly, these strata constitute the majority, or, at any rate, a large minority of the population of the existing states; secondly, they constitute the important reserves from which the capitalist class recruits its army against the proletariat. The proletariat cannot retain power unless it enjoys the sympathy and support of the middle strata, primarily of the peasantry, especially in a country like our Union of Republics. The proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power if these strata have not been at least neutralised, if they have not yet managed to break away from the capitalist class, and if the bulk of them still serve as the army of capital. Hence the fight for the middle strata, the fight for the peasantry, which was a conspicuous feature of the whole of our revolution from 1905 to 1917, a fight which is still far from ended, and which will continue to be waged in the future.

One of the reasons for the defeat of the 1848 Revolution in France was that it failed to evoke a sympathetic response among the French peasantry. One of the reasons for the fall of the Paris Commune was that it encountered the opposition of the middle strata, especially of the peasantry. The same must be said of the Russian revolution of 1905.

Basing themselves on the experience of the European revolutions, certain vulgar Marxists, headed by Kautsky, came to the conclusion that the middle strata, especially the peasantry, are almost the born enemies of the workers' revolution, that, therefore, we must reckon with a lengthier period of development, as a result of which the proletariat will become the majority of the nation and the proper conditions for the victory of the workers' revolution will thereby be created. On the basis of that conclusion, they, these vulgar Marxists, warned the proletariat against "premature" revolution. On the basis of that conclusion, they, from "motives of principle," left the middle strata entirely at the disposal of capital. On the basis of that conclusion, they prophesied the doom of the Russian October Revolution, on the grounds that the proletariat in Russia constituted a minority, that Russia was a peasant country, and, therefore, a victorious workers' revolution in Russia was impossible.

It is noteworthy that Marx himself had an entirely different appraisal of the middle strata, especially of the peasantry. Whereas the vulgar Marxists, washing their hands of the peasantry and leaving it entirely at the political disposal of capital, noisily bragged about their “firm principles,” Marx, the most true to principle of all Marxists, persistently advised the Communist Party not to lose sight of the peasantry, to win it over to the side of the proletariat and to make sure of its support in the future proletarian revolution.

• THE HISTORY OF ALL CLASS SOCIETIES IS THE HISTORY OF CLASS STRUGGLE

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**,* (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.

Where is the party in opposition that has not been decried as Communistic by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the branding reproach of Communism, against the more advanced opposition parties, as well as against its reac-

* *Manifesto of the Communist Party*—the first programme document of scientific communism which provides an integral and well-composed exposition of the fundamental principles of the great teachings of Marx and Engels. “With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society” (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, p. 48).

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* armed the proletariat with scientific proofs of the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and the triumph of the proletarian revolution and defined the tasks and aims of the revolutionary working-class movement.

Written by Marx and Engels as the programme of the Communist League, the Manifesto was first published in London in February 1848.

tionary adversaries?

Two things result from this fact.

I. Communism is already acknowledged by all European Powers to be itself a Power.

II. It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.

To this end, Communists of various nationalities have assembled in London, and sketched the following Manifesto, to be published in the English, French, German, Italian, Flemish and Danish languages.

BOURGEOIS AND PROLETARIANS*

The history of all hitherto existing society† is the history of class struggles.

* By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage-labour. By proletariat, the class of modern wage-labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour-power in order to live. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

† That is, all *written* history. In 1847, the pre history of society, the social organisation existing previous to recorded history, was all but unknown. Since then, Haxthausen discovered common ownership of land in Russia, Maurer proved it to be the social foundation from which all Teutonic races started in history, and by and by village communities were found to be, or to have been the primitive form of society everywhere from India to Ireland. The inner organisation of this primitive Communistic society was laid bare, in its typical form, by Morgan's crowning discovery of the true nature of the *gens* and its relation to the *tribe*. With the dissolution of these primeval communities society begins to be differentiated into separate and finally antagonistic classes. I have attempted to retrace this process of dissolution in: "Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats" [*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. See present edition, Vol. 3.—*Ed.*], 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1886. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888*]

Engels also included this note in the 1890 German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, omitting only the last sentence.—

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master* and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

• THE BIRTH, GROWTH AND DECLINE OF THE BOURGEOISIE

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonisation of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never

* Guild-master, that is, a full member of a guild, a master within, not a head of a guild. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labour between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labour in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediaeval commune; * here inde-

* “Commune” was the name taken, in France, by the nascent towns even before they had conquered from their feudal lords and masters local self-government and political rights as the “Third Estate.” Generally speaking, for the economical development of the bourgeoisie, England is here taken as the typical country; for its political development, France. [*Note by Engels to the English edition of 1888.*]

This was the name given their urban communities by the townsmen of Italy and France, after they had purchased or wrested

pendent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-labourers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigour in the Middle Ages, which Reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.

their initial rights of self-government from their feudal lords. [*Note by Engels to the German edition of 1890.*]

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connexions everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it

batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, *i.e.*, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralised means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands. The necessary consequence of this was political centralisation. Independent, or but loosely connected provinces, with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class-interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff.

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organisation of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be

burst asunder; they were burst asunder.

Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.

• THE ECONOMIC CRISIS SHOWS THE LIMITS OF CAPITALIST RULE

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

A similar movement is going on before our own eyes. Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule. It is enough to mention the commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society. In these crises a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the

wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces: on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.

But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians.

• THE BIRTH, GROWTH AND RISE OF THE PROLETARIAT

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital. These labourers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour,* is equal to its cost of produc-

* In their later works Marx and Engels used the more exact terms “the value of labour power” and “the price of labour power” introduced by Marx instead of “the value of labour” and “the price of labour” (see

tion. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labour increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, and he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialised skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.

The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the

in this connection Engels's introduction to Marx's *Wage Labour and Capital*.

contest is carried on by individual labourers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them. They direct their attacks not against the bourgeois conditions of production, but against the instruments of production themselves; they destroy imported wares that compete with their labour, they smash to pieces machinery, they set factories ablaze, they seek to restore by force the vanished status of the workman of the Middle Ages.

At this stage the labourers still form an incoherent mass scattered over the whole country, and broken up by their mutual competition. If anywhere they unite to form more compact bodies, this is not yet the consequence of their own active union, but of the union of the bourgeoisie, which class, in order to attain its own political ends, is compelled to set the whole proletariat in motion, and is moreover yet, for a time, able to do so. At this stage, therefore, the proletarians do not fight their enemies, but the enemies of their enemies, the remnants of absolute monarchy, the landowners, the non-industrial bourgeois, the petty bourgeoisie. Thus the whole historical movement is concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie; every victory so obtained is a victory for the bourgeoisie.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeois, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious; the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades' Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by

the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years.

This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.

Altogether collisions between the classes of the old society further, in many ways, the course of development of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie finds itself involved in a constant battle. At first with the aristocracy; later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself, whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry; at all times, with the bourgeoisie of foreign countries. In all these battles it sees itself compelled to appeal to the proletariat, to ask for its help, and thus, to drag it into the political arena. The bourgeoisie itself, therefore, supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie.

• THE PROLETARIAT IS THE ONLY CLASS CAPABLE OF LEADING ALL THOSE WHO OPPOSE THE BOURGEOISIE

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

Further, as we have already seen, entire sections of the ruling classes are, by the advance of industry, precipitated into the proletariat, or are at least threatened in their conditions of existence. These also supply the proletariat with fresh elements of enlightenment and progress.

Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.

The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history. If by chance they are revolutionary, they are so only in view of their impending transfer into the proletariat, they thus defend not their present, but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat.

The “dangerous class,” the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution, its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.

• THE FALL OF THE BOURGEOISIE AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROLETARIAT ARE INEVITABLE

Marx & Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, (1848), Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 35-45

In the conditions of the proletariat, those of old society at large are already virtually swamped. The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in com-

mon with the bourgeois family-relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole super-incumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.

Hitherto, every form of society has been based, as we have already seen, on the antagonism of oppressing and oppressed classes. But in order to oppress a class, certain conditions must be assured to it under which it can, at least, continue its slavish existence. The serf, in the period of serfdom, raised himself to membership in the commune, just as the petty bourgeois, under the yoke of feudal absolutism, managed to develop into a bourgeois. The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rap-

idly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an overriding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

The essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labour. Wage-labour rests exclusively on competition between the labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation of the labourers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

1 Supplementary readings

Lenin, **Karl Marx**, (1914), Collected Works, Volume 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 57-59 and 74-79 (The text explains the Marxist teachings on class struggle under capitalism.)

Mao, **Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society**, (1926) Selected Works, Volume 1, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 13-21 (This work analyses the classes in a country dominated by capitalism, feudalism, and imperialism.)

1 Questions

- 1) What is the proletariat? the bourgeoisie? the people? Why must all the people be united under the leadership of the proletariat in the fight against the bourgeoisie?
- 2) How did the bourgeoisie play a revolutionary role in the struggle against feudalism? Why does the bourgeoisie today under the capitalist system, play a reactionary role?

- 3) What is the historical mission of the proletariat, and how does its development up to the present prepare it to carry this out?
- 4) Why is the victory of the proletariat inevitable?

2 Political Economy: Exploitation and Crisis

INTRODUCTION

Political economy is not a mystery, nor an area of knowledge accessible only to university professors. It is an important part of Marxist theory well within the grasp of every worker conscious of the class struggle waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. In particular, Marxist political economy examines the economic phenomena which underlie the political struggle between antagonistic classes.

In the study of the capitalist system, Marxist political economy examines processes such as the exploitation of workers by the capitalists and surplus value as the source of profit, economic crisis and its effects on the working class, and the development of monopolies dominating whole branches of the economy.

Marxist political economy determines that the secret of the capitalists' enrichment is exploitation, that it is not "their" work but rather the unpaid work of the labourers (surplus value) which is the source of the bourgeoisie's immense profits and elevated standard of living. The theory of surplus value reveals the real nature of the capitalists as parasites who must be swept from power by the socialist revolution.

"...and present-day bourgeois society, no less than its predecessors, was exposed as a grandiose institution for the exploitation of the huge majority of the people by a small, ever-diminishing minority." (Engels, **Karl Marx**)

Marxist political economy also shows that economic crises are inherent in the capitalist system and that nothing can change its terrible economic cycle of "boom" and "bust". Thus it is no wonder that the bourgeoisie's line of action is to shift the costs of the crisis to the working class and working people generally. That is what is behind measures such as factory closings, wage controls, increasing repression and deterioration in living and working conditions. We must immediately fight the effects of the crisis and build a fightback movement, while always bearing in mind that the capitalist system itself makes it impossible to eradicate the root causes of crises. "And so things will inevitably continue until the army of the socialist proletariat overthrows the domination of capital and private property." Lenin, **The Lessons of the Crisis**)

That is why Marxist political economy, especially its study of exploitation and the capitalist crisis outlined in this chapter, is a basic and integral part of Marxist education. It is a weapon available to all workers!

• THE THEORY OF SURPLUS VALUE LAYS BARE THE ESSENCE OF CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION

Engels, **Karl Marx**, (1877), *Marx & Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 85-87

The second important discovery of Marx is the final elucidation of the relation between capital and labour, in other words, the demonstration how, within present society and under the existing capitalist mode of production, the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist takes place. Ever since political economy had put forward the proposition that labour is the source of all wealth and of all value, the question became inevitable: How is this then to be reconciled with the fact that the wage-worker does not receive the whole sum of value created by his labour but has to surrender a part of it to the capitalist? Both the bourgeois economists and the Socialists exerted themselves to give a scientifically valid answer to this question, but in vain, until at last Marx came forward with the solution. This solution is as follows: The present-day capitalist mode of production presupposes the existence of two social classes—on the one hand, that of the capitalists, who are in possession of the means of production and subsistence, and, on the other hand, that of the proletarians, who, being excluded from this possession, have only a single commodity for sale, their labour power, and who therefore have to sell this labour power of theirs in order to obtain possession of means of subsistence. The value of a commodity is, however, determined by the socially necessary quantity of labour embodied in its production, and, therefore, also in its reproduction; the value of the labour power of an average human being during a day, month or year is determined, therefore, by the quantity of labour embodied in the quantity of means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of this labour power during a day, month or year. Let us assume that the means of subsistence of a worker for one day require six hours of labour for their production, or, what is the same thing, that the labour contained in them represents a quantity of labour of six

hours; then the value of labour power for one day will be expressed in a sum of money which also embodies six hours of labour. Let us assume further that the capitalist who employs our worker pays him this sum in return, pays him, therefore, the full value of his labour power. If now the worker works six hours of the day for the capitalist, he has completely replaced the latter's outlay—six hours' labour for six hours' labour. But then there would be nothing in it for the capitalist, and the latter therefore looks at the matter quite differently. He says: I have bought the labour power of this worker not for six hours but for a whole day, and accordingly he makes the worker work 8, 10, 12, 14 or more hours, according to circumstances, so that the product of the seventh, eighth and following hours is a product of unpaid labour and wanders, to begin with, into the pocket of the capitalist.

Thus the worker in the service of the capitalist not only reproduces the value of his labour power, for which he receives pay, but over and above that he also produces a *surplus value* which, appropriated in the first place by the capitalist, is in its further course divided according to definite economic laws among the whole capitalist class and forms the basic stock from which arise ground rent, profit, accumulation of capital, in short, all the wealth consumed or accumulated by the non-labouring classes. But this proved that the acquisition of riches by the present-day capitalists consists just as much in the appropriation of the unpaid labour of others as that of the slaveowner or the feudal lord exploiting serf labour, and that all these forms of exploitation are only to be distinguished by the difference in manner and method by which the unpaid labour is appropriated. This, however, also removed the last justification for all the hypocritical phrases of the possessing classes to the effect that in the present social order right and justice, equality of rights and duties and a general harmony of interests prevail, and present-day bourgeois society, no less than its predecessors, was exposed as a grandiose institution for the exploitation of the huge majority of the people by a small, ever-diminishing minority.

• SOCIALIST REVOLUTION ALONE CAN END THE CAPITALIST CRISIS

Lenin, **The Lessons of the Crisis**, (1901), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 89-92

The commercial and industrial crisis has already dragged on for almost two years. Apparently it is still growing, spreading to new branches of industry and to new districts, and is becoming more acute as a result of the failure of more banks. Every issue of our newspaper since last December has in one form or another shown the development of the crisis and its disastrous effects. The time has come to raise the general question of the causes and the significance of this phenomenon. For Russia, it is a comparatively new phenomenon, as new as Russian capitalism. In the old capitalist countries—i.e., in the countries where the greatest part of the goods is produced for sale, and where the majority of the workers own neither land nor tools, but sell their labour-power to employers, to the owners of property, to those to whom the land, the factories, the machinery, etc., belong—in the capitalist countries, crises are an old phenomenon, recurring from time to time, like attacks of a chronic disease. Hence, crises may be predicted, and when capitalism began to develop with particular rapidity in Russia, the present crisis was predicted in Social-Democratic literature.* The pamphlet **The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats**, written at the end of 1897, stated: “We are apparently now passing through the period in the capitalist cycle [a rotation, in which the same events repeat themselves like summer and winter] when industry is ‘prospering’, when business is brisk, when the factories are working at full capacity, and when countless new factories, new enterprises, joint-stock companies, railway enterprises, etc., etc., are springing up like mushrooms. One need not be a prophet to foretell the inevitable and fairly sharp crash that is bound to succeed this period of industrial ‘prosperity’. This crash will ruin masses of small owners, will throw masses of workers into the ranks of the unemployed....”† And the crash came with a severity unparalleled in Russia. What is the cause of this horrible, chronic disease of capitalist society, which recurs so regularly that its coming can be forecast?

* (Ed. note): Lenin used the term “Social-Democrat” before 1917 to refer to the revolutionary Marxist movement. But after 1917 he replaced it with the term “communist” to demarcate from social-democracy which had degenerated into an opportunist movement in the pay of the bourgeoisie.

† See present edition, Vol. 2, p. 346.—Ed.

Capitalist production cannot develop otherwise than by leaps and bounds—two steps forward and one step (and sometimes two) back. As we have said, capitalist production is production for sale, the production of commodities for the market. Production is conducted by individual capitalists, each producing on his own and none of them able to say exactly what kind and what amount of commodities will be required on the market. Production is carried on haphazardly; each producer is concerned only in excelling the others. Quite naturally, therefore, the quantity of commodities produced may not correspond to the market demand. This probability becomes particularly great when the enormous market is suddenly extended to new huge, unexplored territories. This was precisely the situation at the beginning of the industrial “boom” we experienced not so long ago. The capitalists of all Europe stretched out their paws towards that part of the globe inhabited by hundreds of millions of people, towards Asia, of which until recently only India and a small section of the coastal regions had been closely connected with the world market. The Transcaspian Railway began to “open up” Central Asia for the capitalists; the “Great Siberian Railway” (great, not only because of its length, but because of the unrestricted plunder of the Treasury by the contractors and the unrestricted exploitation of the workers who built it) opened up Siberia. Japan began to develop into an industrial nation and strove to make a breach in the Chinese Wall, opening the way to a choice morsel into which the capitalists of England, Germany, France, Russia, and even Italy immediately plunged their teeth. The construction of gigantic railways, the expansion of the world market, and the growth of commerce, all stimulated an unexpected revival of industry, an increase of new enterprises, a wild hunt for commodity markets, a hunt for profits, the floating of new companies, and the attraction to industry of masses of fresh capital, which consisted partly of the small savings of small capitalists. It is not surprising that this wild world-hunt for new and unknown markets led to a terrific crash.

To obtain a clear idea of the nature of this hunt for markets and profits, we must remember what giants took part in it. When we speak of “separate enterprises” and “individual capitalists”, we sometimes forget that, strictly speaking, these terms are inexact. In reality, only the appropriation of profit has remained individual but production itself has become social. Gigantic crashes have become possible and inevitable, only because powerful *social* productive

forces have become subordinated to a gang of rich men, whose only concern is to make profits. We shall illustrate this by an example from Russian industry. Recently the crisis has spread to the oil industry, in which such enterprises as the Nobel Brothers Oil Company are engaged. In 1899 the company sold 163,000,000 poods of oil products to the value of 53,500,000 rubles, while in 1900 it sold 192,000,000 poods to the value of 72,000,000 rubles. In one year, a single enterprise increased the value of its output by 18,500,000 rubles! This “single enterprise” is maintained by the combined labour of tens and hundreds of thousands of workers engaged in extracting oil and refining it; in delivering it by pipeline, railways, seas, and rivers; and in making the necessary machinery, warehouses, materials, lighters, steamers, etc. These tens of thousands of workers work for the whole of society, but their labour is controlled by a handful of millionaires, who appropriate the entire profit earned by the organised labour of this mass of workers. (In 1899 the Nobel Company made a net profit of 4,000,000 rubles, and in 1900 the figure was 6,000,000 rubles, of which the shareholders received 1,300 rubles per 5,000-ruble-share, with five members of the board of directors receiving *bonuses* to the amount of 528,000 rubles!) When several such enterprises fling themselves into the wild chase for a place in an unknown market, is it surprising that a crisis sets in?

Furthermore, for an enterprise to make profit, its goods must be sold, purchasers must be found. The purchasers of these goods must comprise the entire population, because these colossal enterprises produce whole mountains of goods. But nine-tenths of the population of all capitalist countries are poor; they are workers who receive extremely miserable wages and peasants who, in the main, live even worse than the workers. Now, when, in the period of a boom, the large industrial enterprises set out to produce as vast a quantity of goods as possible, they flood the market with such a huge quantity of goods that the majority of the population, being poor, cannot pay for them. The number of machines, tools, warehouses, railroads, etc., continues to grow. From time to time, however, this process of growth is interrupted because the masses of the people for whom, in the last analysis, these improved instruments of production are intended, remain in a state of poverty that verges on beggary. The crisis shows that modern society could produce immeasurably more goods for the improvement of the living condi-

tions of the entire working people, if the land, factories, machines, etc., had not been seized by a handful of private owners, who extract millions of profits out of the poverty of the people. The crisis shows that the workers should not confine themselves to the struggle for individual concessions from the capitalists. While industry is in upswing, such concessions may be won (the Russian workers on more than one occasion between 1894 and 1898 won concessions by energetic struggle); but when the crash comes, the capitalists not only withdraw the concessions they made, but take advantage of the helpless position of the workers to force wages down still lower. And so things will inevitably continue until the army of the socialist proletariat overthrows the domination of capital and private property.

• THE CRISIS IS A CRISIS OF OVERPRODUCTION

Engels, **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, (1880), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 142-151

As a matter of fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange among all civilised peoples and their more or less barbaric hangers-on, are thrown out of joint about once every ten years. Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsaleable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution. The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filters off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time. And the character

of these crises is so clearly defined that Fourier hit all of them off when he described the first as “*crise pléthorique*,” a crisis from plethora.

In these crises, the contradiction between socialised production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is, for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation. All the laws of production and circulation of commodities are turned upside down. The economic collision has reached its apogee. *The mode of production is in rebellion against the mode of exchange.*

The fact that the socialised organisation of production within the factory has developed so far that it has become incompatible with the anarchy of production in society, which exists side by side with and dominates it, is brought home to the capitalists themselves by the violent concentration of capital that occurs during crises, through the ruin of many large, and a still greater number of small, capitalists. The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the industrial reserve army must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available labourers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But “abundance becomes the source of distress and want” (Fourier), because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labour power. The necessity of this transformation into capital of the means of production and subsistence stands like a ghost between these and the workers. It alone prevents the coming together of the material and personal levers of production; it alone forbids the means of production to function, the workers to work and live. On the one hand, therefore, the capitalistic mode of production stands convicted of its own incapacity to further direct these productive forces. On the other, these productive forces themselves, with increasing energy, press forward to the removal of the existing contradiction, to the abolition of their quality as capital, to the *practical recognition of their character as social productive forces.*

• THE BOURGEOISIE IS INCAPABLE OF RESOLVING THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM AND THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

Engels, **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, (1880), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 142-151

This rebellion of the productive forces, as they grow more and more powerful, against their quality as capital, this stronger and stronger command that their social character shall be recognised, forces the capitalist class itself to treat them more and more as social productive forces, so far as this is possible under capitalist conditions. The period of industrial high pressure, with its unbounded inflation of credit, not less than the crash itself, by the collapse of great capitalist establishments, tends to bring about that form of the socialisation of great masses of means of production which we meet with in the different kinds of joint-stock companies. Many of these means of production and of distribution are, from the outset, so colossal that, like the railways, they exclude all other forms of capitalistic exploitation. At a further stage of evolution this form also becomes insufficient. The producers on a large scale in a particular branch of industry in a particular country unite in a trust, a union for the purpose of regulating production. They determine the total amount to be produced, parcel it out among themselves, and thus enforce the selling price fixed beforehand. But trusts of this kind, as soon as business becomes bad, are generally liable to break up, and on this very account compel a yet greater concentration of association. The whole of the particular industry is turned into one gigantic joint-stock company; internal competition gives place to the internal monopoly of this one company. This has happened in 1890 with the English alkali production, which is now, after the fusion of 48 large works, in the hands of one company, conducted upon a single plan, and with a capital of £6,000,000.

In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its very opposite—into monopoly; and the production without any definite plan of capitalistic society capitulates to the production upon a definite plan of the invading socialistic society. Certainly this is so far still to the benefit and advantage of the capitalists. But in this case the exploitation is so palpable that it must break down. No nation will put up with production conducted by trusts, with so barefaced

an exploitation of the community by a small band of dividend-mongers.

In any case, with trusts or without, the official representative of capitalist society—the state—will ultimately have to undertake the direction of production.* This necessity for conversion into state property is felt first in the great institutions for intercourse and communication—the post office, the telegraphs, the railways.

If the crises demonstrate the incapacity of the bourgeoisie for managing any longer modern productive forces, the transformation of the great establishments for production and distribution into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property shows how unnecessary the bourgeoisie are for that purpose. All the social functions of the capitalist are now performed by salaried employees. The capitalist has no further social function than that of pocketing divi-

* I say “*have to*.” For only when the means of production and distribution have *actually* outgrown the form of management by joint-stock companies, and when, therefore, the taking them over by the state has become *economically* inevitable, only then—even if it is the state of today that effects this—is there an economic advance, the attainment of another step preliminary to the taking over of all productive forces by society itself. But of late, since Bismarck went in for state ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkeyism, that without more ado declares *all* state ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic. Certainly, if the taking over by the state of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of socialism. If the Belgian state, for quite ordinary political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the state the chief Prussian lines, simply to be the better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the government, and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was, in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company, the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor shops of the Army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III’s reign, the taking over by the state of the brothels. [*Note by Engels.*]

dends, tearing off coupons, and gambling on the Stock Exchange, where the different capitalists despoil one another of their capital. At first the capitalistic mode of production forces out the workers. Now it forces out the capitalists, and reduces them, just as it reduced the workers, to the ranks of the surplus population, although not immediately into those of the industrial reserve army.

But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.

**• ONLY THE PROLETARIAT'S CONTROL OF THE
PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND STATE POWER CAN DO
AWAY WITH CRISES**

Engels, **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, (1880), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 142-151

This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonising of the modes of production, appropriation, and exchange with the socialised character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control except that of society as a whole. The social character of the means of production and of the products today reacts against the producers, periodically disrupts all production and exchange, acts only like a

law of Nature working blindly, forcibly, destructively. But with the taking over by society of the productive forces, the social character of the means of production and of the products will be utilised by the producers with a perfect understanding of its nature, and instead of being a source of disturbance and periodical collapse, will become the most powerful lever of production itself.

Active social forces work exactly like natural forces: blindly, forcibly, destructively, so long as we do not understand, and reckon with them. But when once we understand them, when once we grasp their action, their direction, their effects, it depends only upon ourselves to subject them more and more to our own will, and by means of them to reach our own ends. And this holds quite especially of the mighty productive forces of today. As long as we obstinately refuse to understand the nature and the character of these social means of action—and this understanding goes against the grain of the capitalist mode of production and its defenders—so long these forces are at work in spite of us, in opposition to us, so long they master us, as we have shown above in detail.

But when once their nature is understood, they can, in the hands of the producers working together, be transformed from master demons into willing servants. The difference is as that between the destructive force of electricity in the lightning of the storm, and electricity under command in the telegraph and the voltaic arc; the difference between a conflagration, and fire working in the service of man. With this recognition, at last, of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. Then the capitalist mode of appropriation, in which the product enslaves first the producer, and then the appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the products that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production—on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment.

Whilst the capitalist mode of production more and more completely transforms the great majority of the population into proletarians, it creates the power which, under penalty of its own destruction, is forced to accomplish this revolution. Whilst it forces on more and more the transformation of the vast means of production,

already socialised, into state property, it shows itself the way to accomplishing this revolution. *The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production into state property.*

But, in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the state. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole; the gathering of it together into a visible embodiment. But it was this only in so far as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for the time being, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, the feudal lords; in our own time, the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection; as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a state, is no longer necessary. The first act by virtue of which the state really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies out of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not “abolished.” *It dies out.* This gives the measure of the value of the phrase “a free state,”* both as to its justifiable use at times by agitators, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the demands of the so-called anarchists for the abolition of the state out of hand.

* See pp. 25-29 and 34-35 of this volume.—*Ed.*

• THE HISTORICAL CONDITIONS FOR THE PROLETARIAT TO SEIZE POWER ALREADY EXIST

Engels, **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, (1880), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 142-151

Since the historical appearance of the capitalist mode of production, the appropriation by society of all the means of production has often been dreamed of, more or less vaguely, by individuals, as well as by sects, as the ideal of the future. But it could become possible, could become a historical necessity, only when the actual conditions for its realisation were there. Like every other social advance, it becomes practicable, not by men understanding that the existence of classes is in contradiction to justice, equality, etc., not by the mere willingness to abolish these classes, but by virtue of certain new economic conditions. The separation of society into an exploiting and an exploited class, a ruling and an oppressed class, was the necessary consequence of the deficient and restricted development of production in former times. So long as the total social labour only yields a produce which but slightly exceeds that barely necessary for the existence of all; so long, therefore, as labour engages all or almost all the time of the great majority of the members of society—so long, of necessity, this society is divided into classes. Side by side with the great majority, exclusively bond slaves to labour, arises a class freed from directly productive labour, which looks after the general affairs of society: the direction of labour, state business, law, science, art, etc. It is, therefore, the law of division of labour that lies at the basis of the division into classes. But this does not prevent this division into classes from being carried out by means of violence and robbery, trickery and fraud. It does not prevent the ruling class, once having the upper hand, from consolidating its power at the expense of the working class, from turning its social leadership into an intensified exploitation of the masses.

But if, upon this showing, division into classes has a certain historical justification, it has this only for a given period, only under given social conditions. It was based upon the insufficiency of production. It will be swept away by the complete development of modern productive forces. And, in fact, the abolition of classes in society presupposes a degree of historical evolution at which the

existence, not simply of this or that particular ruling class, but of any ruling class at all, and, therefore, the existence of class distinction itself has become an obsolete anachronism. It presupposes, therefore, the development of production carried out to a degree at which appropriation of the means of production and of the products, and, with this, of political domination, of the monopoly of culture, and of intellectual leadership by a particular class of society, has become not only superfluous but economically, politically, intellectually, a hindrance to development.

This point is now reached. Their political and intellectual bankruptcy is scarcely any longer a secret to the bourgeoisie themselves. Their economic bankruptcy recurs regularly every ten years. In every crisis, society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon them. Their deliverance from these bonds is the one precondition for an unbroken, constantly accelerated development of the productive forces, and therewith for a practically unlimited increase of production itself. Nor is this all. The socialised appropriation of the means of production does away, not only with the present artificial restrictions upon production, but also with the positive waste and devastation of productive forces and products that are at the present time the inevitable concomitants of production, and that reach their height in the crises. Further, it sets free for the community at large a mass of means of production and of products, by doing away with the senseless extravagance of the ruling classes of today and their political representatives. The possibility of securing for every member of society, by means of socialised production, an existence not only fully sufficient materially, and becoming day by day more full, but an existence guaranteeing to all the free development and exercise of their physical and mental faculties—this possibility is now for the first time here, but *it is here*. *

* A few figures may serve to give an approximate idea of the enormous expansive force of the modern means of production, even under capitalist pressure. According to Mr. Giffen, the total wealth of Great Britain and Ireland amounted, in round numbers, in

With the seizing of the means of production by society, production of commodities is done away with, and, simultaneously, the mastery of the product over the producer. Anarchy in social production is replaced by systematic, definite organisation. The struggle for individual existence disappears. Then for the first time man, in a certain sense, is finally marked off from the rest of the animal kingdom, and emerges from mere animal conditions of existence into really human ones. The whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man, and which have hitherto ruled man, now comes under the dominion and control of man, who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of Nature, because he has now become master of his own social organisation. The laws of his own social action, hitherto standing face to face with man as laws of Nature foreign to, and dominating him, will then be used with full understanding, and so mastered by him. Man's own social organisation, hitherto confronting him as a necessity imposed by Nature and history, now becomes the result of his own free action. The extraneous objective forces that have hitherto governed history pass under the control of man himself. Only from that time will man himself, more and more consciously, make his own history—only from that time will the social causes set in movement by him have, in the main and in a constantly growing measure, the results intended by him. It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

• THE DESTRUCTION OF CAPITALISM BY THE PROLETARIAT IS HISTORICALLY INEVITABLE

Engels, **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**, (1880), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, pp. 142-151

Let us briefly sum up our sketch of historical evolution.

1814 to £2,200,000,000.

1865 to £6,100,000,000.

1875 to £8,500,000,000.

As an instance of the squandering of means of production and of products during a crisis, the total loss in the *German iron industry* alone, in the crisis 1873-78, was given at the second German Industrial Congress (Berlin, February 21, 1878) as £22,750,000. [*Note by Engels.*]

I. *Mediaeval Society*—Individual production on a small scale. Means of production adapted for individual use; hence primitive, ungainly, petty, dwarfed in action. Production for immediate consumption, either of the producer himself or of his feudal lord. Only where an excess of production over this consumption occurs is such excess offered for sale, enters into exchange. Production of commodities, therefore, only in its infancy. But already it contains within itself, in embryo, *anarchy in the production of society at large*.

II. *Capitalist Revolution*—Transformation of industry, at first by means of simple co-operation and manufacture. Concentration of the means of production, hitherto scattered, into great workshops. As a consequence, their transformation from individual to social means of production—a transformation which does not, on the whole, affect the form of exchange. The old forms of appropriation remain in force. The capitalist appears. In his capacity as owner of the means of production, he also appropriates the products and turns them into commodities. Production has become a *social* act. Exchange and appropriation continue to be *individual* acts, the acts of individuals. *The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist*. Fundamental contradiction, whence arise all the contradictions in which our present-day society moves, and which modern industry brings to light.

A. Severance of the producer from the means of production. Condemnation of the worker to wage-labour for life. *Antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie*.

B. Growing predominance and increasing effectiveness of the laws governing the production of commodities. Unbridled competition. *Contradiction between socialised organisation in the individual factory and social anarchy in production as a whole*.

C. On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of labourers. *Industrial reserve army*. On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition for every manufacturer. On both sides, unheard-of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, over-production, glutting of the markets, crises every ten years, the vicious circle: excess here, of means of production and products—excess there, of labourers, without employment and without means of existence. But these two levers of

production and of social well-being are unable to work together, because the capitalist form of production prevents the productive forces from working and the products from circulating, unless they are first turned into capital—which their very superabundance prevents. The contradiction has grown into an absurdity. *The mode of production rises in rebellion against the form of exchange.* The bourgeoisie are convicted of incapacity further to manage their own social productive forces.

D. Partial recognition of the social character of the productive forces forced upon the capitalists themselves. Taking over of the great institutions for production and communication, first by joint-stock companies, later on by trusts, then by the state. The bourgeoisie demonstrated to be a superfluous class. All its social functions are now performed by salaried employees.

III. *Proletarian Revolution*—Solution of the contradictions. The proletariat seizes the public power, and by means of this transforms the socialised means of production, slipping from the hands of the bourgeoisie, into public property. By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne, and gives their socialised character complete freedom to work itself out. Socialised production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. The development of production makes the existence of different classes of society thenceforth an anachronism. In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the state dies out. Man, at last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master—free.

To accomplish this act of universal emancipation is the historical mission of the modern proletariat. To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism.

Written by Engels between January and the first half of March 1880. Published in the journal *La Revue socialiste* Nos. 3, 4 and 5, March 20, April 20 and May 5, 1880, and as a separate pamphlet in French: F. Engels, *Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique*, Paris, 1880. Printed according to the text of the authorised English edition of 1832

2 Supplementary readings

Marx, **Capital**, (1867), Volume I, Chapter 7, Section 2, International Publishers, New York, pp. 186-198

Engels, **On Marx's Capital**, (1868), Marx and Engels Selected Works, Volume 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 146-152 (Simplified explanation of Volume 1 of Marx's **Capital**.)

Stalin, **Report to the 17th Party Congress on the Work of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B)**, (1934), section 1, and **Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B) on the Work of the Central Committee**, (1939), section 1, in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 671-693 and 874-889 (On the general crisis of capitalism and the link between the crisis and the danger of war.)

CCL(ML), **Fight Class against Class for our Demands and Struggle for Socialism**, (1977), (Agitational pamphlet analysing the effects of the crisis and the working class fightback.)

2 Questions

- 1) How do the capitalists extract surplus value (their profits) by exploiting the workers? What is the difference between the value of the worker's labour power and the value he transmits to commodities during a working day?
- 2) Why are capitalist crises inevitable? Where do they come from? What is the result of the overproduction of commodities?
- 3) What false solutions to the crisis do the capitalists and their agents in the workers' movement offer? Why can socialist revolution put an end to crises?
- 4) What contradictions are constantly being sharpened by capitalist development? How does proletarian revolution resolve these contradictions?

3 State and Revolution

INTRODUCTION

The key question in the class struggle is the question of state power. As long as the bourgeoisie holds state power, it will use the capitalist state to suppress the workers' struggles and try to crush under foot any popular resistance.

For the proletariat to win the class struggle, they must overthrow that repressive machine which is the capitalist state and establish their own socialist state.

The question of the state is an important point of demarcation between the Marxists and the defenders of capitalism within the workers' movement, the opportunists. Is the state a repressive machine whereby one class dominates another? Or is it a neutral third party whose purpose is to harmonise the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat? Our study must necessarily bring us to defend the first, the Marxist position, and to thrash those who defend the opportunist viewpoint and hide the true nature of the state in order to mislead the workers.

The proletariat cannot simply take control of the existing state and reform it to meet its needs, because the state belongs to our enemies, the capitalists, and was conceived to serve only their interests. "The words, 'to smash the bureaucratic military machine', briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state." This is the clear and precise response of Lenin, as expressed in the excerpts from *State and Revolution* included in this section.

Once in power, the proletariat must then continue the revolution and build socialism. We have included a text in this section in which Mao Tsetung outlines the basic criteria of this process.

Through the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class exercises its rule over the bourgeoisie, preventing their attempts to restore capitalism. This proletarian state also assures the broadest possible democracy for the people thus creating one of the conditions needed for the transition to a communist society.

Communism is the abolition of classes. And with the arrival of communism the state must cease to exist because there will no longer be any antagonistic classes nor any classes to suppress.

The state under capitalism, its transformation under socialism and its disappearance under communism, these are the questions that are discussed in this section, essential questions for all communists.

A. The capitalist state and socialist revolution

• THE CAPITALIST STATE IS THE BOURGEOISIE'S DICTATORSHIP OVER THE PROLETARIAT

Lenin, **Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**, (1919), Collected Works, Vol. 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 457-462 (excerpts)

In explaining the class nature of bourgeois civilisation, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system, all socialists have expressed the idea formulated with the greatest scientific precision by Marx and Engels, namely, that the most democratic bourgeois republic is no more than a machine for the suppression of the working class by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the working people by a handful of capitalists.* There is not a single revolutionary, not a single Marxist among those now shouting against dictatorship and for democracy who has not sworn and vowed to the workers that he accepts this basic truth of socialism. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is in a fighting mood and taking action to destroy this machine of oppression and to establish proletarian dictatorship, these traitors to socialism claim that the bourgeoisie have granted the working people “pure democracy”, have abandoned resistance and are prepared to yield to the majority of the working people. They assert that in a democratic republic there is not, and never has been, any such thing as a state machine for the oppression of labour by capital. (...)

“Freedom of assembly” can be taken as a sample of the requisites of “pure democracy”. Every class-conscious worker who has not broken with his class will readily appreciate the absurdity of promising freedom of assembly to the exploiters at a time and in a

* Engels's Introduction to *The Civil War in France* by Marx (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1962, Vol. I, p. 485).

situation when the exploiters are resisting the overthrow of their rule and are fighting to retain their privileges. When the bourgeoisie were revolutionary, they did not, either in England in 1649 or in France in 1793, grant “freedom of assembly” to the monarchists and nobles, who summoned foreign troops and “assembled” to organise attempts at restoration. If the present-day bourgeoisie, who have long since become reactionary, demand from the proletariat advance guarantees of “freedom of assembly” for the exploiters, whatever the resistance offered by the capitalists to being expropriated, the workers will only laugh at their hypocrisy.

The workers know perfectly well, too, that even in the most democratic bourgeois republic “freedom of assembly” is a hollow phrase, for the rich have the best public and private buildings at their disposal, and enough leisure to assemble at meetings, which are protected by the bourgeois machine of power. The rural and urban workers and the small peasants—the overwhelming majority of the population—are denied all these things. As long as that state of affairs prevails, “equality”, i.e., “pure democracy”, is a fraud. The first thing to do to win genuine equality and enable the working people to enjoy democracy in practice is to deprive the exploiters of all the public and sumptuous private buildings, to give the working people leisure and to see to it that their freedom of assembly is protected by armed workers, not by scions of the nobility or capitalist officers in command of downtrodden soldiers.

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

“Freedom of the press” is another of the principal slogans of “pure democracy”. And here, too, the workers know—and socialists everywhere have admitted it millions of times—that this freedom is a deception while the best printing-presses and the biggest stocks of paper are appropriated by the capitalists, and while capitalist rule over the press remains, a rule that is manifested throughout the world all the more strikingly, sharply and cynically the more democracy and the republican system are developed, as in America for example. The first thing to do to win real equality and genuine democracy for the working people, for the workers and peasants, is to deprive capital of the possibility of hiring writers, buying up pub-

lishing houses and bribing newspapers. And to do that the capitalists and exploiters have to be overthrown and their resistance suppressed. The capitalists have always used the term “freedom” to mean freedom for the rich to get richer and for the workers to starve to death. In capitalist usage, freedom of the press means freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use their wealth to shape and fabricate so-called public opinion. In this respect, too, the defenders of “pure democracy” prove to be defenders of an utterly foul and venal system that gives the rich control over the mass media. They prove to be deceivers of the people, who, with the aid of plausible, fine-sounding, but thoroughly false phrases, divert them from the concrete historical task of liberating the press from capitalist enslavement. Genuine freedom and equality will be embodied in the system which the Communists are building, and in which there will be no opportunity for amassing wealth at the expense of others, no objective opportunities for putting the press under the direct or indirect power of money, and no impediments in the way of any workingman (or groups of workingmen, in any numbers) for enjoying and practising equal rights in the use of public printing-presses *and public stocks of paper*.

The history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries demonstrated, even before the war, what this celebrated “pure democracy” really is under capitalism. Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the “purer” democracy is, the more naked, acute and merciless the class struggle becomes, and the “purer” the capitalist oppression and bourgeois dictatorship. The Dreyfus case in republican France, the massacre of strikers by hired bands armed by the capitalists in the free and democratic American republic—these and thousands of similar facts illustrate the truth which the bourgeoisie are vainly seeking to conceal, namely, that actually terror and bourgeois dictatorship prevail in the most democratic of republics and are openly displayed every time the exploiters think the power of capital is being shaken.

• THE STATE IS THE PRODUCT OF IRRECONCILABLE CLASS ANTAGONISMS

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 390-395

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to re-establish what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the "Kautskyism" now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels's works, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We shall have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part

either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

“The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it ‘the reality of the ethical idea’, ‘the image and reality of reason’, as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.” (Pp. 177-78, sixth German edition.) *

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, “correct” Marx in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconcilia-*

* See Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1962, pp. 318-19).

Further below, on pp. 388-90, 390-94 of the volume, Lenin is quoting from the same work by Engels (op. cit., pp. 319-22).

tion of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of “order”, which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the “state” “reconciles” classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine “reconciliation” theory.

That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the “Kautskyite” distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. “Theoretically”, it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and “*alienating* itself *more and more* from it”, it is obvious that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this “alienation”. As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident con-

clusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has “forgotten” and distorted.

• THE STATE IS A REPRESSIVE MACHINE BY WHICH ONE CLASS DOMINATES ANOTHER THROUGH THE USE OF THE POLICE, THE ARMY AND THE PRISON SYSTEM

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 390-395

Engels continues:

“As distinct from the old gentile [tribal or clan] order,* the state, first, divides its subjects *according to territory*....”

This division seems “natural” to us, but it cost a prolonged struggle against the old organisation according to generations or tribes.

“The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because *a* self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all

* *Gentile, or tribal, organisation of society*—the primitive communal system, or the first socio-economic formation in history. The tribal commune was a community of blood relatives linked by economic and social ties. The tribal system went through the matriarchal and the patriarchal periods. The patriarchate culminated in primitive society becoming a class society and in the rise of the state. Relations of production under the primitive communal system were based on social ownership of the means of production and equalitarian distribution of all products. This corresponded in the main to the low level of the productive forces and to their character at the time.

For the primitive communal system, see Karl Marx, *Conspectus of Lewis Morgan's "Ancient Society"*, and Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 204-334).

kinds, of which gentile [clan] society knew nothing....”

Engels elucidates the concept of the “power” which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What, does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state “does not directly coincide” with the armed population, with its “self-acting armed organisation”.

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a “self-acting armed organisation of the population” was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems “scientific”, and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the “self-acting armed organisation of the population” would differ from the primitive organisation of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organisation would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose “self-acting” arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men,

and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between “special” bodies of armed men and the “self-acting armed organisation of the population”.

• THE CLASS STRUGGLE LEADS TO THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT — REVOLUTIONARY STATE POWER

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 416-418

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit** (Vol. XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx’s letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy

* *Die Neue Zeit* (New Times)—theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. It was edited by Karl Kautsky till October 1917 and by Heinrich Cunow in the subsequent period. It published some of Marx’s and Engels’s writings 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, upon Engels’s death, the journal began systematically to publish revisionist articles, including a serial by Bernstein entitled “Problems of Socialism”, which initiated a revisionist campaign against Marxism. During the First World War the journal adhered to a Centrist position, and virtually backed the social-chauvinists.

of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historical phases in the development of production* (historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*.”*

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx’s theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats *repudiating* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky’s pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect

* See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, p. 86.

example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in deeds*, while hypocritically recognising it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"!.) Opportunism *does not extend* recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

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

• TO MAKE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, WE MUST BREAK UP, DEMOLISH AND DESTROY THE CAPITALIST STATE

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 418-421

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary

experience of the Paris Communards.

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

“...One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes’ ...”*

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

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

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar “interpretation” of Marx’s famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasises the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

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

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

“If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx’s italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people’s revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting.” (*Neue Zeit*, Vol.

* See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 22.

XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 709.)* (The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)†

The words, “to smash the bureaucratic-military machine”, briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, “interpretation” of Marxism!

As for Marx’s reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people’s revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible, *without* the precondition of destroying the “ready-made state machinery”.

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

• ARMED STRUGGLE IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

* See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, p. 318.

† See present edition, Vol. 12, pp. 104-12.—*Ed.*

Lenin, **The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution**, (1916), Collected Works, Vol. 23, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 80-83

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot, unless we have become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists forget that we are living in a class society from which there is no way out, nor can there be, save through the class struggle. In every class society, whether based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, on wage-labour, the oppressor class is always armed. Not only the modern standing army, but even the modern militia—and even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, Switzerland, for instance—represent the bourgeoisie armed *against* the proletariat. That is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. Suffice it to point to the use of troops against strikers in all capitalist countries.

A bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society. And in face of this fact, revolutionary Social- Democrats are urged to “demand” “disarmament”! That is tantamount to complete abandonment of the class-struggle point of view, to renunciation of all thought of revolution. Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics possible for a revolutionary class, tactics that follow logically from, and are dictated by, the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism. Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but *only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before*.

If the present war rouses among the reactionary Christian socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, *only* horror and fright, only aversion to all use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc., then we must say: Capitalist society is and has always been *horror without end*. If this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society an *end in horror*, we have no reason to fall into despair. But the disarmament “demand”, or more correctly, the dream of disarmament, is, objectively, nothing but an expression of despair at a time when, as everyone can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving

the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war—civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie.

A lifeless theory, some might say, but we would remind them of two world-historical facts: the role of the trusts and the employment of women in industry, on the one hand, and the Paris Commune of 1871 and the December 1905 uprising in Russia, on the other.

The bourgeoisie makes it its business to promote trusts, drive women and children into the factories, subject them to corruption and suffering, condemn them to extreme poverty. We do not “demand” such development, we do not “support” it. We fight it. But *how* do we fight? We explain that trusts and the employment of women in industry are progressive. We do not want a return to the handicraft system, pre-monopoly capitalism, domestic drudgery for women. Forward through the trusts, etc., and beyond them to socialism!

With the necessary changes that argument is applicable also to the present militarisation of the population. Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarises the youth as well as the adults; tomorrow, it may begin militarising the women. Our attitude should be: All the better! Full speed ahead! For the faster we move, the nearer shall we be to the armed uprising against capitalism. How can Social-Democrats give way to fear of the militarisation of the youth, etc., if they have not forgotten the example of the Paris Commune? This is not a “lifeless theory” or a dream. It is a fact. And it would be a sorry state of affairs indeed if, all the economic and political facts notwithstanding, Social-Democrats began to doubt that the imperialist era and imperialist wars must inevitably bring about a repetition of such facts.

A certain bourgeois observer of the Paris Commune, writing to an English newspaper in May 1871, said: “If the French nation consisted entirely of women, what a terrible nation it would be!” Women and teen-age children fought in the Paris Commune side by side with the men. It will be no different in the coming battles for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian women will not look on passively as poorly armed or unarmed workers are shot down by the well-armed forces of the bourgeoisie. They will take to arms, as they did in 1871, and from the cowed nations of today—or more correctly, from the present-day labour movement, disorganised more by the opportunists than by the governments—there will un-

doubtedly arise, sooner or later, but with absolute certainty, an international league of the “terrible nations” of the revolutionary proletariat.

The whole of social life is now being militarised. Imperialism is a fierce struggle of the Great Powers for the division and redivision of the world. It is therefore bound to lead to further militarisation in all countries, even in neutral and small ones. How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only by demanding disarmament? The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept that shameful role. They will say to their sons: “You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie.”

If we are to shun such propaganda, precisely such propaganda, in connection with the present war, then we had better stop using fine words about international revolutionary Social-Democracy, the socialist revolution and war against war.

3A Supplementary readings

Lenin, **The State**, (1919), Collected Works, Volume 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 470-488 (Simplified explanation of the Marxist conception of the state.)

Lenin, **The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky**, (1918) Collected Works, Volume 28, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Chap. 2, pp. 242-249 (On the difference between bourgeois democracy and proletarian democracy) and Chap. 4, pp. 257-262 (On the destruction of the bourgeois state by socialist revolution.)

3A Questions

- 1) Why is bourgeois democracy a fraud for the working class?
- 2) Why is it that the police, the army, and the prisons and not the government are the essence of the bourgeois state? What is the role

of the various levels of government in the Canadian state?

3) Why do the opportunists refuse to recognize that the capitalist state's true nature is that of a repressive machine? Why do they refuse to destroy it through proletarian revolution?

4) Why is peaceful transition to socialism impossible and armed struggle necessary? Who provokes violence—the bourgeoisie or the proletariat? What is the difference between revolutionary and reactionary violence?

B. Revolution, socialist construction and communism

• DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP UNDER SOCIALISM

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 464-467

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

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society is impossible without a “political transition period”, and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: “to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class” and “to win the battle of democracy”. On the basis

of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that “they cannot be bothered with democracy”, “cannot be bothered with politics”; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of “utilising legality”, and organised a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been recorded in capitalist society? *One* million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wage-workers! Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the “petty”—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for “paupers”!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life

(and nine out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards “greater and greater democracy”, as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that “the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist.”

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

• WITH THE COMING OF COMMUNISM THE STATE WITHERS AWAY

Lenin, **The State and Revolution, (1917)**, Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 467-469

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then “the state... ceases to exist”, and “*it becomes possible to speak of freedom*”. Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression “the state *withers away*” is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for suppression.

And so in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper

sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the “state”, is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple “machine”, almost without a “machine”, without a special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed people* (such as the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—“nobody” in the sense of *a class*, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop *such* excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, ex-

cesses will inevitably begin to “*wither away*”. We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

• THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

Lenin, **The State and Revolution**, (1917), Collected Works, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 473-475

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into “life’s prime want”—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”, i.e., when people have become so accustomed to

observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. “The narrow horizon of bourgeois right”, which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be crossed. There will then be no need for society, in distributing products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely “according to his needs”.

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is “sheer utopia” and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois “savants” confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to “promise” that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the great socialists’ *forecast* that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky’s stories, * are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth “just for fun”, and of demanding the impossible.

Until the “higher” phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers’ control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

• REVOLUTION AND SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

Editorial Departments of Renmin Ribao and Hongqi, **On Khrushchov’s Phoney Communism**, (1964), Red Flag Publications, Montreal, pp. 73- 79

* Reference is to the pupils of a seminary who won notoriety by their extreme ignorance and barbarous customs. They were portrayed by N. G. Pomyalovsky, a Russian author.

SECOND, socialist society covers a very long historical period. Classes and class struggle continue to exist in this society, and the struggle still goes on between the road of socialism and the road of capitalism. The socialist revolution on the economic front (in the ownership of the means of production) is insufficient by itself and cannot be consolidated. There must also be a thorough socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts. Here a very long period of time is needed to decide “who will win” in the struggle between socialism and capitalism. Several decades won’t do it; success requires anywhere from one to several centuries. On the question of duration, it is better to prepare for a longer rather than a shorter period of time. On the question of effort, it is better to regard the task as difficult rather than easy. It will be more advantageous and less harmful to think and act in this way. Anyone who fails to see this or to appreciate it fully will make tremendous mistakes. During the historical period of socialism it is necessary to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat and carry the socialist revolution through to the end if the restoration of capitalism is to be prevented, socialist construction carried forward and the conditions created for the transition to communism.

THIRD, the dictatorship of the proletariat is led by the working class, with the worker-peasant alliance as its basis. This means the exercise of dictatorship by the working class and by the people under its leadership over the reactionary classes and individuals and those elements who oppose socialist transformation and socialist construction. Within the ranks of the people democratic centralism is practised. Ours is the broadest democracy beyond the bounds of possibility for any bourgeois state.

FOURTH, in both socialist revolution and socialist construction it is necessary to adhere to the mass line, boldly to arouse the masses and to unfold mass movements on a large scale. The mass line of “from the masses, to the masses” is the basic line in all the work of our Party. It is necessary to have firm confidence in the majority of the people and, above all, in the majority of the worker-peasant masses. We must be good at consulting the masses in our work and under no circumstances alienate ourselves from them. Both commandism and the attitude of one dispensing favours have to be fought. The full and frank expression of views and great debates are important forms of revolutionary struggle which have been created by the people of our country in the course of their long revo-

lutionary fight, forms of struggle which rely on the masses for resolving contradictions among the people and contradictions between ourselves and the enemy.

FIFTH, whether in socialist revolution or in socialist construction, it is necessary to solve the question of whom to rely on, whom to win over and whom to oppose. The proletariat and its vanguard must make a class analysis of socialist society, rely on the truly dependable forces that firmly take the socialist road, win over all allies that can be won over, and unite with the masses of the people, who constitute more than ninety-five per cent of the population, in a common struggle against the enemies of socialism. In the rural areas, after the collectivization of agriculture it is necessary to rely on the poor and lower middle peasants in order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and the worker-peasant alliance, defeat the spontaneous capitalist tendencies and constantly strengthen and extend the positions of socialism.

SIXTH, it is necessary to conduct extensive socialist education movements repeatedly in the cities and the countryside. In these continuous movements for educating the people we must be good at organizing the revolutionary class forces, enhancing their class consciousness, correctly handling contradictions among the people and uniting all those who can be united. In these movements it is necessary to wage a sharp, tit-for-tat struggle against the anti-socialist, capitalist and feudal forces—the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bourgeois rightists, and the embezzlers, grafters and degenerates—in order to smash the attacks they unleash against socialism and to remould the majority of them into new men.

SEVENTH, one of the basic tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat is actively to expand the socialist economy. It is necessary to achieve the modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defence step by step under the guidance of the general policy of developing the national economy with agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor. On the basis of the growth of production, it is necessary to raise the living standards of the people gradually and on a broad scale.

EIGHTH, ownership by the whole people and collective ownership are the two forms of socialist economy. The transition from collective ownership to ownership by the whole people, from two kinds of ownership to a unitary ownership by the whole people, is a rather long process. Collective ownership itself develops from lower

to higher levels and from smaller to larger scale. The people's commune which the Chinese people have created is a suitable form of organization for the solution of the question of this transition.

NINTH, "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" is a policy for stimulating the growth of the arts and the progress of science and for promoting a flourishing socialist culture. Education must serve proletarian politics and must be combined with productive labour. The working people should master knowledge and the intellectuals should become habituated to manual labour. Among those engaged in science, culture, the arts and education, the struggle to promote proletarian ideology and destroy bourgeois ideology is a protracted and fierce class struggle. It is necessary to build up a large detachment of working-class intellectuals who serve socialism and who are both "red and expert", *i.e.*, who are both politically conscious and professionally competent, by means of the cultural revolution, and revolutionary practice in class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment.

TENTH, it is necessary to maintain the system of cadre participation in collective productive labour. The cadres of our Party and state are ordinary workers and not overlords sitting on the backs of the people. By taking part in collective productive labour, the cadres maintain extensive, constant and close ties with the working people. This is a major measure of fundamental importance for a socialist system; it helps to overcome bureaucracy and to prevent revisionism and dogmatism.

ELEVENTH, the system of high salaries for a small number of people should never be applied. The gap between the incomes of the working personnel of the Party, the government, the enterprises and the people's communes, on the one hand, and the incomes of the mass of the people, on the other, should be rationally and gradually narrowed and not widened. All working personnel must be prevented from abusing their power and enjoying special privileges.

TWELFTH, it is always necessary for the people's armed forces of a socialist country to be under the leadership of the Party of the proletariat and under the supervision of the masses, and they must always maintain the glorious tradition of a people's army, with unity between the army and the people and between officers and men. It is necessary to keep the system under which officers serve as common soldiers at regular intervals. It is necessary to practise military democracy, political democracy and economic democracy.

Moreover, militia units should be organized and trained all over the country, so as to make everybody a soldier. The guns must forever be in the hands of the Party and the people and must never be allowed to become the instruments of careerists.

THIRTEENTH, the people's public security organs must always be under the leadership of the Party of the proletariat and under the supervision of the mass of the people. In the struggle to defend the fruits of socialism and the people's interests, the policy must be applied of relying on the combined efforts of the broad masses and the security organs, so that not a single bad person escapes or a single good person is wronged. Counterrevolutionaries must be suppressed whenever found, and mistakes must be corrected whenever discovered.

FOURTEENTH, in foreign policy, it is necessary to uphold proletarian internationalism and oppose great-power chauvinism and national egoism. The socialist camp is the product of the struggle of the international proletariat and working people. It belongs to the proletariat and working people of the whole world as well as to the people of the socialist countries. We must truly put into effect the fighting slogans, "Workers of all countries, unite!" and "Workers and oppressed nations of the world, unite!", resolutely combat the anti-Communist, anti-popular and counter-revolutionary policies of imperialism and reaction and support the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed classes and oppressed nations. Relations among socialist countries should be based on the principles of independence, complete equality and the proletarian internationalist principle of mutual support and mutual assistance. Every socialist country should rely mainly on itself for its construction. If any socialist country practises national egoism in its foreign policy, or, worse yet, eagerly works in partnership with imperialism for the partition of the world, such conduct is degenerate and a betrayal of proletarian internationalism.

FIFTEENTH, as the vanguard of the proletariat, the Communist Party must exist as long as the dictatorship of the proletariat exists. The Communist Party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat. The leading role of the proletariat is realized through the leadership of the Communist Party. The system of Party committees exercising leadership must be put into effect in all departments. During the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian party must maintain and strengthen its close ties with the prole-

tariat and the broad masses of the working people, maintain and develop its vigorous revolutionary style, uphold the principle of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of its own country, and persist in the struggle against revisionism, dogmatism and opportunism of every kind.

3B Supplementary readings

Lenin, **A Great Beginning**, (1919), Collected Works, Volume 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 409-434 (On the continuation of the class struggle under socialism.)

Lenin, **Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat**, (1919), Collected Works, Volume 30, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 107-117 (On the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat concerning the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie.)

3B Questions

- 1) Why is the socialist system superior to capitalism?
- 2) What is the role of the state of the proletarian dictatorship under socialism? Under what conditions does the state disappear?
- 3) Why does class struggle continue under socialism? Why does the danger of capitalist restoration exist throughout the period of socialist transition? What must be done to prevent the restoration of capitalism?
- 4) What is the difference between socialism and communism?

4 The Struggle Against Opportunism and Modern Revisionism

INTRODUCTION

We have seen that Marxists have had to struggle to defend correct ideas and practice concerning both class struggle and the state and revolution. They have not only had to fight the bourgeoisie, but also the erroneous positions of the defenders of capitalism within the workers' movement itself. These agents of the bourgeoisie we call opportunists, because they always take the easy road of accommodating, conciliating and collaborating with the bourgeoisie, pretending to defend the working class in order to better betray it.

Although in the last instance the bourgeoisie can call on the armed forces to maintain its domination over the working class, they also call upon their agents in our ranks, whose role is to undermine the workers' movement from the inside. This is the age-old tactic of the Trojan horse, the idea that a fortress can be more easily captured from within.

These opportunists are recruited from among the corrupt workers who belong to a small stratum we call the labour aristocracy: a small number of people bought off with the super-profits that the capitalists make by their exploitation of the entire world. "This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the 'labour aristocracy,' who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook is... the principal *social* (not military) prop of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, **Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**). They are content with the crumbs from the capitalists' table and in exchange they defend their masters with fierce ardour.

Some of these opportunists act openly, claiming that we can, little by little, reform capitalism so that it will benefit the workers more, and that the revolution is old-fashioned, outmoded and impossible. Because they want to limit the workers' movement to the struggle for reforms, we call them reformists. Other opportunists hide themselves by disguising themselves as Marxists, using the vocabulary of Marxism in order to empty it of its revolutionary content. Because they want to revise the principles of Marxism, we call them revisionists. However, both the revisionists and the reformists agree on one basic thing: the maintenance of capitalism, the defence of the bourgeoisie.

The principal danger in the communist movement today is modern revisionism—the systematic revision of Marxism-Leninism and the all-out attack against Mao Tsetung Thought—led by the Soviet Union with the aid and co-operation of the revisionist parties all over the world. The goal of this form of revisionism is to betray the revolutionary cause of the proletariat, to hide the imperialist nature of the Soviet Union and to serve its superpower politics of winning world hegemony. To combat and destroy its influence in our country and throughout the world is a task of the utmost importance.

Marxist-Leninists struggle for the unity of the whole working class in the fight for socialism. But this unity can only be achieved by a determined and relentless struggle against the opportunists who divide us and divert us from the ultimate aim of the proletarian revolution.

• THE MARXISTS' STRUGGLE AGAINST THE REFORMISTS WHO REJECT REVOLUTION

Lenin, **Marxism and Reformism**, (1913), Collected Works, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 372-375

Unlike the anarchists, the Marxists recognise struggle for reforms, i.e., for measures that improve the conditions of the working people without destroying the power of the ruling class. At the same time, however, the Marxists wage a most resolute struggle against the reformists, who, directly or indirectly, restrict the aims and activities of the working class to the winning of reforms. Reformism is bourgeois deception of the workers, who, despite individual improvements, will always remain wage-slaves, as long as there is the domination of capital.

The liberal bourgeoisie grant reforms with one hand, and with the other always take them back, reduce them to nought, use them to enslave the workers, to divide them into separate groups and perpetuate wage-slavery. For that reason reformism, even when quite sincere, in practice becomes a weapon by means of which the bourgeoisie corrupt and weaken the workers. The experience of all countries shows that the workers who put their trust in the reformists are always fooled.

And conversely, workers who have assimilated Marx's theory,

i.e., realised the inevitability of wage-slavery so long as capitalist rule remains, will not be fooled by any bourgeois reforms. Understanding that where capitalism continues to exist reforms cannot be either enduring or far-reaching, the workers fight for better conditions and use them to intensify the fight against wage-slavery. The reformists try to divide and deceive the workers, to divert them from the class struggle by petty concessions. But the workers, having seen through the falsity of reformism, utilise reforms to develop and broaden their class struggle.

The stronger reformist influence is among the workers the weaker they are, the greater their dependence on the bourgeoisie, and the easier it is for the bourgeoisie to nullify reforms by various subterfuges. The more independent the working-class movement, the deeper and broader its aims, and the freer it is from reformist narrowness the easier it is for the workers to retain and utilise improvements.

There are reformists in all countries, for everywhere the bourgeoisie seek, in one way or another, to corrupt the workers and turn them into contented slaves who have given up all thought of doing away with slavery. In Russia, the reformists are liquidators, who renounce our past and try to lull the workers with dreams of a new, open, legal party. Recently the St. Petersburg liquidators were forced by *Severnaya Pravda** to defend themselves against the charge of reformism. Their arguments should be carefully analysed in order to clarify an extremely important question.

We are not reformists, the St. Petersburg liquidators wrote, because we have not said that reforms are everything and the ultimate goal nothing; we have spoken of movement to the ultimate goal; we have spoken of advancing through the struggle for reforms to the fullness of the aims set.

Let us now see how this defence squares with the facts.

First fact. The liquidator Sedov, summarising the statements of all the liquidators, wrote that of the Marxists' "three pillars" two are no longer suitable for our agitation. Sedov retained the demand for an eight-hour day, which, theoretically, can be realised as a reform. He deleted, or relegated to the background the very things that go beyond reforms. Consequently, Sedov relapsed into downright opportunism, following the very policy expressed in the formula: the

* See pp. 325-27 of this volume.—*Ed.*

ultimate goal is nothing. When the “ultimate goal” (even in relation to democracy) is pushed further and further away from our agitation, that is reformism.

Second fact. The celebrated August Conference (last year’s) of the liquidators likewise pushed non-reformist demands further and further away—until some special occasion—instead of bringing them closer, into the heart of our agitation.

Third fact. By denying and disparaging the “old” and dissociating themselves from it, the liquidators thereby confine themselves to reformism. In the present situation, the connection between reformism and the renunciation of the “old” is obvious.

Fourth fact. The workers’ economic movement evokes the wrath and attacks of the liquidators (who speak of “crazes”, “milling the air”, etc., etc.) as soon as it adopts slogans that go beyond reformism.

What is the result? In words, the liquidators reject reformism as a principle, but in practice they adhere to it all along the line. They assure us, on the one hand, that for them reforms are not the be-all and end-all, but on the other hand, every time the Marxists go beyond reformism, the liquidators attack them or voice their contempt.

However, developments in every sector of the working-class movement show that the Marxists, far from lagging behind, are definitely in the lead in making practical use of reforms, and in fighting for them. Take the Duma elections at the worker curia level—the speeches of our deputies inside and outside the Duma, the organisation of the workers’ press, the utilisation of the insurance reform; take the biggest union, the Metalworkers’ Union, etc.,—everywhere the Marxist workers are ahead of the liquidators, in the direct, immediate, “day-to-day” activity of agitation, organisation, fighting for reforms and using them.

The Marxists are working tirelessly, not missing a single “possibility” of winning and using reforms, and not condemning, but supporting, painstakingly developing every step beyond reformism in propaganda, agitation, mass economic struggle, etc. The liquidators, on the other hand, who have abandoned Marxism, by their attacks on the very existence of the Marxist body, by their destruction of Marxist discipline and advocacy of reformism and a liberal-labour policy, are only disorganising the working-class movement.

Nor, moreover, should the fact be overlooked that in Russia reformism is manifested also in a peculiar form, in identifying the

fundamental political situation in present-day Russia with that of present-day Europe. From the liberal's point of view this identification is legitimate, for the liberal believes and professes the view that "thank God, we have a Constitution". The liberal expresses the interests of the bourgeoisie when he insists that, after October 17, every step by democracy beyond reformism is madness, a crime, a sin, etc.

But it is these bourgeois views that are applied in practice by our liquidators, who constantly and systematically "transplant" to Russia (on paper) the "open party" and the "struggle for a legal party", etc. In other words, like the liberals, they preach the transplanting of the European constitution to Russia, *without* the specific path that in the West led to the adoption of constitutions and their consolidation over generations, in some cases even over centuries. What the liquidators and liberals want is to wash the hide without dipping it in water, as the saying goes.

In Europe, reformism actually means abandoning Marxism and replacing it by bourgeois "social policy". In Russia, the reformism of the liquidators means not only that, it means destroying the Marxist organisation and abandoning the democratic tasks of the working class, it means replacing them by a liberal-labour policy.

Pravda Truda No. 2,
September 12, 1913
Signed: *V. I.*

Published according to the
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• THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY AND BOURGEOIS “LABOUR” PARTIES

Lenin, **Imperialism and the Split in Socialism**, (1913),
Collected Works, Vol. 23, Progress Publishers, Moscow,
pp. 115-120

This, in fact, is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky glosses over instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist “Great” Power *can economically* bribe the upper strata of “its” workers by spending on this a hundred million or so francs a year, for its *superprofits* most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labour ministers, “labour representatives” (remember Engels’s splendid analysis of the term), labour members of war industries committees, labour officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, only England enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail there for decades. *No* other countries possessed either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England’s monopoly position *could* remain *unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the era of imperialist wars has begun. It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of *one* country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist “Great” Power can and does bribe *smaller* strata (than in England in 1848-68) of the “labour aristocracy”. Formerly a “*bourgeois labour party*”, to use Engels’s remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but, on the other hand, it could exist for a long time. Now a “*bourgeois labour party*” is *inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries; but in view of the

desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils, it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while *enabling* the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into “eternal” parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to “rest on the laurels” of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses* who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will now inevitably develop. For the first tendency is not accidental; it is “substantiated” economically. In *all* countries the bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself “bourgeois labour parties” of social-chauvinists. The difference between a definitely formed party, like Bissolati’s in Italy, for example, which is fully social-imperialist, and, say, the semi-formed near-party of the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Bulkins, Chkheidzes, Skobelevs and Co., is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that, economically, the desertion of a stratum of the labour aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shift in class relations, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular “difficulty”.

On the economic basis referred to above, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament, associations, congresses, etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the government or on the war industries committees, in parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of “respectable”, legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and “bourgeois law-abiding” trade unions—this is the bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and supporters of the “bourgeois labour parties”.

The mechanics of political democracy works in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, and promising all manner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the English Minister Lloyd George, one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the “bourgeois labour party”. A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labour audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining sizable sops for docile workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the bourgeoisie splendidly,* and serves it precisely *among* the workers, brings its influence *precisely* to the proletariat, to where the bourgeoisie needs it most and where it finds it most difficult to subject the masses morally.

And is there such a great difference between Lloyd George and the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Hendersons and Hyndmans, Plekhanovs, Renaudels and Co.? Of the latter, it may be objected, some will return to the revolutionary socialism of Marx. This is possible, but it is an insignificant difference in degree, if the question is regarded from its political, i.e., its mass aspect. Certain individuals among the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat. But the social-chauvinist or (what is the same thing) opportunist *trend* can neither disappear nor “return” to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political trend, this “bourgeois labour party”, will swear by the name of Marx. It cannot be prohibited from doing this, just as a trading firm cannot be prohibited from using any particular label, sign or advertisement. It has always been the case in history that

* I recently read an article in an English magazine by a Tory, a political opponent of Lloyd George, entitled “Lloyd George from the Standpoint of a Tory”. The war opened the eyes of this opponent and made him realise what an excellent servant of the bourgeoisie this Lloyd George is! The Tories have made peace with him!

after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies have attempted to appropriate their names so as to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact is that “bourgeois labour parties”, as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in *all* the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless a determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labour movement. The Chkheidze faction,* *Nashe Dyelo* and *Golos Truda*† in Russia, and the O. C. supporters abroad are nothing but varieties of one *such* party. There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear *before* the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream will play in the labour movement. Kautskyism is not an independent trend, because it has no roots either in the masses or in the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilising the ideology of the past, it endeavours to reconcile the proletariat with the “bourgeois labour

* *Chkheidze faction*—the Menshevik group in the Fourth Duma led by N. S. Chkheidze. Officially followed a Centrist policy in the First World War, but factually supported the Russian social-chauvinists. In 1916 the group was composed of M. I. Skobelev, T. N. Tulyakov, V. I. Khaustov, N. S. Chkheidze and A. I. Ohkhenkeli. Lenin criticises their opportunist policy in several articles, including “The Chkheidze Faction and Its Hole”, “Have the Organising Committee and the Chkheidze Group a Policy of their Own?”

† *Nashe Dyelo* (Our Cause)—a Menshevik monthly, chief mouth-piece of the liquidators and Russian social-chauvinists. Published in Petrograd in 1915 in place of *Nasha Zarya* (Our Dawn) which was closed in October 1914. Contributors included Y. Mayevsky, P.P. Maslov, A.N. Potresov and N. Cherevanin. Six issues appeared altogether.

Golos Truda (Voice of Labour)—a legal Menshevik paper published in Samara in 1916, after the closure of *Nash Golos* (Our Voice). Three issues appeared.

party”, to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the latter’s prestige. The masses no longer follow the avowed social-chauvinists: Lloyd George has been hissed down at workers’ meetings in England; Hyndman has left the party; the Renaudels and Scheidemanns, the Potresovs and Gvozdyovs are protected by the police. The Kautskyites’ masked defence of the social-chauvinists is much more dangerous.

One of the most common sophistries of Kautskyism is its reference to the “masses”. We do not want, they say, to break away from the masses and mass organisations! But just think how Engels put the question. In the nineteenth century the “mass organisations” of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labour party. Marx and Engels did not reconcile themselves to it on this ground; they exposed it. They did not forget, firstly, that the trade union organisations directly embraced a *minority of the proletariat*. In England then, as in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organised. No one can seriously think it possible to organise the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Secondly—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of the size of an organisation, as of the real, objective significance of its policy: does its policy represent the masses, does it serve them, i.e., does it aim at their liberation from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, the minority’s reconciliation with capitalism? The latter was true of England in the nineteenth century, and it is true of Germany, etc., now.

Engels draws a distinction between the “bourgeois labour party” of the *old* trade unions—the privileged minority—and the “*lowest mass*”, the real majority, and appeals to the latter, who are *not* infected by “bourgeois respectability”. This is the essence of Marxist tactics!

Neither we nor anyone else can calculate precisely what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the “defenders of the fatherland” in the imperialist war *represent* only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain socialists, to go down *lower* and *deeper*, to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the

interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labour movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilise the experiences of the war to expose, not conceal, the utter vileness of national-liberal labour politics.

In the next article, we shall try to sum up the principal features that distinguish this line from Kautskyism.

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• THE MARXISTS' STRUGGLE AGAINST THE REVISIONISTS WHO ROB COMMUNISM OF ITS REVOLUTIONARY ESSENCE

Lenin, **Marxism and Revisionism**, (1908), Collected Works, Vol. 15, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 31-38

There is a well-known saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which conflicted with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, indicates the tasks facing this class and demonstrates the inevitable replacement (by virtue of economic development) of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine has had to fight for every step forward in the course of its life.

Needless to say, this applies to bourgeois science and philosophy, officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the propertied classes and to “coach” it against internal and foreign enemies. This science will not even hear of

Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Marx is attacked with equal zest by young scholars who are making a career by refuting socialism, and by decrepit elders who are preserving the tradition of all kinds of outworn “systems”. The progress of Marxism, the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class, inevitably increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which becomes stronger, more hardened and more vigorous every time it is “annihilated” by official science.

But even among doctrines connected with the struggle of the working class, and current mainly among the proletariat, Marxism by no means consolidated its position all at once. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 1840s on) Marxism was engaged in combating theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the early forties Marx and Engels settled accounts with the radical Young Hegelians whose viewpoint was that of philosophical idealism. At the end of the forties the struggle began in the field of economic doctrine, against Proudhonism. The fifties saw the completion of this struggle in criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the sixties the struggle shifted from the field of general theory to one closer to the direct labour movement: the ejection of Bakuninism from the International. In the early seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the late seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the workers’ parties in effect built their programmes and their tactics on Marxist foundations. The revived international organisation of the labour movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and causes of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend

hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this trend by coming forward with the most noise and with the most purposeful expression of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia where—owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population weighed down by the relics of serfdom—non-Marxist socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the programme of the municipalisation of all land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our Social-Narodniks are more and more substituting “amendments” to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of their old system, which in its own way was integral and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

(...)

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that in this sphere the “amendments” of the revisionists were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by “new data on economic development”. It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while they proceed very slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and weaker, and that cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to eliminate them altogether. It was said that the “theory of collapse” to which capitalism is heading was unsound, owing to the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx’s theory of value, too, in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.* (...)

The position of revisionism was even worse as regards the theory of crises and the theory of collapse. Only for a very short time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of refashioning the foundations of Marx’s theory under the influence of a

* *Böhm-Bawerk, E.*—an Austrian bourgeois economist.

few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Realities very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thereby intensifying class antagonisms to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is heading for a break-down—in the sense both of individual political and economic crises and of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system—has been made particularly clear, and on a particularly large scale, precisely by the new giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the appalling increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this has resulted in the recent “theories” of the revisionists having been forgotten by everybody, including, apparently, many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals had given the working class must not be forgotten. (...)

In the sphere of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the working men have no country. For, they said, since the “will of the majority” prevails in a democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these arguments of the revisionists amounted to a fairly well-balanced system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal-bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of “democratic” capitalism. Parliamentarism does not

eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clearly as could be how inevitably this intensification comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the enemy of the whole nation, with the foreign army which had ruined its country, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which leads to an even sharper decision of the argument by mass violence than formerly—will never be able on the basis of this parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation consistent in principle, really preparing the working-class masses for victorious participation in such “arguments”. The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social-reform liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Cadets) in the Russian revolution, has convincingly shown that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they do not enhance but weaken the actual significance of their struggle, by linking fighters with elements who are least capable of fighting and most vacillating and treacherous. Millerandism in France—the biggest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide, a really national scale—has provided a practical appraisal of revisionism that will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. “The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing”—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows

from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another.

• THE STRUGGLE AGAINST KHRUSHCHEV’S MODERN REVISIONISM*

Mao, **Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China**, (1956), Selected Works, Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 341-342

I would like to say a few words about the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I think there are two “swords”: one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been discarded by the Russians. Gomulka and some people in Hungary have picked it up to stab at the Soviet Union and oppose so-called Stalinism. The Communist Parties of many European countries are also criticizing the Soviet Union, and their leader is Togliatti. The imperialists also use this sword to slay people with. Dulles, for instance, has brandished it for some time. This sword has not been lent out, it has been thrown out. We Chinese have not thrown it away. First, we protect Stalin, and, second, we at the same time criticize his mistakes, and we have written the article “On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”. Unlike some people who have tried to defame and destroy Stalin, we are

* (Ed. note): *With the 20th Congress of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the USSR in 1956, the Khrushchev and Brezhnev clique took control of the Party and the State and restored capitalism in the Soviet Union. This is how the USSR, the first socialist country became a social-fascist (socialist in words, fascist in deeds) and social-imperialist (socialist in words, imperialist in deeds) country. Mao Tsetung was the first to denounce the 20th Congress and alert the communist movement to Khrushchev’s modern revisionism. It is called “modern” revisionism to distinguish it from the revisionism of the Second International at the beginning of the 20th century.*

acting in accordance with objective reality.

As for the sword of Lenin, hasn't it too been discarded to a certain extent by some Soviet leaders? In my view, it has been discarded to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still serve as the example for all countries? Khrushchov's report at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize state power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away.

The doctrine of Leninism has developed Marxism. In what respects has it done so? First, in world outlook, that is, in materialism and dialectics; and second, in revolutionary theory and tactics, particularly on the questions of class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the political party of the proletariat. And then there are Lenin's teachings on socialist construction. Beginning from the October Revolution of 1917, construction went on in the midst of revolution, and thus Lenin had seven years of practical experience in construction, something denied to Marx. It is precisely these fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism that we have been learning.

In both our democratic revolution and our socialist revolution, we have mobilized the masses to wage class struggle in the course of which we have educated the people. It is from the October Revolution that we have learned to wage class struggle. During the October Revolution, the masses in the cities and villages were fully mobilized to wage class struggle. Those who are now sent by the Soviet Union as experts to various countries were but children or teenagers at the time of the October Revolution, and many of them have forgotten about this practice. Comrades in some countries say that China's mass line is not right, and they are only too happy to pick up the paternalistic approach. There is no stopping them if they want to do so; in any case, we adhere to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, with non-interference in each other's internal affairs and mutual non-aggression. We have no intention of exercising leadership over any country save our own, that is, the People's Republic of China.

The fundamental problem with some East European countries is that they have not done a good job of waging class struggle and have left so many counter-revolutionaries at large; nor have they trained their proletariat in class struggle to help them learn how to draw a clear distinction between the people and the enemy, between

right and wrong and between materialism and idealism. And now they have to reap what they have sown, they have brought the fire upon their own heads.

How much capital do you have? Just Lenin and Stalin. Now you have abandoned Stalin and practically all of Lenin as well, with Lenin's feet gone, or perhaps with only his head left, or with one of his hands cut off. We, on our part, stick to studying Marxism-Leninism and learning from the October Revolution. Marx has left us a great many writings, and so has Lenin. To rely on the masses, to follow the mass line—this is what we have learned from them. Not to rely on the masses in waging class struggle and not to make a clear distinction between the people and the enemy—that would be very dangerous.

4 Supplementary readings

Marx, **Critique of the Gotha Program**, (1875), Marx and Engels, Selected Works, Volume 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 9-30 (Criticism of revisionist conceptions of Marxism.)

Lenin, **What is to be Done?**, (1902), Collected Works, Volume 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 352-372 (Criticism of revisionist conceptions of Marxism.)

Editorial Departments of Renmin Ribao (People's Daily) and Hongqi (Red Flag), **On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism and its Historical Lessons for the World**, (1964), Red Flag Publications, Montreal, pp. 41-58 (Criticism of modern revisionism and its theories on "the party of the whole people" and "the state of the whole people".)

CCL(ML), **Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the Canadian Communist League (Marxist-Leninist)**, (1975), Chap. 1, pp. 9-13 (The defence of Marxism and the fight against opportunism)

4 Questions

1) What is the relationship between the development of imperialism and opportunism within the labour movement? Why is it in the interests of the majority of the working class and the people to reject opportunism?

2) What is the role of bourgeois “labour” parties as agents of the bourgeoisie? What is the Marxist point of view on the struggle for reforms?

3) How do the revisionists distort the Marxist viewpoint on class struggle? on the capitalist crisis? on proletarian revolution? What are the modern revisionist positions of the Soviet party leadership?



Women from the ranks of the proletariat and all the people play an important role in the class struggle because they make up “half the sky.” In the early 1900’s in New York American women garment workers, in the front ranks of the working class, demanded the right to organize.



The capitalist crisis sharpens class struggle and leads the people to fight back. Canadian unemployed men and women demonstrating in Manitoba in 1931 against Bennett's reactionary government and its crisis measures.



Through revolutionary education and communist agitation and propaganda the masses take up communism. Here Mao Tsetung is seen delivering a lecture, "On Protracted War", to cadres at the Yen-nan Military School in 1938.



In 1917 the Bolshevik Red Guard, made up of armed revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers, enabled the Russian people to crush the bourgeois state and establish socialism.

5 The Communist Party

INTRODUCTION

In order to attack the bourgeoisie, to seize state power and to build socialism and then communism, “the army of the proletariat”, to use Stalin’s term, definitely needs leadership, a courageous and experienced general staff, capable of leading it through the complexities of class warfare.

This is the communist party. In order to fulfill its vanguard role the party must bring together the best elements of the working class, those who are most determined and devoted to the liberation of their class. It has to be an organization that is as solid as a rock, united as one, unshakeably based on the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought which guide all our struggles, and sufficiently flexible in terms of tactics to be able to adapt to struggle in any conditions.

The communist party is an organization of leaders. It must therefore be a fortress “whose doors are open only to those who have proven themselves” (Stalin, **Proletarian Class, Proletarian Party**). The party does not want pretty talkers or arm-chair revolutionaries. It must be made up of the best fighters of the proletariat.

Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung, through the experience of years of struggle waged by hundreds of millions of men and women have drawn valuable lessons on what a communist party should be and how to construct it. These are the principles that today guide communists the world over in their struggles to forge the proletarian vanguard in every country.

In the selection included in the first section of this chapter, Stalin summarizes the fundamental characteristics of the communist party:

“The Party, the advanced detachment of the working class,... the organized detachment of the working class,... the highest form of class organization of the proletariat,... an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat,... the embodiment of unity of will, unity incompatible with the existence of fractions... (that) becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.” (Stalin, **“Foundations of Leninism”**)

A. Characteristics of the Party

• THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION REQUIRES A COMMUNIST PARTY

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

In the pre-revolutionary period, the period of more or less peaceful development, when the parties of the Second International were the predominant force in the working-class movement and parliamentary forms of struggle were regarded as the principal forms—under these conditions the Party neither had nor could have had that great and decisive importance which it acquired afterwards, under conditions of open revolutionary clashes. Defending the Second International against attacks made upon it, Kautsky says that the parties of the Second International are an instrument of peace and not of war, and that for this very reason they were powerless to take any important steps during the war, during the period of revolutionary action by the proletariat. That is quite true. But what does it mean? It means that the parties of the Second International are unfit for the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, that they are not militant parties of the proletariat, leading the workers to power, but election machines adapted for parliamentary elections and parliamentary struggle. This, in fact, explains why, in the days when the opportunists of the Second International were in the ascendancy, it was not the party but its parliamentary group that was the chief political organization of the proletariat. It is well known that the party at that time was really an appendage and subsidiary of the parliamentary group. It scarcely needs proof that under such circumstances and with such a party at the helm there could be no question of preparing the proletariat for revolution.

But matters have changed radically with the dawn of the new period. The new period is one of open class collisions, of revolutionary action by the proletariat, of proletarian revolution, a period when forces are being directly mustered for the overthrow of imperialism and the seizure of power by the proletariat. In this period the proletariat is confronted with new tasks, the tasks of reorganizing all party work on new, revolutionary lines; of educating the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; of preparing and mov-

ing up reserves; of establishing an alliance with the proletarians of neighbouring countries; of establishing firm ties with the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries, etc., etc. To think that these new tasks can be performed by the old Social-Democratic Parties, brought up as they were in the peaceful conditions of parliamentarism, is to doom oneself to hopeless despair, to inevitable defeat. If, with such tasks to shoulder, the proletariat remained under the leadership of the old parties, it would be completely unarmed. It scarcely needs proof that the proletariat could not consent to such a state of affairs.

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

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

This new party is the party of Leninism.

What are the specific features of this new party?

• THE PARTY: ADVANCED DETACHMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

The Party as the advanced detachment of the working class. The Party must be, first of all, the *advanced* detachment of the working class. The Party must absorb all the best elements of the working class, their experience, their revolutionary spirit, their selfless devotion to the cause of the proletariat. But in order that it may really be the advanced detachment, the Party must be armed with revolutionary theory, with a knowledge of the laws of the movement, with a knowledge of the laws of revolution. Without this it will be incapable of directing the struggle of the proletariat, of leading the proletariat. The Party cannot be a real party if it limits itself to registering what the masses of the working class feel and think, if it drags at the tail of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to overcome the inertia and political indifference of the spontaneous movement, if it is unable to rise above the momentary interests of

the proletariat, if it is unable to raise the masses to the level of understanding the class interests of the proletariat. The Party must stand at the head of the working class; it must see farther than the working class; it must lead the proletariat, and not drag at the tail of the spontaneous movement. The parties of the Second International, which preach “khvostism,” are vehicles of bourgeois policy, which condemns the proletariat to the role of a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only a party which adopts the standpoint of the advanced detachment of the proletariat and is able to raise the masses to the level of understanding the class interests of the proletariat—only such a party can divert the working class from the path of trade-unionism and convert it into an independent political force.

The Party is the political leader of the working class.

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

The Party is the General Staff of the proletariat.

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

non-Party masses, if these masses do not accept its leadership, if the Party enjoys no moral and political credit among the masses.

Recently 200,000 new members from the ranks of the workers were admitted into our Party. The remarkable thing about this is the fact that these people did not merely join the Party themselves, but were rather sent there by all the rest of the non-Party workers, who took an active part in the admission of the new members, and without whose approval no new member was accepted. This fact shows that the broad masses of non-Party workers regard our Party as *their* Party, as a Party *near* and *dear* to them, in whose expansion and consolidation they are vitally interested and to whose leadership they voluntarily entrust their destiny. It scarcely needs proof that without these intangible moral threads which connect the Party with the non-Party masses, the Party could not have become the decisive force of its class.

The Party is an inseparable part of the working class.

“We,” says Lenin, “are the Party of a class, and therefore almost the whole class (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the whole class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism* and ‘khvostism’ to think that at any time under capitalism almost the whole class, or the whole class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its advanced detachment, of its Social-Democratic Party. No sensible Social-Democrat has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace almost the whole, or the whole, working class. To forget the distinction between the advanced detachment and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to forget the constant duty of the advanced detachment to *raise* ever wider strata to this advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one’s eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow

* *Manilovism*—smug complacency, futile daydreaming; from the landowner Manilov, a character in Gogol’s *Dead Souls*.

down these tasks.” (See Vol. VI, pp. 205-06.) *

• THE PARTY: ORGANIZED DETACHMENT OF THE WORKING CLASS

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

The Party as the organized detachment of the working class. The Party is not only the *advanced* detachment of the working class. If it desires really to direct the struggle of the class it must at the same time be the *organized* detachment of its class. The Party's tasks under the conditions of capitalism are immense and extremely varied. The Party must direct the struggle of the proletariat under the exceptionally difficult conditions of internal and external development; it must lead the proletariat in the offensive when the situation calls for an offensive; it must lead the proletariat so as to escape the blow of a powerful enemy when the situation calls for retreat; it must imbue the millions of unorganized non-Party workers with the spirit of discipline and system in the struggle, with the spirit of organization and endurance. But the Party can fulfil these tasks only if it is itself the embodiment of discipline and organization, if it is itself the *organized* detachment of the proletariat. Without these conditions there can be no question of the Party really leading the vast masses of the proletariat.

The Party is the organized detachment of the working class.

The conception of the Party as an organized whole is embodied in Lenin's well-known formulation of the first paragraph of our Party Rules, in which the Party is regarded as the *sum total* of its organizations, and the Party member as a member of one of the organizations of the Party. The Mensheviks, who objected to this formulation as early as 1903, proposed to substitute for it a "system" of self-enrolment in the Party, a "system" of conferring the "title" of Party member upon every "professor" and "high-school student," upon every "sympathizer" and "striker" who supported the Party in one way or another, but who did not join and did not want to join any one of the Party organizations. It scarcely needs proof that had this singular "system" become entrenched in our Party it would in-

* "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," February-May 1904.

evitably have led to our Party becoming inundated with professors and high-school students and to its degeneration into a loose, amorphous, disorganized “formation,” lost in a sea of “sympathizers,” that would have obliterated the dividing line between the Party and the class and would have upset the Party’s task of raising the unorganized masses to the level of the advanced detachment. Needless to say, under such an opportunist “system” our Party would have been unable to fulfil the role of the organizing core of the working class in the course of our revolution.

“From the point of view of Comrade Martov,” says Lenin, “the border line of the Party remains quite indefinite, for ‘every striker’ may ‘proclaim himself a Party member.’ What is the use of this vagueness? A wide extension of the ‘title.’ Its harm is that it introduces a disorganizing idea, the confusing of class and Party.” (See Vol. VI, p. 211.)*

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

“Formerly,” says Lenin, “our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. *Now* we have become an organized party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher Party bodies.” (See Vol. VI, p. 291.)†

The principle of the minority submitting to the majority, the

* Ibid.

† Ibid.

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

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

“This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous ‘factory’; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as ‘serfdom’..., division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against people being transformed into ‘wheels and cogs’..., mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful... remark that one could very well dispense with rules altogether.”

“It is clear, I think, that the cries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig leaf.... You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the congress not by my will, but against it; you are a formalist because you rely on the formal decisions of the congress, and not on my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way because you plead the ‘mechanical’ majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted; you are an autocrat because you refuse to hand over the power to the old gang.*” (See Vol. VI, pp. 310, 287.)

* The “gang” here referred to is that of Axelrod, Martov, Potresov and others, who would not submit to the decisions of the Second Congress and who accused Lenin of being a “bureaucrat.”—*J. St.*

• THE PARTY: HIGHEST FORM OF CLASS ORGANIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

The Party as the highest form of class organization of the proletariat. The Party is the organized detachment of the working class. But the Party is not the only organization of the working class. The proletariat has also a number of other organizations, without which it cannot wage a successful struggle against capital: trade unions, co-operatives, factory organizations, parliamentary groups, non-Party women's associations, the press, cultural and educational organizations, youth leagues, revolutionary fighting organizations (in times of open revolutionary action), Soviets of deputies as the form of state organization (if the proletariat is in power), etc. The overwhelming majority of these organizations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organizations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class; for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order. But how can single leadership be exercised with such an abundance of organizations? What guarantee is there that this multiplicity of organizations will not lead to divergency in leadership? It may be said that each of these organizations carries on its work in its own special field, and that therefore these organizations cannot hinder one another. That, of course, is true. But it is also true that all these organizations should work in one direction for they serve *one* class, the class of the proletarians. The question then arises: Who is to determine the line, the general direction, along which the work of all these organizations is to be conducted? Where is the central organization which is not only able, because it has the necessary experience, to work out such a general line, but, in addition, is in a position, because it has sufficient prestige, to induce all these organizations to carry out this line, so as to attain unity of leadership and to make hitches impossible?

That organization is the Party of the proletariat.

The Party possesses all the necessary qualifications for this be-

cause, in the first place, it is the rallying centre of the finest elements in the working class, who have direct connections with the non-Party organizations of the proletariat and very frequently lead them; because, secondly, the Party, as the rallying centre of the finest members of the working class, is the best school for training leaders of the working class, capable of directing every form of organization of their class; because, thirdly, the Party, as the best school for training leaders of the working class, is, by reason of its experience and prestige, the only organization capable of centralizing the leadership of the struggle of the proletariat, thus transforming each and every non-Party organization of the working class into an auxiliary body and transmission belt linking the Party with the class.

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

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

That is why Lenin says that the Party is “the *highest form of proletarian class association,*” whose political leadership must extend to every other form of organization of the proletariat. (See Vol. XXV, p. 194.)*

That is why the opportunist theory of the “independence” and “neutrality” of the non-Party organizations, which breeds *independent* members of parliament and journalists *isolated* from the Party, *narrow-minded* trade-union functionaries and co-operative officials *who have become philistines*, is wholly incompatible with the theory and practice of Leninism.

• THE PARTY: INSTRUMENT OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

* “‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder.”

The Party as an instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat. The Party is the principal guiding force within the class of the proletarians and among the organizations of that class. But it does not by any means follow from this that the Party can be regarded as an end in itself, as a self-sufficient force. The Party is not only the highest form of class association of the proletarians; it is at the same time an *instrument* in the hands of the proletariat *for* achieving the dictatorship when that has not yet been achieved and *for* consolidating and expanding the dictatorship when it has already been achieved. The Party could not have risen so high in importance and could not have established its influence over all other forms of organization of the proletariat, if the latter had not been confronted with the question of power, if the conditions of imperialism, the inevitability of wars, and the existence of a crisis had not demanded the concentration of all the forces of the proletariat at one point, the gathering of all the threads of the revolutionary movement in one spot in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletariat needs the Party first of all as its General Staff, which it must have for the successful seizure of power. It scarcely needs proof that without a party capable of rallying around itself the mass organizations of the proletariat, and of centralizing the leadership of the entire movement during the progress of the struggle, the proletariat in Russia could not have established its revolutionary dictatorship.

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

“Certainly, almost everyone now realizes,” says Lenin, “that the Bolsheviks could not have maintained themselves in power for two and a half months, let alone two and a half years, without the strictest, truly iron discipline in our Party, and without the fullest and unreserved support of the latter by the whole mass of the working class, that is, by all its thinking, honest, self-sacrificing and influential elements, capable of leading or of carrying with them the

backward strata.” (See Vol. XXV, p. 173.)*

Now, what does to “maintain” and “expand” the dictatorship mean? It means imbuing the millions of proletarians with the spirit of discipline and organization; it means creating among the proletarian masses a cementing force and a bulwark against the corrosive influences of the petty-bourgeois elemental forces and petty-bourgeois habits; it means enhancing the organizing work of the proletarians in re-educating and remoulding the petty-bourgeois strata; it means helping the masses of the proletarians to educate themselves as a force capable of abolishing classes and of preparing the conditions for the organization of socialist production. But it is impossible to accomplish all this without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and discipline.

“The dictatorship of the proletariat,” says Lenin, “is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully.” (See Vol. XXV, p. 190.)†

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

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

**• THE PARTY: EMBODIMENT OF UNITY OF WILL
INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTENCE OF FACTIONS**

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of**

* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*

Leninism, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

The Party as the embodiment of unity of will, unity incompatible with the existence of factions. The achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party. This does not mean, of course, that the possibility of conflicts of opinion within the Party is thereby precluded. On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and conflict of opinion within the Party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be "blind." On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline. But after a conflict of opinion has been closed, after criticism has been exhausted and a decision has been arrived at, unity of will and unity of action of all Party members are the necessary conditions without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the Party is conceivable.

"In the present epoch of acute civil war," says Lenin, "the Communist Party will be able to perform its duty only if it is organized in the most centralized manner, if iron discipline bordering on military discipline prevails in it, and if its Party centre is a powerful and authoritative organ, wielding wide powers and enjoying the universal confidence of the members of the Party." (See Vol. XXV, pp. 282-83.)*

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

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

"Whoever," says Lenin, "weakens in the least the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat (especially during the time of its dictatorship), actually aids the bourgeoisie

* "The Terms of Admission into the Communist International," July 1920.

against the proletariat.” (See Vol. XXV, p. 190.)*

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

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

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

Hence Lenin’s demand for the “complete elimination of all factionalism” and the “immediate dissolution of all groups, without exception, that have been formed on the basis of various platforms,” on pain of “unconditional and immediate expulsion from the Party.” (See the resolution “On Party Unity.”)

* “ ‘Left-Wing’ Communism, an Infantile Disorder.”

† The resolution “On Party Unity” was written by Lenin and adopted by the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.), held March 8-16, 1921. (See Lenin, *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, pp. 497-501, and also *Resolutions and Decisions of C.P.S.U.(B.) Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, in Russian, 1941, Part I, pp. 364-66.)

• THE PARTY BECOMES STRONG BY PURGING ITSELF OF OPPORTUNIST ELEMENTS

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 97-112

The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements. The source of factionalism in the Party is its opportunist elements. The proletariat is not an isolated class. It is constantly replenished by the influx of peasants, petty bourgeois and intellectuals proletarianized by the development of capitalism. At the same time the upper stratum of the proletariat, principally trade-union leaders and members of parliament who are fed by the bourgeoisie out of the superprofits extracted from the colonies, is undergoing a process of decay. "This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the 'labour aristocracy,' " says Lenin, "who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their entire outlook, is the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our days, the principal *social* (not military) *prop of the bourgeoisie*. For they are real *agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class* movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism." (See Vol. XIX, p. 77.)*

In one way or another, all these petty-bourgeois groups penetrate into the Party and introduce into it the spirit of hesitancy and opportunism, the spirit of demoralization and uncertainty. It is they, principally, that constitute the source of factionalism and disintegration, the source of disorganization and disruption of the Party from within. To fight imperialism with such "allies" in one's rear means to put oneself in the position of being caught between two fires, from the front and from the rear. Therefore, ruthless struggle against such elements, their expulsion from the Party, is a prerequisite for the successful struggle against imperialism.

The theory of "defeating" opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of "overcoming" these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the Party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party,

* "Preface to the French and German Editions of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*," July 1920.

threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism. Our Party could not have emerged on to the broad highway, it could not have seized power and organized the dictatorship of the proletariat, it could not have emerged victorious from the civil war, if it had had within its ranks people like Martov and Dan, Potresov and Axelrod. Our Party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of Liquidators and Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists.

The Party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements.

“With reformists, Mensheviks, in our ranks,” says Lenin, “it is *impossible* to be victorious in the proletarian revolution, it is *impossible* to defend it. That is obvious in principle, and it has been strikingly confirmed by the experience of both Russia and Hungary.... In Russia, difficult situations have arisen *many times*, when the Soviet regime would *most certainly* have been overthrown had Mensheviks, reformists and petty-bourgeois democrats remained in our Party.... In Italy, where, as is generally admitted, decisive battles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the possession of state power are imminent. At such a moment it is not only absolutely necessary to remove the Mensheviks, reformists, Turatists from the Party, but it may even be useful to remove excellent Communists who are liable to waver, and who reveal a tendency to waver towards ‘unity’ with the reformists, to remove them from all responsible posts.... On the eve of a revolution, and at a moment when a most fierce struggle is being waged for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything*, frustrate the revolution, wrest the power from the hands of the proletariat; for this power is not yet consolidated, the attack upon it is still very strong. The desertion of wavering leaders at such a time does not weaken but strengthens the Party, the working-class movement and the revolution.” (See Vol. XXV, pp.

462, 463, 464.)*

5A Supplementary readings

Lenin, **The Terms of Admission into the Communist International**, (1920), Collected Works, Volume 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 206-211 (The 21 conditions any party had to fulfill to be admitted to the Third International.)

A Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B), **History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik)** (1939), Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 353-363 (Conclusion: on the lessons and experience of the Soviet party during its revolutionary period.)

Third International, **Principles of Party Organization: Thesis on the Organization and Structures of the Communist Parties**, (1921), Mass Publications, Calcutta, (On the organization and work of communist parties.)

CCL(ML), **Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the CCL(ML)**, (1975), Chap. 5, pp. 55-62 (The League's role in the struggle to create the party.)

5A Questions

- 1) Why is the communist party essential for the proletariat?
- 2) What is the relationship between the party and the masses? between the party and the vanguard?
- 3) How does the party strengthen itself in the struggle against opportunism?

B. Members, organization and development of the Party

• THE PARTY: GENERAL STAFF AND VANGUARD OF THE PROLETARIAN FORCES

* "On the Struggle Within the Italian Socialist Party," November 1920.

Stalin, **Proletarian Class and Proletarian Party**, (1905), Works, Vol. 1, Red Star Press, London, pp. 63-65

The time when people boldly proclaimed “Russia, one and indivisible,” has gone. Today even a child knows that there is no such thing as Russia “one and indivisible,” that Russia long ago split up into two opposite classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Today it is no secret to anyone that the struggle between these two classes has become the axis around which our contemporary life revolves.

Nevertheless, until recently it was difficult to notice all this, the reason being that hitherto we saw only individual groups in individual towns and parts of the country that waged the struggle, while the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, as classes, were not easily discernible. But now towns and districts have united, various groups of the proletariat have joined hands, joint strikes and demonstrations have broken out—and before us has unfolded the magnificent picture of the struggle between the two Russias—bourgeois Russia and proletarian Russia. Two big armies have entered the arena—the army of proletarians and the army of the bourgeoisie—and the struggle between these two armies embraces the whole of our social life.

Since an army cannot operate without leaders, and since every army has a vanguard which marches as its head and lights up its path, it is obvious that with these armies there had to appear corresponding groups of leaders, corresponding parties, as they are usually called.

Thus, the picture presents the following scene: on one side there is the bourgeois army, headed by the liberal party; on the other, there is the proletarian army, headed by the Social-Democratic Party; each army, in its class struggle, is led by its own party.*

We have mentioned all this in order to compare the proletarian party with the proletarian class and thus briefly to bring out the general features of the Party.

The foregoing makes it sufficiently clear that the proletarian party, being a fighting group of leaders, must, firstly, be considerably smaller than the proletarian class with respect to membership; secondly, it must be superior to the proletarian class with respect to its understanding and its experience; and, thirdly, it must be a compact organization.

* We do not mention the other parties in Russia, because there is no need to deal with them in examining the questions under discussion.

In our opinion, what has been said needs no proof, for it is self-evident that, so long as the capitalist system exists, with its inevitably attendant poverty and backwardness of the masses, the proletariat as a whole cannot rise to the desired level of class-consciousness, and consequently, there must be a group of class-conscious leaders to enlighten the proletarian army in the spirit of socialism, to unite and lead it in its struggle. It is also clear that a party which has set out to lead the *fighting* proletariat must not be a chance conglomeration of individuals, but a compact, centralized *organization*, so that its activities can be directed according to a single plan.

Such, in brief, are the general features of our Party.

• THE CONDITIONS FOR BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE PARTY

Stalin, **Proletarian Class and Proletarian Party**, (1905), Works, Vol. 1, Red Star Press, London, pp. 65-70

Bearing all this in mind, let us pass to the main question: Whom can we call a Party member? Paragraph One of the Party Rules, which is the subject of the present article, deals with precisely this question.

And so, let us examine this question.

Whom, then, can we call a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party—i.e., what are the duties of a Party member?

Our Party is a Social-Democratic Party. This means that it has its own program (the immediate and the ultimate aims of the movement), its own tactics (methods of struggle), and its own organizational principle (form of association). *Unity* of program, tactical and organizational views is the basis on which our Party is built. Only the *unity* of these views can unite the Party members in *one* centralized party. If unity of views collapses, the Party collapses. Consequently, only one who fully accepts the Party's program, tactics and organizational principle can be called a Party member. Only one who has adequately studied and has fully accepted our Party's program, tactical and organizational views can be in the ranks of our Party and, thereby, in the ranks of the leaders of the proletarian army.

But is it enough for a Party member merely to *accept* the

Party's program, tactics and organizational views? Can a person like that be regarded as a true leader of the proletarian army? Of course not! In the first place, everybody knows that there are plenty of windbags in the world who would readily "accept" the Party's program, tactics and organizational views, but who are incapable of being anything else than windbags. It would be a desecration of the Party's Holy of Holies to call a windbag like that a Party member (i.e., a leader of the proletarian army)! Moreover, our Party is not a school of philosophy or a religious sect. Is not our Party a *fighting* party? Since it is, is it not self-evident that our Party will not be satisfied with a platonic *acceptance* of its program, tactics and organizational views, that it will undoubtedly demand that its members should *apply* the views they have accepted? Hence, whoever wants to be a member of our Party cannot rest content with merely accepting our Party's program, tactical and organizational views, but must set about applying these views, putting them into effect.

But what does applying the Party's views mean for a Party member? When can he apply these views? Only when he is fighting, when he is marching with the whole Party at the head of the proletarian army. Can the struggle be waged by solitary, scattered individuals? Certainly not! On the contrary, people first unite, first they organize, and only then do they go into battle. If that is not done, all struggle is fruitless. Clearly, then, the Party members too will be able to fight and, consequently, apply the Party's views, only if they unite in a compact *organization*. It is also clear that the more compact the organization in which the Party members unite, the better will they be able to fight, and, consequently, the more fully will they apply the Party's program, tactics and organizational views. It is not for nothing that our Party is called an *organization* of leaders and not a conglomeration of individuals. And, since the Party is an *organization* of leaders, it is obvious that only those can be regarded as members of this Party, of this organization, who work in this organization and, therefore, deem it their duty to merge their wishes with the wishes of the Party and to act in unison with the Party.

Hence, to be a Party member one must apply the Party's program, tactics and organizational views; to apply the Party's views one must fight for them; and to fight for these views one must work in a Party organization, work in unison with the Party. Clearly, to be

a Party member one must belong to one of the Party organizations.* Only when we join one of the Party organizations and thus merge our personal interests with the Party's interests can we become Party members, and, consequently, real leaders of the proletarian army.

If our Party is not a conglomeration of individual windbags, but an *organization* of leaders which, through its Central Committee, is worthily leading the proletarian army forward, then all that has been said above is self-evident.

The following must also be noted.

Up till now our Party has resembled a hospitable patriarchal family, ready to take in all who sympathize. But now that our Party has become a centralized *organization*, it has thrown off its patriarchal aspect and has become in all respects like a *fortress*, the gates of which are opened only to those who are worthy. And that is of great importance to us. At a time when the autocracy is trying to corrupt the class consciousness of the proletariat with "trade unionism," nationalism, clericalism and the like, and when, on the other hand, the liberal intelligentsia is persistently striving to kill the political independence of the proletariat and to impose its tutelage upon it—at such a time we must be extremely vigilant and never forget that our Party is a *fortress*, the gates of which are opened only to those who have been tested.

We have ascertained two essential conditions of Party membership (acceptance of the program and work in Party organization). If to these we add a third condition, namely, that a Party member must render the Party financial support, then we shall have all the conditions that give one right to the title of Party member.

Hence, a member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts the program of this Party, renders the Party

* *Just as every complex organism is made up of an incalculable number of the simplest organisms, so our Party, being a complex and general organization, is made up of numerous district and local bodies called Party organizations, provided they have been endorsed by the Party Congress or the Central Committee. As you see, not only Committees are called Party organizations. To direct the activities of these organizations according to a single plan there is a Central Committee, through which these local Party organizations constitute one large, centralized organization.*

financial support, and *works in one of the Party organizations*.

That is how Paragraph One of the Party Rules, drafted by Comrade Lenin,* was formulated.

The formula, as you see, springs entirely from the view that *our* Party is a centralized *organization* and not a *conglomeration* of individuals.

Therein lies the supreme merit of this formula.

• INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PARTY: DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Mao, **The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War**, (1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 203-205

PARTY DISCIPLINE

In view of Chang Kuo-tao's serious violations of discipline, we must affirm anew the discipline of the Party, namely:

- (1) the individual is subordinate to the organization;
- (2) the minority is subordinate to the majority;
- (3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and
- (4) the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.

Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts Party unity. Experience proves that some people violate Party discipline through not knowing what it is, while others, like Chang Kuo-tao, violate it knowingly and take advantage of many Party members' ignorance to achieve their treacherous purposes. Hence it is necessary to educate members in Party discipline so that the rank and file will not only observe discipline themselves, but will exercise supervision over the leaders so that they, too, observe it, thus preventing the recurrence of cases like Chang Kuo-tao's. If we are to ensure the development of inner-Party relations along the right lines, besides the four most important articles of discipline mentioned above we must work out a set of fairly detailed Party rules which will serve to unify the actions of the leading bodies at all levels.

* *Lenin is an outstanding theoretician and practical leader of revolutionary Social-Democracy.*

PARTY DEMOCRACY

In the present great struggle, the Chinese Communist Party demands that all its leading bodies and all its members and cadres should give the fullest expression to their initiative, which alone can ensure victory. This initiative must be demonstrated concretely in the ability of the leading bodies, the cadres and the Party rank and file to work creatively, in their readiness to assume responsibility, in the exuberant vigour they show in their work, in their courage and ability to raise questions, voice opinions and criticize defects, and in the comradely supervision that is maintained over the leading bodies and the leading cadres. Otherwise, "initiative" will be an empty thing. But the exercise of such initiative depends on the spread of democracy in Party life. It cannot be brought into play if there is not enough democracy in Party life. Only in an atmosphere of democracy can large numbers of able people be brought forward. Ours is a country in which small-scale production and the patriarchal system prevail, and taking the country as a whole there is as yet no democratic life; consequently, this state of affairs is reflected in our Party by insufficient democracy in Party life. This phenomenon hinders the entire Party from exercising its initiative to the full. Similarly, it has led to insufficient democracy in the united front and in the mass movements. For these reasons, education in democracy must be carried on within the Party so that members can understand the meaning of democratic life, the meaning of the relationship between democracy and centralism, and the way in which democratic centralism should be put into practice. Only in this way can we really extend democracy within the Party and at the same time avoid ultra-democracy and the *laissez-faire* which destroys discipline.

It is also essential to extend democracy in our Party organizations in the army to the degree necessary to stimulate the initiative of the Party members and increase the combat effectiveness of the troops. However, there cannot be as much democracy in the Party organizations in the army as in the local Party organizations. Both in the army and in the local organizations, inner-Party democracy is meant to strengthen discipline and increase combat effectiveness, not to weaken them.

The extension of democracy in the Party should be seen as an essential step in its consolidation and development, and as an important weapon enabling it to be most active in the great struggle, to

prove equal to its tasks, create fresh strength and surmount the difficulties of the war.

**Mao, Talk at an Enlarged Working Conference
Convened by the Central Committee of the Communist
Party of China, (1962), Peking Review no. 27, July 7,
1978, pp. 9-10**

...I said in 1957 that we should create “a political situation in which we have both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness.” We should create such a political situation both inside and outside the Party. Otherwise it will be impossible to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses. We cannot overcome difficulties without democracy. Of course, it’s even more impossible to do so without centralism. But if there’s no democracy there won’t be any centralism.

Without democracy there can’t be correct centralism because centralism can’t be established when people have divergent views and don’t have unity of understanding. What is meant by centralism? First, there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity of understanding, of policy, plan, command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through centralism. But if all those concerned are still not clear about the problems, if their opinions are still unexpressed or their anger is still not vented, how can you achieve this unity through centralism? Without democracy, it is impossible to sum up experience correctly. Without democracy, without ideas coming from the masses, it is impossible to formulate good lines, principles, policies or methods. As far as the formulation of lines, principles, policies and methods is concerned, our leading organs merely play the role of a processing plant. Everyone knows that a factory cannot do any processing without raw material. It cannot produce good finished products unless the raw material is sufficient in quantity and suitable in quality. If there is no democracy, if there is no knowledge of what is going on down below and no clear idea about it, if there is no adequate canvassing of the opinions of all concerned and no communication between higher and lower levels, and if instead issues are decided solely by the leading organs of the higher levels on the strength of one-sided or inaccurate material, then such decisions can

hardly avoid being subjective and it will be impossible to achieve unity in understanding and action or achieve true centralism. Isn't the main topic of our present conference opposition to decentralism and the strengthening of centralism and unity? If we fail to promote democracy in full measure, then will this centralism, this unity, be genuine or sham? Will it be real or empty? Will it be correct or incorrect? Of course it will only be sham, empty and incorrect.

Our centralism is centralism built on the foundation of democracy Proletarian centralism is centralism with a broad democratic base. The Party committees at all levels are the organs which exercise centralized leadership. But leadership by the Party committee means collective leadership, not arbitrary decision by the first secretary alone. Within Party committees, democratic centralism alone should be practised...

• STAGES IN THE PARTY'S DEVELOPMENT

Stalin, **The Party Before and After Taking Power**, (1921), Works, Vol. 5, Red Star Press, London, pp. 103-107

Three periods must be noted in the development of our Party.

The **first** period was the period of **formation**, of the **creation** of our Party. It embraces the interval of time approximately from the foundation of **Iskra*** to the Third Party Congress inclusively (end of 1900 to beginning of 1905).

In this period the Party, as a driving force, was weak. It was weak not only because it itself was young, but also because the working-class movement as a whole was young and because the revolutionary situation, the revolutionary movement, was lacking, or little developed, particularly in the initial stages of this period (the peasantry was silent or did not go beyond sullen murmuring; the workers conducted only partial economic strikes or political strikes covering a whole town; the forms of the movement were of an underground or semi-legal character; the forms of working-class

* *Iskra (The Spark)*—the first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper, founded by V.I. Lenin in 1900 {for the significance and role of *Iskra*, see *History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)*, *Short Course*. Moscow 1952, pp. 55-68).

organization were also mainly of an underground character).

The Party's strategy—since strategy presupposes the existence of reserves and the possibility of manoeuvring with them—was necessarily narrow and restricted. The Party confined itself to mapping the movement's strategic plan, i.e., the route that the movement should take; and the Party's reserves—the contradictions within the camp of the enemies inside and outside of Russia—remained unused, or almost unused, owing to the weakness of the Party.

The Party's tactics, since tactics presuppose the utilisation of all forms of the movement, forms of proletarian organisation, their combination and mutual supplementation, etc., with the object of winning the masses and ensuring strategic success, were also necessarily narrow and without scope.

In this period the Party focussed its attention and care upon the Party itself, upon its own existence and preservation. At this stage it regarded itself as a kind of self-sufficing force. That was natural: tsarism's fierce attacks upon the Party, and the Mensheviks' efforts to blow it up from within and to replace the Party cadres with an amorphous, non-Party body (recall the Mensheviks' campaign for a labour congress launched in connection with Axelrod's notorious pamphlet **A People's Duma and a Labour Congress**, 1905), threatened the Party's very existence and, as a consequence, the question of preserving the Party acquired paramount importance in this period.

The principal task of communism in Russia in that period was to recruit into the Party the best elements of the working class, those who were most active and most devoted to the cause of the proletariat; to form the ranks of the proletarian party and to put it firmly on its feet. Comrade Lenin formulates this task as follows: "to win the vanguard of the proletariat to the side of communism" (see "**Left-Wing**" **Communism...** *).

The **second period** was the period of **winning the broad masses of the workers and peasants** to the side of the Party, to the side of the vanguard of the proletariat. It embraces the interval of time approximately from October 1905 to October 1917.

* N. Lenin. "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Petrograd 1920 (see V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 31, pp. 1-97).

In this period the situation was much more complex and rich in events than in the preceding one. The defeats tsarism sustained on the battlefield in Manchuria and the revolution of October 1905, on the one hand, the termination of the Russo-Japanese war, the triumph of the counter-revolution and the liquidation of the gains of the revolution, on the other, and thirdly, the imperialist war, the revolution of February 1917 and the famous “dual power”—all these events stirred up all classes in Russia and pushed them into the political arena one after the other, strengthened the Communist Party and awakened the broad masses of the peasants to political life.

The proletarian movement was enriched by such powerful forms as the general political strike and armed uprising.

The peasant movement was enriched by the boycott of the landlords (“smoking” the landlords out of their country seats) which developed into insurrection.

The activities of the Party and of other revolutionary organizations were invigorated by the mastery of such forms of work as the extra-parliamentary, legal, open form.

Working-class organisation was enriched not only by a tried and important form like the trade unions, but also by such a powerful form of working-class organization as the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, a form unprecedented in history.

The peasants followed in the footsteps of the working class and set up Soviets of Peasants’ Deputies.

The Party’s reserves were also enriched. It became clear in the course of the struggle that the peasantry could and would constitute an inexhaustible reserve for the proletariat and its party. It also became clear that the proletariat and its party would play the leading role in overthrowing the rule of capital.

In this period the Party was by no means as weak as it was in the preceding one; as a driving force, it became a most important factor. It could now no longer be a self-sufficing force, for its existence and development were now definitely assured; it changed from a self-sufficing force into an instrument for winning the masses of the workers and peasants, into an instrument for leading the masses in overthrowing the rule of capital.

In this period the Party’s strategy acquired wide scope; it was directed primarily to gaining and utilising the peasantry as a reserve, and it achieved important success in this work.

The Party's tactics also acquired wide scope as a result of the enrichment of the movement of the masses, of their organisation, and of the activities of the Party and other revolutionary organisations, by new forms which had previously been absent.

The Party's principal task in this period was to win the vast masses to the side of the proletarian vanguard, to the side of the Party, for the purpose of overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, for the purpose of seizing power. The Party now no longer focussed its attention upon itself, but upon the vast masses of the people. Comrade Lenin formulates this task as follows: "disposition of the vast masses" on the social front in such a way as to ensure victory "in the forthcoming decisive battles" (see the above-mentioned pamphlet by Comrade Lenin).

Such are the characteristic features of the first two periods in the development of our Party.

The difference between the first and the second period is undoubtedly great. But there is also something in common between them. Both in the first and in the second period the Party was nine-tenths, if not entirely, a **national** force, effective only for and within Russia (one of the detachments of the international organised proletariat). That is the first point. The second point is that both in the first and in the second period the Russian Communist Party was a party of upheaval, the party of revolution within Russia, hence in these periods the elements of criticism and destruction of the old order predominated in its work.

An entirely different picture is presented by the third period, the one we are in now.

The **third period** is the period of **taking and holding power** with the object, on the one hand, of drawing all the working people of Russia into the work of **building** socialist economy and the Red Army, and, on the other hand, of applying all forces and resources for **rendering assistance** to the international proletariat in its struggle to overthrow capital.

5B Supplementary readings

Lenin, **One Step Forward, Two Steps Back**, (1904) Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 253-275 (The Marxist struggle against opportunism concerning the conditions of admission to the party).

Lenin, **“Left-Wing” Communism—An Infantile Disorder**, (1920), Collected Works, Volume 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 90-109 (Classic summary of the lessons learned in the building of the Bolshevik party.)

5B Questions

- 1) What are the criteria for membership in the party? What, in your case, are the obstacles to your becoming a member, and what is the struggle you must wage to overcome them?
- 2) What is the relationship between democracy and discipline in the party? What is the difference between proletarian discipline and capitalist military or factory discipline?
- 3) What is meant by democratic centralism as an organizational principle of communist parties?
- 4) What are the stages in the development of the party? What is the main task during the first stage? Why must we become involved in the class struggle during the first stage, even though the party is weak, or has not yet been formed?

6 Agitation and Propaganda

INTRODUCTION

We have seen that the communist party should be made up of the vanguard of the proletariat and of the people, those who are aware of the historic mission of the proletariat and who are most determined to lead the class struggle right through to the end. But who are the communists and where do they come from? Are they born communists, do they fall from the sky? No, they are men and women who have learned from their daily experience and from Marxism-Leninism, who have thus been able to break with bourgeois ideology and develop class consciousness.

Through educational revolutionary work, through agitation and propaganda, communists develop other conscious men and women workers. This implies a determined struggle against bourgeois ideology, because, spontaneously, the workers' movement can develop only a trade unionist consciousness, one dominated by reformism, when it is left to itself. The reason for this is that bourgeois ideology is older, more developed and above all spread by many more and much larger means than proletarian ideology. Hence it is bourgeois ideology that spontaneously imposes itself, despite the glimmerings of awareness that are developed by the workers in their immediate struggles.

As Lenin has shown, in a society divided into classes, there is no third way: "Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology..., the **only** choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology)". (Lenin, **What is to be Done?**) Communists must therefore struggle without let-up in order to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat; they must struggle against bourgeois ideology in all its forms. And the only way to do this is with agitation and propaganda, especially on political questions, in order to educate men and women workers in the struggle against all forms of exploitation and oppression. "These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and **fundamental** condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity." (Lenin, **What is to be Done?**)

In the excerpts contained in this section Lenin has placed par-

ticular importance on the struggle against economism, that is, against lowering the level of agitation and propaganda to topics that are solely or directly related to economic questions. The lessons that Lenin draws from his struggle against the opportunists must guide us in all our agitation and propaganda work among the masses.

A. Political agitation and the development of class consciousness

• CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS GROWS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST SPONTANEITY

Lenin, **What is to be Done?** (1902), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 384-387 (excerpts)

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement,* the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a “third” ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in anyway, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideol-

* This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when they are able, and to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that working men *may succeed in this more often*, every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of “*literature for workers*” but that they learn to an increasing degree to master *general literature*. It would be even truer to say “are not confined”, instead of “do not confine themselves”, because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough “for workers” to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known.

ogy. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo programme*; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity, to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy. (...)

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal *immeasurably* more means of dissemination. * And the younger the socialist movement in any given country, the more vigorously it must struggle against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology, and the more resolutely the workers must be warned against the bad counsellors who shout against “overrating the conscious element”, etc. The authors of the Economist letter, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, inveigh against the intolerance that is characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: Yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up faster, it must become imbued with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity. Nothing is so ridiculous and harmful as pretending that we are “old hands” who have long ago experienced all the decisive stages of the struggle.

* It is often said that the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, *provided*, however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, *provided* it subordinates spontaneity to itself. Usually this is taken for granted, but it is precisely this which *Rabocheye Dyelo* forgets or distorts. The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree.

• POLITICAL AGITATION AND THE FIGHT AGAINST ECONOMISM

Lenin, **What is to be Done?**, (1902), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 398-402

Everyone knows that the economic* struggle of the Russian workers underwent widespread development and consolidation simultaneously with the production of “literature” exposing economic (factory and occupational) conditions. The “leaflets” were devoted mainly to the exposure of the factory system, and very soon a veritable passion for exposures was roused among the workers. As soon as the workers realised that the Social-Democratic study circles desired to, and could, supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their miserable existence, about their unbearably hard toil, and their lack of rights, they began to send in, actually flood us with, correspondence from the factories and workshops. This “exposure literature” created a tremendous sensation, not only in the particular factory exposed in the given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news of the revealed facts spread. And since the poverty and want among the workers in the various enterprises and in the various trades are much the same, the “truth about the life of the workers” stirred *everyone*. Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion arose to “get into print”—a noble passion for this rudimentary form of war against the whole of the present social system which is based upon robbery and oppression. And in the overwhelming majority of cases these “leaflets” were in truth a declaration of war, because the exposures served greatly to agitate the workers; they evoked among them common demands for the removal of the most glaring outrages and roused in them a readiness to support the demands with strikes. Finally, the employers themselves were compelled to recognise the significance of these leaflets as a declaration of war, so much so that in a large

* To avoid misunderstanding, we must point out that here, and throughout this pamphlet, by economic struggle, we imply (in keeping with the accepted usage among us) the “practical economic struggle”, which Engels, in the passage quoted above, described as “resistance to the capitalists”, and which in free countries is known as the *organised-labour*, syndical, or trade-union struggle.

number of cases they did not even wait for the outbreak of hostilities. As is always the case, the mere publication of these exposures made them effective, and they acquired the significance of a strong moral influence. On more than one occasion, the mere appearance of a leaflet proved sufficient to secure the satisfaction of all or part of the demands put forward. In a word, economic (factory) exposures were and remain an important lever in the economic struggle.

And they will continue to retain this significance as long as there is capitalism, which makes it necessary for the workers to defend themselves. Even in the most advanced countries of Europe it can still be seen that the exposure of abuses in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting-point for the awakening of class-consciousness, for the beginning of a trade-union struggle, and for the spread of socialism. *

The overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats have of late been almost entirely absorbed by this work of organising the exposure of factory conditions. Suffice it to recall *Rabochaya Mysl* to see the extent to which they have been absorbed by it—so much so, indeed, that they have lost sight of the fact that this, *taken by itself*, is in essence still not Social-Democratic work, but merely trade-union work. As a matter of fact, the exposures merely dealt with the relations between the workers *in a given trade* and their employers, and all they achieved was that the sellers of labour-

* In the present chapter we deal only with the *political* struggle, in its broader or narrower meaning. Therefore, we note only in passing, merely as a curiosity, *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s charge that *Iskra* is "too restrained" in regard to the economic struggle (*Two Conferences*, p. 27, rehashed by Martynov in his pamphlet, *Social-Democracy and the Working Class*). If the accusers computed by the hundredweights or reams (as they are so fond of doing) any given year's discussion of the economic struggle in the industrial section of *Iskra*, in comparison with the corresponding sections of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and *Rabochaya Mysl* combined, they would easily see that the latter lag behind even in this respect. Apparently, the realisation of this simple truth compels them to resort to arguments that clearly reveal their confusion. "*Iskra*", they write, "willy-nilly [!] is compelled [!] to reckon with the imperative demands of life and to publish at least [!] correspondence about the working-class movement" (*Two Conferences*, p. 27). Now this is really a crushing argument!

power learned to sell their “commodity” on better terms and to fight the purchasers over a purely commercial deal. These exposures could have served (if properly utilised by an organisation of revolutionaries) as a beginning and a component part of Social-Democratic activity; but they could also have led (and, given a worshipful attitude towards spontaneity, were bound to lead) to a “purely trade-union” struggle and to a non-Social-Democratic working-class movement. Social-Democracy leads the struggle of the working class, not only for better terms for the sale of labour-power, but for the abolition of the social system that compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers alone, but in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organised political force. Hence, it follows that not only must Social-Democrats not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must take up actively the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness. *Now that Zarya and Iskra* have made the first attack upon Economism, “all are agreed” on this (although some agree only in words, as we shall soon see).

The question arises, what should political education consist in? Can it be confined to the propaganda of working-class hostility to the autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough *to explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (any more than it is *to explain* to them that their interests are antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Agitation must be conducted with regard to every concrete example of this oppression (as we have begun to carry on agitation around concrete examples of economic oppression). Inasmuch as *this* oppression affects the most diverse classes of society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in the most varied spheres of life and activity—vocational, civic, personal, family, religious, scientific, etc., etc.—is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers if we do not *undertake* the organisation of the *political exposure* of the autocracy *in all its aspects*? In order to carry on agitation around concrete instances of oppression, these instances must be exposed (as it is necessary to expose factory abuses in order to carry on economic agitation).

One might think this to be clear enough. It turns out, however, that it is only in words that “all” are agreed on the need to develop political consciousness, *in all its aspects*. It turns out that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, for example, far from tackling the task of organising (or making a start in organising) comprehensive political exposure, is even trying *to drag Iskra*, which has undertaken this task, *away from it*. Listen to the following: “The political struggle of the working class is merely [it is certainly not “merely”] the most developed, wide, and effective form of economic struggle” (programme of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, published in issue No. 1, p. 3). “The Social-Democrats are now confronted with the task of lending the economic struggle itself, as far as possible, a political character” (Martynov, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 42). “The economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle” (resolution adopted by the Conference of the Union Abroad and “amendments” thereto, *Two Conferences*, pp. 11 and 17). As the reader will observe, all these theses permeate *Rabocheye Dyelo* from its very first number to the latest “Instructions to the Editors”, and all of them evidently express a single view regarding political agitation and struggle. Let us examine this view from the standpoint of the opinion prevailing among all Economists, that political agitation must *follow* economic agitation. Is it true that, in general,* the economic struggle “is the most widely applicable means” of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any and every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less “widely applicable” as a means of “drawing

* We say “in general”, because *Rabocheye Dyelo* speaks of general principles and of the general tasks of the Party as a whole. Undoubtedly, cases occur in practice when politics really *must* follow economics, but only Economists can speak of this in a resolution intended to apply to the whole of Russia. Cases do occur when *it is possible* “right from the beginning” to carry on political agitation “exclusively on an economic basis”; yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* came in the end to the conclusion that “there is no need for this whatever” (*Two Conferences*, p. 11). In the following chapter, we shall show that the tactics of the “politicians” and revolutionaries not only do not ignore the trade-union tasks of Social-Democracy, but that, on the contrary, they alone *can secure* their consistent fulfilment.

in” the masses. The rural superintendents and the flogging of peasants, the corruption of the officials and the police treatment of the “common people” in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes and the persecution of the religious sects, the humiliating treatment of soldiers and the barrack methods in the treatment of the students and liberal intellectuals—do all these and a thousand other similar manifestations of tyranny, though not directly connected with the “economic” struggle, represent, in general, *less* “widely applicable” means and occasions for political agitation and for drawing the masses into the political struggle? The very opposite is true. Of the sum-total of cases in which the workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence, and the lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represent cases of police tyranny in the trade-union struggle as such. Why then should we, beforehand, *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring only *one* of the means to be “the most widely applicable”, when Social-Democrats must have, in addition, other, generally speaking, no less “widely applicable” means?

• POLITICAL AGITATION AND POLITICAL EXPOSURE CAMPAIGNS

Lenin, **What is to be Done?**, (1902), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 412-417

In advancing against *Iskra* his theory of “raising the activity of the working masses”, Martynov actually betrayed an urge to *belittle* that activity, for he declared the very economic struggle before which all economists grovel to be the preferable, particularly important, and “most widely applicable” means of rousing this activity and its broadest field. This error is characteristic, precisely in that it is by no means peculiar to Martynov. In reality, it is possible to “raise the activity of the working masses” *only* when this activity is *not restricted* to “political agitation on an economic basis”. A basic condition for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the organisation of *comprehensive* political exposure. *In no way* except by means of such exposures *can* the masses be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity. Hence, activity of this

kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even political freedom does not in any way eliminate exposures; it merely shifts somewhat their sphere of direction. Thus, the German party is especially strengthening its positions and spreading its influence, thanks particularly to the untiring energy with which it is conducting its campaign of political exposure. Working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected—unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation, and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding—or rather not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical, understanding—of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. For this reason the conception of the economic struggle as the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, which our Economists preach, is so extremely harmful and reactionary in its practical significance. In order to become a Social-Democrat, the worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish strivings and its real “inner workings”; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected. But this “clear picture” cannot be obtained from any book. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given

moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such statistics, in such and such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why do the Russian workers still manifest little revolutionary activity in response to the brutal treatment of the people by the police, the persecution of religious sects, the flogging of peasants, the outrageous censorship, the torture of soldiers, the persecution of the most innocent cultural undertakings, etc.? Is it because the “economic struggle” does not “stimulate” them to this, because such activity does not “promise palpable results”, because it produces little that is “positive”? To adopt such an opinion, we repeat, is merely to direct the charge where it does not belong, to blame the working masses for one’s own philistinism (or Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organise sufficiently wide, striking, and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react, and he will know how to hoot the censors one day, on another day to demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, on still another day to teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc. As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, *to bring* before the working masses prompt exposures on all possible issues. Many of us as yet do not recognise this as our *bounden duty* but trail spontaneously in the wake of the “drab everyday struggle”, in the narrow confines of factory life. Under such circumstances to say that “*Iskra* displays a tendency to minimise the significance of the forward march of the drab everyday struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and complete ideas” (Martynov, *op. cit.*, p. 61), means to drag the Party back, to defend and glorify our unpreparedness and backwardness.

As for calling the masses to action, that will come of itself as soon as energetic political agitation, live and striking exposures

come into play. To catch some criminal red-handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of "calls"; the effect very often is such as will make it impossible to tell exactly who it was that "called" upon the masses and who suggested this or that plan of demonstration, etc. Calls for action, not in the general, but in the concrete, sense of the term can be made only at the place of action; only those who themselves go into action, and do so immediately, can sound such calls. Our business as Social-Democratic publicists is to deepen, expand, and intensify political exposures and political agitation.

A word in passing about "calls to action". *The only newspaper* which *prior to* the spring events *called upon* the workers to intervene actively in a matter that certainly did not *promise any palpable results* whatever for the workers, i.e., the drafting of the students into the army, was *Iskra*. Immediately after the publication of the order of January 11, on "drafting the 183 students into the army", *Iskra* published an article on the matter (in its February issue, No. 2), * and, *before* any demonstration was begun, forthwith *called upon* "the workers to go to the aid of the students", called upon the "people" openly to take up the government's arrogant challenge. We ask: how is the remarkable fact to be explained that although Martynov talks so much about "calls to action", and even suggests "calls to action" as a special form of activity, he said not a word about *this* call? After this, was it not sheer philistinism on Martynov's part to allege that *Iskra* was *one-sided* because it did not issue sufficient "calls" to struggle for demands "promising palpable results"?

Our Economists, including *Rabocheye Dyelo*, were successful because they adapted themselves to the backward workers. But the Social-Democratic worker, the revolutionary worker (and the number of such workers is growing) will indignantly reject all this talk about struggle for demands "promising palpable results", etc., because he will understand that this is only a variation of the old song about adding a kopek to the ruble. Such a worker will say to his counsellors from *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*: you are busying yourselves in vain, gentlemen, and shirking your proper duties, by meddling with such excessive zeal in a job that we can very well manage ourselves. There is nothing clever in your assertion that the Social-

* See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 414-19.—*Ed.*

Democrats' task is to lend the economic struggle itself a political character; that is only the beginning, it is not the main task of the Social-Democrats. For all over the world, including Russia, *the police themselves often take the initiative in lending* the economic struggle a political character, and the workers themselves learn to understand whom the government supports. * The "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government", about which you make as much fuss as if you had discovered a new America, is being waged in all parts of Russia, even the most remote, by the workers themselves who have heard about strikes, but who have heard almost nothing about socialism. The "activity" you want to stimulate among us workers, by advancing concrete demands that promise palpable results, we are already displaying and in our everyday, limited trade-union work we put forward these concrete demands, very often without any assistance whatever from the intellectuals. But *such* activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the thin gruel of "economic" politics alone; we want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every single political event. In order that we may

* The demand "to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" most strikingly expresses *subservience to spontaneity* in the sphere of political activity. Very often the economic struggle *spontaneously* assumes a political character, that is to say, without the intervention of the "revolutionary bacilli—the intelligentsia", without the intervention of the class-conscious Social-Democrats. The economic struggle of the English workers, for instance, also assumed a political character without any intervention on the part of the socialists. The task of the Social-Democrats, however, is not exhausted by political agitation on an economic basis; their task is *to convert* trade-unionist politics into Social-Democratic political struggle, *to utilise* the sparks of political consciousness which the economic struggle generates among the workers, for the purpose of *raising* the workers to the level of *Social-Democratic* political consciousness. The Martynovs, however, instead of raising and stimulating the spontaneously awakening political consciousness of the workers, *bow to spontaneity* and repeat over and over *ad nauseam*, that the economic struggle "impels" the workers to realise their own lack of political rights. It is unfortunate, gentlemen, that the spontaneously awakening trade-unionist political consciousness does not "*impel*" you to an understanding of your Social-Democratic tasks.

do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less of what we already know* and tell us more about what we do not yet know and what we can never learn from our factory and “economic” experience, namely, political knowledge. You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your *duty* to bring it to us in a hundred- and a thousand-fold greater measure than you have done up to now; and you must bring it to us, not only in the form of discussions, pamphlets, and articles (which very often—pardon our frankness—are rather dull), but precisely in the form of vivid *exposures* of what our government and our governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life. Devote more zeal to carrying out this duty and *talk less about “raising the activity of the working masses”*. We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting,

* To prove that this imaginary speech of a worker to an Economist is based on fact, we shall refer to two witnesses who undoubtedly have direct knowledge of the working-class movement and who are least of all inclined to be partial towards us “doctrinaires”; for one witness is an Economist (who regards even *Rabocheye Dyelo* as a political organ!), and the other is a terrorist. The first witness is the author of a remarkably truthful and vivid article entitled “The St. Petersburg Working-Class Movement and the Practical Tasks of Social-Democracy”, published in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6. He divides the workers into the following categories: (1) class-conscious revolutionaries; (2) intermediate stratum; (3) the remaining masses. The intermediate stratum, he says, “is often more interested in questions of political life than in its own immediate economic interests, the connection between which and the general social conditions it has long understood”.... *Rabochaya Mysl* “is sharply criticised”: “It keeps on repeating the same thing over and over again, things we have long known, read long ago.” “Again nothing in the political review!” (pp. 30-31). But even the third stratum, “the younger and more sensitive section of the workers, less corrupted by the tavern and the church, who hardly ever have the opportunity of getting hold of political literature, discuss political events in a rambling way and ponder over the fragmentary news they get about student riots”, etc. The terrorist writes as follows: “...They read over once or twice the petty details of factory life in other towns, not their own, and then they read no more... dull, they find it... To say nothing in a workers’ paper about the government... is to regard the workers as being little children.... The workers are not little children” (*Svoboda*, published by the Revolutionary-Socialist Group, pp. 69-70).

even demands that do not promise any “palpable results” whatever. It is not for you to “raise” our activity, because *activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack*. Bow less in subservience to spontaneity, and think more about raising *your own* activity, gentlemen!

• THE GROWTH OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Lenin, **What is to be Done?** (1902), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 412-417.

We have seen that the conduct of the broadest political agitation and, consequently, of all-sided political exposures is an absolutely necessary and a *paramount* task of our activity, if this activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. However, we arrived at this conclusion *solely* on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But such a presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy, in particular of present-day Russian Social-Democracy. In order to explain the point more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is “nearest” to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. “Everyone agrees” that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. The question is, *how* that is to be done and what is required to do it. The economic struggle merely “impels” the workers to realise the government’s attitude towards the working class. Consequently, *however much we may try* to “lend the economic struggle itself a political character”, we *shall never be able* to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the level of Social-Democratic political consciousness) by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle, for *that framework is too narrow*. The Martynov formula has some value for us, not because it illustrates Martynov’s aptitude for confusing things, but because it pointedly expresses the basic error that all the Economists commit, namely, their conviction that it is possible to develop the class political consciousness of the workers *from within*, so to speak, from their economic struggle, i.e., by making this struggle the exclusive (or, at least, the main) starting-point, by making it the exclusive (or, at least, the main) basis. Such a view is radically wrong. Piqued by our polemics against them, the Economists refuse to ponder deeply

over the origins of these disagreements, with the result that we simply cannot understand one another. It is as if we spoke in different tongues.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: "To go among the workers." To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*; they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions*.

6A Supplementary readings

Lenin, **A propos of the Profession de Foi**, (1899), Collected Works, Volume 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 286-296 (Criticism of economism as a form of opportunism in agitation and propaganda.)

Stalin, **Briefly about the Disagreements in the Party**, (1905), Works, Volume 1, Red Star Press, London, pp. 90-132 (A popular pamphlet summarizing Lenin's arguments in **What is to Be Done?**)

6A Questions

1) What is class consciousness and how does it develop? Would it be correct to say that class consciousness is limited to the recognition of the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists? That class consciousness develops in the economic struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie?

2) Why are political agitation on the political terrain and political exposure campaigns essential in order to develop class consciousness? How does the League wage its political campaigns? How do we do daily political agitation in our work areas?

3) What is economism? How does economism manifest itself in our day-to-day practice? What must be done to combat it?

B. Communist agitation and propaganda: methods and targets

• THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AGITATION AND PROPAGANDA

Lenin, **What is to be Done?**, (1902), Collected Works, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 421 -422

... Hitherto we thought (with Plekhanov, and with all the leaders of the international working-class movement) that the propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the cause of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present “many ideas”, so many, indeed, that they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to his audience, say, the death of an unemployed worker’s family from starvation, the growing impoverishment, etc., and, utilising this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting *a single idea* to the “masses”, e.g., the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty; he will strive *to rouse* discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, leaving a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist. Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the *printed* word; the agitator by means of the *spoken* word. The propagandist requires qualities different from those of the agitator. Kautsky and Lafargue, for example, we term propagandists; Bebel and Guesde we term agitators. To single out a third sphere, or third function, of practical activity, and to include in this function “the call upon the masses to undertake definite concrete actions”, is sheer nonsense, because the “call”, as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical treatise, propagandist pamphlet, and agitational speech, or represents a purely executive function. Let us take, for example, the struggle the German Social-Democrats are

now waging against the corn duties. The theoreticians write research works on tariff policy, with the “call”, say, to struggle for commercial treaties and for Free Trade. The propagandist does the same thing in the periodical press, and the agitator in public speeches. At the present time, the “concrete action” of the masses takes the form of signing petitions to the Reichstag against raising the corn duties. The call for this action comes indirectly from the theoreticians, the propagandists, and the agitators, and, directly, from the workers who take the petition lists to the factories and to private homes for the gathering of signatures.

• **THE COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER: COLLECTIVE AGITATOR, PROPAGANDIST AND ORGANIZER**

Lenin, **Where to Begin**, (1901), Collected Works, Vol. 5,
Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 20-24

In our opinion, the starting-point of our activities, the first step towards creating the desired organisation, or, let us say, the main thread which, if followed, would enable us steadily to develop, deepen, and extend that organisation, should be the founding of an All-Russian political newspaper. A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it, we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general and, in particular, the pressing task of the moment, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the broadest strata of the population. Never has the need been felt so acutely as today for reinforcing dispersed agitation in the form of individual action, local leaflets, pamphlets, etc., by means of generalised and systematic agitation that can only be conducted with the aid of the periodical press. It may be said without exaggeration that the frequency and regularity with which a newspaper is printed (and distributed) can serve as a precise criterion of how well this cardinal and most essential sector of our militant activities is built up. Furthermore, our newspaper must be All-Russian. If we fail, and as long as we fail, to combine our efforts to influence the people and the government by means of the printed word, it will be utopian to think of combining other means, more complex, more difficult, but also more decisive, for exerting influence. Our movement suffers in the first place, ideologically, as well

as in practical and organisational respects, from its state of fragmentation, from the almost complete immersion of the overwhelming majority of Social-Democrats in local work, which narrows their outlook, the scope of their activities, and their skill in the maintenance of secrecy and their preparedness. It is precisely in this state of fragmentation that one must look for the deepest roots of the instability and the waverings noted above. The *first* step towards eliminating this shortcoming, towards transforming divers local movements into a single, All-Russian movement, must be the founding of an All-Russian newspaper. Lastly, what we need is definitely a *political* newspaper. Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today. Without such a newspaper we cannot possibly fulfil our task—that of concentrating all the elements of political discontent and protest, of vitalising thereby the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. We have taken the first step, we have aroused in the working class a passion for “economic”, factory exposures; we must now take the next step, that of arousing in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for *political* exposure. We must not be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is today so feeble, timid, and infrequent. This is not because of a wholesale submission to police despotism, but because those who are able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience, they do not see anywhere among the people that force to which it would be worth while directing their complaint against the “omnipotent” Russian Government. But today all this is rapidly changing. There is such a force—it is the revolutionary proletariat, which has demonstrated its readiness, not only to listen to and support the summons to political struggle, but boldly to engage in battle. We are now in a position to provide a tribune for the nationwide exposure of the tsarist government, and it is our duty to do this. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic newspaper. The Russian working class, as distinct from the other classes and strata of Russian society, displays a constant interest in political knowledge and manifests a constant and extensive demand (not only in periods of intensive unrest) for illegal literature. When such a mass demand is evident, when the training of experienced revolutionary leaders has already begun, and when the concentration of the working class makes it virtual master in the working-class districts of the big cities and in the factory settlements and communities, it is quite feasible for the

proletariat to found a political newspaper. Through the proletariat the newspaper will reach the urban petty bourgeoisie, the rural handicraftsmen, and the peasants, thereby becoming a real people's political newspaper.

The role of a newspaper, however, is not limited solely to the dissemination of ideas, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies. A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this last respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour. With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will naturally take shape that will engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events. The mere technical task of regularly supplying the newspaper with copy and of promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party, who will maintain constant contact with one another, know the general state of affairs, get accustomed to performing regularly their detailed functions in the All-Russian work, and test their strength in the organisation of various revolutionary actions. This network of agents* will form the skeleton of precisely the kind of organisation we need—one that is sufficiently large to embrace the whole country; sufficiently broad and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently well tempered to be able to conduct steadily *its own* work under any circumstances, at all “sudden turns”, and in face of all contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able, on the one hand, to avoid an open battle against an over-

* It will be understood, of course, that these agents could work successfully only in the closest contact with the local committees (groups, study circles) of our Party. In general, the entire plan we project can, of course, be implemented only with the most active support of the committees which have on repeated occasions attempted to unite the Party and which, we are sure, will achieve this unification—if not today, then tomorrow, if not in one way, then in another.

whelming enemy, when the enemy has concentrated all his forces at one spot, and yet, on the other, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him when and where he least expects it. Today we are faced with the relatively easy task of supporting student demonstrations in the streets of big cities; tomorrow we may, perhaps, have the more difficult task of supporting, for example, the unemployed movement in some particular area, and the day after may have to be at our posts to play a revolutionary part in a peasant uprising. Today we must take advantage of the tense political situation arising out of the government's campaign against the Zemstvo; tomorrow we may have to support popular indignation against some tsarist bashi-bazouk on the rampage and help, by means of boycott, indictment demonstrations, etc., to make things so hot for him as to force him into open retreat. Such a degree of combat readiness can be developed only through the constant activity of regular troops. If we join forces to produce a common newspaper, this work will train and bring into the foreground, not only the most skilful propagandists, but the most capable organisers, the most talented political party leaders capable, at the right moment, of releasing the slogan for the decisive struggle and of taking the lead in that struggle.

In conclusion, a few words to avoid possible misunderstanding. We have spoken continuously of systematic, planned preparation, yet it is by no means our intention to imply that the autocracy can be overthrown only by a regular siege or by organised assault. Such a view would be absurd and doctrinaire. On the contrary, it is quite possible, and historically much more probable, that the autocracy will collapse under the impact of one of the spontaneous outbursts or unforeseen political complications which constantly threaten it from all sides. But no political party that wishes to avoid adventurous gambles can base its activities on the anticipation of such outbursts and complications. We must go our own way, and we must steadfastly carry on our regular work, and the less our reliance on the unexpected, the less the chance of our being caught unawares by any "historic turns".

• THE THREE STRATA OF THE PROLETARIAT AND THE TASKS OF COMMUNISTS

Lenin, **A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy**, (1899), Collected Works, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 280-285

We shall, therefore, have to deal in greater detail with the question of the relation of the advanced strata of the proletariat to the less advanced, and the significance of Social-Democratic work among these two sections.

The history of the working-class movement in all countries shows that the better-situated strata of the working class respond to the ideas of socialism more rapidly and more easily. From among these come, in the main, the advanced workers that every working-class movement brings to the fore, those who can win the confidence of the labouring masses, who devote themselves entirely to the education and organisation of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who even elaborate independent socialist theories. Every viable working-class movement has brought to the fore such working-class leaders, its own Proudhons, Vaillants, Weitlings, and Bebels. And our Russian working-class movement promises not to lag behind the European movement in this respect. At a time when educated society is losing interest in honest, illegal literature, an impassioned desire for knowledge and for socialism is growing among the workers, real heroes are coming to the fore from amongst the workers, who, despite their wretched living conditions, despite the stultifying penal servitude of factory labour, possess so much character and will-power that, they study, study, study, and turn themselves into conscious Social-Democrats—"the working-class intelligentsia." This "working-class intelligentsia" already exists in Russia, and we must make every effort to ensure that its ranks are regularly reinforced, that its lofty mental requirements are met and that leaders of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party come from its ranks. The newspaper that wants to become the organ of all Russian Social-Democrats must, therefore, be at the level of the advanced workers; not only must it not lower its level artificially, but, on the contrary, it must raise it constantly, it must follow up all the tactical, political, and theoretical problems of world Social-Democracy. Only then will the demands of the working-class

intelligentsia be met, and it itself will take the cause of the Russian workers and, *consequently*, the cause of the Russian revolution, into its own hands.

After the numerically small stratum of advanced workers comes the broad stratum of average workers. These workers, too, strive ardently for socialism, participate in workers' study circles, read socialist newspapers and books, participate in agitation, and differ from the preceding stratum only in that they cannot become fully independent leaders of the Social-Democratic working-class movement. The average worker will not understand some of the articles in a newspaper that aims to be the organ of the Party, he will not be able to get a full grasp of an intricate theoretical or practical problem. This does not at all mean that the newspaper must lower itself to the level of the mass of its readers. The newspaper, on the contrary, must raise their level and help promote advanced workers from the middle stratum of workers. Such workers, absorbed by *local* practical work and interested mainly in the events of the working-class movement and the immediate problems of agitation, should connect their every act with thoughts of the entire Russian working-class movement, its historical task, and the ultimate goal of socialism, so that the newspaper, the mass of whose readers are average workers, must connect socialism and the political struggle with every local and narrow question.

Lastly, behind the stratum of average workers comes the mass that constitutes the lower strata of the proletariat. It is quite possible that a socialist newspaper will be completely or well-nigh incomprehensible to them (even in Western Europe the number of Social-Democratic voters is much larger than the number of readers of Social-Democratic newspapers), but it would be absurd to conclude from this that the newspaper of the Social-Democrats should adapt itself to the lowest possible level of the workers. The only thing that follows from this is that different forms of agitation and propaganda must be brought to bear on these strata—pamphlets written in more popular language, oral agitation, and chiefly—leaflets on local events. The Social-Democrats should not confine themselves even to this; it is quite possible that the first steps towards arousing the consciousness of the lower strata of the workers will have to take the form of legal educational activities. It is very important for the *Party* to make use of this activity, guide it in the direction in which it is most needed, send out legal workers to plough up virgin fields

that can later be planted by Social-Democratic agitators. Agitation among the lower strata of the workers should, of course, provide the widest field for the personal qualities of the agitator and the peculiarities of the locality, the trade concerned, etc. "Tactics and agitation must not be confused," says Kautsky in his book against Bernstein. "Agitational methods must be adapted to individual and local conditions. Every agitator must be allowed to select those methods of agitation that he has at his disposal. One agitator may create the greatest impression by his enthusiasm, another by his biting sarcasm, a third by his ability to adduce a large number of instances, etc. While being adapted to the agitator, agitation must also be adapted to the public. The agitator must speak so that he will be understood; he must take as a starting-point something well known to his listeners. All this is self-evident and is not merely applicable to agitation conducted among the peasantry. One has to talk to cabmen differently than to sailors, and to sailors differently than to printers. *Agitation* must be *individualised*, but our *tactics*, our political *activity* must be *uniform*" (S. 2-3). These words from a leading representative of Social-Democratic theory contain a superb assessment of agitation as part of the general activity of the party. These words show how unfounded are the fears of those who think that the formation of a revolutionary party conducting a political struggle will interfere with agitation, will push it into the background and curtail the freedom of the agitators. On the contrary, only an organised party can carry out widespread agitation, provide the necessary guidance (and material) for agitators on all economic and political questions, make use of every local agitational success for the instruction of all Russian workers, and send agitators to those places and into that *milieu* where they can work with the greatest success. It is only in an organised party that people possessing the capacities for work as agitators will be able to dedicate themselves wholly to this task—to the advantage both of agitation and of the other aspects of Social-Democratic work. From this it can be seen that whoever forgets political agitation and propaganda on account of the economic struggle, whoever forgets the necessity of organising the working-class movement into the struggle of a political party, will, aside from everything else, deprive himself of even an opportunity of successfully and steadily attracting the lower strata of the proletariat to the working-class cause.

However, such an exaggeration of one side of our activities to

the detriment of the others, even the urge to throw overboard the other aspects, is fraught with still graver consequences for the Russian working class movement. The lower strata of the proletariat may even become demoralised by such calumnies as that the founders of Russian Social-Democracy only want to use the workers to overthrow the autocracy, by invitations to confine themselves to the restoration of holidays and to craft unions, with no concern for the final aims of socialism and the immediate tasks of the political struggle. Such workers may (and will) always be ensnared by the bait of any sops offered by the government or the bourgeoisie. The lower strata of the proletariat, the very undeveloped workers, might, under the influence of the preaching of *Rabochaya Mysl*, fall victim to the bourgeois and profoundly reactionary idea that the worker cannot and should not interest himself in anything but increased wages and the restoration of holidays (“the interests of the moment”); that the working people can and should conduct the workers’ struggle by their own efforts alone, by their own “private initiative,” and not attempt to combine it with socialism; that they should not strive to turn the working-class movement into the essential, advanced cause of all mankind. We repeat, the most undeveloped workers might be demoralised by such an idea, but we are confident that the advanced Russian workers, those who guide the workers’ study circles and all Social-Democratic activity, those who today fill our prisons and places of exile—from Archangel Gubernia to Eastern Siberia—that those workers will reject such a theory with indignation. To reduce the entire movement to the interests of the moment means to speculate on the backward condition of the workers, means to cater to their worst inclinations. It means artificially to break the link between the working-class movement and socialism, between the fully defined political strivings of the advanced workers and the spontaneous manifestations of protest on the part of the masses. Hence, the attempt of *Rabochaya Mysl* to introduce a special trend merits particular attention and calls for a vigorous protest. As long as *Rabochaya Mysl*, adapting itself, apparently, to the lower strata of the proletariat, assiduously avoided the question of the ultimate goal of socialism and the political struggle, with no declaration of its special trend, many Social-Democrats only shook their heads, hoping that with the development and extension of their work the members of the *Rabochaya Mysl* group would come to rid themselves of their narrowness. However, when people who, until

now, have performed the useful work of a preparatory class clutch at fashionable opportunist theories and begin to deafen the ears of Europe with announcements about intending to put the whole of Russian Social-Democracy into the preparatory class for many years (if not for ever), when, in other words, people who have, until now, been labouring usefully over a barrel of honey begin “in full view of the public” to pour ladles of tar into it, then it is time for us to set ourselves decisively against this retrograde trend!

Russian Social-Democracy, both through its founders, the members of the Emancipation of Labour group, and through the Russian Social-Democratic organisations that founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, has always recognised the following two principles: 1) The essence of Social-Democracy is the organisation of the class struggle of the proletariat for the purpose of winning political power, of transferring all means of production to society as a whole, and of replacing capitalist by socialist economy; 2) the task of Russian Social-Democracy is to organise the Russian revolutionary working-class party which has as its immediate aim the overthrow of the autocracy and the winning of political liberty. Whoever departs from these basic principles (formulated precisely in the programme of the Emancipation of Labour group and expressed in the *Manifesto of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party*) departs from Social-Democracy.

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6B Supplementary readings

Lenin, **Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya**, (1900), Collected Works, Volume 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 320-332 (The agitation and propaganda tasks of a communist newspaper and a communist theoretical journal.)

CCL(ML), **Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the CCL(ML)**, (1975), Chap. 7, section 3, pp. 70-74 (The League’s tasks of agitation and propaganda in Canada.)

6B Questions

- 1) What is the difference between agitation and propaganda? What key role does propaganda play in rallying workers to communism?
- 2) How should we use the newspaper as an agitator, propagandist and collective organizer? What are the weaknesses to be corrected in our work with the newspaper?
- 3) What are the tasks of communists in the various strata of the proletariat?

7 Unions

INTRODUCTION

The unions were born out of the spontaneous struggle of the workers to protect themselves from the capitalists' continuous attacks. They are the most broadly-based organizations of the working class and were won through hard struggles. The workers see them as their rampart, protecting their wages and working conditions.

But is this role sufficient? No. Considering the union question from the standpoint of the class struggle for socialism, Marx and Engels were the first to state that the unions must also, and above all, struggle to abolish the wage slavery of capitalism and help the workers to take power and establish socialism. "Trade Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital... They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system." (Marx, **Wages, Price and Profit**).

The bourgeoisie also realizes this fact and that is why it does everything possible to corrupt the union leaders and put its own people at the head of the unions. The result of this is the class collaborationist line, a line which betrays the struggle for socialism, as well as the immediate struggles of the working class.

Lenin has shown the importance for communists to be active in the unions. Communists are the best defenders of the interests of the working class. They must therefore prove themselves in the daily struggles of the workers. But above all they struggle within the unions to combat the influence of the labour aristocracy, in order to transform the unions into class struggle unions and to win over the masses to the revolution.

The strength of a communist party can be seen by the support the unions give it and by its capacity to provide them with political leadership. By informing, educating and mobilizing the workers in the struggle against capitalism and for socialism, class struggle unions hasten the victory of the proletariat. Therein lies all of the importance of the union question for communists.

• THE PARTY MUST WIN THE SUPPORT OF THE UNIONS AND GIVE THEM POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Stalin, “**The Immediate Tasks of the Communist Parties in the Capitalist Countries**”, (1925) in **On the Opposition**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 199-204.

I pass to the second group of questions.

The new and specific feature of the present position of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries is that the period of the flow of the revolutionary tide has given way to a period of its ebb, a period of lull. The task is to take advantage of the period of lull that we are passing through to strengthen the Communist Parties, to Bolshevise them, to transform them into genuine mass parties relying on the trade unions, to rally the labouring elements among the non-proletarian classes, above all among the peasantry, around the proletariat, and lastly, to educate the proletarians in the spirit of revolution and proletarian dictatorship.

I shall not enumerate all the immediate tasks that confront the Communist Parties in the West. If you read the resolutions on this subject, especially the resolution on Bolshevisation passed by the enlarged plenum of the Comintern,* it will not be difficult for you to understand what these tasks are concretely.

I should like to deal with the main task, with that task confronting the Communist Parties in the West, the elucidation of which will facilitate the fulfilment of all the other immediate tasks.

What is that task?

That task is to link the Communist Parties in the West with the trade unions. That task is to develop and bring to a successful conclusion the campaign for trade-union unity, to see that all Communists without fail join the trade unions, to work systematically in them for combining the workers in a united front against capital, and in this way to create the conditions that will enable the Communist Parties to have the backing of the trade unions.

* This refers to the theses on the Bolshevisation of the parties affiliated to the Communist International adopted by the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern held in Moscow, March 21-April 6, 1925.

If this task is not carried out it will be impossible to transform the Communist Parties into genuine mass parties or to create the conditions necessary for the victory of the proletariat.

The trade unions and parties in the West are not what the trade unions and the Party are here in Russia. The relations between the trade unions and the parties in the West are quite different from those that have been established here in Russia. In our country the trade unions arose after the Party, and around the Party of the working class. Trade unions had not yet arisen in our country when the Party and its organisations were already leading not only the political but also the economic struggle of the working class, down to small and very small strikes. That, mainly, explains the exceptional prestige of our Party among the workers prior to the February Revolution, in contrast to the rudimentary trade unions which then existed here and there. Real trade unions appeared in our country only after February 1917. Before October we already had definitely formed trade-union organisations, which enjoyed tremendous prestige among the workers. Already at that time Lenin said that without trade-union support it would be impossible either to achieve or to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat. The most powerful development of the trade unions in our country was reached after the capture of power, particularly under the conditions of NEP. There is no doubt that our powerful trade unions now constitute one of the chief supports of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The most characteristic feature of the history of the development of our trade unions is that they arose, developed and became strong after the Party, around the Party, and in friendship with the Party.

The trade unions in Western Europe developed under entirely different circumstances. Firstly, they arose and became strong long before working-class parties appeared. Secondly, there it was not the trade unions that developed around the working-class parties; on the contrary, the working-class parties themselves emerged from the trade unions. Thirdly, since the economic sphere of the struggle, the one that is closest to the working class, had already been captured, so to speak, by the trade unions, the parties were obliged to engage mainly in the parliamentary political struggle, and that could not but affect the character of their activities and the importance attached to them by the working class. And precisely because the parties there arose after the trade unions, precisely because the trade unions came into being long before the parties, and in fact became

the proletariat's principal fortresses in its struggle against capital—precisely for that reason, the parties, as independent forces that did not have the backing of the trade unions, were pushed into the background.

From this it follows, however, that if the Communist Parties want to become a real mass force, capable of pushing the revolution forward, they must link up with the trade unions and get their backing.

Failure to take this specific feature of the situation in the West into account means leading the cause of the communist movement to certain doom.

Over there, in the West, there are still individual “Communists” who refuse to understand this specific feature and continue to make play with the anti-proletarian and anti-revolutionary slogan: “Leave the trade unions!” It must be said that nobody can do more harm to the communist movement in the West than these and similar “Communists.” Regarding the trade unions as an enemy camp, these people contemplate “attacking” them from without. They fail to understand that if they pursue such a policy the workers will indeed regard them as enemies. They fail to understand that the trade unions, whether good or bad, are regarded by the rank-and-file worker as his fortresses, which help him to protect his wages, hours, and so forth. They fail to understand that such a policy, far from facilitating, hinders Communists from penetrating among the vast working-class masses.

The average rank-and-file worker may say to such “Communists”: “You are attacking my fortress. You want to wreck the organisations that took me decades to build, and are trying to prove to me that communism is better than trade-unionism. I don't know, perhaps your theoretical arguments about communism are right. How can I, an ordinary working man, grasp the meaning of your theories? But one thing I do know: I have my trade-union fortresses; they have led me into the struggle, they have protected me, well or ill, from the attacks of the capitalists, and whoever thinks of destroying these fortresses wants to destroy my own cause, the workers' cause. Stop attacking my fortresses, join the trade unions, work in them for five years or so, help to improve and strengthen them. In the meantime I shall see what sort of fellows you are, and if you turn out to be real good fellows, I, of course, will not refuse to support you,” and so forth.

That is the attitude, or approximately the attitude, of the average rank-and-file workers in the West today towards the anti-trade-unionists.

Whoever fails to understand this specific feature of the mentality of the average worker in Europe will understand nothing about the position of our Communist Parties at the present time.

Wherein lies the strength of Social-Democracy in the West?

In the fact that it has the backing of the trade unions.

Wherein lies the weakness of our Communist Parties in the West?

In the fact that they have not yet linked up with the trade unions, and certain elements in these Communist Parties do not wish to link up with them.

Hence, the main task of the Communist Parties in the West at the present time is to develop and bring to a successful conclusion the campaign for trade-union unity, to see that all Communists without exception join the trade unions, to work in them systematically and patiently for uniting the working class against capital, and in this way to enable the Communist Parties to have the backing of the trade unions.

Such is the meaning of the decisions of the enlarged plenum of the Comintern concerning the immediate tasks of the Communist Parties in the West at the present time.

Lenin, **On Trade Unions**, (1908), Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 190-192.

Our whole Party, consequently, has now recognised that work in the trade unions must be conducted not in the spirit of trade union neutrality but in the spirit of the closest possible relations between them and the Social-Democratic Party. It is also recognised that the partisanship of the trade unions must be achieved exclusively by S.-D. work within the unions, that the S.-D.s. must form solid Party cells in the unions, and that illegal unions should be formed since legal ones are impossible. (...)

Now, on the question of the trade unions, equally strong emphasis should be placed on the fact that Bolshevism applies the tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy in all fields of struggle, in all spheres of activity. What distinguishes Bolshevism from Menshevism is not that the former “repudiates” work in the trade unions

or the co-operative societies, etc., but that the former *takes a different line* in the work of propaganda, agitation, and organisation of the working class. Today activity in the trade unions undoubtedly assumes tremendous importance. In contrast to the neutralism of the Mensheviks we must conduct this activity on the lines of closer alignment of the unions with the Party, of the development of socialist consciousness and an understanding of the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat.

• COMMUNISTS WORK IN THE UNIONS TO OPPOSE THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY AND WIN OVER THE MASSES

Lenin, “**Left-Wing**” Communism — An Infantile Disorder, (1920), Collected Works, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 50-56

The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers’ disunity and helplessness to the *rudiments* of class organisation. When the *revolutionary party of the proletariat*, the *highest* form of proletarian class organisation, began to take shape (and the Party will not merit the name until it learns to weld the leaders into one indivisible whole with the class and the masses) the trade unions inevitably began to reveal *certain* reactionary features, a certain craft narrow-mindedness, a certain tendency to be non-political, a certain inertness, etc. However, the development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class. The proletariat’s conquest of political power is a gigantic step forward for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever and in a new way, not only in the old, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time bearing in mind that they are and will long remain an indispensable “school of communism” and a preparatory school that trains proletarians to exercise their dictatorship, an indispensable organisation of the workers for the gradual transfer of the management of the whole economic life of the country to the working *class* (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the working people.

In the sense mentioned above, a *certain* “reactionism” in the

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

Further. In countries more advanced than Russia, a certain reactionism in the trade unions has been and was bound to be manifested in a far greater measure than in our country. Our Mensheviks found support in the trade unions (and to some extent still do so in a small number of unions), as a result of the latter’s craft narrow-mindedness, craft selfishness and opportunism. The Mensheviks of the West have acquired a much firmer footing in the trade unions; there the *craft-union, narrow-minded, selfish, case-hardened, covetous, and petty-bourgeois “labour aristocracy”, imperialist-minded, and imperialist-corrupted*, has developed into a much stronger section than in our country. That is incontestable. The struggle against the Gomperses, and against the Jouhau, Hendersons, Merrheims, Legions and Co. in Western Europe is much more difficult than the struggle against our Mensheviks, who are an *absolutely homogeneous* social and political type. This struggle must be waged ruthlessly, and it must unfailingly be brought—as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social-chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trade unions. Political power cannot be captured (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until the struggle has

reached a *certain* stage. This “certain stage” will be *different* in different countries and in different circumstances; it can be correctly gauged only by thoughtful, experienced and knowledgeable political leaders of the proletariat in each particular country. (In Russia the elections to the Constituent Assembly in November 1917, a few days after the proletarian revolution of October 25, 1917, were one of the criteria of the success of this struggle. In these elections the Mensheviks were utterly defeated; they received 700,000 votes—1,400,000 if the vote in Transcaucasia is added—as against 9,000,000 votes polled by the Bolsheviks. See my article, “The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”, * in the *Communist International*† No. 7-8.)

We are waging a struggle against the “labour aristocracy” in the name of the masses of the workers and in order to win them over to our side; we are waging the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to win the working class over to our side. It would be absurd to forget this most elementary and most self-evident truth. Yet it is this very absurdity that the German “Left” Communists perpetrate when, *because* of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the trade union *top leadership*, they jump to the conclusion that... we must withdraw from the trade unions, refuse to work in them, and create new and *artificial* forms of labour organisation! This is so unpardonable a blunder that it is tantamount to the greatest service Communists could render the

* See present edition, Vol. 30, pp. 253-75.

† The *Communist International*—a journal, organ of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. It was published in Russian, German, French, English, Spanish and Chinese, the first issue appearing on May 1, 1919.

The journal published theoretical articles and documents of the Comintern, including a number of articles by Lenin. It elucidated the fundamental questions of Marxist-Leninist theory in connection with problems confronting the international working-class and communist movement and the experience of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. It also waged a struggle against various anti-Leninist tendencies.

Publication of the journal ceased in June 1943 in connection with the resolution adopted by the Presidium of the Comintern’s Executive Committee on May 15, 1943, on the dissolution of the Communist International.

bourgeoisie. Like all the opportunist, social-chauvinist, and Kautskyite trade union leaders, our Mensheviks are nothing but “agents of the bourgeoisie in the working-class movement” (as we have always said the Mensheviks are), or “labour lieutenants of the capitalist class”, to use the splendid and profoundly true expression of the followers of Daniel DeLeon in America. To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie, the labour aristocrats, or “workers who have become completely bourgeois” (cf. Engels’s letter to Marx in 1858 about the British workers*).

This ridiculous “theory” that Communists should not work in reactionary trade unions reveals with the utmost clarity the frivolous attitude of the “Left” Communists towards the question of influencing the “masses”, and their misuse of clamour about the “masses”. If you want to help the “masses” and win the sympathy and support of the “masses”, you should not fear difficulties, or pinpricks, chicanery, insults and persecution from the “leaders” (who, being opportunists and social-chauvinists, are in most cases directly or indirectly connected with the bourgeoisie and the police), but must absolutely *work wherever the masses are to be found*. You must be capable of any sacrifice, of overcoming the greatest obstacles, in order to carry on agitation and propaganda systematically, perseveringly, persistently and patiently in those institutions, societies and associations—even the most reactionary—in which proletarian or semi-proletarian masses are to be found. The trade unions and the workers’ co-operatives (the latter sometimes, at least) are the very organisations in which the masses are to be found. According to figures quoted in the Swedish paper *Folkets Dagblad Politiken* of March 10. 1920, the trade union membership in Great Britain increased from 5,500,000 at the end of 1917 to 6,600,000 at the end of 1918, an increase of 19 per cent. Towards the close of 1919, the membership was estimated at 7,500,000. I have not got the corresponding figures for France and Germany to hand, but absolutely incontestable and generally known facts testify to a rapid rise in the trade union membership in these countries too.

These facts make crystal clear something that is confirmed by

* See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 110.

thousands of other symptoms, namely, that class-consciousness and the desire for organisation are growing among the proletarian masses, among the rank and file, among the backward elements. Millions of workers in Great Britain, France and Germany are *for the first time* passing from a complete lack of organisation to the elementary, lowest, simplest, and (to those still thoroughly imbued with bourgeois-democratic prejudices) most easily comprehensible form of organisation, namely, the trade unions; yet the revolutionary but imprudent Left Communists stand by, crying out “the masses”, “the masses!” but *refusing to work within the trade unions*, on the pretext that they are “reactionary”, and invent a brand-new, immaculate little “Workers’ Union”, which is guiltless of bourgeois-democratic prejudices and innocent of craft or narrow-minded craft-union sins, a union which, they claim, will be (!) a broad organisation. “Recognition of the Soviet system and the dictatorship” will be the *only* (!) condition of membership. (See the passage quoted above.)

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

There can be no doubt that the Gomperses, the Hendersons, the Jouhaux and the Legiens are very grateful to those “Left” revolutionaries who, like the German opposition “on principle” (heaven preserve us from such “principles”!), or like some of the revolutionaries in the American Industrial Workers of the World* advocate

* The *Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.)*—a workers’ trade union organisation, founded in the U.S.A. in 1905, and in the main organising unskilled and low-paid workers of various trades. Among its founders were such working-class leaders as Daniel De Leon, Eugene Debs and William Haywood. I.W.W. organisations were also set up in Canada, Australia, Britain, Latin America and South Africa. In conditions of the mass strike movement in the

quitting the reactionary trade unions and refusing to work in them. These men, the “leaders” of opportunism, will no doubt resort to every device of bourgeois diplomacy and to the aid of bourgeois governments, the clergy, the police and the courts, to keep Communists out of the trade unions, oust them by every means, make their work in the trade unions as unpleasant as possible, and insult, bait and persecute them. We must be able to stand up to all this, agree to make any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to various stratagems, artifices and illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, as long as we get into the trade unions, remain in them, and carry on communist work within them at all costs. Under tsarism we had no “legal opportunities” whatsoever until 1905. However, when Zubatov, agent of the secret police, organised Black-Hundred workers’ assemblies and workingmen’s societies for the purpose of trapping revolutionaries and combating them, we sent members of our Party to these assemblies and into these societies (I personally remember one of them, Comrade Babushkin, a leading St. Petersburg factory worker, shot by order of the tsar’s generals in 1906). They established contacts with the masses, were able to carry on their agitation, and succeeded in wresting workers from the influence of

U.S.A., which developed under the influence of the Russian revolution of 1905-07, the I.W.W. organised a number of successful mass strikes, waged a struggle against the policy of class collaboration conducted by reformist leaders of the American Federation of Labor and Right-wing socialists. During the First World War of 1914-18, the organisation led a number of mass anti-war actions by the American working class. Some I.W.W. leaders, among them William Haywood, welcomed the Great October Socialist Revolution and joined the Communist Party of the U.S.A. At the same time, anarcho-syndicalist features showed up in I.W.W. activities: it did not recognise the proletariat’s political struggle, denied the Party’s leading role and the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, and refused to carry on work among the membership of the American Federation of Labor. In 1920 the organisation’s anarcho-syndicalist leaders took advantage of the imprisonment of many revolutionaries and, against the will of the trade union masses, rejected appeal by the Comintern’s Executive Committee that they join the Communist International. As a result of the leaders’ opportunist policy, the I.W.W. degenerated into a sectarian organisation, which soon lost all influence on the working-class movement.

Zubatov's agents.* Of course, in Western Europe, which is imbued with most deep-rooted legalistic, constitutionalist and bourgeois-democratic prejudices, this is more difficult of achievement. However, it can and must be carried out, and systematically at that.

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

• TWO LINES IN THE UNION MOVEMENT

Marx, **Resolution de l'Association internationaux des travailleurs sur les syndicats** (1866), in Marx, Engels, **Le Syndicalisms**, Vol. 1, François Maspero, Paris, pp. 68-70 (our translation)

A.) **Their Past.** Capital is a concentrated social force, while the worker disposes only of his individual productive force. Therefore the contract between capital and labour can never be established on an “equitable” basis, even when using the adulterated meaning given to the word “equitable” in a society where the material conditions are on one side and the essential productive energy on the other.

The workers' only social power lies in their numbers. But the strength of their numbers is cancelled out by their disunion. This

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

disunion of the workers is engendered and perpetuated by the inevitable competition among them. Unions were born out of the spontaneous efforts of the workers struggling against the despotic orders of capital, to stop or at least lessen the effects of this competition among themselves. They wanted to change the terms of the contract in the hopes of removing themselves from the condition of common slaves.

Yet the immediate objective of the unions was limited to the necessities of the daily struggles, to makeshift actions against the unending usurpations of capital, in short, the questions of wages and the length of the working day. These activities are not only legitimate, they are necessary. As long as the present system exists, we must continue them and in addition the labour unions must generalize their actions by uniting in all countries.

Furthermore the labour unions, without their being aware of it, have formed organizing centers for the working class, just as the commons and municipalities of the Middle Ages had done for the bourgeois class. The unions are indispensable in the war of attrition between labour and capital and they are even more important as an organized force to suppress and replace the system of wage labour.

B.) **Their present.** The unions' local and immediate struggles against capital occupy too much of their time. They are not aware enough of all that they can do against the system of wage slavery itself. They have separated themselves too much from both the more general movements and the political struggles. Nevertheless in the recent past they have started to perceive their great historic mission. Take for example their participation in the recent political movements in England, the new perception of their role in the United States and the following resolution recently adopted at the large convention of union delegates at Sheffield: **“Recognizing the true value of the work done by the International Workingmen’s Association to unite the workers of all countries in a fraternal organization and realizing that the International Association is a necessary part of the progress and prosperity of the workers’ community, this convention recommends very highly that all the groups represented here affiliate with this organization.”**

C.) **Their future:** Aside from their immediate work of reacting to the pestering manoeuvres of capital, they must become the organizing centres of the working class fighting towards that great goal, its total emancipation. They must help any political and social move-

ment in favour of this aim.

By considering themselves as, and by acting as the champions of the whole working class, they will succeed in bringing into their ranks all those who are still unorganized. By attending to the lowest-paid industries, like the agricultural industry where especially bad conditions have impeded an organized resistance, they will convince the broad working masses that they are not limited to narrow and selfish interests, but aim towards the emancipation of the millions of down-trodden proletarians.

Engels, **Le système du salariat** (1881), in Marx, Engels, **Le Syndicalisme**, Vol. 1, François Maspero, Paris, pp. 87-90 (our translation)

The Wage-system

In the preceding article we examined the motto, “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work”, which has deservedly come to the end of its days. We came to conclude that in the present social conditions even the fairest of daily wages necessarily amounts to only the most unfair division of the worker’s produce, with the major portion being pocketed by the capitalist and the worker receiving only enough to enable him to continue working and to perpetuate his species.

This is a law of political economy, that is, a law of present society’s economic organization, which is more powerful than all of England’s written laws and precedents put together, including those of the Chancellor’s Court.

As long as society remains divided into opposing classes—on the one hand, the capitalists who monopolize all the means of production, land, raw materials and machinery, on the other, workers who labour and are deprived of any ownership of the means of production, and have only their labour power at their disposal—as long as this social organization exists, the law of wages will remain all-mighty and with each day will draw tighter the chains that make the worker a slave of the product of his own hands, the product which the capitalist monopolizes.

For nearly sixty years, English trade unions have been fighting this capitalist law. And what has come of it? Have they succeeded in freeing the English working class from the slavery in which capital holds them—a capital which is nothing more than the product of

workers' labour? Have they enabled the working class, and not just a tiny fraction, to rise above their conditions of wage slavery by becoming owners of the means of production, raw materials, tools and machinery required for manufacturing, and consequently owners of the product of their own labour? It is well known that not only have they never attained this goal but that they have never even pursued it.

When we say this we do not intend to claim that because the unions have not succeeded they are of no use. On the contrary, unions, in England as in any other industrial country, are indispensable to the working class for fighting capital. The average wage equals the cost of the means of subsistence required by workers in a particular country to maintain their species according to the traditional standard of living of that country. This standard of living varies greatly among different categories of workers. The great merit of trade unions is that in their struggle to maintain this wage rate and reduce working hours they strive to maintain, indeed raise, this standard of living.

There are many workers in East London whose work requires just as much experience and is just as difficult as that of the masons and their journeymen. Yet the former earn barely half of what the latter receive. The reason for this difference is very simple: a strong organization allows the latter to impose on the capitalist a wage norm much higher than that of the others who, being unorganized and powerless, must suffer not only the inevitable exploitation by their employers but their high-handed rule thrown into the bargain as well. Their standard of living deteriorates and they learn to live with ever lower wages, their natural wages dropping to the level which they've ended up accepting.

The line drawn by the law of wages is not necessarily rigid or fixed. Within certain limits it is not inflexible. Except for periods of extreme depression, each trade always has a certain margin within which the wages can vary, according to the result of the struggle between the workers and capitalists. In each case the wage is fixed by contract; now, in a contract, those who put up the best and longest resistance will have the greatest chance of obtaining more than they would have otherwise received. If each worker in isolation negotiates with the capitalist, he is beaten easily and forced to accept an unconditional surrender.

In contrast, if an entire trade forms a powerful organization and

collects from among themselves sufficient funds to meet their employers head on, as one powerful group against another, then and only then do the workers stand a chance of obtaining the little that they can under the economic laws of the present society, what is called, “a fair day’s wage for a fair day’s work”.

However, the struggles of the unions do not violate the law of wages; on the contrary, they only apply it. Without the union weapon of resistance, the worker would not even receive what is owing to him according to the law of wages.

The proof? Just compare the wages paid to the members of the large unions with those paid to the numerous small trades in that stagnant swamp that constitutes the neighbourhoods of East London.

Thus the unions do not attack the wage system itself. And the economic degradation of the working class is not due to the level of wages, be they high or low, but to the fact that instead of collecting the whole product of its labour, the working class must be content with only a fraction of that product, that is, wages. Since the capitalist is the owner of the means of production he pockets the whole of the product and then out of that pays the worker.

Therefore, there cannot be a true emancipation of the working class as long as it does not own all of the means of production—land, raw materials, machinery, etc.—and hence possesses all of the product of its labour.

Marx, **Wages, Price and Profit**, (1865), Selected Works, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 75-76

Thirdly. Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system.

• UNDER SOCIALISM, UNIONS ARE SCHOOLS OF COMMUNISM

Lenin, "The Trade Unions, the Present Situation...", in **On Trade Unions**, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 371-372

It follows from what I have said that the trade unions have an extremely important part to play at every step of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But what is their part? I find that it is a most unusual one, as soon as I delve into this question, which is one of the most fundamental theoretically. On the one hand, the trade unions, which take in all industrial workers, are an organisation of the ruling, dominant, governing class, which has now set up a dictatorship and is exercising coercion through the state. But it is not a state organisation; nor is it one designed for coercion, but for education. It is an organisation designed to draw in and to train; it is, in fact, a school: a school of administration, a school of economic management, a school of communism. It is a very unusual type of school, because there are no teachers or pupils; this is an extremely unusual combination of what has necessarily come down to us from capitalism, and what comes from the ranks of the advanced revolutionary detachments, which you might call the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. To talk about the role of the trade unions without taking these truths into account is to fall straight into a number of errors.

Within the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the trade unions stand, if I may say so, between the Party and the government. In the transition to socialism the dictatorship of the proletariat is inevitable, but it is not exercised by an organisation which takes in all industrial workers. Why not? The answer is given in the theses of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the role of political parties in general. I will not go into this here. What happens is that the Party, shall we say, absorbs the vanguard of the proletariat, and this vanguard exercises the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship cannot be exercised or the functions of government performed without a foundation such as the trade unions. These functions, however, have to be performed through the medium of special institutions which are also of a new type, namely, the Soviets. What are the practical conclusions to be drawn from this peculiar situation? They are, on the one hand, that the trade unions are a *link* between the vanguard and the masses, and by their daily work bring conviction to the masses, the masses of the class which alone is capable of taking us from capitalism to communism. On the other hand, the trade unions are a "reservoir" of the state

power. This is what the trade unions are in the period of transition from capitalism to communism.

7 Supplementary readings

Losovsky, A., **Program of Action of the Red International of Labour Unions**, (1921), and **La Grève est un Combat**, (1931), (“A Strike is a Battle”, available only in French), Red Flag Publications and Librairie Progressiste, Montreal. (Written by the leader of the international organization of class-struggle unions affiliated to the Third International. Discussion of the two lines in the union movement.)

CCL(ML), **Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the CCL(ML)**, (1975), Chap. 7, pp. 75-86. **(On Class Struggle Unions and the Tasks of Communists in the Union Movement.)**

7 Questions

- 1) What should be the relationship between the party and the unions? What is the difference between the party and the unions?
- 2) How is the class collaborationist line manifested in the union movement today? within the CLC? the CNTU? the QFL, OFL, or other union federations?
- 3) What are our tasks in order to transform the unions into class struggle unions?

8 The Woman Question

INTRODUCTION

The exploitation of the workers is not the only manifestation of the cruelty of the capitalist system, though it is the basis and the starting point. In their greed for profits and power the capitalists use a whole series of other forms of oppression in order to divide the people and submit major groups among them to double or even triple oppression. The oppression of women is one of the most important of these forms.

Shut off from the labour market, enclosed within the four walls of the house, last hired and first fired when they succeed in finding work, paid lower wages than men for the same work, limited in their exercise of the most elementary democratic rights, women are doubly oppressed. And this double oppression makes them a potentially formidable revolutionary force, if they are mobilised by the conscious proletariat to participate in the class struggle.

For the working class, the mobilisation of working women is a question of primary importance, since they make up half of the revolutionary forces, "half the sky" in the words of Mao Tsetung. The women of the people are the most important reserve for the working class and their participation in class struggle is decisive for its outcome.

The source of women's oppression is the private ownership of the means of production. This oppression dates from the division of society into opposing classes. Since this epoch women have been deprived of their rights, and relegated to second class status. Capitalism simply maintains this oppression, all the while proclaiming an equality which does not exist in reality, in order to fool the people and defuse the women's struggle.

This is why the emancipation of women necessitates the abolition of capitalism. Socialism creates the necessary conditions for their real emancipation, for the first time permitting and encouraging the full participation of women in the economic and political life of the country, and insures a social life characterized by equality, before the law and in fact, between men and women.

Starting now we must undertake the struggle for the democratic rights of women and mobilize them in the struggle of the whole working class for socialism. The woman question is of capital im-

portance, which is why Lenin concluded that, “The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.” (Lenin, *On the Emancipation of Women*)

• WOMEN ARE THE LARGEST RESERVE OF THE WORKING CLASS; THEY MUST BE MOBILIZED IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE

Stalin, “**Long Live International Women’s Day!**”, (1925), in **On the Woman Question**, International Publishers, New York, pp. 44-45

Not a single great movement of the oppressed in the history of mankind has been able to do without the participation of working women. Working women, the most oppressed among the oppressed, never have or could stand aside from the broad path of the liberation movement. This movement of slaves has produced, as is known, hundreds and thousands of martyrs and heroines. Tens of thousands of working women were to be found in the ranks of fighters for the liberation of the serfs. It is not surprising that millions of working women have been drawn in beneath the banners of the revolutionary movement of the working class, the most powerful of all liberation movements of the oppressed masses.

International Woman’s Day is a token of invincibility and an augury of the great future which lies before the liberation movement of the working class.

Working women—workers and peasants—are the greatest reserve of the working class. This reserve constitutes a good half of the population. The fate of the proletarian movement, the victory or defeat of the proletarian revolution, the victory or defeat of proletarian power depends on whether or not the reserve of women will be for or against the working class.

That is why the first task of the proletariat and its advance detachment, the Communist Party, is to engage in decisive struggle for the freeing of women workers and peasants from the influence of the bourgeoisie, for political education and the organization of women workers and peasants beneath the banner of the proletariat.

International Woman’s Day is a means of winning the women’s labor reserves to the side of the proletariat. Working women are not only reserves, however. They can and must become—if the working

class carries out a correct policy—a real army of the working class, operating against the bourgeoisie.

The second and decisive task of the working class is to forge an army of worker and peasant women out of the women's labor reserves to operate shoulder to shoulder with the great army of the proletariat.

International Woman's Day must become a means for turning worker and peasant women from a reserve of the working class into an active army in the liberation movement of the proletariat.

Long live International Woman's Day!

• THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN ORIGINATES IN THE DIVISION OF SOCIETY INTO CLASSES AND THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN FROM SOCIAL PRODUCTION

Stalin, **Anarchism or Socialism**, (1906), Works, Vol. 1, Red Star Press, London, pp. 341-342

History teaches us that the class or social group which plays the principal role in social production and performs the main functions in production must, in the course of time, inevitably take control of that production. There was a time, under the matriarchate, when women were regarded as the controllers of production. Why was this? Because under the kind of production then prevailing, primitive agriculture, women played the principal role in production, they performed the main functions, while the men roamed the forests in quest of game. Then came the time, under the patriarchate, when the predominant position in production passed to men. Why did this change take place? Because under the kind of production prevailing at that time, stock-breeding, in which the principal instruments of production were the spear, the lasso, and the bow and arrow, the principal role was played by men.

Engels, **Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State**, (1884), Marx & Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 319-320

(...)

In the old communistic household, which embraced numerous couples and their children, the administration of the household, en-

trusted to the women, was just as much a public, a socially necessary industry as the providing of food by the men. This situation changed with the patriarchal family, and even more with the monogamous individual family. The administration of the household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became a *private service*. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production.

(...)

The increase of production in all branches—cattle breeding, agriculture, domestic handicrafts—enabled human labour power to produce more than was necessary for its maintenance. At the same time, it increased the amount of work that daily fell to the lot of every member of the gens or household community or single family. The addition of more labour power became desirable. This was furnished by war; captives were made slaves. Under the given general historical conditions, the first great social division of labour, by increasing the productivity of labour, that is, wealth, and enlarging the field of production, necessarily carried slavery in its wake. Out of the first great social division of labour arose the first great division of society, into two classes: masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited.

How and when the herds and flocks were converted from the common property of the tribe or gens into the property of the individual heads of families we do not know to this day; but it must have occurred, in the main, at this stage. The herds and the other new objects of wealth brought about a revolution in the family. Gaining a livelihood had always been the business of the man; he produced and owned the means therefore. The herds were the new means of gaining a livelihood, and their original domestication and subsequent tending was his work. Hence, he owned the cattle, and the commodities and slaves obtained in exchange for them. All the surplus now resulting from production fell to the man; the woman shared in consuming it, but she had no share in owning it. The “savage” warrior and hunter had been content to occupy second place in the house and give precedence to the woman. The “gentler” shepherd, presuming upon his wealth, pushed forward to first place and forced the woman into second place. And she could not complain. Division of labour in the family had regulated the distribution of property between man and wife. This division of labour remained

unchanged, and yet it now put the former domestic relationship topsy-turvy simply because the division of labour outside the family had changed. The very cause that had formerly made the woman supreme in the house, namely, her being confined to domestic work, now assured supremacy in the house for the man: the woman's housework lost its significance compared with the man's work in obtaining a livelihood; the latter was everything, the former an insignificant contribution. Here we see already that the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits of the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a public industry.

• CAPITALISM MAINTAINS THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN, ONLY SOCIALISM CAN LEAD TO THEIR EMANCIPATION

Lenin, "Soviet Power and the Status of Women", (1919), in **On the Emancipation of Women**, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 73-76

The second anniversary of Soviet power is an occasion for taking stock of what has been done during this period and for reflecting on the significance and the aims of the revolution that has been accomplished.

The bourgeoisie and its supporters charge us with having violated democracy. We, on the other hand, assert that the Soviet revolution has given an unprecedented impulse to the development of democracy in breadth and in depth, democracy, that is, for the working people oppressed by capitalism, democracy for the overwhelming majority of the people, socialist democracy (for the working people), as distinct from bourgeois democracy (for the exploiters, for the capitalists, for the rich).

Who is right?

To give proper thought to this question and achieve a deeper understanding of it one must take stock of the experience of these two years and make better preparations for its further development.

The status of women makes clear in the most striking fashion the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy and furnishes a most effective reply to the question posed.

In a bourgeois republic (i.e., where there is private ownership of land, factories, shares, etc.), be it the most democratic republic, women have never had equal rights, *anywhere in the world, in any one of the more advanced countries*. And this despite the fact that more than 125 years have passed since the French (bourgeois-democratic) Revolution.

In words bourgeois democracy promises equality and freedom, but in practice *not a single* bourgeois republic, even the more advanced, has granted women (half the human race) and men complete equality in the eyes of the law, or delivered women from dependence on and the oppression of the male.

Bourgeois democracy is the democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, lavish promises and high-sounding slogans about *freedom and equality*, but in practice all this cloaks the lack of freedom and the inequality of women, the lack of freedom and the inequality for the working and exploited people.

Soviet or socialist democracy sweeps away these pompous but false words and declares ruthless war on the hypocrisy of “democrats”, landowners, capitalists and farmers with bursting bins who are piling up wealth by selling surplus grain to the starving workers at speculation prices.

Down with this foul lie! There is no “equality”, nor can there be, of oppressed and oppressor, exploited and exploiter. There is no real “freedom”, nor can there be, so long as women are handicapped by men’s legal privileges, so long as there is no freedom for the worker from the yoke of capital, no freedom for the labouring peasant from the yoke of the capitalist, landowner and merchant.

Let the liars and the hypocrites, the obtuse and the blind, the bourgeois and their supporters, deceive the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general and about democracy in general.

We say to the workers and peasants—tear the mask from these liars, open the eyes of the blind. Ask them:

Is there equality of the two sexes?

Which nation is the equal of which?

Which *class* is the equal of which?

Freedom from what yoke or from the yoke of which class?

Freedom for which class?

He who speaks about politics, democracy and freedom, about equality, about socialism, *without posing* these questions, without giving them priority, who does not fight against hushing them up, concealing and blunting them, is the worst enemy of the working people, a wolf in sheep's clothing, the rabid opponent of the workers and peasants, a lackey of the landowners, the tsars and the capitalists.

In the course of two years of Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe more has been done to emancipate woman, to make her the equal of the "strong" sex, than has been done during the past 130 years by all the advanced, enlightened, "democratic" republics of the world taken together.

Education, culture, civilisation, freedom—all these high-sounding words are accompanied in all the capitalist, bourgeois republics of the world by incredibly foul, disgustingly vile, bestially crude laws that make women unequal in marriage and divorce, that make the child born out of wedlock and the "legally born" child unequal, and that give privileges to the male, and humiliate and degrade womankind.

The yoke of capital, the oppression of "sacred private property", the despotism of philistine obtuseness, the avarice of the small property-owner—these are the things that have prevented the most democratic bourgeois republics from abolishing these foul and filthy laws.

The Soviet Republic, the republic of workers and peasants, wiped out these laws at one stroke and did not leave standing a single stone of the edifice of bourgeois lies and bourgeois hypocrisy.

Down with this lie! Down with the liars who speak about freedom and equality *for all*, while there is an oppressed sex, oppressing classes, private ownership of capital and shares and people with bursting bins who use their surplus grain to enslave the hungry. Instead of freedom for all, instead of equality for all, let there be *struggle* against the oppressors and exploiters, *let the opportunity* to oppress and exploit be abolished. That is our slogan!

Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex!

Freedom and equality for the workers and labouring peasants!
Struggle against the oppressors, struggle against the capitalists,
struggle against the kulak profiteers!

This is our fighting slogan, this is our proletarian truth, the truth of the fight against capital, the truth that we hurl in the face of the world of capital with its honeyed, hypocritical and pompous phrases about freedom and equality *in general*, about freedom and equality *for all*.

And it is because we have laid bare this hypocrisy, because, with revolutionary vigour, we are ensuring freedom and full rights for the oppressed and working people, against the oppressors, against the capitalists, against the kulaks—precisely because of this Soviet rule has become so dear to the workers of the whole world.

It is because of this, the sympathies of the working masses, the sympathies of the oppressed and exploited in all countries of the world, are with us on this occasion of the second anniversary of Soviet rule.

Because of this, on the occasion of the second anniversary of Soviet rule, despite the famine and cold, despite all the suffering caused by the imperialists' invasion of the Russian Soviet Republic, we are fully convinced of the justness of our cause, firmly convinced of the inevitable victory of Soviet power on a world scale.

Pravda No. 249
November 6, 1919

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 120-23

Lenin, "International Working Women's Day", (1921), in
On the Emancipation of Women, Progress Publishers,
Moscow, pp. 83-85

International Working Women's Day*

Capitalism combines formal equality with economic and, consequently, social inequality. That is one of the principal features of capitalism, one that is deliberately obscured by the supporters of the bourgeoisie, the liberals, and is not understood by petty-bourgeois democrats. This feature of capitalism, incidentally, renders it necessary for us in our resolute fight for economic equality openly to admit capitalist inequality, and even, under certain conditions, to make this open admission of inequality the basis of the proletarian statehood (the Soviet Constitution).

But even in the matter of formal equality (equality before the law, the "equality" of the well-fed and the hungry man, of the man of property and the propertyless), capitalism *cannot* be consistent. And one of the most glaring manifestations of this inconsistency is the *inequality* of women and men. Complete equality has not been granted even by the most progressive republican and democratic bourgeois states.

The Soviet Republic of Russia, on the other hand, at once swept away *all* legislative traces of the inequality of women *without exception*, and immediately ensured their complete equality before the law.

It is said that the best criterion of the cultural level is the legal status of women. The aphorism contains a grain of profound truth. In this respect only the dictatorship of the proletariat, only the socialist state could attain, and has attained, the highest cultural level.

The new, mighty and unparalleled stimulus given to the working women's movement is therefore inevitably associated with the foundation (and consolidation) of the first Soviet Republic—and, in

* *International Working Women's Day* or International Women's Day, March 8, is a day of international unity of working women all over the world in the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

March 8 was instituted as the International Women's Day on the proposal of Clara Zetkin at the Second International Conference of Women Socialists, held at Copenhagen in 1910, with the aim of mobilising broad sections of women for the struggle against bourgeois domination. International Women's Day was first observed in 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland. It was first observed in Russia in 1913.

addition to and in connection with this, with the Communist International.*

Since mention has been made of those who were oppressed by capitalism, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, it must be said that the Soviet system, and only the Soviet system, guarantees democracy. This is clearly shown by the position of the working class and the poor peasants. It is clearly shown by the position of women.

But the Soviet system is the last decisive struggle for the *abolition of classes*, for economic and social equality. Democracy, even democracy for those who were oppressed by capitalism, including the oppressed sex, *is not enough for us*.

It is the chief task of the working women's movement to fight for economic and social equality, and not only formal equality, for women. The chief thing is to get women to take part in socially productive labour, to liberate them from "domestic slavery", to free them from their stupefying and humiliating subjugation to the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery.

This struggle will be a long one, and it demands a radical re-

* *Communist International* (Comintern, the Third International)—international revolutionary organisation of the proletariat, which existed from 1919 to 1943. It was a union of communist parties of different countries.

The Comintern set itself the task of winning the working people for the cause of communism, achieving the dictatorship of the proletariat, abolishing the capitalist system and replacing it with the socialist system, and doing away with the exploitation of man by man. The Comintern restored and cemented the ties between the working people of all countries which had been disrupted as a result of the treachery of the Second International leaders during the First World War; it upheld the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism and prevented its being distorted by the opportunists; it worked out a number of theoretical problems of the working-class movement and the struggle for socialism between the two world wars, did much to spread the ideas of scientific socialism among the masses and helped to strengthen the communist parties of various countries.

It was dissolved in May 1943 by a decision of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, because under the new conditions the former organisational form of leadership of the working-class movement fell short of the requirements of the day.

construction both of social technique and of morals. But it will end in the complete triumph of communism.

March 4, 1920

Supplement to *Pravda* No. 52,
March 7, 1920

Collected Works, Vol. 30,
pp. 408-09

Lenin, "On International Working Women's Day", (1919),
in **On the Emancipation of Women**, Progress Publishers,
Moscow, pp. 80-81

The gist of Bolshevism and the Russian October Revolution is getting into politics the very people who were most oppressed under capitalism. They were downtrodden, cheated and robbed by the capitalists, both under the monarchy and in the bourgeois-democratic republics. So long as the land and the factories were privately owned this oppression and deceit and the plunder of the people's labour by the capitalists were inevitable.

The essence of Bolshevism and the Soviet power is to expose the falsehood and mummery of bourgeois democracy, to abolish the private ownership of land and the factories and concentrate all state power in the hands of the working and exploited masses. They, these masses, get hold of politics, that is, of the business of building the new society. This is no easy task: the masses are downtrodden and oppressed by capitalism, but there is no other way—and there can be no other way—out of the wage slavery and bondage of capitalism.

But you cannot draw the masses into politics without drawing the women into politics as well. For the female half of the human race is doubly oppressed under capitalism. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly—and this is the main thing—they remain in "household bondage", they continue to be "household slaves", for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid and backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the individual family household.

No party or revolution in the world has ever dreamed of striking so deep at the roots of the oppression and inequality of women as the Soviet, Bolshevik revolution is doing. Over here, in Soviet Rus-

sia, no trace is left of any inequality between men and women under the law. The Soviet power has eliminated all there was of the especially disgusting, base and hypocritical inequality in the laws on marriage and the family and inequality in respect of children.

This is only the first step in the liberation of woman. But none of the bourgeois republics, including the most democratic of them, has dared to take even this first step. The reason is awe of “sacrosanct private property”.

The second and most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from “household slavery” through the transition from petty individual housekeeping to large-scale socialised domestic services.

This transition is a difficult one, because it involves the remoulding of the most deep-rooted, inveterate, hidebound and rigid “order” (indecent and barbarity, would be nearer the truth). But the transition has been started, the thing has been set in motion, we have taken the new path.

And so on this international working women’s day countless meetings of working women in all countries of the world will send greetings to Soviet Russia, which first tackled this unparalleled and incredibly hard but great task, a task that is universally great and truly liberatory. There will be bracing calls not to lose heart in face of the fierce and frequently savage bourgeois reaction. The “freer” or “more democratic” a bourgeois country is, the wilder the rampage of its gang of capitalists against the workers’ revolution, an example of this being the democratic republic of the United States of North America. But the mass of workers have already awakened. The dormant, somnolent and inert masses in America, Europe and even in backward Asia were finally roused by the imperialist war.

The ice has been broken in every corner of the world.

Nothing can stop the tide of the peoples’ liberation from the imperialist yoke and the liberation of working men and women from the yoke of capital. This cause is being carried forward by tens and hundreds of millions of working men and women in town and countryside. That is why this cause of labour’s freedom from the yoke of capital will triumph all over the world.

March 4, 1921

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No. 51

Collected Works, Vol. 32, pp.
161-63

8 Supplementary readings

Mao, **Quotations**, (1966), Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Chap. 31, (The woman question, the importance of mobilizing women in the building of socialism, “half the sky”)

CCL(ML), **Statement of Political Agreement for the Creation of the CCL(ML)**, (1975), Chap. 8, pp. 87-90 (The first presentation of the League’s position on the woman question), and

Half the Sky, a column in **The Forge** (Presenting developments in the League’s line on the question and analysing the situation of women.)

8 Questions

- 1) What is the origin of women’s oppression? Why do we say that the oppression of women is linked to the division of society into classes? Who are women’s enemies?
- 2) How does capitalist society deny women equality with men? What are the democratic rights for which women must struggle today?
- 3) What conditions are necessary for the liberation of women? How will socialism bring about these conditions?
- 4) What is male chauvinism? bourgeois feminism? How must we fight these two forms of bourgeois ideology?

9 Imperialism and Proletarian Revolution

INTRODUCTION

We live in the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. Capitalism has developed to its monopoly stage and has become imperialism, a barbaric system by which a handful of countries exploit the world. Throughout the world the oppressed peoples are rising up and waging national liberation struggles against imperialist domination. These struggles are taking place alongside the revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries and together they form the two great currents of the world proletarian revolution.

Imperialism is parasitic, decaying, moribund capitalism, the highest stage of capitalism, which can be followed only by the proletarian socialist revolution. In Canada a handful of millionaires and monopolies control the country's economic and political life. These Canadian capitalists, having reached the imperialist stage, exploit and oppress other peoples of the world. Thus the strategic goal of the Canadian revolutionary movement must be the overthrow of Canadian imperialism, and socialist revolution in our country.

Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tsetung developed Marxist theory in accordance with the nature of this new stage of capitalism. Lenin elaborated the theory of proletarian revolution and explained how the revolution can break out in a country that is the weak link in the imperialist chain, a country where the most contradictions come together. Mao Tsetung formulated the theory of new democracy and showed how the national liberation struggle in an oppressed and under-developed country can be followed directly by socialist revolution, provided that it is led by a communist party. These two theories were the guideposts for the two great revolutions of the 20th century, the 1917 Bolshevik revolution and the 1949 Chinese revolution.

The study of imperialism and the international situation is of prime importance for revolutionaries of every country, because every national revolution is an integral part of the world revolution and must be subordinated to it.

Imperialism also means war, since "an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in the striving for hegemony" (Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*). Today in the world, only the two superpowers, the Soviet Un-

ion and the United States, have the capacity and the means to compete for the domination of the world. Their rivalry is inevitably leading us to world war. The Soviet Union is the more dangerous of the two and the main source of a third world war.

The theory of three worlds enables us to analyse and properly understand the present international situation. It was formulated by Chairman Mao himself and is aimed at building the international united front against the two superpowers, to isolate them and slow down their plans for world war, particularly the Soviet social-imperialist offensive. In this way the peoples and the other countries of the world can best prepare themselves to destroy the two superpowers and can deal a decisive blow to these two pillars of the world imperialist system.

This masterful theory bases itself clearly on the principles of the united front and the Marxist analysis of imperialism, as well as the analysis of war and revolution and the relation between them. The excerpts in this section are intended to give the theoretical basis necessary to correctly understand and defend the Marxist-Leninist point of view on these questions.

A. The Characteristics of imperialism and the inevitability of war

• LENIN'S DEFINITION OF IMPERIALISM AS THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM AND THE EVE OF SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Lenin, **Imperialism and the Split in Socialism**, (1916), Collected Works, Vol. 23, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 105-107

We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism; (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; (3) moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capital-

ists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big hanks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of *raw material* by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels has begun. There are already over *one hundred* such international cartels, which command the *entire* world market and divide it “amicably” among themselves—until war redivides it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) *is completed*.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898-1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo Boer War (1899-1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of *every* monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of *rentiers*, capitalists who live by “clipping coupons”. In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to 100,000 or 150,000 *million* francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, “finance capital strives for domination, not freedom”. Political reaction *all along* the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of “Great” Powers, in-

creasingly transforms the “civilised” world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi.* Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to socialism: monopoly, which grows *out of* capitalism, is *already* dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous *socialisation* of labour by imperialism (what its apologists—the bourgeois economists—call “interlocking”) produces the same result.

• THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF IMPERIALISM AND THE GREAT POWERS’ STRUGGLE FOR WORLD HEGEMONY

Lenin, **Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**, (1916), Collected Works, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 265-269

We must now try to sum up, to draw together the threads of what has been said above on the subject of imperialism. Imperialism emerged as the development and direct continuation of the fundamental characteristics of capitalism in general. But capitalism only became capitalist imperialism at a definite and very high stage of its development, when certain of its fundamental characteristics began to change into their opposites, when the features of the epoch of transition from capitalism to a higher social and economic system had taken shape and revealed themselves in all spheres. Economically, the main thing in this process is the displacement of capitalist free competition by capitalist monopoly. Free competition is the basic feature of capitalism, and of commodity production generally; monopoly is the exact opposite of free competition, but we have

* K. Marx, Preface to the second edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1962, p. 244).

seen the latter being transformed into monopoly before our eyes, creating large-scale industry and forcing out small industry, replacing large-scale by still larger-scale industry, and carrying concentration of production and capital to the point where out of it has grown and is growing monopoly: cartels, syndicates and trusts, and merging with them, the capital of a dozen or so banks, which manipulate thousands of millions. At the same time the monopolies, which have grown out of free competition, do not eliminate the latter, but exist above it and alongside it, and thereby give rise to a number of very acute, intense antagonisms, frictions and conflicts. Monopoly is the transition from capitalism to a higher system.

If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capi-

tal is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.

We shall see later that imperialism can and must be defined differently if we bear in mind not only the basic, purely economic concepts—to which the above definition is limited—but also the historical place of this stage of capitalism in relation to capitalism in general, or the relation between imperialism and the two main trends in the working-class movement. The thing to be noted at this point is that imperialism, as interpreted above, undoubtedly represents a special stage in the development of capitalism. To enable the reader to obtain the most well-grounded idea of imperialism, I deliberately tried to quote as extensively as possible *bourgeois* economists who have to admit the particularly incontrovertible facts concerning the latest stage of capitalist economy. With the same object in view, I have quoted detailed statistics which enable one to see to what degree bank capital, etc., has grown, in what precisely the transformation of quantity into quality, of developed capitalism into imperialism, was expressed. Needless to say, of course, all boundaries in nature and in society are conventional and changeable, and it would be absurd to argue, for example, about the particular year or decade in which imperialism “definitely” became established.

In the matter of defining imperialism, however, we have to enter into controversy, primarily, with Karl Kautsky, the principal Marxist theoretician of the epoch of the so-called Second International—that is, of the twenty-five years between 1889 and 1914. The fundamental ideas expressed in our definition of imperialism were very resolutely attacked by Kautsky in 1915, and even in November 1914, when he said that imperialism must not be regarded as a “phase” or stage of economy, but as a policy, a definite policy “preferred” by finance capital; that imperialism must not be “identified” with “present-day capitalism”; that if imperialism is to be understood to mean “all the phenomena of present-day capitalism”—cartels, protection, the domination of the financiers, and colonial policy—then the question as to whether imperialism is necessary to capitalism becomes reduced to the “flattest tautology”, because, in that case, “imperialism is naturally a vital necessity for capitalism”,

and so on. The best way to present Kautsky's idea is to quote his own definition of imperialism, which is diametrically opposed to the substance of the ideas which I have set forth (for the objections coming from the camp of the German Marxists, who have been advocating similar ideas for many years already, have been long known to Kautsky as the objections of a definite trend in Marxism).

Kautsky's definition is as follows:

"Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to bring under its control or to annex all large areas of *agrarian* [Kautsky's italics] territory, irrespective of what nations inhabit it."*

This definition is of no use at all because it one-sidedly, i.e., arbitrarily, singles out only the national question (although the latter is extremely important in itself as well as in its relation to imperialism), it arbitrarily and *inaccurately* connects this question *only* with industrial capital in the countries which annex other nations, and in an equally arbitrary and inaccurate manner pushes into the forefront the annexation of agrarian regions.

Imperialism is a striving for annexations—this is what the *political* part of Kautsky's definition amounts to. It is correct, but very incomplete, for politically, imperialism is, in general, a striving towards violence and reaction. For the moment, however, we are interested in the *economic* aspect of the question, which Kautsky *himself* introduced into *his* definition. The inaccuracies in Kautsky's definition are glaring. The characteristic feature of imperialism is *not* industrial *but* finance capital. It is not an accident that in France it was precisely the extraordinarily rapid development of *finance* capital, and the weakening of industrial capital, that from the eighties onwards, gave rise to the extreme intensification of annexationist (colonial) policy. The characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex *not only* agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialised regions (German appetite for Belgium; French appetite for Lorraine), because (1) the fact that the world is already partitioned obliges those contemplating a *redivision* to reach out for *every kind* of territory, and (2) an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in the striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so

* *Die Neue Zeit*, 1914, 2 (B, 32), S. 909, Sept. 11, 1914; cf. 1915, 2. S. 107 et seq.

much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine *his* hegemony. (Belgium is particularly important for Germany as a base for operations against Britain; Britain needs Baghdad as a base for operations against Germany, etc.)

**• THE STRUGGLE OF THE OPPRESSED PEOPLES
AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND THE INTERNATIONALIST
TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT OF THE IMPERIALIST
COUNTRIES**

**Lenin, Report on the International Situation and the
Fundamental Tasks of the Communist International,**
(1920), Collected Works, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers,
Moscow, pp. 215-218.

Imperialism's economic relations constitute the core of the entire international situation as it now exists. Throughout the twentieth century, this new, highest and final stage of capitalism has fully taken shape. Of course, you all know that the enormous dimensions that capital has reached are the most characteristic and essential feature of imperialism. The place of free competition has been taken by huge monopolies. An insignificant number of capitalists have, in some cases, been able to concentrate in their hands entire branches of industry; these have passed into the hands of combines, cartels, syndicates and trusts, not infrequently of an international nature. Thus, entire branches of industry, not only in single countries, but all over the world, have been taken over by monopolists in the field of finance, property rights, and partly of production. This has formed the basis for the unprecedented domination exercised by an insignificant number of very big banks, financial tycoons, financial magnates who have, in fact, transformed even the freest republics into financial monarchies. Before the war this was publicly recognised by such far from revolutionary writers as, for example, Lysis in France.

This domination by a handful of capitalists achieved full development when the whole world had been partitioned, not only in the sense that the various sources of raw materials and means of production had been seized by the biggest capitalists, but also in the sense that the preliminary partition of the colonies had been completed. Some forty years ago, the population of the colonies stood at

somewhat over 250,000,000, who were subordinated to six capitalist powers. Before the war of 1914, the population of the colonies was estimated at about 600,000,000, and if we add countries like Persia, Turkey, and China, which were already semi-colonies, we shall get, in round figures, a population of a thousand million people oppressed through colonial dependence by the richest, most civilised and freest countries. And you know that, apart from direct political and juridical dependence, colonial dependence presumes a number of relations of financial and economic dependence, a number of wars, which were not regarded as wars because very often they amounted to sheer massacres, when European and American imperialist troops, armed with the most up-to-date weapons of destruction, slaughtered the unarmed and defenceless inhabitants of colonial countries.

The first imperialist war of 1914-18 was the inevitable outcome of this partition of the whole world, of this domination by the capitalist monopolies, of this great power wielded by an insignificant number of very big banks—two, three, four or five in each country. This war was waged for the repartitioning of the whole world. It was waged in order to decide which of the small groups of the biggest states—the British or the German—was to obtain the opportunity and the right to rob, strangle and exploit the whole world. You know that the war settled this question in favour of the British group. And, as a result of this war, all capitalist contradictions have become immeasurably more acute. At a single stroke the war relegated about 250,000 of the world's inhabitants to what is equivalent to colonial status, viz., Russia, whose population can be taken at about 130,000,000, and Austria-Hungary, Germany and Bulgaria, with a total population of not less than 120,000,000. That means 250,000,000 people living in countries, of which some, like Germany, are among the most advanced, most enlightened, most cultured, and on a level with modern technical progress. By means of the Treaty of Versailles, the war imposed such terms upon these countries that advanced peoples have been reduced to a state of colonial dependence, poverty, starvation, ruin, and loss of rights: this treaty binds them for many generations, placing them in conditions that no civilised nation has ever lived in. The following is the post-war picture of the world: at least *1,250 million* people are at once brought under the colonial yoke, exploited by a brutal capitalism, which once boasted of its love for peace, and had some right to do

so some fifty years ago, when the world was not yet partitioned, the monopolies did not as yet rule, and capitalism could still develop in a relatively peaceful way, without tremendous military conflicts.

Today, after this “peaceful” period, we see a monstrous intensification of oppression, the reversion to a colonial and military oppression that is far worse than before.

(...)

Comrades, in conclusion I shall deal with one other aspect of the subject. Our comrade, the chairman, has said that our Congress merits the title of a World Congress. I think he is right, particularly because we have here quite a number of representatives of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and backward countries. This is only a small beginning, but the important thing is that a beginning has been made. At this Congress we see taking place a union between revolutionary proletarians of the capitalist, advanced countries, and the revolutionary masses of those countries where there is no or hardly any proletariat, i.e., the oppressed masses of colonial, Eastern countries. It is on ourselves that the consolidation of unity depends, and I am sure we shall achieve it. World imperialism shall fall when the revolutionary onslaught of the exploited and oppressed workers in each country, overcoming resistance from petty-bourgeois elements and the influence of the small upper crust of labour aristocrats, merges with the revolutionary onslaught of hundreds of millions of people who have hitherto stood beyond the pale of history, and have been regarded merely as the object of history.

Lenin, **The Terms of Admission into the Communist International**, (1920), Collected Works, Vol. 31, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 208-209

...Parties in countries whose bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations must pursue a most well-defined and clear-cut policy in respect of colonies and oppressed nations. Any party wishing to join the Third International must ruthlessly expose the colonial machinations of the imperialists of its “own” country, must support—in deed, not merely in word—every colonial liberation movement, demand the expulsion of its compatriot imperialists from the colonies, inculcate in the hearts of the workers of its own country an attitude of true brotherhood with the working population

of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and conduct systematic agitation among the armed forces against all oppression of the colonial peoples.

• UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES AND THE INEVITABILITY OF WAR IN THE IMPERIALIST ERA

Stalin, “The Unevenness of Development of the Capitalist Countries”, (1926), in **On the Opposition**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 456-460

I said in my report that Lenin discovered and demonstrated the law of the unevenness of economic and political development of the capitalist countries, and that on the basis of this law, and of the fact that the unevenness was developing and becoming more pronounced, Lenin arrived at the idea that the victory of socialism in one country is possible. This thesis of Lenin’s was contested by Trotsky and Zinoviev. Trotsky said that it is incorrect theoretically. And Zinoviev, together with Trotsky, asserted that formerly, in the period of pre-monopoly capitalism, the unevenness of development was greater than it is now, in the period of monopoly capitalism, and that therefore the idea of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country cannot be linked with the law of the unevenness of capitalist development.

That Trotsky objects to Lenin’s theoretical thesis concerning the law of uneven development is not at all surprising, for it is well known that this law refutes Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution.

Furthermore, Trotsky is obviously tending to a philistine point of view here. He confuses the *economic inequality* of the various countries in the past—an inequality which did not always, and could not, lead to their spasmodic development—with the *unevenness of economic and political development* in the period of imperialism, when the economic inequality of countries is less than it was in the past, but the unevenness of economic and political development is incomparably greater than before and manifests itself more sharply than before; moreover it necessarily and inevitably leads to spasmodic development, to a situation in which countries which were industrially backward in a more or less short period overtake countries which had

gone ahead, and this cannot but create the pre-conditions for gigantic imperialist wars and the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country.

It scarcely needs proof that this muddling of two different concepts does not, and cannot, testify to a high level of “theoretical” knowledge on Trotsky’s part.

But I cannot understand Zinoviev, who after all was a Bolshevnik and had some inkling of Bolshevism. How can it be asserted that the unevenness of development was formerly greater than it is now, in the conditions of monopoly capitalism, without running the risk of landing in the quagmire of ultra-imperialism and Kautskyism? How can it be asserted that the idea of the victory of socialism in one country is not linked with the law of uneven development? Is it not known that it was precisely from the law of uneven development that Lenin deduced this idea? What, for example, do the following words of Lenin indicate?

“Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. *Hence,** the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country taken separately” (see Vol. XVIII, p. 232). †

What does the law of uneven development proceed from?

It proceeds from the fact that:

1) the old, pre-monopoly capitalism has grown into and developed into monopoly capitalism, into imperialism;

2) the division of the world into spheres of influence of imperialist groups and states is already completed;

3) world economic development is proceeding in the midst of a desperate, a mortal struggle of the imperialist groups for markets, raw materials, and the expansion of old spheres of influence;

4) this development is not even, but spasmodic; states that have run on ahead being ousted from the markets, and new states coming to the fore;

5) this manner of development results from some imperialist groups being able rapidly to develop technique, lower the cost of commodities and seize markets to the detriment of other imperialist groups;

* My italics.—*J. St.*

† Lenin, *The United States of Europe Slogan* (1915)

6) periodical redivisions of the already divided world thus become an absolute necessity;

7) such redivisions may therefore be effected only by forcible means, by the testing of the strength of this or that imperialist group by force;

8) this cannot but lead to sharp conflicts and gigantic wars between the imperialist groups;

9) this state of affairs inevitably leads to the mutual weakening of the imperialists and creates the possibility of the imperialist front being breached in individual countries;

10) the possibility of the imperialist front being breached in individual countries cannot but create favourable conditions for the victory of socialism in one country.

What is it that accentuates the unevenness and lends decisive significance to the uneven development in the conditions of imperialism?

Two main circumstances:

Firstly, that the division of the world among the imperialist groups is completed, that such a thing as "vacant" territory no longer exists anywhere, and that redivision of the already divided world through imperialist wars is an absolute necessity for the achievement of economic "equilibrium."

Secondly, that the colossal and hitherto unparalleled development of technique, in the broad meaning of the word, makes it easier for certain imperialist groups to overtake and outstrip others in the struggle for markets, for seizing sources of raw material, etc.

But these circumstances developed and reached their climax only in the period of developed imperialism. And it could not be otherwise, because only in the period of imperialism could the division of the world be completed, and only in the period of developed imperialism did the colossal technical possibilities show themselves.

It is to this that must be attributed the fact that, whereas formerly Britain was able to keep ahead of all other countries industrially and to leave them lagging behind for more than a hundred years, later, in the period of monopoly capitalism, Germany required only about a couple of decades to begin to outstrip Britain, while America required even less to overtake the European countries.

How, after this, can it be asserted that the unevenness of devel-

opment was formerly greater than it is now, and that the idea of the possibility of the victory of socialism in one country is not linked with the law of uneven development of capitalism in the period of imperialism?

Is it not clear that only philistines in matters of theory can confuse the economic inequality of the industrial countries in the past with the law of uneven economic and political development, which assumed particular force and acuteness only in the period of developed monopoly capitalism?

Is it not clear that only complete ignorance in the field of Leninism could have prompted Zinoviev and his friends to put forward their more than strange objections to Lenin's propositions connected with the law of uneven economic and political development of the capitalist countries?

• THE MARXIST-LENINIST ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WAR DANGER

Mao, **On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People**, (1957), Selected Works, Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 416-417

People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will completely collapse.

Mao, **All Reactionaries are Paper Tigers**, (1957), Selected Works, Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 517-518

When Chiang Kai-shek started his offensive against us in 1946, many of our comrades and the people of the country were much concerned about whether we could win the war. I myself was concerned. But we were confident of one thing. At that time an American correspondent, Anna Louise Strong, came to Yen-an. In an interview, I discussed many questions with her, including Chiang Kai-shek, Hitler, Japan, the United States and the atom bomb. I said all allegedly powerful reactionaries are merely paper tigers. The reason is that they are divorced from the people. Look! Wasn't Hitler a paper tiger? Wasn't he overthrown? I also said that the tsar of Russia was a paper tiger, as were the emperor of China and Japanese imperialism, and see, they were all overthrown. U.S. imperialism has not yet been overthrown and it has the atom bomb, but I believe it too is a paper tiger and will be overthrown. Chiang Kai-shek was very powerful, for he had a regular army of more than four million. We were then in Yen-an. What was the population of Yen-an? Seven thousand. How many troops did we have? We had 900,000 guerrillas, all isolated by Chiang Kai-shek in scores of base areas. But we said that Chiang Kai-shek was only a paper tiger and that we could certainly defeat him. We have developed a concept over a long period for the struggle against the enemy, namely, strategically we should despise all our enemies, but tactically we should take them all seriously. In other words, with regard to the whole we must despise the enemy, but with regard to each specific problem we must take him seriously. If we do not despise him with regard to the whole, we shall commit opportunist errors. Marx and Engels were but two individuals, and yet in those early days they already declared that capitalism would be overthrown throughout the world. But with regard to specific problems and specific enemies, if we do not take them seriously, we shall commit adventurist errors. In war, battles can only be fought one by one and the enemy forces can only be destroyed one part at a time. Factories can only be built one by one. Peasants can only plough the land plot by plot. The same is even true of eating a meal. Strategically, we take the eating of a meal lightly, we are sure we can manage it. But when it comes to the actual eating, it must be done mouthful by mouthful, you cannot swallow an entire banquet at one gulp. This is called the piecemeal solution and is known in military writings as destroying the enemy forces one by one.

9A Supplementary readings

Stalin, **Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR**, (1952), Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 32-36 (The inevitability of wars between imperialist countries.)

CCL(ML), **Document of Political Agreement for the Creation of the CCL(ML)**, (1975), Chap. 2, pp. 15-24 (On the theory of three worlds) and Chap. 3. pp. 25-40 (Canada as an imperialist country)

CCL(ML), “The Theory of Three Worlds: A Strategic Guide to Advance the World Revolution to Victory”, in **October**, no. 2-3, 1978, pp. 22-64 (The theory of three world as the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the international situation, and criticism of those who attack it.)

9A Questions

- 1) What are the characteristics of imperialism? How do they apply to Canada?
- 2) What is proletarian internationalism? What tasks does it imply for Canadian communists?
- 3) What is hegemonism? How do you explain that hegemonism arises from the very nature of imperialism? Which countries today are fighting for world hegemony? Which of the two is the more dangerous and the main source of a new war?
- 4) Why is war among imperialist countries inevitable? What is the attitude of communists towards war?

B. The era of imperialism and the theory of proletarian revolution

• LENINISM DEFINED AS MARXISM IN THE ERA OF IMPERIALISM AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 2-4

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics

of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular. Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

• THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 4-6

Leninism grew up and took shape under the conditions of imperialism, when the contradictions of capitalism had reached an extreme point, when the proletarian revolution had become an immediate practical question, when the old period of preparation of the working class for revolution had come up and passed over to a new period, that of direct assault on capitalism.

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

The *first contradiction* is the contradiction between labour and capital. Imperialism is the omnipotence of the monopolist trusts and syndicates, of the banks and the financial oligarchy, in the industrial countries. In the fight against this omnipotence, the customary methods of the working class—trade unions and co-operatives, parliamentary parties and the parliamentary struggle—have proved to be totally inadequate. Either place yourself at the mercy of capital, eke out a wretched existence as of old and sink lower and lower, or adopt a new weapon—this is the alternative imperialism puts before the vast masses of the proletariat. Imperialism brings the working

class to revolution.

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

The *third contradiction* is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, “civilized” nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhuman oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build there railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centres. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement—such are the inevitable results of this “policy.” The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.

Such, in general, are the principal contradictions* of imperial-

* (Ed. note): Stalin speaks here of the fundamental contradictions of imperialism before the October Revolution, that is, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that among the imperialist

ism which have converted the old, “flourishing” capitalism into moribund capitalism.

The significance of the imperialist war which broke out 10 years ago lies, among other things, in the fact that it gathered all these contradictions into a single knot and threw them on to the scales, thereby accelerating and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat.

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

Such was the international situation which gave birth to Leninism.

• THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE REVOLUTION IN EACH COUNTRY; THE WEAK LINK IN THE IMPERIALIST CHAIN

Stalin, **Foundations of Leninism**, (1924), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 24-27

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

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

countries and among the monopoly groups themselves, and that between imperialism and the oppressed nations. After the victory of the Bolshevik revolution, a fourth contradiction was added: that between the imperialist countries and the socialist countries.

*Imperialism**)

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

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

Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

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

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

Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclu-

*See Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, FLP, Peking, 1973.

sion that “*imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.*”* (See Vol. XIX, p. 71.)†

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

Formerly, the analysis of the prerequisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old “cultured” capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of “advanced” countries.

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

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

* My italics.—*J. St.*

† “*Preface to Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,*” April 1917.

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

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

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

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

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

• THE NEW DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION

Mao, **On New Democracy**, (1940), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 342-344

The historical characteristic of the Chinese revolution lies in its division into the two stages, democracy and socialism, the first be-

ing no longer democracy in general, but democracy of the Chinese type, a new and special type, namely, New Democracy. How, then, has this historical characteristic come into being? Has it been in existence for the past hundred years, or is it of recent origin?

A brief study of the historical development of China and of the world shows that this characteristic did not emerge immediately after the Opium War, but took shape later, after the first imperialist world war and the October Revolution in Russia. Let us now examine the process of its formation.

Clearly, it follows from the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal character of present-day Chinese society that the Chinese revolution must be divided into two stages. The first step is to change the colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal form of society into an independent, democratic society. The second is to carry the revolution forward and build a socialist society. At present the Chinese revolution is taking the first step.

The preparatory period for the first step began with the Opium War in 1840, i.e., when China's feudal society started changing into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal one. Then came the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Reform Movement of 1898, the Revolution of 1911, the May 4th Movement, the Northern Expedition, the War of the Agrarian Revolution and the present War of Resistance Against Japan. Together these have taken up a whole century and in a sense they represent that first step, being struggles waged by the Chinese people, on different occasions and in varying degrees, against imperialism and the feudal forces in order to build up an independent, democratic society and complete the first revolution. The Revolution of 1911 was in a fuller sense the beginning of that revolution. In its social character, this revolution is a bourgeois-democratic and not a proletarian-socialist revolution. It is still unfinished and still demands great efforts, because to this day its enemies are still very strong. When Dr. Sun Yat-sen said, "The revolution is not yet completed, all my comrades must struggle on", he was referring to the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

A change, however, occurred in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution after the outbreak of the first imperialist world war in 1914 and the founding of a socialist state on one-sixth of the globe as a result of the Russian October Revolution of 1917.

Before these events, the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolu-

tion came within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, of which it was a part.

Since these events, the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution has changed, it has come within the new category of bourgeois-democratic revolutions and, as far as the alignment of revolutionary forces is concerned, forms part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution.

Why? Because the first imperialist world war and the first victorious socialist revolution, the October Revolution, have changed the whole course of world history and ushered in a new era.

It is an era in which the world capitalist front has collapsed in one part of the globe (one-sixth of the world) and has fully revealed its decadence everywhere else, in which the remaining capitalist parts cannot survive without relying more than ever on the colonies and semi-colonies, in which a socialist state has been established and has proclaimed its readiness to give active support to the liberation movement of all colonies and semi-colonies, and in which the proletariat of the capitalist countries is steadily freeing itself from the social-imperialist influence of the social-democratic parties and has proclaimed its support for the liberation movement in the colonies and semi-colonies. In this era, any revolution in a colony or semi-colony that is directed against imperialism, i.e., against the international bourgeoisie or international capitalism, no longer comes within the old category of the bourgeois-democratic world revolution, but within the new category. It is no longer part of the old bourgeois, or capitalist, world revolution, but is part of the new world revolution, the proletarian-socialist world revolution. Such revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies can no longer be regarded as allies of the counterrevolutionary front of world capitalism; they have become allies of the revolutionary front of world socialism.

Although such a revolution in a colonial and semi-colonial country is still fundamentally bourgeois-democratic in its social character during its first stage or first step, and although its objective mission is to clear the path for the development of capitalism, it is no longer a revolution of the old type led by the bourgeoisie with the aim of establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship. It belongs to the new type of revolution led by the proletariat with the aim, in the first stage, of establishing a new-democratic society and a state under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes. Thus this revolution actually serves the pur-

pose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism. In the course of its progress, there may be a number of further sub-stages, because of changes on the enemy's side and within the ranks of our allies, but the fundamental character of the revolution remains unchanged.

Such a revolution attacks imperialism at its very roots, and is therefore not tolerated but opposed by imperialism. However, it is favoured by socialism and supported by the land of socialism and the socialist international proletariat.

Therefore, such a revolution inevitably becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution.

The correct thesis that "the Chinese revolution is part of the world revolution" was put forward as early as 1924-27 during the period of China's First Great Revolution. It was put forward by the Chinese Communists and endorsed by all those taking part in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle of the time. However, the significance of this thesis was not fully expounded in those days, and consequently it was only vaguely understood.

• WORLD REVOLUTION IN THE IMPERIALIST ERA

Mao, **On New Democracy**, (1940), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 344-347

The "world revolution" no longer refers to the old world revolution, for the old bourgeois world revolution has long been a thing of the past; it refers to the new world revolution, the socialist world revolution. Similarly, to form "part of" means to form part not of the old bourgeois but of the new socialist revolution. This is a tremendous change unparalleled in the history of China and of the world.

This correct thesis advanced by the Chinese Communists is based on Stalin's theory.

As early as 1918, in an article commemorating the first anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin wrote:

The great world-wide significance of the October Revolution chiefly consists in the fact that:

- 1) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression in Europe into the general question of emancipating the op-

pressed peoples, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism;

2) It has opened up wide possibilities for their emancipation and the right paths towards it, has thereby greatly facilitated the cause of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples of the West and the East, and has drawn them into the common current of the victorious struggle against imperialism;

3) It has thereby erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East, having created a new front of revolutions against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian Revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East.*

Since writing this article, Stalin has again and again expounded the theory that revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies have broken away from the old category and become part of the proletarian-socialist revolution. The clearest and most precise explanation is given in an article published on June 30, 1925, in which Stalin carried on a controversy with the Yugoslav nationalists of the time. Entitled "The National Question Once Again", it is included in a book translated by Chang Chung-shih and published under the title *Stalin on the National Question*. It contains the following passage:

Semich refers to a passage in Stalin's pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question*, written at the end of 1912. There it says that "the national struggle under the conditions of rising capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves". Evidently, by this Semich is trying to suggest that his formula defining the social significance of the national movement under the present historical conditions is correct. But Stalin's pamphlet was written before the imperialist war, when the national question was not yet regarded by Marxists as a question of world significance, when the Marxists' fundamental demand for the right to self-determination was regarded not as part of the proletarian revolution, but as part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It would be ridiculous not to see that since then the international situation has radically changed, that the war, on the one hand, and the October Revolution in Russia, on the other, transformed the national question from a part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a part of the proletarian-socialist revolution. As far back as October 1916, in his article, "The Discus-

* J. V. Stalin, "The October Revolution and the National Question", *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1953, Vol. IV, pp. 169-70.

sion on Self-Determination Summed Up”, Lenin said that the main point of the national question, the right to self-determination, had ceased to be a part of the general democratic movement, that it had already become a component part of the general proletarian, socialist revolution. I do not even mention subsequent works on the national question by Lenin and by other representatives of Russian communism. After all this, what significance can Semich’s reference to the passage in Stalin’s pamphlet, written in the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia, have at the present time, when, as a consequence of the new historical situation, we have entered a new epoch, the epoch of proletarian revolution? It can only signify that Semich quotes outside of space and time, without reference to the living historical situation, and thereby violates the most elementary requirements of dialectics, and ignores the fact that what is right for one historical situation may prove to be wrong in another historical situation.*

From this it can be seen that there are two kinds of world revolution, the first belonging to the bourgeois or capitalist category. The era of this kind of world revolution is long past, having come to an end as far back as 1914 when the first imperialist world war broke out, and more particularly in 1917 when the October Revolution took place. The second kind, namely, the proletarian-socialist world revolution, thereupon began. This revolution has the proletariat of the capitalist countries as its main force and the oppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies as its allies. No matter what classes, parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point or understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and they become its allies.

Today, the Chinese revolution has taken on still greater significance. This is a time when the economic and political crises of capitalism are dragging the world more and more deeply into the Second World War, when the Soviet Union has reached the period of transition from socialism to communism and is capable of leading and helping the proletariat and oppressed nations of the whole world in their fight against imperialist war and capitalist reaction,

* J. V. Stalin, “The National Question Once Again”, *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VII, pp. 225-27.

when the proletariat of the capitalist countries is preparing to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism, and when the proletariat, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie in China have become a mighty independent political force under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Situated as we are in this day and age, should we not make the appraisal that the Chinese revolution has taken on still greater world significance? I think we should. The Chinese revolution has become a very important part of the world revolution.

Although the Chinese revolution in this first stage (with its many sub-stages) is a new type of bourgeois-democratic revolution and is not yet itself a proletarian-socialist revolution in its social character, it has long become a part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and is now even a very important part and a great ally of this world revolution. The first step or stage in our revolution is definitely not, and cannot be, the establishment of a capitalist society under the dictatorship of the Chinese bourgeoisie, but will result in the establishment of a new-democratic society under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes of China headed by the Chinese proletariat. The revolution will then be carried forward to the second stage, in which a socialist society will be established in China.

This is the fundamental characteristic of the Chinese revolution of today, of the new revolutionary process of the past twenty years (counting from the May 4th Movement of 1919), and its concrete living essence.

9B Supplementary readings

Stalin, Concerning Questions of Leninism, (1926), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 160-236 (Criticism of Trotskyist distortions of Leninism and the theory of proletarian revolution.)

Mao, **The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party**, (1939), Selected Works, Volume 2, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Chap. 2, sections 2-7, pp. 315-334 (On the link between the democratic and socialist stages of the Chinese revolution.)

9B Questions

- 1) What are the fundamental contradictions of imperialism? How does Leninism develop Marxist theory in order to take into account the development of capitalism to the stage of imperialism?
- 2) What importance does the international situation hold for the revolution within each country? Why is it wrong, in formulating the conditions for socialist revolution, to take into account only the internal situation of the country?
- 3) How can a national liberation struggle be transformed into socialist revolution? What are the two component parts of the world proletarian revolution?

10 The National Question

INTRODUCTION

National oppression is another form of oppression maintained by the capitalists. Oppressed nationalities constitute sources of cheap labour for the bourgeoisie and permit them to make even higher profits.

Furthermore national oppression is part of the policy of “divide and rule.” By giving privileges to one nationality while depriving the others of their fundamental rights, the bourgeoisie tries to divide the working class. The bourgeoisie is the one pulling the strings in the national conflicts that oppose the workers of different countries. As long as they fight among themselves the bourgeoisie is safe.

For communists the national question is of very great importance. The enemy of oppressed nationalities is the bourgeoisie, the same enemy that opposes the working class. Fully mobilized in the struggle for their rights, the oppressed nations are reserves for the proletarian revolution.

At least a third of the population of Canada is made up of oppressed nationalities, including the Québécois nation, the Inuit, the Indians, the Metis, and the Acadians among others. Their anger must be directed into the struggle against the bourgeoisie and this is why the communists put forward a program of action to resolve national oppression and mobilize the working people of the oppressed nationalities in the struggle for socialism.

The excerpts in this section bring out the Marxist-Leninist principles on the national question, notably: the right of self-determination up to and including separation; equal rights for all nations and nationalities and the banning of discrimination towards national minorities; the organization of workers of diverse nationalities into the same organization of struggle; and finally the subordination of the national question to the class struggle of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie tries to divide us, but its power will inevitably flounder before the unity of the revolutionary proletariat and the oppressed nationalities: this is a part of the revolutionary strategy that is indispensable for the victory of socialism in Canada.

A. The proletarian viewpoint and the Marxist program on the national question

• OUR STAND ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION MUST BE BASED ON THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS

Lenin, **The Working Class and the National Question**, (1913), Collected Works, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 91-92

The national question must be clearly considered and solved by all class-conscious workers.

When the bourgeoisie was fighting for freedom together with the people, together with all those who labour, it stood for full freedom and equal rights for the nations. Advanced countries, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and others, provide us with an example of how free nations under a really democratic system live together in peace or separate peacefully from each other.

Today the bourgeoisie fears the workers and is seeking an alliance with the Purishkeviches, with the reactionaries, and is betraying democracy, advocating oppression or unequal rights among nations and corrupting the workers with *nationalist slogans*.

In our times the proletariat alone upholds the real freedom of nations and the unity of workers of all nations.

For different nations to live together in peace and freedom or to separate and form different states (if that is more convenient for them), a full democracy, upheld by the working class, is essential. No privileges for any nation or any one language! Not even the slightest degree of oppression or the slightest injustice in respect of a national minority—such are the principles of working-class democracy.

The capitalists and landowners want, at all costs, to keep the workers of different nations apart while the powers that be live splendidly together as shareholders in profitable concerns involving millions (such as the Lena Gold fields); Orthodox Christians and Jews, Russians and Germans, Poles and Ukrainians, everyone who possesses *capital*, exploit the workers of all nations in company.

Class-conscious workers stand for *full unity* among the workers of all nations in every educational, trade union, political, etc., workers' organisation. Let the Cadet gentlemen disgrace themselves by

denying or belittling the importance of equal rights for Ukrainians. Let the bourgeoisie of all nations find comfort in lying phrases about national culture, national tasks, etc., etc.

The workers will not allow themselves to be disunited by sugary speeches about national culture, or “national-cultural autonomy”. The workers of all nations together, concertedly, uphold full freedom and complete equality of rights in organisations common to all—and that is the guarantee of genuine culture.

The workers of the whole world are building up their own internationalist culture, which the champions of freedom and the enemies of oppression have for long been preparing. To the old world, the world of national oppression, national bickering, and national isolation the workers counterpose a new world, a world of the unity of the working people of all nations, a world in which there is no place for any privileges or for the slightest degree of oppression of man by man.

Pravda No. 106, May 10,
1913

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• THE MARXIST PROGRAM ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Lenin, **Theses on the National Question**, (1913),
Collected Works, Vol. 19, Progress Publishers, Moscow,
pp. 245-246

Social-Democrats, in upholding a consistently democratic state system, demand unconditional equality for all nationalities and struggle against absolutely all privileges for one or several nationalities.

In particular, Social-Democrats reject a “state” language. It is particularly superfluous in Russia because more than seven-tenths of the population of Russia belong to related Slav nationalities who, given a free school and a free state, could easily achieve intercourse by virtue of the demands of the economic turnover without any “state” privileges for any one language.

Social-Democrats demand the abolition of the old administrative divisions of Russia established by the feudal landowners and the civil servants of the autocratic feudal state and their replacement by divisions based on the requirements of present-day economic life

and in accordance, as far as possible, with the national composition of the population.

All areas of the state that are distinguished by social peculiarities or by the national composition of the population, must enjoy wide self-government and autonomy, with institutions organised on the basis of universal, equal and secret voting.

Social-Democrats demand the promulgation of a law, operative throughout the state, protecting the rights of every national minority in no matter what part of the state. This law should declare inoperative any measure by means of which the national majority might attempt to establish privileges for itself or restrict the rights of a national minority (in the sphere of education, in the use of any specific language, in budget affairs, etc.), and forbid the implementation of any such measure by making it a punishable offence.

Stalin, **Report on the National Question**, (1917), in **Marxism and the National-Colonial Question**, Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 102-106

The first question is, how is the political life of the oppressed nations to be arranged? In answer to this question it must be said that the oppressed peoples forming part of Russia must be allowed the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to remain part of the Russian state or to secede and form independent states. We are at present witnessing a definite conflict between the Finnish people and the Provisional Government. The representatives of the Finnish people, the representatives of Social-Democracy, are demanding that the Provisional Government should restore to the people the rights they enjoyed before they were annexed to Russia. The Provisional Government refuses, because it will not recognize the sovereignty of the Finnish people. On whose side must we range ourselves? Obviously, on the side of the Finnish people, for it is inconceivable for us to accept the forcible retention of any people whatsoever within the bounds of a unitary state. When we put forward the principle that peoples have the right to self-determination we thereby raise the struggle against national oppression to the level of a struggle against imperialism, our common enemy. If we fail to do this, we may find ourselves in the position of bringing grist to the mill of the imperialists. If we, Social-Democrats, were to deny the Finnish people the right to declare their will on the subject of

secession and the right to give effect to their will, we would be putting ourselves in the position of continuing the policy of tsarism.

It would be impermissible to confuse the question of the *right* of nations freely to secede with the question of whether a nation must *necessarily* secede at any given moment. This latter question must be settled quite separately by the party of the proletariat in each particular case, according to the circumstances. When we recognize the right of oppressed peoples to secede, the *right* to decide their political destiny, we do not thereby settle the question whether particular nations *should* secede from the Russian state at the given moment. I may recognize the right of a nation to secede, but that does not mean that I oblige it to do so. A people has the right to secede, but it may or may not exercise that right, according to the circumstances. Thus we are at liberty to agitate for or against secession in accordance with the interests of the proletariat, of the proletarian revolution. Hence, the question of secession must be determined in each particular case independently, in accordance with the existing situation, and, for this reason, recognizing the right of secession must not be confused with the expediency of secession in any given circumstances. For instance, I personally would be opposed to the secession of Transcaucasia, bearing in mind the common development in Transcaucasia and Russia, certain conditions of the struggle of the proletariat, and so forth. But if, nevertheless, the peoples of Transcaucasia were to demand secession, they would, of course, secede without encountering opposition from us. (*Reads further the text of the resolution.*)

Further, what is to be done with the peoples which may desire to remain within the Russian state? Whatever mistrust of Russia existed among the peoples was fostered chiefly by the tsarist policy. But now that tsarism no longer exists, and its policy of oppression no longer exists, this mistrust is bound to diminish and attraction towards Russia to increase. I believe that now, after the overthrow of tsarism, nine-tenths of the nationalities will not desire to secede. The Party therefore proposes to institute regional autonomy for regions which do not desire to secede and which are distinguished by peculiarities of customs and language, as, for instance, Transcaucasia, Turkestan and the Ukraine. The geographical boundaries of these autonomous regions must be determined by the populations themselves with due regard for economic conditions, customs, etc.

Lastly, there is the question of the national minorities. Their

rights must be specially protected. The Party therefore demands full equality of status in educational, religious and other matters and the abolition of all restrictions on national minorities.

There is §9, which proclaims the equality of nations. The conditions required for its realization can arise only when the whole of society has been fully democratized.

We have still to settle the question of how to organize the proletariat of the various nations into a single, common party. One plan is that the workers should be organized on national lines—so many nations, so many parties. That plan was rejected by the Social-Democrats. Experience has shown that the organization of the proletariat of a given state on national lines tends only to destroy the idea of class solidarity. All the proletarians of all the nations in a given state must be organized in a single, indivisible proletarian collective.

Thus, our views on the national question can be reduced to the following propositions:

- a) Recognition of the right of nations to secession;
- b) Regional autonomy for nations remaining within the given state;
- c) Special legislation guaranteeing freedom of development for national minorities;
- d) A single, indivisible proletarian collective, a single party, for the proletarians of all nationalities of the given state.

• THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION FROM THE MARXIST POINT OF VIEW

Lenin, **The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination**, (1916), Collected Works, Vol. 22, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 155-161

1. IMPERIALISM, SOCIALISM AND THE LIBERATION OF OPPRESSED NATIONS

Imperialism is the highest stage in the development of capitalism. In the foremost countries capital has outgrown the bounds of national states, has replaced competition by monopoly and has created all the objective conditions for the achievement of socialism. In Western Europe and in the United States, therefore, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the overthrow of capitalist gov-

ernments and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is on the order of the day. Imperialism forces the masses into this struggle by sharpening class contradictions on a tremendous scale, by worsening the conditions of the masses both economically—trusts, high cost of living—and politically—the growth of militarism, more frequent wars, more powerful reaction, the intensification and expansion of national oppression and colonial plunder. Victorious socialism must necessarily establish a full democracy and, consequently, not only introduce full equality of nations but also realise the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination, i.e., the right to free political separation. Socialist parties which did not show by all their activity, both now, during the revolution, and after its victory, that they would liberate the enslaved nations and build up relations with them on the basis of a free union—and free union is a false phrase without the right to secede—these parties would be betraying socialism.

Democracy, of course, is also a form of state which must disappear when the state disappears, but that will only take place in the transition from conclusively victorious and consolidated socialism to full communism.

2. THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY

The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy.

It would be no less a mistake to remove one of the points of the democratic programme, for example, the point on the self-determination of nations, on the grounds of it being “impracticable” or “illusory” under imperialism. The contention that the right of nations to self-determination is impracticable within the bounds of

capitalism can be understood either in the absolute, economic sense, or in the conditional, political sense.

In the first case it is radically incorrect from the standpoint of theory. First, in that sense, such things as, for example, labour money, or the abolition of crises, etc., are impracticable under capitalism. It is absolutely untrue that the self-determination of nations is *equally* impracticable. Secondly, even the one example of the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905 is sufficient to refute “impracticability” in that sense. Thirdly, it would be absurd to deny that some slight change in the political and strategic relations of, say, Germany and Britain, might today or tomorrow make the formation of a new Polish, Indian and other similar state fully “practicable”. Fourthly, finance capital, in its drive to expand, can “freely” buy or bribe the freest democratic or republican government and the elective officials of any, even an “independent”, country. The domination of finance capital and of capital in general is not to be abolished by *any* reforms in the sphere of political democracy; and self-determination belongs wholly and exclusively to this sphere. This domination of finance capital, however, does not in the least nullify the significance of political democracy as a freer, wider and clearer *form* of class oppression and class struggle. Therefore all arguments about the “impracticability”, in the economic sense, of one of the demands of political democracy under capitalism are reduced to a theoretically incorrect definition of the general and basic relationships of capitalism and of political democracy as a whole.

In the second case the assertion is incomplete and inaccurate. This is because not only the right of nations to self-determination, but *all* the fundamental demands of political democracy are only partially “practicable” under imperialism, and then in a distorted form and by way of exception (for example, the secession of Norway from Sweden in 1905). The demand for the immediate liberation of the colonies that is put forward by all revolutionary Social-Democrats is also “impracticable” under capitalism without a series of revolutions. But from this it does not by any means follow that Social-Democracy should reject the immediate and most determined struggle for *all* these demands—such a rejection would only play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and reaction—but, on the contrary, it follows that these demands must be formulated and put through in a revolutionary and not a reformist manner, going beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, breaking them down, going beyond

speeches in parliament, and verbal protests, and drawing the masses into decisive action, extending and intensifying the struggle for every fundamental democratic demand up to a direct proletarian onslaught on the bourgeoisie, i.e., up to the socialist revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie. The socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt, but also as a result, of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus case* or the Zabern incident,† or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation, etc.

Increased national oppression under imperialism does not mean that Social-Democracy should reject what the bourgeoisie call the “utopian” struggle for the freedom of nations to secede but, on the contrary, it should make greater use of the conflicts that arise in this sphere, *too*, as grounds for mass action and for revolutionary attacks on the bourgeoisie.

3. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND ITS RELATION TO FEDERATION

The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation. This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand

* A frame-up trial instituted in 1894 by reactionary royalist circles among the French militarists against Dreyfus, a Jewish officer of the General Staff, who was falsely accused of espionage and high treason. A court martial sentenced him to life imprisonment. The public movement for a review of the case took the form of a fierce struggle between the republicans and the royalists and led to his eventual release in 1906.

Lenin said the Dreyfus case was “one of the many thousands of fraudulent tricks of the reactionary military caste”.

† The incident was caused by the brutality of a Prussian officer towards Alsatians in Zabern, Alsace, in November 1913, and resulted in a burst of indignation among the local, mainly French, population against the Prussian militarists (see Lenin’s article “Zabern” in the present edition, Vol. 19, pp. 513-15).

for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression. The closer a democratic state system is to complete freedom to secede the less frequent and less ardent will the desire for separation be in practice, because big states afford indisputable advantages, both from the standpoint of economic progress and from that of the interests of the masses and, furthermore, these advantages increase with the growth of capitalism. Recognition of self-determination is not synonymous with recognition of federation as a principle. One may be a determined opponent of that principle and a champion of democratic centralism but still prefer federation to national inequality as the only way to full democratic centralism. It was from this standpoint that Marx, who was a centralist, preferred even the federation of Ireland and England to the forcible subordination of Ireland to the English.*

The aim of socialism is not only to end the division of mankind into tiny states and the isolation of nations in any form, it is not only to bring the nations closer together but to integrate them. And it is precisely in order to achieve this aim that we must, on the one hand, explain to the masses the reactionary nature of Renner and Otto Bauer's idea of so-called "cultural and national autonomy"† and, on the other, demand the liberation of oppressed nations in a clearly and precisely formulated political programme that takes special account of the hypocrisy and cowardice of socialists in the oppressor nations, and not in general nebulous phrases, not in empty declamations and not by way of "relegating" the question until socialism has been achieved. In the same way as mankind can arrive at the abolition of classes only through a transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, it can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of the complete emancipation of all oppressed nations, i.e., their freedom to secede.

* Marx's letters to Engels of November 2 (no English translation available) and November 30, 1867 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1955, pp. 234-37).

† For a critique of Renner and Bauer's reactionary idea of "cultural and national autonomy" see Lenin's "Cultural and National Autonomy" (present edition, Vol. 19) and "Critical Remarks on the National Question" (Vol. 20).

4. THE PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION OF THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF NATIONS

The petty bourgeoisie had put forward not only the demand for the self-determination of nations but *all* the points of our democratic minimum programme long *before*, as far back as the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are still putting them *all* forward in a utopian manner because they fail to see the class struggle and its increased intensity under democracy, and because they believe in “peaceful” capitalism. That is the exact nature of the utopia of a peaceful union of equal nations under imperialism which deceives the people and which is defended by Kautsky’s followers. The programme of Social-Democracy, as a counter-balance to this petty-bourgeois, opportunist utopia, must postulate the division of nations into oppressor and oppressed as basic, significant and inevitable under imperialism.

The proletariat of the oppressor nations must not confine themselves to general, stereotyped phrases against annexation and in favour of the equality of nations in general, such as any pacifist bourgeois will repeat. The proletariat cannot remain silent on the question of the *frontiers* of a state founded on national oppression, a question so “unpleasant” for the imperialist bourgeoisie. The proletariat must struggle against the enforced retention of oppressed nations within the bounds of the given state, which means that they must fight for the right to self-determination. The proletariat must demand freedom of political separation for the colonies and nations oppressed by “their own” nation. Otherwise, the internationalism of the proletariat would be nothing but empty words; neither confidence nor class solidarity would be possible between the workers of the oppressed and the oppressor nations; the hypocrisy of the reformists and Kautskyites, who defend self-determination but remain silent about the nations oppressed by “their own” nation and kept in “their own” state by force, would remain unexposed.

On the other hand, the socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including organisational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation. Without this it is impossible to defend the independent policy of the proletariat and their class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in face of all man-

ner of intrigues, treachery and trickery on the part of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations persistently utilise the slogans of national liberation to deceive the workers; in their internal policy they use these slogans for reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the dominant nation (for example, the Poles in Austria and Russia who come to terms with reactionaries for the oppression of the Jews and Ukrainians); in their foreign policy they strive to come to terms with one of the rival imperialist powers for the sake of implementing their predatory plans (the policy of the small Balkan states, etc.).

The fact that the struggle for national liberation against one imperialist power may, under certain conditions, be utilised by another “great” power for its own, equally imperialist, aims, is just as unlikely to make the Social-Democrats refuse to recognise the right of nations to self-determination as the numerous cases of bourgeois utilisation of republican slogans for the purpose of political deception and financial plunder (as in the Romance countries, for example) are unlikely to make the Social-Democrats reject their republicanism.*

5. MARXISM AND PROUDHONISM ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

In contrast to the petty-bourgeois democrats, Marx regarded every democratic demand without exception not as an absolute, but as an historical expression of the struggle of the masses of the people, led by the bourgeoisie, against feudalism. There is not one of these demands which could not serve and has not served, under cer-

* It would, needless to say, be quite ridiculous to reject the right to self-determination on the grounds that it implies “defence of the fatherland”. With equal right, i.e., with equal lack of seriousness, the social-chauvinists of 1914-16 refer to any of the demands of democracy (to its republicanism, for example) and to any formulation of the struggle against national oppression in order to justify “defence of the fatherland”. Marxism deduces the defence of the fatherland in wars, for example, in the great French Revolution or the wars of Garibaldi, in Europe, and the renunciation of defence of the fatherland in the imperialist war of 1914-16, from an analysis of the concrete historical peculiarities of each individual war and never from any “general principle”, or any one point of a programme.

tain circumstances, as an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie for deceiving the workers. To single out, in this respect, one of the demands of political democracy, specifically, the self-determination of nations, and to oppose it to the rest, is fundamentally wrong in theory. In practice, the proletariat can retain its independence only by subordinating its struggle for all democratic demands, not excluding the demand for a republic, to its revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, in contrast to the Proudhonists who “denied” the national problem “in the name of social revolution”, Marx, mindful in the first place of the interests of the proletarian class struggle in the advanced countries, put the fundamental principle of internationalism and socialism in the foreground—namely, that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.* It was from the standpoint of the interests of the German workers’ revolutionary movement that Marx in 1848 demanded that victorious democracy in Germany should proclaim and grant freedom to the nations oppressed by the Germans.† It was from the standpoint of the revolutionary struggle of the English workers that Marx, in 1869, demanded the separation of Ireland from England, and added: “...even if federation should follow upon separation.”‡ Only by putting forward this demand was Marx really educating the English workers in the spirit of internationalism. Only in this way could he counterpose the opportunists and bourgeois reformism—which even to this day, half a century later, has not carried out the Irish “reform”—with a revolutionary solution of the given historical task. Only in this way could Marx maintain—unlike the apologists of capital who shout that the freedom of small nations to secede is utopian and impracti-

*Karl Marx, “Konfidentielle Mitteilung”, quoted from the manuscript kept in the archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the C.C. C.P.S.U.

† Friedrich Engels, “Der Prager Aufstand”, in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* No. 18, June 18, 1848.

‡ Marx’s proposition on the Irish question was stated in his letters to Kugelmann on November 29 and to Engels on December 10, 1869 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 276-78 and pp. 279-81). Lenin quotes from Marx’s letter to Engels on November 2, 1867 (no English translation available).

cable and that not only economic but also political concentration is progressive—that this concentration is progressive when it is *non-imperialist*, and that nations should not be brought together by force, but by a free union of the proletarians of all countries. Only in this way could Marx, in opposition to the merely verbal, and often hypocritical, recognition of the equality and self-determination of nations, advocate the revolutionary action of the masses in the settlement of national questions *as well*. The imperialist war of 1914-16, and the Augean stables of hypocrisy on the part of the opportunists and Kautskyites that it has exposed, have strikingly confirmed the correctness of Marx's policy, which should serve as a model for all advanced countries, for all of them are now oppressing other nations.*

10A Supplementary readings

Lenin, **Critical Remarks on the National Question**, (1913), Collected Works, Volume 20, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 20-23, and 40-44 (On the equal rights of all nationalities and against an official language.)

* Reference is often made—e.g., recently by the German chauvinist Lensch in *Die Glocke** Nos. 8 and 9—to the fact that Marx's objection to the national movement of certain peoples, to that of the Czechs in 1848, for example, refutes the necessity of recognising the self-determination of nations from the Marxist standpoint. But this is incorrect, for in 1848 there were historical and political grounds for drawing a distinction between "reactionary" and revolutionary-democratic nations. Marx was right to condemn the former and defend the latter.**The right to self-determination is one of the demands of democracy which must naturally be subordinated to its general interests. In 1848 and the following years these general interests consisted primarily in combating tsarism.

* *Die Glocke* (The Bell)—a magazine published in Munich and later in Berlin from 1915 to 1925 by the social-chauvinist Parvus (A. L. Helfand), a member of the German Social-Democratic Party.

** Friedrich Engels, "Der demokratische Panslawismus". Lenin used *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, hrsg. von Franz Mehring, Stuttgart, 1902, Bd. III, S. 246-64, in which the author of the article is not named.

Lenin, **The Right of Nations to Self-Determination**, (1914), Collected Works, Volume 20, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 409-413 (Criticism of opportunists who deny the struggle for the right to self-determination under capitalism; explanation of when communists are for separation and when they are against it.)

CCL(ML), **Resolution on the Quebec National Question**, in **October**, no. 2-3, 1978, pp. 64-105 (The League's position on the Quebec national question and criticism of the PQ's narrow nationalism.)

10A Questions

- 1) Why are communists against national oppression? Why do communists advocate uniting workers of different nationalities organizationally into one single party? What is the meaning of 'a multinational working class'?
- 2) Why do communists fight for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination up to and including separation?
- 3) Under what circumstances do communists support separation? Under what circumstances do they oppose it? What is the situation today with regards to the Quebec nation?
- 4) What is the principle of equal rights for all nationalities? How can nationalities be organized within the same state and have their national rights respected?

B. The nation under capitalism, socialism and communism

• THE MARXIST DEFINITION OF THE NATION

Stalin, **Marxism and the National Question**, (1913), in **Marxism and the National-Colonial Question**, Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 18-23

What is a nation?

A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people.

This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons, and so on. The same must be said of the British, the Germans and others, who were formed into nations from people of diverse races and tribes.

Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the great empires of Cyrus and Alexander could not be called nations, although they came to be constituted historically and were formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but casual and loosely-connected conglomerations of groups, which fell apart or joined together according to the victories or defeats of this or that conqueror.

Thus, a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but *a stable community of people*.

But not every stable community constitutes a nation. Austria and Russia are also stable communities, but nobody calls them nations. What distinguishes a national community from a state community? The fact, among others, that a national community is inconceivable without a common language, while a state need not have a common language. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish in Russia would be impossible if each did not have a common language, whereas the integrity of Russia and Austria is not affected by the fact that there are a number of different languages within their borders. We are referring, of course, to the spoken languages of the people and not to the official governmental languages.

Thus a **common language** is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere speak different languages, or that all who speak one language necessarily constitute one nation. A **common** language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations! There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there cannot be two nations speaking the same language! Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegians and the Danes, the English and the Irish.

But why, for instance, do the English and the Americans not

constitute one nation in spite of their common language?

Firstly, because they do not live together, but inhabit different territories. A nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of people living together generation after generation. But people cannot live together for lengthy periods unless they have a common territory. Englishmen and Americans originally inhabited the same territory, England, and constituted one nation. Later, one section of the English emigrated from England to a new territory, America, and there, in the new territory, in the course of time, came to form the new American nation. Difference of territory led to the formation of different nations.

Thus, **a common territory** is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But this is not all. Common territory does not by itself create a nation. This requires, in addition, an internal economic bond to weld the various parts of the nation into a single whole. There is no such bond between England and America, and so they constitute two different nations. But the Americans themselves would not deserve to be called a nation were not the different parts of America bound together into an economic whole, as a result of division of labour between them, the development of means of communication, and so forth.

Take the Georgians, for instance. The Georgians before the Reform inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other, each inciting the Persians and Turks against the other. The ephemeral and casual union of the principalities which some successful king sometimes managed to bring about embraced at best a superficial administrative sphere, and rapidly disintegrated owing to the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia... Georgia came on the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, introduced division of labour between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic isolation of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole.

The same must be said of the other nations which have passed through the stage of feudalism and have developed capitalism.

Thus, **a common economic life, economic cohesion**, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But even this is not all. Apart from the foregoing, one must take into consideration the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a nation. Nations differ not only in their conditions of life, but also in spiritual complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland, which speak one language, nevertheless constitute three- distinct nations, it is in no small measure due to the peculiar psychological make-up which they developed from generation to generation as a result of dissimilar conditions of existence.

Of course, by itself, psychological make-up or, as it is otherwise called, “national character,” is something intangible for the observer, but in so far as its manifests itself in a distinctive culture common to the nation it is something tangible and cannot be ignored.

Needless to say, “national character” is not a thing that is fixed once and for all, but is modified by changes in the conditions of life; but since it exists at every given moment, it leaves its impress on the physiognomy of the nation.

Thus, **a common psychological make-up**, which manifests itself in a common culture, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

We have now exhausted the characteristic features of a nation.

A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasized that none of the above characteristics taken separately is sufficient to define a nation. More than that, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be lacking and the nation ceases to be a nation.

It is possible to conceive of people possessing a common “national character” who, nevertheless, cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically disunited, inhabit different

territories, speak different languages, and so forth. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian and Caucasian Highland Jews, who, in our opinion, do not constitute a single nation.

It is possible to conceive of people with a common territory and economic life who nevertheless would not constitute a single nation because they have no common language and no common “national character.” Such, for instance, are the Germans and Letts in the Baltic region.

Finally, the Norwegians and the Danes speak one language, but they do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.

It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation.

• THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF NATIONS UNDER CAPITALISM; THEIR TRANSFORMATION UNDER SOCIALISM

Stalin, **The National Question and Leninism**, (1929), Works, Vol. 11, Red Star Press, London, pp. 350-355

2. THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS

One of the grave mistakes you make is that you lump together all existing nations and fail to see any fundamental difference between them.

There are different kinds of nations. There are nations which developed in the epoch of rising capitalism, when the bourgeoisie, destroying feudalism and feudal disunity, gathered the parts of nations together and cemented them. These are the so-called “modern” nations.

You assert that nations arose and existed before capitalism. But how could nations have arisen and existed before capitalism, in the period of feudalism, when countries were split up into separate, independent principalities, which, far from being bound together by national ties, emphatically denied the necessity for such ties? Your erroneous assertions notwithstanding, there were no nations in the pre-capitalist period, nor could there be, because there were as yet no national markets and no economic or cultural national centres,

and, consequently, there were none of the factors which put an end to the economic disunity of a given people and draw its hitherto disunited parts together into one national whole.

Of course, the elements of nationhood—language, territory, common culture, etc.—did not fall from the skies, but were being formed gradually, even in the pre-capitalist period. But these elements were in a rudimentary state, and at best, were only a potentiality, that is, they constituted the possibility of the formation of a nation in the future, given certain favourable conditions. The potentiality became a reality only in the period of rising capitalism, with its national market and its economic and cultural centres.

In this connection it would be well to recall the remarkable words of Lenin on the subject of the rise of nations, contained in his pamphlet **What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats**. Controverting the Narodnik Mikhailovsky, who derived the rise of national ties and national unity from the development of gentile ties, Lenin says:

And so, national ties are a continuation and generalisation of gentile ties! Mikhailovsky, evidently, borrows his ideas of the history of society from the fairy-tale that is taught to school-boys. The history of society—this copybook doctrine runs—is that first there was the family, that nucleus of all society... then the family grew into the tribe, and the tribe grew into the state. If Mr. Mikhailovsky solemnly repeats this childish nonsense, it only goes to show—apart from everything else—that he has not the slightest notion of the course even of Russian history. While one might speak of gentile life in ancient Rus, there can be no doubt that by the Middle Ages, the era of the Muscovite tsars, these gentile ties no longer existed, that is to say, the state was based not at all on gentile unions but on territorial unions: the landlords and the monasteries took their peasants from various localities, and the village communities thus formed were purely territorial unions. But one could hardly speak of national ties in the true sense of the word at that time: the state was divided into separate lands, sometimes even principalities, which preserved strong traces of former autonomy, peculiarities of administration, at times their own troops (the local boyars went to war at the head of their own companies), their own customs borders, and so forth. Only the modern period of Russian history (beginning approximately with the seventeenth century) is characterised by an actual merging of all such regions, lands and principalities into a

single whole. This merging, most esteemed Mr. Mikhailovsky, was not brought about by gentile ties, nor even by their continuation and generalisation: it was brought about by the growth of exchange between regions, the gradual growth of commodity circulation and the concentration of the small local markets into a single, all-Russian market. Since the leaders and masters of this process were the merchant capitalist, the creation of these national ties was nothing but the creation of bourgeois ties” (see Vol. 1. pp. 72-73).*

That is how matters stand with regard to the rise of the so-called “modern” nations.

The bourgeoisie and its nationalist parties were throughout this period the chief leading force of such nations. Class peace within the nation for the sake of “national unity”: expansion of the territory of one’s own nation by seizure of the national territories of others; distrust and hatred of other nations; suppression of national minorities; a united front with imperialism—such is the ideological, social and political stock-in-trade of these nations.

Such nations must be qualified as bourgeois nations. Examples are the French, British, Italian, North-American and other similar nations. The Russian, Ukrainian, Tatar, Armenian, Georgian and other nations in Russia were likewise bourgeois nations before the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet system in our country.

Naturally, the fate of such nations is linked with the fate of capitalism; with the fall of capitalism, such nations must depart from the scene.

It is precisely such bourgeois nations that Stalin’s pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question* has in mind when it says that “a nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism,” that “the fate of a national movement, which is essentially a bourgeois movement, is naturally bound up with the fate of the bourgeoisie,” that “the final disappearance of a national movement is possible only with the downfall of the bourgeoisie,” and that “only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established.”†

* See V.I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 1. pp. 137-138.

† See J. V. Stalin. *Works*, Vol. 2. pp. 313, 322.

*

That is how matters stand with regard to the bourgeois nations.

But there are other nations. These are the new, Soviet nations, which developed and took shape on the basis of the old, bourgeois nations after the overthrow of capitalism in Russia, after the elimination of the bourgeoisie and its nationalist parties, after the establishment of the Soviet system.

The working class and its internationalist party are the force that cements these new nations and leads them. An alliance between the working class and the working peasantry within the nation for the elimination of the survivals of capitalism in order that socialism may be built triumphantly; abolition of the survivals of national oppression in order that the nations and national minorities may be equal and may develop freely; elimination of the survivals of nationalism in order that friendship may be knit between the peoples and internationalism firmly established; a united front with all oppressed and unequal nations in the struggle against the policy of annexation and wars of annexation, in the struggle against imperialism—such is the spiritual, and social and political complexion of these nations.

Such nations must be qualified as socialist nations.

These new nations arose and developed on the basis of old, bourgeois nations, as a result of the elimination of capitalism—by their radical transformation on socialist lines. Nobody can deny that the present socialist nations of the Soviet Union—the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Tatar, Bashkir, Uzbek, Kazakh, Azerbaijanian, Georgian, Armenian and other nations—differ radically from the corresponding old, bourgeois nations of the old Russia both in class composition and spiritual complexion and in social and political interests and aspirations.

Such are the two types of nations known to history.

• THE FIGHT AGAINST GREAT NATION CHAUVINISM AND NARROW NATIONALISM

**(Ed. note): The distinction that Stalin made between bourgeois nations and socialist nations corresponds to the concepts of the nation under capitalism and the nation under socialism, and can be more easily understood in this way.*

Stalin, **Theses on National Factors in Party and State Affairs**, (1923), in **Marxism and the National-Colonial Question**, Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 207-210

7. But finding the key to the correct solution of the national question does not yet mean solving it fully and finally, does not yet mean giving the solution concrete and practical shape. In order to put into effect correctly the national programme advanced by the October Revolution, it is also necessary to surmount the obstacles which we have inherited from the past period of national oppression, and which cannot be surmounted at one stroke, in a short space of time.

This heritage consists, firstly, in the survivals of dominant-nation chauvinism, which is a reflection of the former privileged position of the Great Russians. These survivals still persist in the minds of our Soviet officials, both central and local; they are entrenched in our state institutions, central and local; they are being reinforced by the “new,” *Smyena Vekh*,* Great-Russian chauvinist spirit, which is becoming stronger and stronger owing to the N.E.P. In practice they find expression in an arrogantly disdainful and heartlessly bureaucratic attitude on the part of Russian Soviet officials towards the needs and requirements of the national republics. The multi-national Soviet state can become really durable, and the co-operation of the peoples within it really fraternal, only if these survivals are vigorously and irrevocably eradicated from the practice of our state institutions. Hence, the first immediate task of our Party is vigorously to combat the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism. (...)

This heritage consists, lastly, in the survivals of nationalism

* *Smyena Vekh* (*Change of Landmarks*)—a bourgeois political trend that arose in 1921 among the Russian whiteguard émigrés abroad. It was headed by a group consisting of N. Ustryalov, Y. Kluchnikov, and others, who published the magazine *Smyena Vekh* (at first a symposium was published with this title). The *Smyena-Vekhist* ideology expressed the views of that section of the bourgeoisie which had abandoned the open armed struggle against the Soviet Government. They considered that with the adoption of the New Economic Policy the Soviet system would gradually change into bourgeois democracy.

among a number of nations which have borne the heavy yoke of national oppression and have not yet managed to rid their minds of old national grievances. These survivals find practical expression in a certain national aloofness and the absence of full confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in measures proceeding from the Russians. However, in some of the republics which consist of several nationalities, this defensive nationalism often becomes converted into aggressive nationalism, into blatant chauvinism on the part of a strong nationality directed against the weak nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) directed against the Armenians, Ossetians, Ajarians and Abkhazians; Azerbaijanian chauvinism (in Azerbaijan directed against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bukhara and Khorezm) directed against the Turkmenians and Kirghiz—all these forms of chauvinism, which, moreover, are fostered by the conditions of the N.E.P. and by competition, are a grave evil which threatens to convert some of the national republics into arenas of squabbling and bickering. Needless to say, all these phenomena hinder the actual union of the peoples into a single union state. In so far as the survivals of nationalism are a distinctive form of defence against Great-Russian chauvinism, the surest means of overcoming them lies in a vigorous struggle against Great-Russian chauvinism. In so far, however, as these survivals become converted into local chauvinism directed against the weak national groups in individual republics, it is the duty of Party members to wage a direct struggle against these survivals. Thus, the third immediate task of our Party is to combat nationalist survivals and primarily, the chauvinist forms of these survivals.

Mao, **On the Ten Major Relationships**, (1956), Selected Works. Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 295-296

Comparatively speaking, our policy on the relationship between the Han nationality and the minority nationalities is sound and has won the favour of the minority nationalities. We put the emphasis on opposing Han chauvinism. Local-nationality chauvinism must be opposed too, but generally that is not where our emphasis lies.

The population of the minority nationalities in our country is small, but the area they inhabit is large. The Han people comprise 94 per cent of the total population, an overwhelming majority. If

they practised Han chauvinism and discriminated against the minority peoples, that would be very bad. And who has more land? The minority nationalities, who occupy 50 to 60 per cent of the territory. We say China is a country vast in territory, rich in resources and large in population; as a matter of fact, it is the Han nationality whose population is large and the minority nationalities whose territory is vast and whose resources are rich, or at least in all probability their resources under the soil are rich.

The minority nationalities have all contributed to the making of China's history. The huge Han population is the result of the intermingling of many nationalities over a long time. All through the ages, the reactionary rulers, chiefly from the Han nationality, sowed feelings of estrangement among our various nationalities and bullied the minority peoples. Even among the working people it is not easy to eliminate the resultant influences in a short time. So we have to make extensive and sustained efforts to educate both the cadres and the masses in our proletarian nationality policy and make a point of frequently reviewing the relationship between the Han nationality and the minority nationalities. One such review was made two years ago and there should be another now. If the relationship is found to be abnormal, then we must deal with it in earnest and not just in words.

We need to make a thorough study of what systems of economic management and finance will suit the minority nationality areas.

We must sincerely and actively help the minority nationalities to develop their economy and culture. In the Soviet Union the relationship between the Russian nationality and the minority nationalities is very abnormal; we should draw lessons from this. The air in the atmosphere, the forests on the earth and the riches under the soil are all important factors needed for the building of socialism, but no material factor can be exploited and utilized without the human factor. We must foster good relations between the Han nationality and the minority nationalities and strengthen the unity of all the nationalities in the common endeavour to build our great socialist motherland.

• THE AMALGAMATION OF NATIONS AFTER THE WORLD-WIDE TRIUMPH OF COMMUNISM

Stalin, **The National Question and Leninism**, (1929), Works, Vol. 11, Red Star Press, London, pp. 362-364

It would be incorrect to think that after the defeat of world imperialism national differences will be abolished and national languages will die away immediately, at one stroke, by decree from above, so to speak. Nothing is more erroneous than this view. To attempt to bring about the merging of nations by decree from above, by compulsion, would be playing into the hands of the imperialists, it would spell disaster to the cause of the liberation of nations and be fatal to the cause of organising co-operation and fraternity among nations. Such a policy would be tantamount to a policy of assimilation.

You know, of course, that the policy of assimilation is absolutely excluded from the arsenal of Marxism-Leninism, as being an anti-popular and counter-revolutionary policy, a fatal policy.

Furthermore, we know that nations and national languages possess an extraordinary stability and tremendous power of resistance to the policy of assimilation. The Turkish assimilators—the most brutal of all assimilators—mangled and mutilated the Balkan nations for hundreds of years, yet not only did they fail to destroy them, but in the end were forced to capitulate. The tsarist-Russian Russifiers and the German-Prussian Germanisers, who yielded little in brutality to the Turkish assimilators, rent and mangled the Polish nation for over a hundred years, just as the Persian and Turkish assimilators for hundreds of years rent and mangled and massacred the Armenian and Georgian nations, yet, far from destroying these nations, in the end they were also forced to capitulate.

All these circumstances must be taken into account in order to correctly forecast the probable course of events as regards the development of nations directly after the defeat of world imperialism.

It would be a mistake to think that the first stage of the period of the world dictatorship of the proletariat will mark the beginning of the dying away of nations and national languages, the beginning of the formation of one common language. On the contrary, the first stage, during which national oppression will be completely abolished, will be a stage marked by the growth and flourishing of the formerly oppressed nations and national languages, the consolidation of equality among nations, the elimination of mutual national

distrust, and the establishment and strengthening of international ties among nations.

Only in the second stage of the period of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, to the extent that a single world socialist economy is built up in place of the world capitalist economy—only in that stage will something in the nature of a common language begin to take shape; for only in that stage will the nations feel the need to have, in addition to their own national languages, a common international language—for convenience of intercourse and of economic, cultural and political co-operation. Consequently, in this stage, national languages and a common international language will exist side by side. It is possible that, at first, not one world economic centre will be formed, common to all nations and with one common language, but several zonal economic centres for separate groups of nations, with a separate common language for each group of nations, and that only later will these centres combine into one common world socialist economic centre, with one language common to all the nations.

In the next stage of the period of world dictatorship of the proletariat—when the world socialist system of economy becomes sufficiently consolidated and socialism becomes part and parcel of the life of the peoples, and when practice convinces the nations of the advantages of a common language over national languages—national differences and languages will begin to die away and make room for a world language, common to all nations.

Such in my opinion, is the approximate picture of the future of nations, a picture of the development of the nations along the path to their merging in the future.

10B Supplementary Readings

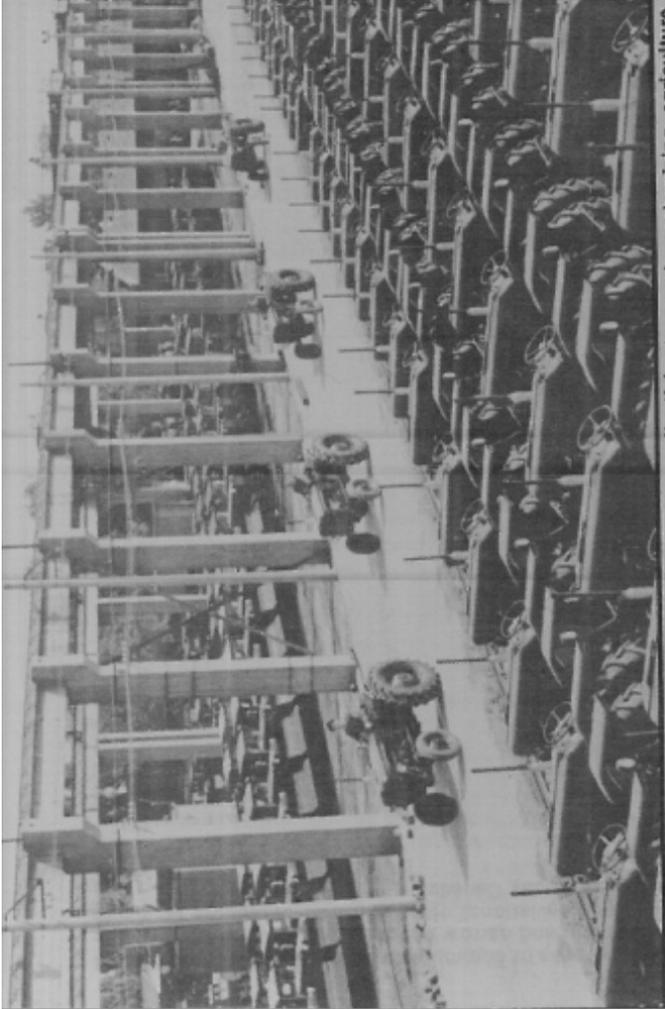
Stalin, **Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs**, (1923), in **Marxism and the National-Colonial Question**, Proletarian Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 216-250 (Concerning the national question and socialist construction.)

Stalin, **Deviations on the National Question**, (1929), and **Deviations towards Nationalism**, (1934), in **Marxism and the National-Colonial Question**, Proletarian

Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 385-405 (Criticism of great-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism.)

10B Questions

- 1) What is the Marxist definition of a nation? Why does the Quebec nation meet this definition?
- 2) What is the difference between nations under capitalism and nations under socialism? When do nations fuse together? What is the difference between the fusion of nations and the assimilation of one nation by another?
- 3) What are the tasks of communists in the struggle against great nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism? What is the link between these two deviations? How do these bourgeois concepts show up in present-day Canada?



Building socialism means developing heavy industry, collectivizing and mechanizing agriculture and improving the people's standard of living. This is the Tunganghung tractor factory in city of Loyang, Honan province, China.



Communists must link themselves with the masses, learn from them, and serve them. Chairman Mao with students and professors from Shaoshan in 1959.



Workers at the Taching oil-field, vanguard of China's industry, along with the whole Chinese people, are denouncing the crimes of the "gang of four" and continuing to combat revisionism.



“Proletarians of ail countries, oppressed peoples and nations unite” is the rallying cry of proletarian internationalism. Here, Lenin is shown at the first session of the First Congress of the Third International in Moscow in 1919.

11 The Marxist World View

INTRODUCTION

The dialectical and historical materialist world outlook is the very core, the heart of Marxism-Leninism. It is the scientific and revolutionary conception of the development of history, of society, of thought and of nature.

Mao Tsetung explains the fundamental principle of Marxist thought when he says, “man’s social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of this knowledge of the external world.” He explained that social practice is comprised of these three elements: class struggle, the struggle for production, and scientific experiment. This is the materialist aspect of the Marxist philosophy: correct ideas come from facts and from social practice.

But once these correct ideas are formulated, they are confronted with practice, act on the facts and transform the world. This is the dialectical aspect of Marxist thought: correct ideas come back in revolutionary practice to transform the world. This is why Marxist philosophy, which determines the communist way of thinking, is called dialectical materialism.

When this theory is applied to the history of societies, it is called historical materialism. It explains that the very foundation of society is the economy, that is, the system and the techniques by which men and women are organized in production. A political and ideological superstructure arises on this economic base. This superstructure is a very complex and sometimes deformed reflection of the reality of the foundation. “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines consciousness.” (Marx, **Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**)

Historical materialism studies the relations between the foundation and superstructure of each productive system and their overthrow through class struggle. At a certain stage of economic development, each system must, through political revolution, yield its place to another system that is more advanced and alone able to develop the economy and social life. This then is the very basis of the inevitability of socialist revolution, revolution that will condemn the capitalist system of crisis and of exploitation of man by man, and will throw it into the trash can of history.

These two elements, dialectical and historical materialism, are the roots of the tree of Marxism-Leninism. All the principles treated in this study guide are branches that have grown out from it.

A. Dialectical Materialism

• THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE AS THE CRITERION OF TRUTH

Mao, **On Practice**^{*}, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 295-297

Before Marx, materialism examined the problem of knowledge apart from the social nature of man and apart from his historical development, and was therefore incapable of understanding the dependence of knowledge on social practice, that is, the dependence of knowledge on production and the class struggle.

Above all, Marxists regard man's activity in production as the most fundamental practical activity, the determinant of all his other activities. Man's knowledge depends mainly on his activity in mate-

* There used to be a number of comrades in our Party who were dogmatists and who for a long period rejected the experience of the Chinese revolution, denying the truth that "Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action" and overawing people with words and phrases from Marxist works, torn out of context. There were also a number of comrades who were empiricists and who for a long period restricted themselves to their own fragmentary experience and did not understand the importance of theory for revolutionary practice or see the revolution as a whole, but worked blindly though industriously. The erroneous ideas of these two types of comrades, and particularly of the dogmatists, caused enormous losses to the Chinese revolution during 1931-34, and yet the dogmatists, cloaking themselves as Marxists, confused a great many comrades. "On Practice" was written in order to expose the subjectivist errors of dogmatism and empiricism in the Party, and especially the error of dogmatism, from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge. It was entitled "On Practice" because its stress was on exposing the dogmatist kind of subjectivism, which belittles practice. The ideas contained in this essay were presented by Comrade Mao Tsetung in a lecture at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yanan.

rial production, through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena, the properties and the laws of nature, and the relations between himself and nature; and through his activity in production he also gradually comes to understand, in varying degrees, certain relations that exist between man and man. None of this knowledge can be acquired apart from activity in production. In a classless society every person, as a member of society, joins in common effort with the other members, enters into definite relations of production with them and engages in production to meet man's material needs. In all class societies, the members of the different social classes also enter, in different ways, into definite relations of production and engage in production to meet their material needs. This is the primary source from which human knowledge develops.

Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms—class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society. Thus man, in varying degrees, comes to know the different relations between man and man, not only through his material life but also through his political and cultural life (both of which are intimately bound up with material life). Of these other types of social practice, class struggle in particular, in all its various forms, exerts a profound influence on the development of man's knowledge. In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

Marxists hold that in human society activity in production develops step by step from a lower to a higher level and that consequently man's knowledge, whether of nature or of society, also develops step by step from a lower to a higher level, that is, from the shallower to the deeper, from the one-sided to the many-sided. For a very long period in history, men were necessarily confined to a one-sided understanding of the history of society because, for one thing, the bias of the exploiting classes always distorted history and, for another, the small scale of production limited man's outlook. It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism.

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of

the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success; this is what is meant by "failure is the mother of success" and "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit". The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice. Thus Lenin said, "Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality."* The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge.†

• THE ORIGIN OF CORRECT IDEAS IN THE CLASS STRUGGLE, THE STRUGGLE FOR PRODUCTION, AND SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT

* V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Russ, ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 205.

† See Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in two volumes, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, p. 403, and V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp. 136-42.

Mao, **Where do Correct Ideas Come From?**^{*}, (1963),
Selected Readings, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp.
502-504

Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs—the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first, knowledge is perceptual. The leap to conceptual knowledge, i.e., to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness, from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not. Then comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success. Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect but because, in the bal-

^{*} This passage is from the "Draft Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Certain Problems in Our Present Rural Work", which was drawn up under the direction of Comrade Mao Tsetung. The passage was written by Comrade Mao Tsetung himself.

ance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later. Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap in cognition, i.e., of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth. Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the source of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles, they consider the question strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfilment of our great internationalist duty.

• THE GAP BETWEEN IDEAS AND REALITY IS THE IDEOLOGICAL SOURCE OF OPPORTUNISM

Mao, **On Practice**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 306-308

It often happens, however, that thinking lags behind reality; this is because man's cognition is limited by numerous social conditions. We are opposed to die-hards in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and

has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism. These people fail to see that the struggle of opposites has already pushed the objective process forward while their knowledge has stopped at the old stage. This is characteristic of the thinking of all die-hards. Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply trail behind, grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction.

We are also opposed to “Left” phrase-mongering. The thinking of “Leftists” outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future. They alienate themselves from the current practice of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions.

Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the separation of knowledge from practice. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, characterized as it is by scientific social practice, cannot but resolutely oppose these wrong ideologies. Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man’s knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth.* The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man’s practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man’s cogni-

* See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952. pp. 129-36.

tion of truth through practice. Marxism-Leninism has in no way exhausted truth but ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice. Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether “Left” or Right, which depart from concrete history.

In the present epoch of the development of society, the responsibility of correctly knowing and changing the world has been placed by history upon the shoulders of the proletariat and its party. This process, the practice of changing the world, which is determined in accordance with scientific knowledge, has already reached a historic moment in the world and in China, a great moment unprecedented in human history, that is, the moment for completely banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as never previously existed. The struggle of the proletariat and the revolutionary people to change the world comprises the fulfilment of the following tasks: to change the objective world and, at the same time, their own subjective world—to change their cognitive ability and change the relations between the subjective and the objective world. Such a change has already come about in one part of the globe, in the Soviet Union. There the people are pushing forward this process of change. The people of China and the rest of the world either are going through, or will go through, such a process. And the objective world which is to be changed also includes all the opponents of change, who, in order to be changed, must go through a stage of compulsion before they can enter the stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.

• TWO WORLD CONCEPTIONS: DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM AND BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

Mao, **On Contradiction**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 311-315

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).*

Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks.

In China another name for metaphysics is *hsuan-hsueh*. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe

* V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358.

and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist for ever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography and climate. They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its development, and they deny the theory of materialist dialectics which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. Consequently they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not",* and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie.

As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysi-

* A saying of Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty.

cal mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another. As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is

constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated; both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.

The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naive character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was

further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought.

This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

• THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION AND THE THEORY OF THE UNITY AND STRUGGLE OF OPPOSITES

Mao, **On Contradiction**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 315-319

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analysing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not clearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyse the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analysing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.

The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of develop-

ment of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction."* Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, *mutually exclusive*, opposite tendencies in *all* phenomena and processes of nature (*including* mind and society)".† Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion.

Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development... life consists precisely and primarily in this—that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is—at least practically, for us—an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.

...one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same....

But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions.‡

* Frederick Engels, "Dialectics. Quantity and Quality", *Anti-Dühring*, Eng. ed. FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166.

† V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357-58.

‡ Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-67.

Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:

In mathematics: + and -. Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle*

In war, offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems.

Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

Thus it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process? Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?

As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely

* V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.

agreeing with Bukharin. In analysing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labour and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labour and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.

As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of development of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both growth and*

movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the Σ [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Lenin added, “Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general.”*

Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyse the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

• THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANTAGONISTIC AND NON-ANTAGONISTIC CONTRADICTIONS

Mao, **On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People**, (1957), Selected Works, Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 385-386

...We are confronted with two types of social contradictions—those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. The two are totally different in nature.

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

* *Ibid.*, pp. 358-59.

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

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

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

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

11A Supplementary readings

Engels, **Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy**, (1888), Marx and Engels Selected Works, Volume 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 335-376 (On the development of the dialectical materialist basis of Marxist philosophy.)

Lenin, **The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism**, (1913), Collected Works, Volume 19, pp. 23-28 (Brief summary of Marxist principles of socialism, philosophy and political economy.)

11A Questions

1) What is the difference between materialism and idealism? between metaphysics and dialectics? Why is it important to acquire a dialectical materialist world outlook in order to become a commu-

nist?

2) What is the criterion for truth? Where do correct ideas come from? incorrect ideas?

3) What is the difference between an antagonistic contradiction and a non-antagonistic contradiction? How does the handling of the antagonistic contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat differ from that of the non-antagonistic contradiction between men and women within the ranks of the people?

B. Historical materialism

• THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY IS THE APPLICATION OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM TO THE STUDY OF SOCIETY

Engels, **Karl Marx**, (1877), Marx & Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 83-87

Of the many important discoveries through which Marx has inscribed his name in the annals of science, we can here dwell on only two.

The first is the revolution brought about by him in the whole conception of world history. The whole previous view of history was based on the conception that the ultimate causes of all historical changes are to be looked for in the changing ideas of human beings, and that of all historical changes political changes are the most important and dominate the whole of history. But the question was not asked as to whence the ideas come into men's minds and what the driving causes of the political changes are. Only upon the newer school of French, and partly also of English, historians had the conviction forced itself that, since the Middle Ages at least, the driving force in European history was the struggle of the developing bourgeoisie with the feudal aristocracy for social and political domination. Now Marx has proved that the whole of previous history is a history of class struggles, that in all the manifold and complicated political struggles the only thing at issue has been the social and political rule of social classes, the maintenance of domination by older classes and the conquest of domination by newly arising classes. To what, however, do these classes owe their origin and

their continued existence? They owe it to the particular material, physically sensible conditions in which society at a given period produces and exchanges its means of subsistence. The feudal rule of the Middle Ages rested on the self-sufficient economy of small peasant communities, which themselves produced almost all their requirements, in which there was almost no exchange and which received from the arms-bearing nobility protection from without and national or at least political cohesion. When the towns arose and with them separate handicraft industry and trade intercourse, at first internal and later international, the urban bourgeoisie developed, and already during the Middle Ages achieved, in struggle with the nobility, its inclusion in the feudal order as likewise a privileged estate. But with the discovery of the extra-European world, from the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, this bourgeoisie acquired a far more extensive sphere of trade and therewith a new spur for its industry; in the most important branches handicrafts were supplanted by manufacture, now on a factory scale, and this again was supplanted by large-scale industry, become possible owing to the discoveries of the previous century, especially that of the steam engine. Large-scale industry, in its turn, reacted on trade by driving out the old manual labour in backward countries, and creating the present-day new means of communication: steam engines, railways, electric telegraphy, in the more developed ones. Thus the bourgeoisie came more and more to combine social wealth and social power in its hands, while it still for a long period remained excluded from political power, which was in the hands of the nobility and the monarchy supported by the nobility. But at a certain stage—in France since the Great Revolution—it also conquered political power, and now in turn became the ruling class over the proletariat and small peasants. From this point of view all the historical phenomena are explicable in the simplest possible way—with sufficient knowledge of the particular economic condition of society, which it is true is totally lacking in our professional historians, and in the same way the conceptions and ideas of each historical period are most simply to be explained from the economic conditions of life and from the social and political relations of the period, which are in turn determined by these economic conditions. History was for the first time placed on its real basis; the palpable but previously totally overlooked fact that men must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, therefore must work, before they can fight for domination,

pursue politics, religion, philosophy, etc.—this palpable fact at last came into its historical rights.

This new conception of history, however, was of supreme significance for the socialist outlook. It showed that all previous history moved in class antagonisms and class struggles, that there have always existed ruling and ruled, exploiting and exploited classes, and that the great majority of mankind has always been condemned to arduous labour and little enjoyment. Why is this? Simply because in all earlier stages of development of mankind production was so little developed that the historical development could proceed only in this antagonistic form, that historical progress as a whole was assigned to the activity of a small privileged minority, while the great mass remained condemned to producing by their labour their own meagre means of subsistence and also the increasingly rich means of the privileged. But the same investigation of history, which in this way provides a natural and reasonable explanation of the previous class rule, otherwise only explicable from the wickedness of man, also leads to the realisation that, in consequence of the so tremendously increased productive forces of the present time, even the last pretext has vanished for a division of mankind into rulers and ruled, exploiters and exploited, at least in the most advanced countries; that the ruling big bourgeoisie has fulfilled its historic mission, that it is no longer capable of the leadership of society and has even become a hindrance to the development of production, as the trade crises, and especially the last great collapse,* and the depressed condition of industry in all countries have proved; that historical leadership has passed to the proletariat, a class which, owing to its whole position in society, can only free itself by abolishing altogether all class rule, all servitude and all exploitation; and that the social productive forces, which have outgrown the control of the bourgeoisie, are only waiting for the associated proletariat to take possession of them in order to bring about a state of things in which every member of society will be enabled to participate not only in production but also in the distribution and administration of social wealth, and which so increases the social productive forces

* This is a reference to the world economic crisis of 1873. In Germany it began with an “immense crash” in May 1873 which was a prelude to a protracted crisis which lasted till the end of the seventies.

and their yield by planned operation of the whole of production that the satisfaction of all reasonable needs will be assured to everyone in an ever-increasing measure.

• THE NATURE OF PRODUCTIVE FORCES AND THE RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION

Stalin, **Dialectical and Historical Materialism**, (1938), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 856-858

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

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

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

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

But the productive forces are only one aspect of production, only one aspect of the mode of production, an aspect that expresses the relation of men to the objects and forces of nature which they make use of for the production of material values. Another aspect of production, another aspect of the mode of production, is the relation of men to each other in the process of production, men's *relations of production*. Men carry on a struggle against nature and utilize nature for the production of material values not in isolation from each other, not as separate individuals, but in common, in groups, in so-

cieties. Production, therefore, is at all times and under all conditions *social* production. In the production of material values men enter into mutual relations of one kind or another within production, into relations of production of one kind or another. These may be relations of co-operation and mutual help between people who are free from exploitation; they may be relations of domination and subordination; and, lastly, they may be transitional from one form of relations of production to another. But whatever the character of the relations of production may be, always and in every system they constitute just as essential an element of production as the productive forces of society.

“In production,” Marx says, “men not only act on nature but also on one another. They produce only by co-operating in a certain way and mutually exchanging their activities. In order to produce, they *enter* into definite connections and relations with one another and only within *these* social connections and relations does their action on nature, does production, take place.” (Marx and Engels, Vol. V, p. 429.)*

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

• THE RELATION BETWEEN THE ECONOMIC BASE AND THE POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL SUPERSTRUCTURE

Stalin, **Dialectical and Historical Materialism**, (1938), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 859-862

b) *The first feature* of production is that it never stays at one point for a long time and is always in a state of change and development, and that, furthermore, changes in the mode of production inevitably call forth changes in the whole social system, social ideas, political views and political institutions—they call forth a

* “Wage Labour and Capital,” April 1849.

reconstruction of the whole social and political order. At different stages of development people make use of different modes of production, or, to put it more crudely, lead different manners of life. In the primitive commune there is one mode of production, under slavery there is another mode of production, under feudalism a third mode of production, and so on. And, correspondingly, men's social system, the spiritual life of men, their views and political institutions also vary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE REVOLUTIONARY NATURE OF THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

Stalin, **Dialectical and Historical Materialism**, (1938), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 859-862

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

An instance in which the relations of production do not correspond to the character of the productive forces, conflict with them, is the economic crises in capitalist countries, where private capitalist ownership of the means of production is in glaring incongruity with the social character of the process of production, with the character of the productive forces. This results in economic crises, which lead to the destruction of productive forces. Furthermore, this incongruity itself constitutes the economic basis of social revolution, the purpose of which is to destroy the existing relations of production and to create new relations of production corresponding to the character of the productive forces.

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

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

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

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

Here is a rough picture of the development of productive forces from ancient times to our day. The transition from crude stone tools to the bow and arrow, and the accompanying transition from the life of hunters to the domestication of animals and primitive pasturage; the transition from stone tools to metal tools (the iron axe, the wooden plough fitted with an iron coulter, etc.), with a corresponding transition to tillage and agriculture; a further improvement in

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

• THE VARIOUS MODES OF PRODUCTION IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND

Stalin, **Dialectical and Historical Materialism**, (1938), in **Problems of Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 862-866

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

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

The basis of the relations of production under the primitive communal system is that the means of production are socially owned. This in the main corresponds to the character of the productive forces of that period. Stone tools, and, later, the bow and arrow, precluded the possibility of men individually combating the forces of nature and beasts of prey. In order to gather the fruits of the forest, to catch fish, to build some sort of habitation, men were obliged to work in common if they did not want to die of starvation, or fall victim to beasts of prey or to neighbouring societies. Labour in

common led to the common ownership of the means of production, as well as of the fruits of production. Here the conception of private ownership of the means of production did not yet exist, except for the personal ownership of certain implements of production which were at the same time means of defence against beasts of prey. Here there was no exploitation, no classes.

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

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

The basis of the relations of production under the feudal system is that the feudal lord owns the means of production and does not fully own the worker in production—the serf, whom the feudal lord can no longer kill, but whom he can buy and sell. Alongside of feudal ownership there exists individual ownership by the peasant and the handicraftsman of his implements of production and his private enterprise based on his personal labour. Such relations of production in the main correspond to the state of the productive forces of that period. Further improvements in the smelting and working of

iron; the spread of the iron plough and the loom; the further development of agriculture, horticulture, viniculture and dairying; the appearance of manufactories alongside of the handicraft workshops—such are the characteristic features of the state of the productive forces.

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

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

The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production—the wage labourers, whom the capitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labour power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation. Alongside of capitalist property in the means of production, we find, at first on a wide scale, private property of the peasants and handicraftsmen in the means of production, these peasants and handicraftsmen no longer being serfs, and their private property being based on personal labour. In place of the handicraft workshops and manufactories there appear huge mills and factories equipped with machinery. In place of the manorial estates tilled by the primitive implements of production of the peasant, there now appear large capitalist farms run on scientific lines and supplied with agricultural machinery.

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

But having developed productive forces to a tremendous extent,

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

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

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

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

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

• THE REVOLUTIONARY OVERTHROW OF THE OLD RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND THE ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS

Stalin, **Dialectical and Historical Materialism**. (1938), in **Problems in Leninism**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 871-872

This, however, does not mean that changes in the relations of production, and the transition from old relations of production to new relations of production proceed smoothly, without conflicts, without upheavals. On the contrary, such a transition usually takes place by means of the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production and the establishment of new relations of production. Up to a certain period the development of the productive forces and the changes in the realm of the relations of production proceed spontaneously, independently of the will of men. But that is so only up to a certain moment, until the new and developing productive forces have reached a proper state of maturity. After the new productive forces have matured, the existing relations of production and their upholders—the ruling classes—become that “insuperable” obstacle which can only be removed by the conscious action of the new classes, by the forcible acts of these classes, by revolution. Here there stands out in bold relief the *tremendous role* of new social ideas, of new political institutions, of a new political power, whose mission it is to abolish by force the old relations of production. Out of the conflict between the new productive forces and the old relations of production, out of the new economic demands of society, there arise new social ideas; the new ideas organize and mobilize the masses; the masses become welded into a new political army, create a new revolutionary power, and make use of it to abolish by force the old system of relations of production, and to firmly establish the new system. The spontaneous process of development yields place to the conscious actions of men, peaceful development to violent upheaval, evolution to revolution.

• MATERIALIST VIEW OF HISTORY AND SOCIETY

Marx, **Preface to “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”**, (1859), Marx & Engels, Selected Works (in 1 volume), International Publishers, New York, pp. 182-183

My investigation led to the result that legal relations as well as forms of state are to be grasped neither from themselves nor from the so-called general development of the human mind, but rather have their roots in the material conditions of life, the sum total of which Hegel, following the example of the Englishmen and

Frenchmen of the eighteenth century, combines under the name of “civil society,” that, however, the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy. The investigation of the latter, which I began in Paris, I continued in Brussels, whither I had emigrated in consequence of an expulsion order of M. Guizot. The general result at which I arrived and which, once won, served as a guiding thread for my studies, can be briefly formulated as follows: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social productive forces and the relations of production. No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society it-

self. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production can be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from the social conditions of life of the individuals; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation brings, therefore, the pre-history of human society to a close.

Mao, **On Contradiction**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. 1, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 374-375

At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The

creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, “Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.”* When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also—and indeed must—recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

11B Supplementary Readings

Marx, **Preface to “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”**, (1857), Marx and Engels Selected Works, International Publishers, New York, pp. 181-185 (General presentation of the materialist conception of history.)

Engels, Letters: to Bloch, (1890), and **To Borgius**, (1894), Marx and Engels Selected Works, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 518-620 and pp. 534-536 (The role of economic factors in history and a warning against mechanical interpretations.)

11B Questions

- 1) In what way does the materialist conception of history differ from the idealist outlook which attributes historical changes to great men or to new ideas alone?
- 2) What is the difference between productive forces and relations of

*V. I. Lenin, “What Is to Be Done?”, *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

production? What happens when the old relations of production are disrupted by new productive forces?

3) What is the relationship between the economic base (productive forces and relations of production) and the political and ideological superstructure? Which of the two determines the other? How do revolutionary ideas affect the economic base?

12 The Marxist Workstyle

INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to simply acknowledge the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and of the political line. They must be applied in class struggle. In order to do this, every communist must adopt the revolutionary Marxist workstyle. “Once our Party’s style of work is put completely right, the people all over the country will learn from our example.” (Mao Tsetung, **Rectify the Party’s Style of Work**)

Following the guidance of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and starting from the concrete experience of the Communist Party of China, Mao Tsetung formulated the three main elements of the Marxist workstyle: 1) link theory to practice, 2) forge links with the masses, and 3) practice criticism and self-criticism.

He formulated a series of propositions on how to concretize these principles, like, “shooting the arrow at the target”, “seek truth from the facts”, “from the masses, to the masses”, “learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones”, and “cure the sickness to save the patient”. These propositions and principles are explained in the texts in this section.

The Marxist workstyle will assure that communism becomes a living force among the masses and not just words written in books. Adopt the Marxist workstyle and transform yourself into a teacher and leader of the masses, or refuse to adopt this workstyle, cut yourself off from the masses and degenerate into a renegade: this is the crux of the question.

This is why Mao Tsetung formulated the following as the criteria which identify an authentic communist party: “A well-disciplined Party armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, using the method of self-criticism and linked with the masses of the people.”

This is the workstyle that we require of all communists: the party we want to forge is based on this workstyle.

• THE IMPORTANCE OF A CORRECT WORKSTYLE

Mao, **Rectify the Party’s Style of Work**, (1942), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 37-39

To accomplish the task of overthrowing the enemy, we must accomplish the task of rectifying these styles within the Party. The style of study and the style of writing are also the Party's style of work. Once our Party's style of work is put completely right, the people all over the country will learn from our example. Those outside the Party who have the same kind of bad style will, if they are good and honest people, learn from our example and correct their mistakes, and thus the whole nation will be influenced. So long as our Communist ranks are in good order and march in step, so long as our troops are picked troops and our weapons are good weapons, any enemy, however powerful, can be overthrown.

Let me speak now about subjectivism.

Subjectivism is an improper style of study; it is opposed to Marxism-Leninism and is incompatible with the Communist Party. What we want is the Marxist-Leninist style of study. What we call style of study means not just style of study in the schools but in the whole Party. It is a question of the method of thinking of comrades in our leading bodies, of all cadres and Party members, a question of our attitude towards Marxism-Leninism, of the attitude of all Party comrades in their work. As such, it is a question of extraordinary, indeed of primary, importance.

Certain muddled ideas find currency among many people. There are, for instance, muddled ideas about what is a theorist, what is an intellectual and what is meant by linking theory and practice.

Let us first ask, is the theoretical level of our Party high or low? Recently more Marxist-Leninist works have been translated and more people have been reading them. That is a very good thing. But can we therefore say that the theoretical level of our Party has been greatly raised? True, the level is now somewhat higher than before. But our theoretical front is very much out of harmony with the rich content of the Chinese revolutionary movement, and a comparison of the two shows that the theoretical side is lagging far behind. Generally speaking, our theory cannot as yet keep pace with our revolutionary practice, let alone lead the way as it should. We have not yet raised our rich and varied practice to the proper theoretical plane. We have not yet examined all the problems of revolutionary practice—or even the important ones—and raised them to a theoretical plane. Just think, how many of us have created theories worthy of the name on China's economics, politics, military affairs or culture, theories which can be regarded as scientific and compre-

hensive, and not crude and sketchy? Especially in the field of economic theory: Chinese capitalism has had a century of development since the Opium War, and yet not a single theoretical work has been produced which accords with the realities of China's economic development and is genuinely scientific. Can we say that in the study of China's economic problems, for instance, the theoretical level is already high? Can we say that our Party already has economic theorists worthy of the name? Certainly not. We have read a great many Marxist-Leninist books, but can we claim, then, that we have theorists? We cannot. For Marxism-Leninism is the theory created by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the basis of practice, their general conclusion drawn from historical and revolutionary reality. If we merely read their works but do not proceed to study the realities of China's history and revolution in the light of their theory or do not make any effort to think through China's revolutionary practice carefully in terms of theory, we should not be so presumptuous as to call ourselves Marxist theorists. Our achievements on the theoretical front will be very poor indeed if, as members of the Communist Party of China, we close our eyes to China's problems and can only memorize isolated conclusions or principles from Marxist writings. If all a person can do is to commit Marxist economics or philosophy to memory, reciting glibly from Chapter I to Chapter X, but is utterly unable to apply them, can he be considered a Marxist theorist? No! He cannot. What kind of theorists do we want? We want theorists who can, in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, correctly interpret the practical problems arising in the course of history and revolution and give scientific explanations and theoretical elucidations of China's economic, political, military, cultural and other problems. Such are the theorists we want. To be a theorist of this kind, a person must have a true grasp of the essence of Marxism-Leninism, of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method and of the theories of Lenin and Stalin on the colonial revolution and the Chinese revolution, and he must be able to apply them in a penetrating and scientific analysis of China's practical problems and discover the laws of development of these problems. Such are the theorists we really need.

The Central Committee of our Party has now made a decision calling upon our comrades to learn how to apply the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method in the serious study of China's history, and of China's economics, politics, military affairs

and culture, and to analyse every problem concretely on the basis of detailed material and then draw theoretical conclusions. This is the responsibility we must shoulder.

Our comrades in the Party School should not regard Marxist theory as lifeless dogma. It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying it. If you can apply the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint in elucidating one or two practical problems, you should be commended and credited with some achievement. The more problems you elucidate and the more comprehensively and profoundly you do so, the greater will be your achievement. Our Party School should also lay down the rule to grade students good or poor according to how they look at China's problems after they have studied Marxism-Leninism, according to whether or not they see the problems clearly and whether or not they see them at all.

• THE TRANSFORMATION OF INTELLECTUALS IN CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WORKERS THROUGH THE STUDY OF THEORY

Mao, **Rectify the Party's Style of Work**, (1942), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 39-42.

Next let us talk about the question of the "intellectuals". Since China is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country and her culture is not well developed, intellectuals are particularly treasured. On this question of the intellectuals, the Central Committee of the Party made the decision* over two years ago that we should win over the great numbers of intellectuals and, insofar as they are revolutionary and willing to take part in the resistance to Japan, welcome them one and all. It is entirely right for us to esteem intellectuals, for without revolutionary intellectuals the revolution cannot triumph. But we all know there are many intellectuals who fancy themselves very learned and assume airs of erudition without realizing that such

* This was the decision on recruiting intellectuals adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1939, which is printed under the title "Recruit Large Numbers of Intellectuals" in the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Vol. II.

airs are bad and harmful and hinder their own progress. They ought to be aware of the truth that actually many so-called intellectuals are, relatively speaking, most ignorant and the workers and peasants sometimes know more than they do. Here some will say, "Ha! You are turning things upside down and talking nonsense." (Laughter) But, comrades, don't get excited; there is some sense in what I am saying.

What is knowledge? Ever since class society came into being the world has had only two kinds of knowledge, knowledge of the struggle for production and knowledge of the class struggle. Natural science and social science are the crystallizations of these two kinds of knowledge, and philosophy is the generalization and summation of the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of society. Is there any other kind of knowledge? No. Now let us take a look at certain students, those brought up in schools that are completely cut off from the practical activities of society. What about them? A person goes from a primary school of this kind all the way through to a university of the same kind, graduates and is reckoned to have a stock of learning. But all he has is book-learning; he has not yet taken part in any practical activities or applied what he has learned to any field of life. Can such a person be regarded as a completely developed intellectual? Hardly so, in my opinion, because his knowledge is still incomplete. What then is relatively complete knowledge? All relatively complete knowledge is formed in two stages: the first stage is perceptual knowledge, the second is rational knowledge, the latter being the development of the former to a higher stage. What sort of knowledge is the students' book-learning? Even supposing all their knowledge is truth, it is still not knowledge acquired through their own personal experience, but consists of theories set down by their predecessors in summarizing experience of the struggle for production and of the class struggle. It is entirely necessary that students should acquire this kind of knowledge, but it must be understood that as far as they are concerned such knowledge is in a sense still one-sided, something which has been verified by others but not yet by themselves. What is most important is to be good at applying this knowledge in life and in practice. Therefore, I advise those who have only book-learning but as yet no contact with reality, and also those with little practical experience, to realize their own shortcomings and become a little more modest.

How can those who have only book-learning be turned into intellectuals in the true sense? The only way is to get them to take part in practical work and become practical workers, to get those engaged in theoretical work to study important practical problems. In this way our aim can be attained.

What I have said will probably make some people angry. They will say, "According to your explanation, even Marx would not be regarded as an intellectual." I say they are wrong. Marx took part in the practice of the revolutionary movement and also created revolutionary theory. Beginning with the commodity, the simplest element of capitalism, he made a thorough study of the economic structure of capitalist society. Millions of people saw and handled commodities every day but were so used to them that they took no notice. Marx alone studied commodities scientifically. He carried out a tremendous work of research into their actual development and derived a thoroughly scientific theory from what existed universally. He studied nature, history and proletarian revolution and created dialectical materialism, historical materialism and the theory of proletarian revolution. Thus Marx became a most completely developed intellectual, representing the acme of human wisdom; he was fundamentally different from those who have only book-learning. Marx undertook detailed investigations and studies in the course of practical struggles, formed generalizations and then verified his conclusions by testing them in practical struggles—this is what we call theoretical work. Our Party needs a large number of comrades who will learn how to do such work. In our Party there are many comrades who can learn to do this kind of theoretical research; most of them are intelligent and promising and we should value them. But they must follow correct principles and not repeat the mistake of the past. They must discard dogmatism and not confine themselves to ready-made phrases in books.

There is only one kind of true theory in this world, theory that is drawn from objective reality and then verified by objective reality; nothing else is worthy of the name of theory in our sense. Stalin said that theory becomes aimless when it is not connected with practice* Aimless theory is useless and false and should be discarded. We should point the finger of scorn at those who are fond of

* See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

aimless theorizing. Marxism-Leninism is the most correct, scientific and revolutionary truth, born out of and verified by objective reality, but many who study Marxism-Leninism take it as lifeless dogma, thus impeding the development of theory and harming themselves as well as other comrades.

On the other hand, our comrades who are engaged in practical work will also come to grief if they misuse their experience. True, these people are often rich in experience, which is very valuable, but it is very dangerous if they rest content with their own experience. They must realize that their knowledge is mostly perceptual and partial and that they lack rational and comprehensive knowledge; in other words, they lack theory and their knowledge, too, is relatively incomplete. Without comparatively complete knowledge it is impossible to do revolutionary work well.

Thus, there are two kinds of incomplete knowledge, one is ready-made knowledge found in books and the other is knowledge that is mostly perceptual and partial; both are one-sided. Only an integration of the two can yield knowledge that is sound and relatively complete.

In order to study theory, however, our cadres of working-class and peasant origin must first acquire an elementary education. Without it they cannot learn Marxist-Leninist theory. Having acquired it, they can study Marxism-Leninism at any time. In my childhood I never attended a Marxist-Leninist school and was taught only such things as, “The Master said: ‘How pleasant it is to learn and constantly review what one has learned.’”^{*} Though this teaching material was antiquated, it did me some good because from it I learned to read. Nowadays we no longer study the Confucian classics but such new subjects as modern Chinese, history, geography and elementary natural science, which, once learned, are useful everywhere. The Central Committee of our Party now emphatically requires that our cadres of working-class and peasant origin should obtain an elementary education because they can then take up any branch of study—politics, military science or economics. Otherwise, for all their rich experience they will never be able to study theory.

It follows that to combat subjectivism we must enable people of

^{*} This is the opening sentence of the *Confucian Analects*, a record of the dialogues of Confucius and his disciples.

each of these two types to develop in whichever direction they are deficient and to merge with the other type. Those with book-learning must develop in the direction of practice; it is only in this way that they will stop being content with books and avoid committing dogmatist errors. Those experienced in work must take up the study of theory and must read seriously; only then will they be able to systematize and synthesize their experience and raise it to the level of theory, only then will they not mistake their partial experience for universal truth and not commit empiricist errors. Dogmatism and empiricism alike are subjectivism, each originating from an opposite pole.

Hence there are two kinds of subjectivism in our Party, dogmatism and empiricism. Each sees only a part and not the whole. If people are not on guard, do not realize that such one-sidedness is a shortcoming and do not strive to overcome it, they are liable to go astray.

However, of the two kinds of subjectivism, dogmatism is still the greater danger in our Party. For dogmatists can easily assume a Marxist guise to bluff, capture and make servitors of cadres of working-class and peasant origin who cannot easily see through them; they can also bluff and ensnare the naive youth. If we overcome dogmatism, cadres with book-learning will readily join with those who have experience and will take to the study of practical things, and then many good cadres who integrate theory with experience, as well as some real theorists, will emerge. If we overcome dogmatism, the comrades with practical experience will have good teachers to help them raise their experience to the level of theory and so avoid empiricist errors.

•THE LINK BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE AND THE DISCOVERY OF TRUTH THROUGH FACTS

Mao, **Rectify the Party's Style of Work**, (1942), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 42-43

Besides muddled ideas about the “theorist” and the “intellectual”, there is a muddled idea among many comrades about “linking theory and practice”, a phrase they have on their lips every day. They talk constantly about “linking”, but actually they mean “sepa-

rating”, because they make no effort at linking. How is Marxist-Leninist theory to be linked with the practice of the Chinese revolution? To use a common expression, it is by “shooting the arrow at the target”. As the arrow is to the target, so is Marxism-Leninism to the Chinese revolution. Some comrades, however, are “shooting without a target”, shooting at random, and such people are liable to harm the revolution. Others merely stroke the arrow fondly, exclaiming, “What a fine arrow! What a fine arrow!”, but never want to shoot it. These people are only connoisseurs of curios and have virtually nothing to do with the revolution. The arrow of Marxism-Leninism must be used to shoot at the target of the Chinese revolution. Unless this point is made clear, the theoretical level of our Party can never be raised and the Chinese revolution can never be victorious.

Our comrades must understand that we study Marxism-Leninism not for display, nor because there is any mystery about it, but solely because it is the science which leads the revolutionary cause of the proletariat to victory. Even now, there are not a few people who still regard odd quotations from Marxist-Leninist works as a ready-made panacea which, once acquired, can easily cure all maladies. These people show childish ignorance, and we should enlighten them. It is precisely such ignorant people who take Marxism-Leninism as a religious dogma. To them we should say bluntly, “Your dogma is worthless.” Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly stated that our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action. But such people prefer to forget this statement which is of the greatest, indeed the utmost, importance. Chinese Communists can be regarded as linking theory with practice only when they become good at applying the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method and the teachings of Lenin and Stalin concerning the Chinese revolution and when, furthermore, through serious research into the realities of China’s history and revolution, they do creative theoretical work to meet China’s needs in different spheres. Merely talking about linking theory and practice without actually doing anything about it is of no use, even if one goes on talking for a hundred years. To oppose the subjectivist, one-sided approach to problems, we must demolish dogmatist subjectiveness and one-sidedness.

So much for today about combating subjectivism in order to rectify the style of study throughout the Party.

Mao, **Reform our Study**, (1941), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 22-23.

The “target” is the Chinese revolution, the “arrow” is Marxism-Leninism. We Chinese Communists have been seeking this arrow because we want to hit the target of the Chinese revolution and of the revolution of the East. To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. “Facts” are all the things that exist objectively, “truth” means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and “to seek” means to study. We should proceed from the actual conditions inside and outside the country, the province, county or district, and derive from them, as our guide to action, laws which are inherent in them and not imaginary, that is, we should find the internal relations of the events occurring around us. And in order to do that we must rely not on subjective imagination, not on momentary enthusiasm, not on lifeless books, but on facts that exist objectively; we must appropriate the material in detail and, guided by the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, draw correct conclusions from it.

• LINKS WITH THE MASSES AND THE MASS LINE

Mao, **Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership**, (1943), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 119-120.

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily “from the masses, to the masses”. This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.

The concept of a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organization or in a struggle, the concept that correct ideas on the part of the leadership can only be “from the

masses, to the masses”, and the concept that the general call must be combined with particular guidance when the leadership’s ideas are being put into practice—these concepts must be propagated everywhere during the present rectification movement in order to correct the mistaken viewpoints among our cadres on these questions. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, drawing together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership, and they do not see the importance of, or are not good at, linking this nucleus of leadership closely with the masses, and so their leadership becomes bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership becomes bureaucratic. In the present rectification movement we must correct these defects and learn to use the methods of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular in our study, in the check-up on work and in the examination of cadres’ histories; and we must also apply these methods in all our future work.

Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership—such is the basic method of leadership. In the process of concentrating ideas and persevering in them, it is necessary to use the method of combining the general call with particular guidance, and this is a component part of the basic method. Formulate general ideas (general calls) out of the particular guidance given in a number of cases, and put them to the test in many different units (not only doing so yourself, but by telling others to do the same); then concentrate the new experience (sum it up) and draw up new directives for the guidance of the masses generally. Comrades should do this in the present rectification movement, and also in every other kind of work. Better leadership comes with greater skill in doing this.

• CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM

Mao, **On Coalition Government**, (1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 266-267.

Conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties. As we say, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, our faces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. Our comrades' minds and our Party's work may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing. The proverb "Running water is never stale and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten" means that constant motion prevents the inroads of germs and other organisms. To check up regularly on our work and in the process develop a democratic style of work, to fear neither criticism nor self-criticism, and to apply such good popular Chinese maxims as "Say all you know and say it without reserve", "Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words" and "Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not"—this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dust and germs from contaminating the minds of our comrades and the body of our Party. The reason for the great effectiveness of the rectification movement, the purpose of which was "to learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and to cure the sickness to save the patient", was that the criticism and self-criticism we carried out were honest and conscientious, and not perfunctory and distorted. As we Chinese Communists, who base all our actions on the highest interests of the broadest masses of the Chinese people and who are fully convinced of the justice of our cause, never balk at any personal sacrifice and are ready at all times to give our lives for the cause, can we be reluctant to discard any idea, viewpoint, opinion or method which is not suited to the needs of the people? Can we be willing to allow political dust and germs to dirty our clean faces or eat into our healthy organism? Countless revolutionary martyrs have laid down their lives in the interests of the people, and our hearts are filled with pain as we the living think of them—can there be any personal interest, then, that we would not sacrifice or any error that we would not discard?

Mao, **Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of**

China, (1949), Selected Works, Vol. IV, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, p. 374.

...With victory, the people will be grateful to us and the bourgeoisie will come forward to flatter us. It has been proved that the enemy cannot conquer us by force of arms. However, the flattery of the bourgeoisie may conquer the weak-willed in our ranks. There may be some Communists, who were not conquered by enemies with guns and were worthy of the name of heroes for standing up to these enemies, but who cannot withstand sugar-coated bullets; they will be defeated by sugar-coated bullets. We must guard against such a situation. To win countrywide victory is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand li. Even if this step is worthy of pride, it is comparatively tiny; what will be more worthy of pride is yet to come. After several decades, the victory of the Chinese people's democratic revolution, viewed in retrospect, will seem like only a brief prologue to a long drama. A drama begins with a prologue, but the prologue is not the climax. The Chinese revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous. This must be made clear now in the Party. The comrades must be taught to remain modest, prudent and free from arrogance and rashness in their style of work. The comrades must be taught to preserve the style of plain living and hard struggle. We have the Marxist-Leninist weapon of criticism and self-criticism. We can get rid of a bad style and keep the good. We can learn what we did not know. We are not only good at destroying the old world, we are also good at building the new. Not only can the Chinese people live without begging alms from the imperialists, they will live a better life than that in the imperialist countries.

Mao, On the Ten Major Relationships, (1956), Selected Works, Vol. V, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, p. 302.

With regard to comrades who have erred, some people say we must observe them and see if they are going to correct their mistakes. I would say just observing them will not do, we must help them correct their mistakes. That is to say, first we must observe and second we must give help. Everybody needs help; those who have not done wrong need it and those who have need it still more. Probably no one is free from mistakes, only some make more and some less, and once they do they need help. It is passive just to ob-

serve; conditions must be created to help those who have erred to mend their ways. A clear distinction must be drawn between right and wrong, for inner-Party controversies over principle are a reflection inside the Party of the class struggle in society, and no equivocation is to be tolerated. It is normal, in accordance with the merits of the case, to mete out appropriate and well grounded criticism to comrades who have erred, and even to conduct necessary struggle against them; this is to help them correct mistakes. To deny them help and, what is worse, to gloat over their mistakes, is sectarianism.

For revolution, it is always better to have more people. Except for a few who cling to their mistakes and fail to mend their ways after repeated admonition, the majority of those who have erred can correct their mistakes. People who have had typhoid become immune to it; similarly, people who have made mistakes will make fewer ones provided they are good at drawing lessons. On the other hand, since it is easier for those who have not erred to become cocky, they are prone to make mistakes. Let us be careful, for those who fix people guilty of mistakes will more often than not end up finding themselves in a fix. Kao Kang started out to lift a rock to hurl at others only to find himself being knocked down. Treating with good will those who have erred will win general approval and unite people. A helpful attitude or a hostile attitude towards comrades who have erred—this is a criterion for judging whether one is well-intentioned or ill-intentioned.

The policy of “learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones and curing the sickness to save the patient” is a policy for uniting the whole Party. We must stick to this policy.

Mao, **On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party**, (1929), Selected Works, Vol. I, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 111-112.

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

dermine the Party organization.

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

The main method of correction is to educate Party members so that a political and scientific spirit pervades their thinking and their Party life. To this end we must: (1) teach Party members to apply the Marxist-Leninist method in analysing a political situation and appraising the class forces, instead of making a subjective analysis and appraisal; (2) direct the attention of Party members to social and economic investigation and study, so as to determine the tactics of struggle and methods of work, and help comrades to understand that without investigation of actual conditions they will fall into the pit of fantasy and putschism; and (3) in inner-Party criticism, guard against subjectivism, arbitrariness and the vulgarization of criticism; statements should be based on facts and criticism should centre on politics.

• THE FIGHT AGAINST LIBERALISM

Mao, **Combat Liberalism**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 31 -34.

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon.

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

Liberalism manifests itself in various ways.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We could name more. But these eleven are the principal types.

They are all manifestations of liberalism.

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

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

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

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

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

he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any private person, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist.

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

12 Supplementary readings

Mao, **Quotations**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Sections 11 (On the Mass Line, pp. 118-133), 27 (On Criticism and Self-Criticism, pp. 258-267), 33 (On Study, pp. 304-312).

Questions

- 1) What are the three main components of a revolutionary style of work? If you examine your own work, what errors are you making with respect to each of these components? How can we rectify these errors?
- 2) How does the principle 'seek truth from facts' follow from a work style in which theory and practice are linked?
- 3) Why is it necessary to fight against subjectivism and liberalism, in order to develop a good style of work?

13 The Proletarian Class Stand

INTRODUCTION

Every class develops more than ideas or a world outlook. It also develops attitudes, whether they be positive or negative, towards the facts around it. These attitudes reflect the real situation as well as the future development of each class. Since the working class is the rising class and the future master of society, its attitude must be positive and in conformity with its revolutionary role.

But the bourgeoisie tries to corrupt the working class with incorrect ideas and bad attitudes. The bourgeoisie is a class in decline; its positive work, overthrowing feudalism, belongs to the past. This class will itself be overthrown in the near future. As a result, its attitude is negative and in conformity with its reactionary role.

It tries to transmit to the workers its own contempt for the masses, treating them as uncultured and unable to lead themselves. It spreads pessimism about the revolution, saying that it is impossible, in order to discourage the proletariat and to put off as long as possible its own inevitable downfall. It spreads self-contempt in the working class, stirs up individualism in order to undermine collective workstyle, devotion, discipline and determination, qualities that are essential for communists.

This is why communists must fight simultaneously to develop a Marxist workstyle and world outlook and to adopt the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat and reject the stand of the decadent bourgeoisie.

The extracts in this section explain that communists should show enthusiasm for the revolution, modesty in their work and confidence in the masses. Every communist must demonstrate devotion to the cause of the proletariat, putting political tasks in the forefront; determination to wage the revolution to the end and to surmount all obstacles; discipline in the accomplishment of his tasks. The examples of Norman Bethune, Chang Szu-teh, and the fable about Yukong, as well as the model of Lenin himself, demonstrate these essential attitudes of the proletariat.

• DEVOTION, DEVELOPMENT AND DISCIPLINE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN CAUSE

Mao, **Serve the People**, (1944), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 177-178

Our Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests. Comrade Chang Szu-teh* was in the ranks of these battalions.

All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be weightier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather."† To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather. Comrade Chang Szu-teh died for the people, and his death is indeed weightier than Mount Tai.

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it. The idea of "better troops and simpler administration" was put forward by Mr. Li Ting-ming,‡ who is not a Communist. He made a good suggestion which is of benefit to the people, and we have adopted it. If, in the interests of the people, we persist in doing

* Comrade Chang Szu-teh was a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. A member of Communist Party who loyally served the interests of the people, he joined the revolution in 1933, took part in the Long March and was wounded in service. On September 5, 1944, when making charcoal in the mountains of Ansai County, northern Shensi, he was killed by the sudden collapse of a kiln.

† Szuma Chien, the famous Chinese historian of the 2nd century B C., was the author of the *Historical Records*. The quotation comes from his "Reply to Jen Shao-ching's Letter".

‡ Li Ting-ming, an enlightened landlord of northern Shensi Province, was at one time elected Vice-Chairman of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region Government.

what is right and correct what is wrong, our ranks will surely thrive.

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

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

Mao, **The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains**, (1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 271-272.

We have had a very successful congress. We have done three things. First, we have decided on the line of our Party, which is boldly to mobilize the masses and expand the people's forces so that, under the leadership of our Party, they will defeat the Japanese aggressors, liberate the whole people and build a new-democratic China. Second, we have adopted the new Party Constitution. Third, we have elected the leading body of the Party—the Central Committee. Henceforth our task is to lead the whole membership in car-

* This was the total population of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and all other Liberated Areas in northern, central and southern China.

rying out the Party line. Ours has been a congress of victory, a congress of unity. The delegates have made excellent comments on the three reports. Many comrades have undertaken self-criticism; with unity as the objective unity has been achieved through self-criticism. This congress is a model of unity, of self-criticism and of inner-Party democracy.

When the congress closes, many comrades will be leaving for their posts and the various war fronts. Comrades, wherever you go, you should propagate the line of the congress and, through the members of the Party, explain it to the broad masses.

Our aim in propagating the line of the congress is to build up the confidence of the whole Party and the entire people in the certain triumph of the revolution. We must first raise the political consciousness of the vanguard so that, resolute and unafraid of sacrifice, they will surmount every difficulty to win victory. But this is not enough; we must also arouse the political consciousness of the entire people so that they may willingly and gladly fight together with us for victory. We should fire the whole people with the conviction that China belongs not to the reactionaries but to the Chinese people. There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. He called his sons, and hoe in hand they began to dig up these mountains with great determination. Another grey-beard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too,

will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?

Mao, **In Memory of Norman Bethune**, (1939), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, pp. 337-338.

Comrade Norman Bethune,* a member of the Communist Party of Canada, was around fifty when he was sent by the Communist Parties of Canada and the United States to China; he made light of travelling thousands of miles to help us in our War of Resistance Against Japan. He arrived in Yen-an in the spring of last year, went to work in the Wutai Mountains, and to our great sorrow died a martyr at his post. What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn. Leninism teaches that the world revolution can only succeed if the proletariat of the capitalist countries supports the struggle for liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples and if the proletariat of the colonies and semi-colonies supports that of the proletariat of the capitalist countries.† Comrade Bethune put this Leninist line into practice. We Chinese Communists must also follow this line in our practice. We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and

* The distinguished surgeon Norman Bethune was a member of the Canadian Communist Party. In 1936 when the German and Italian fascist bandits invaded Spain, he went to the front and worked for the anti-fascist Spanish people. In order to help the Chinese people in their War of Resistance Against Japan, he came to China at the head of a medical team and arrived in Yen-an in the spring of 1938. Soon after he went to the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei border area. Imbued with ardent internationalism and the great communist spirit, he served the army and the people of the Liberated Areas for nearly two years. He contracted blood poisoning while operating on wounded soldiers and died in Tanghsien, Hopei, on November 12, 1939.

† See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, pp. 70-79.

all other capitalist countries, for this is the only way to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

Comrade Bethune's spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his great sense of responsibility in his work and his great warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people. Every Communist must learn from him. There are not a few people who are irresponsible in their work, preferring the light and shirking the heavy, passing the burdensome tasks on to others and choosing the easy ones for themselves. At every turn they think of themselves before others. When they make some small contribution, they swell with pride and brag about it for fear that others will not know. They feel no warmth towards comrades and the people but are cold, indifferent and apathetic. In truth such people are not Communists, or at least cannot be counted as devoted Communists. No one who returned from the front failed to express admiration for Bethune whenever his name was mentioned, and none remained unmoved by his spirit. In the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei border area, no soldier or civilian was unmoved who had been treated by Dr. Bethune or had seen how he worked. Every Communist must learn this true communist spirit from Comrade Bethune.

Comrade Bethune was a doctor, the art of healing was his profession and he was constantly perfecting his skill, which stood very high in the Eighth Route Army's medical service. His example is an excellent lesson for those people who wish to change their work the moment they see something different and for those who despise technical work as of no consequence or as promising no future.

Comrade Bethune and I met only once. Afterwards he wrote me many letters. But I was busy, and I wrote him only one letter and do not even know if he ever received it. I am deeply grieved over his death. Now we are all commemorating him, which shows how profoundly his spirit inspires everyone. We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit everyone can be very useful to the people. A man's ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

• MODESTY, ENTHUSIASM AND CONFIDENCE IN THE MASSES

Stalin, **Lenin**, (1924), Works, Vol. 6, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 54-66.

MODESTY

I first met Lenin in December 1905 at the Bolshevik conference in Tammerfors (Finland). I was hoping to see the mountain eagle of our Party, the great man, great not only politically, but, if you will, physically, because in my imagination I had pictured Lenin as a giant, stately and imposing. What, then, was my disappointment to see a most ordinary-looking man, below average height, in no way, literally in no way, distinguishable from ordinary mortals....

It is accepted as the usual thing for a “great man” to come late to meetings so that the assembly may await his appearance with bated breath; and then, just before the “great man” enters the warning whisper goes up: “Hush!... Silence!... He’s coming.” This ritual did not seem to me superfluous, because it creates an impression, inspires respect. What, then, was my disappointment to learn that Lenin had arrived at the conference before the delegates, had settled himself somewhere in a corner, and was unassumingly carrying on a conversation, a most ordinary conversation with the most ordinary delegates at the conference. I will not conceal from you that at that time this seemed to me to be something of a violation of certain essential rules.

Only later did I realize that this simplicity and modesty, this striving to remain unobserved, or, at least, not to make himself conspicuous and not to emphasize his high position, this feature was one of Lenin’s strongest points as the new leader of the new masses, of the simple and ordinary masses of the “rank and file” of humanity.

FORCE OF LOGIC

The two speeches Lenin delivered at this conference were remarkable: one was on the current situation and the other on the agrarian question. Unfortunately, they have not been preserved. They were inspired, and they roused the whole conference to a pitch of stormy enthusiasm. The extraordinary power of conviction, the

simplicity and clarity of argument, the brief and easily understood sentences, the absence of affectation, of dizzying gestures and theatrical phrases aiming at effect—all this made Lenin’s speeches a favourable contrast to the speeches of the usual “parliamentary” orators.

But what captivated me at the time was not this aspect of Lenin’s speeches. I was captivated by that irresistible force of logic in them which, although somewhat terse, gained a firm hold on his audience, gradually electrified it, and then, as one might say, completely overpowered it. I remember that many of the delegates said: “The logic of Lenin’s speeches is like a mighty tentacle which twines all round you and holds you as in a vice and from whose grip you are powerless to tear yourself away: you must either surrender or resign yourself to utter defeat.”

I think that this characteristic of Lenin’s speeches was the strongest feature of his art as an orator.

NO WHINING

The second time I met Lenin was in 1906 at the Stockholm Congress * of our Party. You know that the Bolsheviks were in the minority at this congress and suffered defeat. This was the first time I saw Lenin in the role of the vanquished. But he was not in the least like those leaders who whine and lose heart after a defeat. On the contrary, defeat transformed Lenin into a spring of compressed energy which inspired his supporters for new battles and for future victory. I said that Lenin was defeated. But what sort of defeat was it? You had only to look at his opponents, the victors at the Stockholm Congress—Plekhanov, Axelrod, Martov and the rest. They had little of the appearance of real victors, for Lenin’s merciless criticism of Menshevism had not left one whole bone in their body, so to speak. I remember that we, the Bolshevik delegates, huddled together in a group, gazing at Lenin and asking his advice. The speeches of some of the delegates betrayed a note of weariness and dejection. I recall that to these speeches Lenin bitingly replied through clenched teeth: “Don’t whine, comrades, we are bound to

* The Stockholm Party Congress—the Fourth (“Unity”) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.—took place on April 10-25, 1906 (see *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, *Short Course*. Moscow, 1952, pp. 136-39).

win, for we are right.” Hatred of the whining intellectual, faith in our own strength, confidence in victory—that is what Lenin impressed upon us. It was felt that the Bolsheviks’ defeat was temporary, that they were bound to win in the very near future.

“No whining over defeat”—this was the feature of Lenin’s activities that helped him to rally around himself an army faithful to the end and confident in its strength.

NO BOASTING

At the next congress, held in 1907 in London,* the Bolsheviks proved victorious. This was the first time I saw Lenin in the role of victor. Victory turns the heads of some leaders and makes them haughty and boastful. They begin in most cases to be triumphant, to rest on their laurels. But Lenin did not in the least resemble such leaders. On the contrary, it was precisely after a victory that he became especially vigilant and cautious. I recall that Lenin insistently impressed on the delegates; “The first thing is not to become intoxicated by victory and not to boast; the second thing is to consolidate the victory; the third is to give the enemy the finishing stroke, for he has been beaten, but by no means crushed.” He poured withering scorn on those delegates who frivolously asserted: “It is all over with the Mensheviks now.” He had no difficulty in showing that the Mensheviks still had roots in the working-class movement, that they had to be fought with skill, and that all overestimation of one’s own strength and, especially, all underestimation of the strength of the enemy had to be avoided.

“No boasting in victory”—this was the feature of Lenin’s character that helped him soberly to weigh the strength of the enemy and to insure the Party against possible surprises.

FIDELITY TO PRINCIPLE

Party leaders cannot but prize the opinion of the majority of their party. A majority is a power with which a leader cannot but reckon. Lenin understood this no less than any other party leader.

* The Fifth (London) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. took place from April 30 to May 19, 1907 (see J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 47-80, and *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, *Short Course*, Moscow, 1952, pp. 145-46).

But Lenin never became a captive of the majority, especially when that majority had no basis of principle. There have been times in the history of our Party when the opinion of the majority or the momentary interests of the Party conflicted with the fundamental interests of the proletariat. On such occasions Lenin would never hesitate and resolutely took his stand in support of principle as against the majority of the Party. Moreover, he did not fear on such occasions literally to stand alone against all, considering—as he would often say—that “a policy based on principle is the only correct policy.”

Particularly characteristic in this respect are the two following facts.

First fact. It was in the period 1909-11, when the Party, smashed by the counter-revolution, was in process of complete disintegration. It was a period of disbelief in the Party, of wholesale desertion from the Party, not only by the intellectuals, but partly even by the workers; a period when the necessity for illegal organization was being denied, a period of Liquidationism and collapse. Not only the Mensheviks, but even the Bolsheviki then consisted of a number of factions and trends, for the most part severed from the working-class movement. You know that it was just at that period that the idea arose of completely liquidating the illegal organization and organizing the workers into a legal, liberal Stolypin party. Lenin at that time was the only one not to succumb to the widespread epidemic and to hold high the banner of Party principle, assembling the scattered and shattered forces of the Party with astonishing patience and extraordinary persistence, combating each and every anti-Party trend within the working-class movement and defending the Party principle with unusual courage and unparalleled perseverance.

We know that in this fight for the Party principle, Lenin later proved the victor.

Second fact. It was in the period 1914-17, when the imperialist war was in full swing, and when all, or nearly all, the Social-Democratic and Socialist parties had succumbed to the general patriotic frenzy and had placed themselves at the service of the imperialism of their respective countries. It was a period when the Second International had hauled down its colours to capitalism, when even people like Plekhanov, Kautsky, Guesde and the rest were unable to withstand the tide of chauvinism. Lenin at that time was the only one, or almost the only one, to wage a determined struggle

against social-chauvinism and social-pacifism, to denounce the treachery of the Guesdes and Kautskys, and to stigmatize the half-heartedness of the betwixt and between “revolutionaries.” Lenin knew that he was backed by only an insignificant minority, but to him this was not of decisive moment, for he knew that the only correct policy with a future before it was the policy of consistent internationalism, that a policy based on principle is the only correct policy.

We know that in this fight for a new International, too, Lenin proved the victor.

“A policy based on principle is the only correct policy”—this was the formula by means of which Lenin took new “impregnable” positions by assault and won over the best elements of the proletariat to revolutionary Marxism.

FAITH IN THE MASSES

Theoreticians and leaders of parties, men who are acquainted with the history of nations and who have studied the history of revolutions from beginning to end, are sometimes afflicted by a shameful disease. This disease is called fear of the masses, disbelief in the creative power of the masses. This sometimes gives rise in the leaders to a kind of aristocratic attitude towards the masses, who, although not versed in the history of revolutions, are destined to destroy the old order and build the new. This kind of aristocratic attitude is due to a fear that elemental forces may break loose, that the masses may “destroy too much”; it is due to a desire to play the part of a mentor who tries to teach the masses from books, but who is averse to learning from the masses.

Lenin was the very antithesis of such leaders. I do not know of any other revolutionary who had so profound a faith in the creative power of the proletariat and in the revolutionary efficacy of its class instinct as Lenin. I do not know of any other revolutionary who could scourge the smug critics of the “chaos of revolution” and the “riot of unauthorized actions of the masses” so ruthlessly as Lenin. I recall that when in the course of a conversation one comrade said that “the revolution should be followed by the normal order of things,” Lenin sarcastically remarked: “It is a pity that people who want to be revolutionaries forget that the most normal order of things in history is the revolutionary order of things.”

Hence, Lenin's contempt for all who superciliously looked down on the masses and tried to teach them from books. And hence, Lenin's constant precept: learn from the masses, try to comprehend their actions, carefully study the practical experience of the struggle of the masses.

Faith in the creative power of the masses—this was the feature of Lenin's activities which enabled him to comprehend the spontaneous process and to direct its movement into the channel of the proletarian revolution.

• REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPING REVOLUTIONARY SUCCESSORS

Mao Tsetung, quoted by Editorial Departments of Renmin Ribao and Hongqi, **On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism**, (1964), Red Flag Publications, Montreal, pp. 81-82.

What are the requirements for worthy successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat?

They must be genuine Marxist-Leninists and not revisionists like Khrushchov wearing the cloak of Marxism-Leninism.

They must be revolutionaries who whole-heartedly serve the majority of the people of China and the whole world, and must not be like Khrushchov who serves both the interests of the handful of members of the privileged bourgeois stratum in his own country and those of foreign imperialism and reaction.

They must be proletarian statesmen capable of uniting and working together with the overwhelming majority. Not only must they unite with those who agree with them, they must also be good at uniting with those who disagree and even with those who formerly opposed them and have since been proved wrong. But they must especially watch out for careerists and conspirators like Khrushchov and prevent such bad elements from usurping the leadership of the Party and government at any level.

They must be models in applying the Party's democratic centralism, must master the method of leadership based on the principle of "from the masses, to the masses", and must cultivate a democratic style and be good at listening to the masses. They must not be despotic like Khrushchov and violate the Party's democratic cen-

tralism, make surprise' attacks on comrades or act arbitrarily and dictatorially.

They must be modest and prudent and guard against arrogance and impetuosity; they must be imbued with the spirit of self-criticism and have the courage to correct mistakes and shortcomings in their work. They must not cover up their errors like Khrushchov, and claim all the credit for themselves and shift all the blame on others.

Successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat come forward in mass struggles and are tempered in the great storms of revolution. It is essential to test and know cadres and choose and train successors in the long course of mass struggle.

Mao, **Combat Liberalism**, (1937), Selected Works, Vol. II, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, p. 33.

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

13 Supplementary readings

Mao, **Quotations**, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, Sections 7 (Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win, pp. 82-87), 17 (Serve the People, pp. 170-174), 26 (Discipline, pp. 254-257).

13 Questions

1) Why is it necessary to maintain a proletarian attitude in everything we do? Give examples of the harmful results of a bourgeois attitude.

2) What is the relationship between political work and personal life (family, hobbies, sports, etc.)? What kind of individualist errors can

be made? How should we maintain our proletarian attitude of commitment towards political work and the revolutionary cause of the proletariat?

3) What is the fundamental importance of having confidence in the masses? Why is it essential for communists to have this confidence? In what way does this confidence follow from Marxist theory and the character of the working class?