

# Lenin

## On Standing Army



# Lenin vs Trotsky

Collected Writings  
on Subject

Erdogan A

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## **on**

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Selected Writings on the subject

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## Lenin vs Trotsky on Standing Army

In politics nothing is coincidental but a reflection of an ideology in one way or another. No matter how much the core ideology is masked, the actions will inevitably show the indications and bring the mask down and expose the real ideology behind it. From the time of split as Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1903, the opposition to the insurrection, opposition to the party, treatment of Military Commissars and favoring Tsarists officers, the "August Bloc", "Trotsky-Zinoviev Bloc", collaborating with the fascists and imperialists in different capacities in China, Vietnam, Spain and other places **was never a coincidence but an inevitable path of Trotsky's 'ideology.**

As Stalin asks;

"**Is it an accident** that Trotsky who, after the Revolution made his way into the ranks of our Party, slipped up and **adopted a counter-revolutionary** Menshevik position and was thrown out beyond the borders of our state, beyond the borders of the Soviet Union?"

Vyshinsky actually responded to this question at the court;

"**It is not an accident** because prior to the October Revolution as well, Trotsky and his friends fought against Lenin and Lenin's Party as they fight now against Stalin and the Party of Lenin and Stalin."

The fact is that **Trotsky never believed in the possibility of Socialism**, not only in one country, but socialism in general since there is no possibility of a world revolution at one leap, at one strike. Trotsky believed in **Military dictatorship** of an elite **group**, not as much different than that of Mussolini's or Hitler's with exporting "revolutions" in mind. **For Trotsky**

**working class is a means to the military dictatorship of elite not the dictatorship of working class.**

Although years later he revised in words only, but not indeed, **here what he says:**

“In its **real significance**, a revolution is a fight for **control of the State**. That **rests directly on the Army**. This is why **all revolutions in history** sharply raised the question: **on whose side is the army?** And one way or another, in every case, this question had to be answered.” *Leon Trotsky, The Young Turks, (P81)*

Without twisting his words, two of these remarks are crucial as far as Marxist Leninists are concerned; 1) revolution” **rests directly on the Army**” and 2) **“whose side is the army”**.

If we talk about **an army**, and mentioning the **“side”** it will take, we are, without any doubt, talking about an **existing standing army** and literally saying that **the success** of a revolution **“rests directly on this Army”**.

**Let’s start with what is an Army in view of Marxism Leninism**

As far back as to 1899, Rosa Luxemburg was saying;

“The most general standpoint upon which Schippel bases his defense of militarism is his belief in the necessity of this military system. Using all possible arguments of a technical, social and economic nature, he **demonstrates the absolute necessity of a standing army**. And from a certain point of view he is quite correct. A standing army and militarism are indeed indispensable – **but for whom?** For the present-day **ruling classes** and the **contemporary governments**.”

Now what can one conclude from this other than that, **from the class standpoint of the present government** and ruling classes, doing away with the standing army and introducing the militia, i.e. **arming the people, must appear to be an impossibility, an absurdity?"**  
*Rosa Luxemburg, The Militia and Militarism (P18)*

And same year James Connolly was saying;

"A standing army anywhere, in any country, is first of all unnecessary; secondly, a tool in the hands of oppressors of the people" *James Connolly, 'Soldiers of the Queen', (1899)*

To the question of What is an army? Lenin responds;

" **A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power..... The centralized state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society** came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. **Two institutions** are most characteristic of **this state machine**: the bureaucracy and **the standing army**. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that **it is the bourgeoisie with whom these institutions are connected** by thousands of threads." *Lenin, The state and revolution*

"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, wage-labor, 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." *Lenin, The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution (P110)*

Reading Trotsky's remarks, he is resting the success of a revolution on the "question of "whose side the army" will be, an army which Lenin describes as a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society. "

### What do Marxist Leninists do with Army?

"The capitalists now have directed all their efforts at making the Russian republic as much like a monarchy as possible so that it might **be changed back into a monarchy** with the least difficulty (this has happened time and again in many countries). **For this purpose,** "says Lenin, "**the capitalists want to preserve** the bureaucracy, which stands above the people, to preserve the police **and the standing army,** which is separated from the people and commanded by non-elective generals and other officers. And **the generals and other officers,** unless they are elected, will **almost invariably be landowners and capitalists.** That much we know from the experience of all the republics in the world.

Our Party, the party of class-conscious workers and poor peasants, is therefore working for a democratic republic of another kind. We want a republic where there is no police that browbeats the people; where all officials, from the bottom up, are elective and displaceable whenever the people demand it, and are paid salaries not higher than the wages of a competent



worker; where all army officers are similarly elective and where the standing army separated from the **people and subordinated to classes alien to the people is replaced by the universally armed people, by a people's militia.**" *Lenin, An Open Letter to the Delegates to the All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies (P144)*

**Trotsky** not only suggests the **cooperation with the army** but reconstructing and "**partly**" **dismissing** the army. Here what he says;

**"To establish revolutionary cooperation with the army,** the peasantry, and the plebeian lower strata of the urban bourgeoisie. To abolish absolutism. To destroy the material organization of absolutism **by reconstructing and partly dismissing the army.** *Leon Trotsky, Our Revolution, The Soviet and the Revolution (P81)*

**Lenin,** however, speaks of the "**abolition**" of the **standing army** and "**arming the people.**" Here what Lenin says;

". . . The **first decree of the Commune** . . . was the **suppression of the standing army,** and the **substitution for it of the armed people.**" This demand now figures in the program of **every party claiming the name of Socialist.**

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, **by destroying** the two greatest sources of expenditure - **the standing army** and State functionarism." *Lenin, "The State and Revolution", With what is the smashed state machine to be replaced?( P178)*

The question of army is not separated from the question of state. State apparatus needs to be smashed, all other institutions need to be wrested from the capitalist control, for the use and benefit of the new. **Trotsky looks at the question differently.** His admiration for army goes so far as that the insurrection was against the commanding army staff not to Monarchy, and **if the "bad apples" in the army are cleaned,** the army, serving the society, could be revived.

**"In the minds of the soldiers** the insurrection against the monarchy was primarily an **insurrection against the commanding staff.**

An army is always a copy of **the society it serves** – with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both **their positive and negative features** to an extreme.

The **ill-will and friction between the democratic and aristocratic officers,** incapable of reviving the army, only introduced a further element of decomposition. Even many fighting officers, those who seriously cared about the fate of the army, insisted upon **the necessity of a general clean-up of the commanding staff."** *Leon Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution, Volume One: The Overthrow of Tzarism (P190)*

Lenin however finds this approach of not replacing but a "general clean-up" as a **deception and trick in the service of bourgeoisie.**

"The **minimum programme** of the Social-Democrats calls for the **replacement of the standing army** by a universal arming of the people... it is most urgent and

essential that **there be a universal arming of the people.** To assert that, while we have a revolutionary army, there is no need to arm the proletariat, or that there would “not be enough” arms to go around, **is mere deception and trickery.** The thing is to begin organising a universal militia straight away, so that everyone should learn the use of arms even if there is “not enough” to go around, for it is not at all necessary that the people have enough weapons to arm everybody. The people must learn, one and all, how to use arms, they must belong, one and all, to the militia which is to replace the police and the standing army.....

The workers do not want an army standing apart from the people; what they want is that the **workers and soldiers should merge into a single militia consisting of all the people. Failing this, the apparatus of oppression will remain in force...**, Replacement of the old organs of oppression, the police, the bureaucracy, the standing army, by a **universal arming of the people,** by a really universal militia, **is the only way to guarantee** the country a maximum of security against the restoration.

Public service through a police force standing above the people, through bureaucrats, who are the most faithful servants of the bourgeoisie, and **through a standing army under the command of landowners and capitalists**—that is the ideal of the bourgeois parliamentary republic, **which is out to perpetuate the rule of Capital.**

Public service through a really **universal people's militia**, composed of men and women, a militia capable partly of replacing the bureaucrats—this, combined with the principle of elective office and displaceability of all public officers, with payment for their work according to proletarian, not “master-class”, bourgeois standards, **is the ideal of the working class.”** *Lenin, A Proletarian Militia (P139)*

Countering the bourgeois demand of keeping or “cleaning-up of the standing army under the command of landowners and capitalists, Lenin explaining the soldiers demands and intentions states;

**“The soldiers do not want to keep out of politics.** The soldiers do not agree with the Cadets. **The soldiers are advancing a demand that obviously amounts to the abolition of the caste army, of the army that is isolated from the people,** and its replacement by an army of free and equal citizens. **Now this is exactly the same thing as the abolition of the standing army and the arming of the people.**

They are demanding freedom of assembly and of association for soldiers **“without the consent or presence of officers”.** *Lenin, The Army & the People (P63)*

In connection with that, defends arming of people;

“the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party advances as its immediate political task the over throw of the tsarist autocracy and its replacement by a republic based on a democratic constitution that would ensure: **general arming of the people instead of maintaining a**

**standing army;"** *Lenin, Material for the Preparation of the Programme of the R.S.D.L.P. January-April 1902, Collected Works, Volume 6, pages 17-78.*"The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides **an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced** from the people.. From the military point of view **this force** is incomparably **more powerful than previous forces;** from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else." *Lenin Can the Bolsheviks retain the Power? (P184)*

Trotsky says;

"Territorial-economic districts must form the basis both of the Soviet territorial-administrative system (region, province, uyezd, volost) and of the local military organs (commissariats), in the course of the **gradual transition from the standing army** to the militia." *Trotsky, The Transition to Universal Labour Service*

Lenin says;

**"Everywhere, in all countries, the standing army is used not so much against the external enemy as against the internal enemy.** Everywhere **the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour,** the executioner of the people's liberty. Let us not, therefore, stop short at mere partial demands in our great liberating revolution. Let us tear the evil up by the roots. **Let us do away with the standing army altogether....** The experience of Western Europe has shown how utterly reactionary the standing army is." *Lenin, The Armed Forces and the Revolution (P29)*

“We are in favour of a people's republic, **without a standing army**, bureaucracy, or police force. **In place of a standing army** we demand a national guard with elected commanders.” *Stalin, The Constituent Assembly elections, July 27, 1917*

Another staunch Trotskyite, General Tuchachevsky **spells out** the Trotskyite, anti-Marxist view of “exporting of revolution by force, by means of war”. During the heated discussions between the supporters of the militia system and the advocates of a standing army, the chief spokesman for the standing army was Tuchachevsky. He published a polemic entitled “The Red Army and the Militia” in January 1921, in which he states;

“The adherents of the militia system take absolutely no account of Soviet Russia’s present **military mission of disseminating socialist revolution throughout the world**. The rich varieties of socialist life and the socialist revolution cannot be forced into any particular framework. They will **spread irresistibly over the whole world, and their expanding force will endure** so long as there is a bourgeoisie left anywhere.

“What is the way in which they will best achieve their aims? It is the way of armed insurrection within every state, or the way of armed socialist attacks on bourgeois states, or a combination of both ways. No one can make definite prophecies, for the course of the Revolution will show us the right way. One thing, however, is certain: if a socialist revolution succeeds in gaining power in any country, it will have a self-evident right to expand, and will strive to cover the whole world by making its immediate influence felt in all neighboring countries. **Its**

**most powerful instrument will naturally be its military forces.**

“The structure of an army is determined on the one hand by **the political aims it pursues** and on the other by the recruiting system it employs.” *Tuchachevsky, The Red Army and the Militia*

For Marxist Leninists, the question of **exporting revolution** by force or otherwise is fundamentally anti-Marxist not even worth to debate.

Going back to March 1848, at a meeting of German Workers’ Club in Paris, Marx opposes the adventurist “**export of revolution**” planned by the petty-bourgeois leaders of the German migrants in Paris. These quotes below should suffice to comprehend the Marxist Leninist attitude.

Engels;

“One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat **can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing.** Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds.” *Engels to Karl Kautsky In Vienna, 12 September 1882*

Lenin;

“**There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism,** and that is—working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in **one’s own country,** and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line,

in every country without exception. **Everything else is deception** and Manilovism." *Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*

Stalin;

"The **export of revolution is nonsense**. Every country will make its own revolution if it wants to, and if it does not want to, there will be no revolution." *Interview Between J. Stalin and Roy Howard*

Marxist Leninists **do not expect and rely on the Army switching sides for the revolution**. The success of the revolution **depends largely on the revolutionary activity** and the ability of the vanguard Party and the proletariat to organize and ally themselves with great masses of the other exploited and oppressed groups and classes of the population. **Revolutionary activity does not exclude working among the soldiers**, since most of them belong either to the poor peasants or the middle strata. As Stalin puts it;

" The question of the middle strata is undoubtedly one of the basic questions of the workers' revolution... these are the strata whose economic status puts them midway between the proletariat and the capitalist class... 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.. The proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power if these strata have not been at least neutralized, 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." *Stalin, The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata*

Marxists, in addition to Party's military cadres, arm the people and do not call on Army but soldiers, troopers. December 1905 Bolshevik Leaflet states; "Strictly differentiate between your conscious enemies and your unconscious and accidental enemies. Destroy the former and have mercy on the latter. If, possible do not bother the infantry. **Soldiers are the children of the people and do not go against the people by their own will.** The officers and the higher leadership set them on the people. **Direct your energies against these officers and authorities.** Every officer leading soldiers to beat workers proclaims himself an enemy of the people and puts himself outside the law. **Kill him unconditionally.**" *Combat Organization of the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP (P 34)*

As does Trotsky not in so many words but indeed, **the bourgeoisie likes to describe any revolutionary uprising** as something artificial, a **military "putsch"**, and try to minimize the power of working masses. In reference to 1905 uprising, **countering such arguments**, Lenin says; "In reality, the inexorable trend of the Russian revolution was towards an armed, decisive battle between the tsarist government and the **vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat.**" *Lenin, Lecture on the 1905 revolution, January 9, 1917*

Neither Trotsky's relying on the switching of standing army for the success of revolution, nor Tuchachevsky's statement of "exporting of revolution" is accidental. As history has proven that it was an inevitable path derives from the ideology. It is not an accident but the reflection of ideology in practice, regardless of how skillfully disguised with Marxist Leninist phrases.

Army's switching side as the determining factor where the success of "revolution" rests directly on it, in fact corresponds to the concept of military "putsch". "The term "putsch", in its scientific sense, "says Lenin, "may be **employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing** but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs and has **aroused no sympathy among the masses.**" Giving example of Irish rebellion Lenin notes;

*"So, **one army lines up in one place** and says, "We are for socialism", **and another**, somewhere else and says, "We are for imperialism", and **that will be a social revolution!** Only **those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view** could vilify the Irish rebellion **by calling it a "putsch"**". *Lenin: The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up**

An army in any given country **is the chief instruments of state power**. From top down all the officers controlling the army **either a part of the ruling class** or well-paid and **receiving their lion share** from the exploitation of natural resources and of laboring masses. To rest the success of revolution on the "switching side "of army, and to speak about cooperation with army, and after the revolution "cleaning up "the bad apples and keeping the army cannot be proposed by a Marxist Leninist, but by a bourgeois. Marxist Leninists abolish the standing army and arm the people, set up revolutionary army in the process.

E.A 2019

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Rosa Luxemburg

**The Militia and Militarism, (1899)**

[Extract]

February 20th-26th, 1899

This is not the first time, and hopefully not the last, that critical voices concerning particular points in our programme and tactics have been heard from the party's rank and file. In itself this cannot be welcomed enough. However, the most important thing is how the criticism is made, and by this we do not mean the 'tone' which it has unfortunately become fashionable to employ in the party in calling for a show of hands on every occasion. Rather, we mean something far more important – the general basis of the criticism, the specific Weltanschauung that is expressed in the criticism.

In fact, Isegrim-Schippel's ['Isegrim' was a pseudonym for Schippel] crusade against our demand for a militia and in favour of militarism rests upon a very consistent socio-political Weltanschauung.

The most general standpoint upon which Schippel bases his defence of militarism is his belief in the necessity of this military system. Using all possible arguments of a technical, social and economic nature, he demonstrates the absolute necessity of a standing army. And from a certain point of view he is quite correct. A standing army and militarism are indeed indispensable – but for whom? For the present-day ruling classes and the contemporary governments. Now what can one conclude from this other than that, from the class standpoint of the present government and ruling classes, doing away with the

standing army and introducing the militia, i.e. arming the people, must appear to be an impossibility, an absurdity? And if Schippel, for his part, likewise regards the militia as an impossibility and an absurdity, then he is only revealing that he himself shares the bourgeois point of view on the question of militarism, and that he views it through the eyes of the capitalist government or the bourgeois classes. This is also demonstrated clearly in each of his individual arguments. He claims that to equip all citizens with weapons, which is a basic tenet of the militia system, would be impossible because there is not enough money for this. 'Culture suffers enough as it is,' he says. He bases his argument simply on the present Prusso-German public economy; he cannot imagine a different economy, for example one which makes use of progressive taxation of the capitalist class in order to finance the militia system.

Schippel considers the military training of youth – another basic tenet of the militia system – as undesirable because, he says, the non-commissioned officers as military trainers would exert the most corruptive influence on youth. Here of course he bases his argument on the present Prussian non-commissioned barracks-officer and simply extrapolates him as an educator of youth into his imaginary militia system. Schippel's view of the situation is a vivid reminder of Professor Julius Wolf, who sees an important objection to the social order of socialism in that under its rule, according to his calculations, the general rate of interest would rise ...

Schippel considers the militarism of the present day to be economically indispensable because it 'relieves' the economic pressure on society. Kautsky makes every conceivable effort to guess how the Social Democrat, Schippel, might have conceived

that this militarism could 'release' of pressure. Kautsky then accompanies each possible explanation with an excellent refutation. It seems, however, that Schippel has not taken up the matter as a Social Democrat, nor from the point of view of the working people at all. When he speaks of a 'release' of pressure, it is obvious that he is thinking of capitalism. And in this he is of course correct: for capitalism, one of the most important forms of investment is militarism; from capitalism's point of view, militarism is indeed a 'release' of pressure. That Schippel here speaks as a real advocate of the interests of capitalism is revealed by the fact that he has found a qualified authority to support him in this point.

'I claim, gentlemen,' someone said in the Reichstag session of January 12th, 1899, 'that it is quite incorrect to say that the Reich's debts of two million concern only unproductive expenditures, and that these are not offset by productive income of any kind. I claim that there is no investment more productive than expenditures for the army.' To be sure, the minutes of that session report 'Mirth on the Left' ... The speaker was Baron von Stumm. [A major German industrialist and armaments manufacturer.]

It is characteristic of all Schippel's claims that not only are they intrinsically wrong, but they are also based on the perspectives of bourgeois society. Thus, considered from a Social-Democratic viewpoint, everything that Schippel says seems to be upside down: the standing army is indispensable, militarism is economically beneficial, the militia is impracticable, etc.

One is struck by the similarity between Schippel's perspective on the question of militarism and his attitude to another

important question of the political struggle, namely customs policy.

Firstly, and most strikingly, we find in his treatment of both questions a refusal to recognize their connection with positions on the issue of democracy and reaction. If we are to believe Schippel's lecture at the Stuttgart Party Conference, the claim that free trade is identical with progress and that protective tariffs are identical with reaction is wrong. Long and broad historical experience, he continues, proves that one may well be simultaneously a freetrader, and a reactionary or, on the other hand, a supporter of protective tariffs and an ardent friend of democracy. We are now informed, in almost the same words, that: 'There are militia enthusiasts who afflict our working life with endless disruptions and interruptions, and who themselves seek to transplant the non-commissioned officer's mentality into our boys and young lads right down to the lowest school grades – which is much worse than the present militarism. There are opponents of the militia who are mortal enemies of each and every extension of this kind of military intrusion and requisition.' [Die Neue Zeit (1898-9), 580-81]

The fact that in these, as in all questions, the bourgeois politicians do not adopt a position based on principle, that they follow a policy of opportunism, leads the Social Democrat, Schippel, to conclude that he too has the same right. He therefore necessarily fails to appreciate the inner reactionary core of protective tariffs and of militarism, and, conversely, the progressive significance of free trade and of the militia; that is, he too fails to adopt a position based on principle towards the two questions.

In the second place, we find in his position on both issues an opposition to the individual evils involved in the policy of protective tariffs and of militarism, with a determined refusal to combat both phenomena as such in their entirety. In Schippel's lecture in Stuttgart we were informed of the necessity of combatting excessive individual protective tariffs, but at the same time we were warned not to 'commit' ourselves, not to 'tie our hands', which meant not to oppose the protective tariff always and everywhere. Now we are informed that, although Schippel would not reject 'the struggle, carried on in parliament and through agitation, against concrete military demands' [Sozialistische Monatshefte, November 1898, p.495.], he warns against 'taking purely external chance occurrences and very incidental, but admittedly also very conspicuous reactions (of militarism) in the remaining social spheres to be the essence and the core of militarism'. [Die Neue Zeit (1 no.19)]

Thirdly and finally, the foundation of the two viewpoints mentioned above is in both cases the evaluation of the phenomena exclusively from the point of view of the previous bourgeois development, that is, from their historically conditioned progressive aspect, while disregarding completely further imminent developments which reveal their reactionary aspect. For Schippel the protective tariff remains what it was at the time of the late Friedrich List, more than half a century ago: a great advance beyond the medieval-feudal economic fragmentation of Germany. That today universal free trade already represents the same necessary progression beyond the national economic structure to a unified global economy, thus making today's national tariff barriers reactionary – this fact, as far as Schippel is concerned, does not exist.

The same is true of the question of militarism. He still approaches it from the point of view that it is the same great step forward as was the standing army based on universal and compulsory conscription vis-à-vis the former enlisted army and feudal army. But here the development stops as far as Schippel is concerned; history does not progress beyond the standing army, except for a further extension of universal conscription.

What then is the significance of these characteristic positions which Schippel adopts on both the tariff and military questions? They signify, firstly, an ad hoc policy rather than one based on principle. Secondly, and connected with this, they attack merely the abuses of the tariff and military systems rather than the system itself. But what is this policy other than our well-known acquaintance from recent party history – opportunism?

Again 'practical politics' celebrate their triumph in Isegrim-Schippel's open renunciation of the militia postulate, one of the basic points in our whole political programme. From the party's point of view, the real significance of Schippel's appearance lies herein. This most recent Social-Democratic proclamation in favour of militarism can be judged and evaluated correctly only in connection with this whole current and from the view-point of the general foundations and consequences of opportunism.



Lenin

To the Rural Poor

**An Explanation for the Peasants of What the Social-Democrats Want**

March 1903

Collected Works, Volume 6, pages 361-432.

5. What Improvements are the Social-Democrats Striving to Obtain for the Whole People and for the Workers?

The Social-Democrats are fighting for the liberation of all the working people from all robbery, oppression, and in justice. To become free the working class must first of all become united. And to become united it must have freedom to unite, have the right to unite, have political liberty. We have already said that autocratic government means enslavement of the people by the officials and the police. Political liberty is therefore needed by the whole people, except a handful of courtiers and a few money-bags and high dignitaries who are received at Court. But most of all, political liberty is needed by the workers and the peasants. The rich can escape the self-will and the tyranny of officials and the police by buying them off. The rich can make their complaints heard in the highest places. That is why the police and the officials take much fewer liberties with the rich than with the poor. The workers and the peasants have no money to buy off the police or the officials; they have no one to complain to and are not in a position to sue them in court. The workers and the peasants will never rid themselves of the extortions, tyranny, and insults of the police and the officials as long as there is no elective government, as long as there is no

national assembly of deputies. Only such a national assembly of deputies can free the people from enslavement by the officials. Every intelligent peasant must support the Social-Democrats, who first and foremost demand of the tsarist government the convocation of a national assembly of deputies. The deputies must be elected by all, irrespective of social-estate, irrespective of wealth or poverty. The elections must be free, without any interference on the part of the officials; they must be carried out under the supervision of such that enjoy the people's confidence, and not of police officers or the rural superintendents. Under such conditions, deputies representing the entire people will be able to discuss all the needs of the people and introduce a better state of affairs in Russia.

The Social-Democrats demand that the police be deprived of the power to imprison anyone without trial. Officials must be severely punished for arbitrarily arresting anyone. To put an end to their self-assumed power, they must be chosen by the people, and everyone must have the right to lodge a complaint against any official directly in a court. What is the use of complaining to the rural superintendent about a police officer, or to the governor about the rural superintendent? The rural superintendent will, of course, always protect the police officer and the governor will always protect the rural superintendent, while the complainant will get into trouble. He runs a fair chance of being put into prison or deported to Siberia. The officials will be curbed only. when everyone in Russia (as in all other countries) has the right to complain both to the national assembly and to the elected courts, and to speak freely of his needs, to write about them in the newspapers.

The Russian people are still in feudal dependence upon the officials. Without permission from the officials the people cannot call meetings, or get books and newspapers printed. Is that not feudal dependence? If meetings cannot be freely called, or books freely printed, how can one obtain redress against the officials, or against the rich? Of course, the officials suppress every book, every utterance that tells the truth about the people's poverty. The present pamphlet, too, has to be printed by the Social-Democratic Party secretly and circulated secretly: anyone who is found in possession of this pamphlet will make the acquaintance of courts and prisons. But the Social-Democratic workers are not afraid of this: they print more and more, and give the people more and more truthful books to read. And no prisons, no persecution can halt the fight for the people's freedom!

The Social-Democrats demand that the social-estates be abolished, and that all the citizens of the state enjoy exactly the same rights. Today the social-estates are divided into tax-paying and non-tax-paying, into privileged and non-privileged; we have blue blood and common blood; even the birch has been retained for the common people. In no other country are the workers and peasants in such a position of inferiority. In no country except Russia are there different laws for different social-estates. It is time the Russian people, too, demanded that every muzhik should possess all the rights possessed by the nobility. Is it not a disgrace that the birch should still be used and that a tax paying social-estate should be in existence more than forty years after the abolition of serfdom?

The Social-Democrats demand that the people shall have complete freedom of movement and occupation. What does

freedom of movement mean? It means that the peasant should be free to go wherever he pleases, to move to whatever place he wants to, to live in any village or town he chooses without having to ask for permission from anyone. It means that passports should be abolished in Russia too (in other countries passports were abolished long ago), that no local police officer or rural superintendent should dare to hinder any peasant from settling or working wherever he pleases. The Russian peasant is still so much the serf of the officials that he is not free to move to a town, or to settle in a new district. The minister issues orders that the governors should not allow unauthorised settlement! A governor knows better than the peasant what place is good for the peasant! The peasant is a little child and must not move without permission of the authorities! Is that not feudal dependence? Is it not an insult to the people when any profligate nobleman is allowed to lord it over grown-up farmers?

There is a book called *Crop Failure and the Distress of the People* (famine), written by the present "Minister of Agriculture" Mr. Yermolov. This book says in so many words: the peasant must not change residence as long as their worships the landlords need hands. The minister says this quite openly, without the least embarrassment: he thinks the peasant will not hear what he is saying and will not understand. Why allow people to go away when the landlords need cheap labour? The more crowded the people are on the land the more that is to the landlords' advantage; the poorer the peasants are, the more cheaply can they be hired and the more meekly will they submit to oppression of every kind. Formerly, the bailiffs looked after the landlord's interests, now the rural superintendents and governors do that. Formerly, the bailiffs ordered the flogging of

peasants in the stables; now the rural superintendent in the volost administration office orders the flogging.

The Social-Democrats demand that the standing army be abolished and that a militia be established in its stead, that all the people be armed. A standing army is an army that is divorced from the people and trained to shoot down the people. If the soldier were not locked up for years in barracks and inhumanly drilled there, would he ever agree to shoot down his brothers, the workers and the peasants? Would he go against the starving peasants? A standing army is not needed in the least to protect the country from attack by an enemy; a people's militia is sufficient. If every citizen is armed, Russia need fear no enemy. And the people would be relieved of the yoke of the military clique. The upkeep of this clique costs hundreds of millions of rubles a year, and all this money is collected from the people; that is why the taxes are so heavy and why it becomes increasingly difficult to live. The military clique still further increases the power of the officials and police over the people. This clique is needed to plunder foreign peoples, for instance, to take the land from the Chinese. This does not ease but, on the contrary, increases the people's burden because of greater taxation. The substitution of the armed nation for the standing army would enormously ease the burden of all the workers and all the peasants.

Lenin

### **The Armed Forces and the Revolution**

Novaya Zhizn, No. 14, November 16, 1905

Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 54-57.

The insurrection at Sevastopol continues to spread. Things are coming to a head. **The sailors and soldiers who are fighting for freedom are removing their officers.** Complete order is being maintained. The government is unable to repeat the dirty trick it played at Kronstadt, it is unable to engineer riots. The squadron has refused to put to sea and threatens to shell the town if any attempt is made to suppress the insurgents. Command of the Ochakov has been taken over by Lieutenant Schmidt (retired), who was dismissed from the service for an “insolent” speech about defending, arms in hand, the liberties promised by the Manifesto of October 17. According to a report in Rus, the term fixed for the sailors’ surrender expires today, the 15th.

We are thus on the eve of the decisive moment. The next few days—perhaps hours—will show whether the insurgents will win a complete victory, whether they will be defeated, or whether a bargain will be struck. In any case, the Sevastopol events signify the complete **collapse of the old slavish order in the armed forces**, the system which transformed soldiers into armed machines and made them instruments for the suppression of the slightest striving after freedom.

Gone forever are the days when Russian troops could be sent abroad to suppress a revolution—as happened in 1849. Today the armed forces have irretrievably turned away from the

autocracy. They have not yet become wholly revolutionary. The political consciousness of the soldiers and sailors is still at a very low level. But the important thing is that it has already awakened, that **the soldiers have started a movement of their own**, that the spirit of liberty has penetrated into the barracks everywhere. Military barracks in Russia are as a rule worse than any prisons; nowhere is individuality so crushed and oppressed as in the barracks; nowhere are torture, beating and degradation of the human being so rife. And these barracks are becoming hotbeds of revolution.

The Sevastopol events are neither isolated nor accidental. Let us not speak of former attempts at open insurrection in the Navy and in the Army. Let us compare the sparks at St. Petersburg with the fire at Sevastopol. Let us recall the soldiers' demands which are now being formulated in various military units at St. Petersburg (they appeared in yesterday's issue of our paper). What a remarkable document this list of demands is! How clearly it shows that the slavish army is being transformed into a revolutionary army. And what power can now prevent the spread of similar demands throughout the Navy and throughout the Army?

The soldiers stationed in St. Petersburg want better rations, better clothing, better quarters, higher pay, a reduction in the term of service and shorter daily drill. But more prominent among their demands are those which could be presented only by the civic-minded soldier. They include the right to attend in uniform at all meetings, "on an equal footing with all other citizens", the right to read all newspapers and keep them in the barracks, freedom of conscience, equal rights for all nationalities, complete abolition of all deference to rank outside

the barracks, the abolition of officers' batmen, the abolition of courts martial, jurisdiction for the civil courts over all military offences, the right to present complaints collectively, the right to defend oneself against any attempt on the part of a superior to strike a subordinate. Such are the principal demands of the soldiers in St. Petersburg.

These demands show that a great part of the Army is already at one with the men of Sevastopol who have risen for liberty.

These demands show that the hypocritical talk of the henchmen of the autocracy about the neutrality of the armed forces, about the need to keep the forces out of politics, etc., cannot count on the slightest sympathy among the soldiers.

**The armed forces cannot and should not be neutral.** Not to drag them into politics is the slogan of the hypocritical servants of the bourgeoisie and of tsarism, who in fact have always dragged the forces into reactionary politics and turned Russian soldiers into henchmen of the Black Hundreds, accomplices of the police. It is impossible to hold aloof from the struggle the whole people is waging for liberty. Whoever shows indifference to this struggle is supporting the outrages of the police government, which promised liberty only to mock at it.

The demands of the soldier-citizens are the demands of Social-Democracy, of all the revolutionary parties, of the class-conscious workers. By joining the ranks of the supporters of liberty and siding with the people, the soldiers will ensure victory for the cause of liberty and the satisfaction of their own demands.

But in order to secure the really complete and lasting satisfaction of these demands, it is necessary to take another



little step forward. All the separate wishes of the soldiers, worn out by the accursed convict life of the bar racks, should be brought together into a single whole. And put together, these demands will read: abolition of the standing army and introduction of the arming of the whole people in its stead.

**Everywhere, in all countries, the standing army is used not so much against the external enemy as against the internal enemy.** Everywhere **the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour,** the executioner of the people's liberty. Let us not, therefore, stop short at mere partial demands in our great liberating revolution. Let us tear the evil up by the roots. **Let us do away with the standing army altogether.** Let the army merge with the armed people, let the soldiers bring to the people their military knowledge, let the barracks disappear to be replaced by free military schools. No power on earth will dare to encroach upon free Russia, if the bulwark of her liberty is an armed people which has destroyed the military caste, which has made all soldiers citizens and all citizens capable of bearing arms, soldiers.

The experience of Western Europe has shown how utterly reactionary the standing army is. Military science has proved that a people's militia is quite practicable, that it can rise to the military tasks presented by a war both of defence and of attack. Let the hypocritical or the sentimental bourgeoisie dream of disarmament. **So long as there are oppressed and exploited people in the world, we must strive, not for disarmament, but for the arming of the whole people.** It alone will fully safeguard liberty. It alone will completely overthrow reaction.

Only when this change has been affected will the millions of toilers, and not a mere handful of exploiters, enjoy real liberty.

Bolshevik Leaflets - Instructions on Guerrilla warfare Issued by  
the Bolshevik Moscow Committee

December 11, 1905

**ADVICE TO THE RISING WORKERS**

Comrades! A street battle of rising workers against the army and police has begun. If you do not adhere to certain rules, many of your brothers army perish in this battle. The combat organization of the Moscow Com-mittee of the Social-Democratic Labor Party makes haste to point these rules out and to urge you to follow them strictly.

1. The first Rule--do not act in crowds. Work in small details of three or four men, not more. Let there be as many of these details as possible and let them learn to attack quickly and disappear quickly. The police strives to shoot crowds of thousands of people with a hundred Cossack. You must put one or two snipers against a hundred cossacks. To fall on a hundred is easier than on one, especially if that one shoots and escapes unnoticed. The police and army will be helpless if all Moscow is covered with this small and elusive details.

2. In addition, comrades, do not take up fortified places. The army always attempts to take them or simply destroy them with artillery. Let our fortresses be passable yards and all places from which we can shoot and escape easily. If they take such a place, they will not find anyone there, and will lose many of their own. It is impossible to take them all, for to do that it would be necessary to settle every home with a cossack.

3. Therefore, comrades., if anyone should call you to go in a great crowd or to take a fortified place ., consider him a fool or

a provocateur. If he is a fool, don't listen to him, if a provocateur --kill ..

4. Also, avoid going to large meetings. We see them often in free states, but for now, it is necessary to struggle and only struggle. The government understands this perfectly and makes use of our meetings to beat and disarm us.

5. Rather, gather in small clusters for combat conferences, each in his own district, and at the first appearance of the army, scatter throughout the yards. From these yards, shoot and throw rocks at the Cossacks and after that, climb into the neighboring yard and leave.

6. Strictly differentiate between your conscious enemies and your unconscious and accidental enemies. Destroy the former and have mercy on the latter. If, possible do not bother the infantry. Soldiers are the children of the people and do not go against the people by their own will. The officers and the higher leadership set them on the people. Direct your energies against these officers and authorities. Every officer leading soldiers to beat workers proclaims himself an enemy of the people and puts himself outside the law. Kill him unconditionally.

7. Do not spare the Cossacks. Much of the people's blood is upon them. They are the constant enemies of the workers. Let them leave for their own lands, where they have their lands and families, or let them sit shut up in their barracks. Do not bother them there. But as soon as they came out on the street -on foot or on horse ., armed or unarmed--consider them the most evil enemies and destroy them without pity.

8. Attack and destroy the dragoons and patrols.

9. In conflict with the police, proceed in this way. Kill all higher ranks whenever conditions are favorable. Disarm and arrest the others. Also kill those 'Who are known for their cruelty and meanness. As for the town militia only take their weapons and compel them to serve not the police but us.

10. Forbid homeowners to lock their doors. This is very important.

Go after them and if they do not obey, beat them for the first offense, and for the second--kill them. Compel the homeowners to serve us and not the police. Then, each yard will be our refuge and place of ambush.

These then, are the most important rules, comrades. In forthcoming leaflets the combat organization will give you additional advice on how to protect yourselves, attack, and construct barricades. Now we will say a few words about something quite different.

Remember Comrades that we want not only to destroy the old order but to build a new one, in 'which each citizen will be free from all compulsion. Therefore, immediately take upon yourselves the protection Of all citizens. Protect them. Make unnecessary that police, which under the disguise of protector of the social peace and security exercises force over the poor, puts us in prison, and forms Black Hundred Pogroms:

Our immediate task, comrades is to transfer the city into the hands of' the people. We will begin with the outskirts and seize one part after another In the seized pert we will immediately establish our elected administration, install our ow order, the eight-hour day, progressive taxes, and so on. We will prove that under our administration social life will go on more justly, and

the life, liberty, and rights of each will be better protected than now.

Therefore, struggling and destroying, remember your future roles and learn to be rulers.

Combat Organization of the Moscow Committee of the  
Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party.

SPREAD THIS LEAFLET EVERYWHERE, PASTE IT ON THE  
STREETS, .HAND IT OUT TO

PASSERS-BY.

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Vysshii Pod 'em Revoliutsii, PP 665-666.

Lenin

**Report on the Unity Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.**

A Letter to the St. Petersburg Workers

May 1906

Collected Works, Volume 10, pages 317-382.

III

The Agrarian Question

The agrarian question, or rather, the question of the agrarian programme, was taken by the Congress as the first item on the agenda. There was a big debate on this, and a large number of most interesting points of principle were raised. There were five reporters. I spoke in favour of the draft of the Agrarian Committee (published in the pamphlet *Revision of the Agrarian Programme of the Workers' Party*), and attacked Maslov's proposal for municipalisation. Comrade John spoke in favour of the latter. The third reporter, Plekhanov, defended Maslov, and tried to persuade the Congress that Lenin's proposal for nationalisation smacked of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the *Narodnaya Volya*. The fourth reporter, Schmidt, supported the Agrarian Committee's draft with amendments on the lines of "Variant A" (for which see the pamphlet mentioned above). The fifth reporter, Borisov, advocated division of the land. His programme was rather original in construction, but in substance it approximated most to our programme, except that for nationalisation—made conditional on the establishment of a republic—he substituted division of the land among the peasants as their property.

Of course, it is quite impossible for me to give in this report a full account of that lengthy debate in all its details. I shall try to deal with the more important points, i.e., the nature of “municipalisation”, and the arguments advanced against nationalisation made conditional on the establishment of a republic, and so forth. I will remark that the pivot of the debate was Plekhanov’s formulation of the question: this was due to its polemical acerbity, which is always good and desirable for the purpose of clearly distinguishing between the fundamental tendencies of the various trends of thought.

What is the essence of “municipalisation”? It is the transfer of the landed estates (or to be precise, of all large private estates) to the Zemstvos, or to local self-government bodies in general. The peasants’ allotments, and the land of the smallholders, are to remain their property. The large estates are to be “alienated” and transferred to democratically organised local self-government bodies. This can be more simply expressed. as follows: the peasants’ land can remain the peasants’ property; as for the landed estates, let the peasants rent them from the Zemstvos, only they must be democratic Zemstvos.

As the first reporter, I emphatically opposed this proposal. It is not revolutionary. The peasants will not agree to it. It would be harmful without a fully consistent democratic state system, including a republic, the election of government officials by the people, abolition of the standing army, etc. Such were my three main arguments.

I think that this draft is not revolutionary, first, because instead of confiscation (alienation without compensation) it speaks of alienation in general; secondly, and this is most important, it does not call for a revolutionary method of changing the



agrarian system. Phrases about democracy mean nothing whatever at a time when the Cadets, those hypocritical advocates of compromise between the autocracy and the people, call themselves democrats. All methods of changing the agrarian system will be reduced to a liberal-bureaucratic reform, a Cadet reform, and not to a peasant revolution, if there is no slogan of the immediate seizure of the land by the peasants themselves, on the spot, that is, by revolutionary peasant committees, and of the peasants themselves disposing of the land thus seized, pending the convocation of a national constituent assembly. Without this slogan we shall have a programme for a Cadet, or semi-Cadet, agrarian reform, and not for a peasant revolution.

Furthermore, the peasants will not agree to municipalisation. Municipalisation means you can have the allotment land gratis, but for the landed estates you must pay rent to the Zemstvo. The revolutionary peasants will not agree to this. They will say either let us divide all the land among ourselves or let us make all the land the property of the whole people. Municipalisation will never become the slogan of a revolutionary peasantry. If the revolution is victorious it cannot in any circumstances stop at municipalisation. If the revolution is not victorious, "municipalisation" will only be another swindle for the peasants, like the Reform of 1861.

My third main argument. Municipalisation will be harmful if made conditional on "democracy" in general, and not specifically on a republic and the election of government officials by the people. Municipalisation means transferring the land to the local authorities, to the self-government bodies. If the central government is not fully democratic (a republic, and

so forth), the local authorities may be “autonomous” only in minor matters, may be independent only in “tinkering with wash-basins”: they may be no more “democratic” than, say, the Zemstvos were under Alexander III. In important matters, however, particularly in such a fundamentally important matter as the landed estates, the democracy of local authorities in face of an undemocratic central authority would be merely a plaything. Without a republic and the election of government officials by the people, municipalisation would mean transferring the landed estates to elected local authorities even though the central government remained in the hands of the Trepovs and Dubasovs. Such a reform would be a plaything, and a harmful one, because the Trepovs and Dubasovs would allow the elected local authorities to provide water, electric trains, and so forth, but never could leave them in control of land taken from the landlords. The Trepovs and Dubasovs would transfer these lands from the “jurisdiction” of the Zemstvos to the “jurisdiction” of the Ministry of the Interior, and the peasants would be trebly swindled. We must call for the overthrow of the Trepovs and Dubasovs, for the election of all government officials by the people, and not design—instead of that and before that—toy models of liberal local reform.

What were Plekhanov’s arguments in favour of municipalisation? In both his speeches he laid most stress on the question of guarantees against restoration. This curious argument runs as follows. Nationalised land was the economic basis of Muscovy before the reign of Peter I. Our present revolution, like every other revolution, contains no guarantees against restoration. Therefore, in order to prevent the possibility of restoration (i.e., the restoration of the old, pre-

revolutionary regime), we must particularly shun nationalisation.

To the Mensheviks this argument seemed particularly convincing, and they enthusiastically applauded Plekhanov, especially for the “strong language” he used about nationalisation (“Socialist-Revolutionary talk”, etc.). And yet, if one ponders over the matter a little, one will easily see that the argument is sheer sophistry.

First of all, look at this “nationalisation in Muscovy before the reign of Peter I”. We will not dwell on the fact that Plekhanov’s views on history are an exaggerated version of the liberal-Narodnik view of Muscovy. It is absurd to talk about the land being nationalised in Russia in the period before Peter I; we have only to refer to Klyuchevsky, Yefimenko and other historians. But let us leave these excursions into history. Let us assume for a moment that the land was really nationalised in Muscovy before the reign of Peter I, in the seventeenth century. What follows from it? According to Plekhanov’s logic, it follows that nationalisation would facilitate the restoration of Muscovy. But such logic is sophistry and not logic, it is juggling with words without analysing the economic basis of developments, or the economic content of concepts. Insofar as (or if) the land was nationalised in Muscovy, the economic basis of this nationalisation was the Asiatic mode of production. But it is the capitalist mode of production that became established in Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century and is absolutely predominant in the twentieth century. What, then, remains of Plekhanov’s argument? He confused nationalisation based on the Asiatic mode of production with nationalisation based on the capitalist mode of production. Because the words are

identical, he failed to see the fundamental difference in economic, that is, production relations. Although he built up his argument on the restoration of Muscovy (i.e., the alleged restoration of Asiatic modes of production), he actually spoke about political restoration, such as the restoration of the Bourbons (which he mentioned), that is, the restoration of the anti-republican form of government on the basis of capitalist production relations.

Was Plekhanov told at the Congress that he had got himself muddled up? Yes, a comrade who at the Congress called himself Demyan said in his speech that Plekhanov's "restoration" bogy was an out-and-out fizzle. The logical deduction from his premises is the restoration of Muscovy, i.e., the restoration of the Asiatic mode of production—which is a sheer absurdity in the epoch of capitalism. What actually followed from his conclusions and examples is the restoration of the Empire by Napoleon, or the restoration of the Bourbons after the great French bourgeois revolution. But first, this sort of restoration had nothing in common with pre-capitalist modes of production. And secondly, this sort of restoration followed, not on the nationalisation of the land, but on the sale of the landed estates, that is, a measure that was arch-bourgeois, purely bourgeois and certainly one that strengthened bourgeois, i.e., capitalist production relations. Thus, neither form of restoration that Plekhanov dragged in—neither the restoration of the Asiatic mode of production (the restoration of Muscovy). nor restoration in France in the nineteenth century, had anything at all to do with the question of nationalisation.

What was Comrade Plekhanov's reply to Comrade Demyan's absolutely irrefutable arguments? He replied with uncommon

adroitness. He exclaimed: "Lenin is a Socialist-Revolutionary. And Comrade Demyan is feeding me a new brand of Demyan hash."

The Mensheviks were delighted. They laughed till their sides ached at Plekhanov's sparkling wit. The hall rocked with applause. The question whether there was any logic in Plekhanov's argument about restoration was completely shelved at this Menshevik Congress.

I am far from denying, of course, that Plekhanov's reply was not only a superb piece of wit, but, if you will, also of Marxist profundity. Nevertheless, I take the liberty of thinking that Comrade Plekhanov got himself hopelessly muddled up over the restoration of Muscovy and restoration in France in the nineteenth century. I take the liberty of thinking that "Demyan hash" will become a "historic term" that will be applied to Comrade Plekhanov and not to Comrade Demyan (as the Mensheviks, fascinated by the brilliance of Plekhanov's wit, think). At all events, when Comrade Plekhanov, in speaking about the seizure of power in the present Russian revolution, was tickling his Mensheviks with a story about a Communard in some provincial town in France who munched sausage after the unsuccessful "seizure of power", several delegates at the Unity Congress remarked that Plekhanov's speeches were like a "Moscow stew", and that they sparkled with "sausage wit".

As I have already said, I was the first reporter on the agrarian question. And in winding up the debate, I was not the last to be given the floor but the first, preceding the other four reporters. Consequently, I spoke after Comrade Demyan and before Comrade Plekhanov. Hence, I was unable to foresee Plekhanov's brilliant defence against Demyan's arguments. I

briefly reiterated these arguments and concentrated on the question of restoration as such, rather than on revealing the utter futility of the talk about restoration as an argument in favour of municipalisation. What guarantees against restoration have you in mind?—I asked Comrade Plekhanov Is it absolute guarantees in the sense of eliminating the economic foundation which engenders restoration? Or a relative and temporary guarantee, i.e., creating political conditions that would not rule out the possibility of restoration, but would merely make it less probable, would hamper restoration? If the former, then my answer is: the only complete guarantee against restoration in Russia (after a victorious revolution in Russia) is a socialist revolution in the West. There is and can be no other guarantee. Thus, from this aspect, the question is: how can the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia facilitate, or accelerate, the socialist revolution in the West? The only conceivable answer to this is: if the miserable Manifesto of October 17 gave a powerful impetus to the working-class movement in Europe, then the complete victory of the bourgeois revolution in Russia will almost inevitably (or at all events, in all probability) arouse a number of such political upheavals in Europe as will give a very powerful impetus to the socialist revolution.

Now let us examine the “second”, i.e., relative guarantee against restoration. What is the economic foundation of restoration on the basis of the capitalist mode of production, i.e., not the comical “restoration of Muscovy” but restoration of the type that occurred in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century? The condition of the small commodity producer in any capitalist society. The small commodity producer wavers between labour and capital. Together with the working class he

fights against the survivals of serfdom and the police-ridden autocracy. But at the same time he longs to strengthen his position as a property-owner in bourgeois society, and therefore, if the conditions of development of this society are at all favourable (for example, industrial prosperity, expansion of the home market as a result of the agrarian revolution, etc.), the small commodity producer inevitably turns against the proletarian who is lighting for socialism. Consequently, I said, restoration on the basis of small commodity production, of small peasant property in capitalist society, is not only possible in Russia, but even inevitable, for Russia is mainly a petty-bourgeois country. I went on to say that from the point of view of restoration, the position of the Russian revolution may be expressed in the following thesis: the Russian revolution is strong enough to achieve victory by its own efforts; but it is not strong enough to retain the fruits of victory. It can achieve victory because the proletariat jointly with the revolutionary peasantry can constitute an invincible force. But it cannot retain its victory, because in a country where small production is vastly developed, the small commodity producers (including the peasants) will inevitably turn against the proletarians when they pass from freedom to socialism. To be able to retain its victory, to be able to prevent restoration, the Russian revolution will need non-Russian reserves, will need outside assistance. Are there such reserves? Yes, there are: the socialist proletariat in the West.

Whoever overlooks this in discussing the question of restoration reveals that his views on the Russian revolution are extremely narrow. He forgets that France at the end of the eighteenth century, in the period of her bourgeois-democratic revolution, was surrounded by far more backward, semi-feudal

countries, which served as the reserves of restoration; whereas Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the period of her bourgeois-democratic revolution, is surrounded by far more advanced countries, where there is a social force capable of becoming the reserve of the revolution.

To sum up. In raising the question of guarantees against restoration, Plekhanov touched upon a number of most interesting subjects but he explained nothing at all on the point at issue and led away (led his Menshevik audience away) from the question of municipalisation. Indeed, if the small commodity producers, as a class, are the bulwark of capitalist restoration (this is what we shall for short call restoration on the basis, not of the Asiatic, but of the capitalist mode of production), where does municipalisation come in? Municipalisation is a form of landownership; but is it not clear that the forms of landownership do not alter the main and fundamental features of a class? The petty bourgeois will certainly and inevitably serve as the bulwark of restoration against the proletariat, no matter whether the land is nationalised, municipalised or divided. If any sharp distinctions between the forms of landownership can be drawn in this respect, it can, perhaps, only be in favour of division, since that creates closer ties between the small proprietor and the land—closer and, therefore, more difficult to break. But to urge municipalisation as an argument against restoration is simply ridiculous.

Comrades John and Plekhanov, who spoke after me in winding up the debate, tried once again to jump imperceptibly from this flimsy argument about restoration to another, which seemed to resemble it, but was really of an entirely different nature. They



began to defend municipalisation, not as a guarantee against restoration of the monarchy after the establishment of a republic, that is, not as a measure that would safeguard the republic, not as a permanent institution, but as a basis in the process of the struggle against the monarchy for a republic, i.e., a measure that would facilitate further gains, a temporary and transitional institution. Plekhanov even went to the length of calling the large local self-government bodies that would municipalise the land local “republics” that would serve as strongholds in the war against the monarchy.

On this argument, we would make the following observations:

First, neither Maslov’s original programme nor the John Plekhanov-Kostrov programme that was adopted at the Congress indicated by a single word that they regarded municipalisation as a temporary, transitional measure in the course of the revolution, i.e., as a weapon in the struggle for further gains. Thus, such an interpretation is “a free invention”, which is not confirmed but refuted by the text of the programme. For example, in advocating in my programme the establishment of revolutionary peasant committees as an instrument of the revolution, as a basis in the struggle for further gains, I say in so many words: the Party advises the peasant committees to seize the land and dispose of it pending the convocation of a constituent assembly. The Maslov-John-Plekhanov Kostrov programme, not only does not say this, but on the contrary, outlines beyond question a plan for a permanent system of land tenure.

Secondly, the main and fundamental answer to the argument we are examining is that in the guise of a guarantee against restoration or against reaction, Plekhanov’s programme

actually advocates a deal with reaction. Just think. Do we not write our programme, and particularly the agrarian (peasant) programme, for the broad masses whom we want to lead? But what do we get? Some members of the Party, be they even leaders, will say that Zemstvos which have municipalised the land will be republics, fighting against the monarchy at the centre. In the programme, the agrarian revolution is directly and definitely linked with democratic local administration; but not by one word is it linked with complete democracy in the central government and state system! I ask you: What is to guide our rank-and-file Party workers in their everyday agitation and propaganda? Plekhanov's talk about local "republics"

fighting against the central monarchy, or the text of our new Party programme, in which the demand for land for the peasants is definitely linked only with democratic local administration, not with democratic central government and state system? Plekhanov's statements, muddled in themselves, will inevitably play the same role of a "misleading" slogan as the "celebrated" ("celebrated" in Plekhanov's opinion) slogan of "revolutionary local self-government". In practice, our Party programme remains the programme of a deal with reaction. If we take its real political significance in the present situation in Russia, and not the motives advanced by some of our speakers, it is not a Social-Democratic programme, but a Cadet programme. Some of our speakers' motives are of the very best, their intentions are most Social-Democratic; but the programme has turned out in practice to be a Cadet programme, filled with the spirit of a "deal" and not of a "peasant revolution" (incidentally, Plekhanov said that formerly we were afraid of the peasant revolution but now we must get rid of this fear).

Above, I examined the scientific significance of the argument about “guarantees against restoration”. I now come to its political significance, in the period of Dubasov constitutionalism and of the Cadet State Duma. The scientific significance of this argument is zero, or minus one. Its political significance is that it is a weapon borrowed from the Cadet arsenal and brings grist to the mill of the Cadets. Look around! Which trend in politics has made almost a monopoly of pointing to the danger of restoration? The Cadet trend. What answer have the Cadets given millions of times to our Party comrades who have pointed to the contradiction between the “democratic principles” of the Cadets and their monarchist, etc., programme? That to touch the monarchy means creating the danger of restoration. The Cadets have been shouting to the Social-Democrats in a thousand different sharps and fiats: “Don’t touch the monarchy, for you have no guarantee against restoration. Why create the danger of restoration, the danger of reaction? Far better to strike a bargain with reaction!” This is the sum and substance of the Cadets’ political wisdom, all their programme, all their tactics. And these are the logical outcome of the class position of the petty bourgeois, of the danger that democratic revolution carried through to the end represents for the bourgeoisie.

I will give only two examples in confirmation of the foregoing. In December 1905, *Narodnaya Svoboda*, the organ of Milyukov and Hessen, wrote that Moscow had proved that insurrection was possible; nevertheless, insurrection was fatal, not because it was hopeless, but because reaction would sweep away the gains of the insurrection (quoted in my pamphlet *Social-Democracy and the State Duma*). The other example. In *Proletary*, in 1905, I quoted an extract from an article by

Vinogradov in *Russkiye Vedomosti*. Vinogradov had expressed a desire that the Russian revolution should follow the lines of 1848-49 and not 1789-93; that is to say, that we should not have any victorious insurrections, that our revolution should not be carried to its complete fulfilment, that it should be cut short as early as possible by the treachery of the liberal bourgeoisie, by the latter's deal with the monarchy. He raised the bogey of restoration in the guise of the Prussian drill sergeant—without saying a word, of course, about such a “guarantee of revolution” as the German proletariat.

This argument about the absence of guarantees against restoration is a purely Cadet idea: it is the bourgeoisie's political weapon against the proletariat. The interests of the bourgeoisie force it into struggling to prevent the proletariat from completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution jointly with the revolutionary peasantry. In this struggle, the bourgeois philosophers and politicians inevitably clutch at historical arguments and examples from the past. In the past it always happened that the workers were bamboozled, that even the victory of the revolution was followed by restoration. Consequently, the same thing must happen here, says the bourgeoisie, naturally striving to undermine the faith of the Russian proletariat in its own strength and in the strength of European socialism. The sharpening of political contradictions and of the political struggle results in reaction, says the bourgeois for the edification of the workers: therefore, these contradictions must be blunted. Rather than run the risk of reaction coming after victory, it would be better not to fight for victory, but to strike a bargain with reaction.

Is it an accident that Plekhanov began to snatch at the ideological weapon that the bourgeoisie uses against the proletariat? No, this was inevitable after he had wrongly appraised the December uprising (“it was wrong to take up arms”) and, without calling a spade a spade, had begun, in his *Dnevnik*, to advocate that the workers’ party should support the Cadets. At the Congress this question was touched upon during the debate on another item of the agenda, when the question was raised as to why the bourgeoisie was praising Plekhanov. I shall deal with this point in its proper place; but here I will note that I did not elaborate the foregoing arguments at length but presented them in the most general outline. I said that our “guarantee against restoration” was the complete fulfilment of the revolution, and not a deal with reaction. And it is this, and this alone, that is emphasised in my agrarian programme which is entirely a programme of peasant uprising and of the complete fulfilment of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. For example, “peasant revolutionary committees” are the only line along which peasant uprising can advance (moreover, I do not counter- pose peasant committees to revolutionary power, in the way the Mensheviks draw a contrast between the latter and revolutionary self-government; I regard these committees as one of the instruments of such authority, an instrument that must be supplemented by other, central instruments, by a provisional revolutionary government and a national constituent assembly). This is the only formulation of the agrarian programme that can preclude a bourgeois-bureaucratic settlement of the agrarian question, a settlement by the Petrunkeviches, Rodichevs, Kaufmans and Kutlers.

Plekhanov could not but see this fundamental feature of my programme. He saw it and admitted it at the Congress. But (true to his nature) his admission was just another Demyan hash, or Plekhanov trash: oh, Lenin's programme contains the idea of seizing power. Lenin himself admits it. But that's just what is bad. It's Narodnaya Volya-ism. Lenin is reviving Narodnaya Volya-ism. Comrades, fight against the revival of Narodnaya Volya-ism! Lenin even talks about "the creative activity of the people". Isn't that Narodnaya Volya-ism? And so on, and so forth.

We Bolsheviks, both Voyinov and I, heartily thanked Plekhanov for these arguments. Arguments like these can only benefit us, and we welcome them. Ponder over this argument, comrades: "Since Lenin's programme contains the idea of seizing power, Lenin is a Narodnaya Volya-ist." Which programme are we discussing? The agrarian programme. Who is to seize power, according to this programme? The revolutionary peasantry. Does Lenin confuse the proletariat with the peasantry? Far from doing that, he singles it out in the third part of his programme, which (the third part) the Menshevik Congress copied in full in its resolution on tactics!

Good, isn't it? Plekhanov himself said that it is unbecoming for Marxists to be afraid of a peasant revolution. But at the same time, he fancies he can see Narodnaya Volya-ism in the seizure of power by the revolutionary peasants!! But how can a peasant revolution win if the revolutionary peasantry does not seize power?? Plekhanov has reduced his own arguments to absurdity. Having stepped on to a slope; he irresistibly rolls down. First he denied that it was possible for the proletariat to seize power in the present revolution. Now he denies that it is

possible for the revolutionary peasantry to seize power in the present revolution. But if neither the proletariat nor the revolutionary peasantry can seize power, then, logically, that power must remain in the hands of the tsar and of Dubasov. Or should the Cadets take power? But the Cadets do not want to seize power themselves, for they are in favour of retaining the monarchy, the standing army, the Upper Chamber and all the other delights.

Was I not right when I said at the Congress that Plekhanov's fear of seizing power is fear of the peasant revolution? Was not Voyinov right when he said that in his youth Plekhanov had been so scared by the Narodnaya Volya that he fancied he can see it even when he himself admits that a peasant revolution is inevitable, and when not a single Social-Democrat has any illusions as to peasant socialism? Was not Voyinov right when, in connection with the Menshevik resolution on armed uprising (Clause 1 of which starts with the admission that the task is "to wrest power from the autocratic government"), he ironically remarked at the Congress that to "seize power" means reviving the Narodnaya Volya, but to "wrest power" is true and profound Marxism? But really, it has turned out that in order to combat a Narodnaya Volya trend among the Social-Democrats, the Mensheviks have bestowed on our Party a programme which advocates the "wresting of power" —by the Cadets.

Of course, these outcries about Narodnaya Volya-ism did not surprise me in the least. I remember only too well that the opportunists in the Social-Democratic movement have always (ever since 1898-1900) raised this bogey against the revolutionary Social-Democrats. And Comrade Akimov, who at the Unity Congress made a brilliant speech in defence of Axelrod and the

Cadets, quite appropriately recalled this. I hope to return to this subject on another occasion in the literature.

A word about "the creative activity of the people". In what sense did I speak about this at the Congress? In the same sense as I speak about it in my pamphlet *The Victory of the Cadets and the Tasks of the Workers' Party* (this pamphlet was distributed among the delegates at the Congress). I contrast October-December 1905 to the present Cadet period and say that in the revolutionary period the creative activity of the people (the revolutionary peasants plus the proletarians) is richer and more productive than in the Cadet period. Plekhanov thinks that this is Narodnaya Volya-ism. I think that from the scientific point of view, Plekhanov's opinion is an evasion of the highly important question of appraising the period of October-December 1905 (it never occurred to him to analyse the forms of the movement of this period in his *Dnevnik*; he confined himself to moralising!). From the political point of view, it is merely additional proof of how close Plekhanov's tactics are to those of Mr. Blank, and of the Cadets in general.

To finish with the agrarian question, I will deal with the last of the important arguments. Plekhanov said: "Lenin is a dreamer; he has fantastic ideas about the election of government officials by the people, and so forth. It is not difficult to draw up a programme for such a favourable contingency. Try to draw one up for an unfavourable contingency. Draw up your programme so as to have it 'well shod on all four hoofs'."

Undoubtedly, this argument contains an idea to which every Marxist should pay the strictest attention. Indeed, it would be a very poor programme that allowed for only a favourable



contingency. But it is from this standpoint, I said in reply to Plekhanov, that my programme is obviously superior to Maslov's. To satisfy oneself of this, one has only to remember that there is such a thing as the renting of land. What distinguishes the capitalist (and semi-capitalist) mode of production in agriculture? Everywhere it is the renting of land. Does this apply to Russia? Yes, on a very large scale. And Comrade John was wrong when, in replying to me, he said that my programme contained an absurdity, namely, that the renting of land remains after the landed estates are confiscated. On this point, Comrade John was thrice wrong: first, the whole of the first part of my programme speaks of the first steps of the peasant revolution (seizure of the land pending the convocation of a national constituent assembly); hence, in my programme, the renting of land does not "remain after" confiscation, but is taken for granted, because it is a fact. Secondly, confiscation means transferring the ownership of land to other hands, and in itself, the transference of ownership, does not in the least affect the renting of land. Thirdly, as everybody knows, peasant land and allotment land are also being rented.

See how things stand as regards being "well shod on all four hoofs", as regards taking the worst as well as the best possible conditions into account. Maslov, with a majestic gesture, completely strikes out the renting of land. He assumes straightway a revolution that will abolish the renting of land. As I pointed out, this assumption is absolutely absurd from the point of view of "unpleasant reality" and of having to take it into account. Indeed, the whole of the first part of my programme is entirely based on the assumption of "unpleasant reality", against which the revolutionary peasants are rebelling. Therefore in my programme the renting of land does not vanish

into the realm of shades (the abolition of the renting of land in capitalist society is a reform no less, if not more, "fantastic", from the point of view of Plekhanov's "common sense", than the abolition of the standing army, etc.). Hence, I take "unpleasant reality" into account much more seriously than Maslov, while I preach pleasant reality to the peasants, not in terms of a Cadet deal (local republics versus the central monarchy), but in terms of the complete victory of the revolution and the winning of a really democratic republic.

I especially emphasised at the Congress that it was particularly important to have this element of political propaganda in the agrarian programme; and in all probability I shall have to deal with this point again more than once in the literature. At the Congress we Bolsheviks were told: we have a political programme, and that is where we ought to talk about a republic. This argument shows that those who made it have not thought out the question at all. True, we have a general programme, in which we formulate our principles (the first section of the Party programme) and we have special programmes: political, workers', and peasants' programmes. Nobody proposes that a reservation should also be made in the workers' section of the programme (eight-hour day, etc) regarding the special political conditions required for the various reforms proposed in it. Why? Because the eight-hour day and similar reforms must inevitably become instruments of progress under all political conditions. But is it necessary to make special reservations as regards political conditions in the peasant programme? Yes, because the very best redistribution of the land may become an instrument of retrogression under the regime of the Trepovs and Dubasovs. Take even Maslov's programme. It advocates the transfer of the land to the

democratic state and to democratic local self-government bodies. Thus, although the Party has a political programme, Maslov's programme makes special reservations as regards the political conditions for present-day agrarian reforms. Hence there can be no argument about the necessity of making reservations as regards special political conditions for agrarian demands. The point at issue is: is it permissible, either from the standpoint of science or of consistent proletarian democracy, to link a radical agrarian revolution, not with the election of government officials by the people, not with a republic, but with "democracy" in general, i.e., with Cadet democracy as well, which today, whether we like it or not, is the principal and most wide spread form of pseudo-democracy, and the most influential in the press and in "society". I think that this is not permissible. I predict that the mistake in our agrarian programme will have to be, and will be, put right by practical experience, that is to say. the political situation will compel our propagandists and agitators in their fight against the Cadets to emphasise, not Cadet democracy, but the election of government officials by the people, and a republic.

As for the programme which advocates the division of the land, I expressed my attitude towards it at the Congress in the following terms: municipalisation is wrong and harmful; division, as a programme, is mistaken, but not harmful. Therefore I, of course, am closer to those who are for division, and I am prepared to vote for Borisov as against Maslov. In the first place, division cannot be harmful, because the peasants will agree to it; and in the second place, it does not have to be made conditional on the consistent reorganisation of the state. Why is it mistaken? Because it one-sidedly regards the peasant movement only in the light of the past and present and gives

no consideration to the future. In arguing against nationalisation, the “divisionists” say: when you hear the peasants talking about nationalisation, you must understand that it is not what they want. Don’t pay attention to words, but to the substance. The peasants want private ownership, the right to sell land; and their talk about “God’s land”, and so forth, is merely an ideological cloak for their desire to take the land away from the landlords.

In my answer to the “divisionists” I said: all that is true; but our disagreements only begin where you think the question is settled. You repeat the mistake made by the old materialists, concerning whom Marx said: the old materialists have interpreted the world, but we must change it. Similarly, the advocates of division rightly understand what the peasants say about nationalisation, they rightly interpret what they say; but the point is that they do not know how to convert this correct interpretation into an instrument for changing the world, into an instrument of progress. We are not suggesting that we should impose nationalisation on the peasants instead of division (Variant A in my programme removes all ground for such absurd ideas if they do occur to any one). What we are suggesting is that a socialist, in ruthlessly exposing the peasants’ petty-bourgeois illusions about “God’s land”, should be able to show them the road of progress. I told Plekhanov at the Congress, and I will repeat it a thousand times, that the practical workers will vulgarise the present programme just as they vulgarised the demand for the restitution of the cut-off lands; they will convert a minor mistake into a major one. They will try to convince the crowds of peasants—who are shouting that the land is no body’s, the land is God’s, the land is the state’s—of the advantages of division, and by that will discredit

and vulgarise Marxism. This is not what we must tell the peasants. We must say: there is a great deal of truth in what you say about the land being God's, nobody's or the state's; but we must look at the truth very closely. If the land is the state's and Trepov is at the head of the state, then the land will be Trepov's. Is that what you want? Do you want the land to pass into the hands of the Rodichevs and Petrunkeviches if they should succeed in capturing power, and consequently, the state, as they would like to do? Of course, the peasants will answer: no, we don't want that. We will not surrender the land taken from the landlords either to the Trepovs or to the Rodichevs. If that is so, we must say, all government officials must be elected by the people, the standing army must be abolished, we must have a republic. Only then will the transfer of the land to the "state", to "the people", be a useful and not a harmful measure. And from the strictly scientific point of view, from the point of view of the conditions of development of capitalism in general, we must undoubtedly say if we do not want to differ with Volume III of Capital—that the nationalisation of land is possible in bourgeois society, that it promotes economic development, facilitates competition and the influx of capital into agriculture, reduces the price of grain, etc. Hence, in a period of real peasant revolution, given fairly well-developed capitalism, we cannot in any circumstances adopt a crude and sweepingly negative attitude towards nationalisation. That would be narrow, one-sided, crude and short-sighted. We should only explain to the peasants what political conditions are necessary for nationalisation to make it a useful measure, and then proceed to show its bourgeois character (as is done in Section 3 of my programme, now incorporated in the resolution of the Unity Congress).

In concluding my narrative of the arguments about the agrarian question at the Congress, I will mention the amendments that were proposed to Maslov's draft programme. When the question of which draft to take as a basis was voted on, Maslov's draft at first obtained only 52 votes, that is, less than half. About 40 voted in favour of division (I voted with the "divisionists" to avoid splitting the vote against municipalisation). Only when a second vote was taken did Maslov's draft obtain 60-odd votes, as all the waverers voted for it, to save the Party from being left without any agrarian programme at all.

One of the amendments that the Mensheviks voted down was aimed at a more precise definition of the term: democratic state. We proposed the formulation: "a democratic republic fully guaranteeing the sovereignty of the people". This amendment was based on the idea, outlined above, that without complete democratisation of the central state authority, municipalisation would be positively harmful, and might degenerate into a Cadet agrarian reform. The amendment caused a storm. I was not in the hall at the time. I remember that as I was passing through an adjoining room on my way back to the hall, I was struck by the extraordinary noise in the "lobbies" and heard people jesting, saying: "Comrade John has proclaimed a republic!" "He could find no guarantees against restoration!" "Comrade Plekhanov has restored the monarchy."

As I was told afterwards, what happened was this. The Mensheviks, thin-skinned as usual, took offence at this amendment, which they regarded as an attempt to prove that they were opportunists, that they were opposed to a republic. There were angry speeches and shouts. The Bolsheviks also got

heated, of course. They demanded a vote by roll-call. This stirred passion to fever heat. Comrade John was embarrassed and being loath to create discord—he was not at all “against a republic”, of course—he got up and announced that he would withdraw his formulation and support the amendment. The Bolsheviks applauded the “proclamation of a republic”. But Comrade Plekhanov, or some other Menshevik, intervened, the argument started afresh, a demand was made for another vote, and the “monarchy was restored” by—according to what I was told—a matter of 38 votes to 34 (evidently many of the delegates were absent from the hall, or abstained from voting).

Of the amendments that were accepted, I must mention the substitution of the term “confiscation” for the term “alienation”. Then the “municipalisers” had, after all, to make a concession to the “divisionists”, and Comrade Kostrov proposed an amendment which in certain conditions permitted of division as well. Thus, instead of Maslov’s original programme, the result was, as someone wittily put it at the Congress, a “castrated” programme. It is, in effect, a blend of nationalisation (certain lands are to become national property), municipalisation (part of the land is to be transferred to large local self-government bodies), and lastly, division. To this must be added that neither the programme nor the resolution on tactics specifies when we are to support municipalisation and when division. The upshot was a programme, not well shod on all four hoofs, but with all four shoes loose.

Lenin

## **The Army and the People**

Ekho, No. 10, July 2, 1906.

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 85-87.

All the newspapers continue to teem with reports about the movement among the armed forces. It is difficult to calculate now in how many regiments, or military units, there have been unrest and revolts during the two months of the Duma's "work". In regard to military affairs, too, the notorious peaceful parliamentary activity which naïve, not always naïve, by the way, bourgeois politicians have invented, has resulted in methods of struggle and forms of the movement that are by no means peaceful, and by no means parliamentary.

In publishing facts and reports about the movement among the armed forces, our liberal-bourgeois press usually uses this material only for the purpose of intimidating the government. The Cadet newspapers usually argue as follows: the conflagration is spreading. Look out, beware, gentlemen, members of the Cabinet. Yield to us before it is too late. And the Cabinet Ministers retaliate (through the medium of *Novoye Vremya* and other servile newspapers) by trying to intimidate the Cadets. They say: Look, gentlemen, the conflagration is spreading. Come to an understanding with us before it is too late. Both the Cadets and the government regard the **movement among the armed forces as proof of the necessity of taking immediate measures to extinguish the revolution**. Their short-sighted outlook, which is largely prompted by their selfish interests, prevents them from seeing that this movement is a most important index of the real character of our revolution, of



its real aims. Both the Cadets and the government are each pursuing their own selfish interests in the question of the army. The pogrom-mongers need the army as an instrument for pogroms. The liberal bourgeoisie needs it to protect the bourgeois monarchy from the “excessive” encroachments and demands of the peasants, and particularly of the workers. The vulgar, hypocritical and false doctrine that “the army must be kept out of politics” is particularly convenient for concealing the true designs of the bourgeoisie in this field.

But look at the character of the unrest in the armed forces, at the demands the soldiers are making. Try to regard the soldiers who risk being shot for “insubordination” as human beings who have their own, independent interests, **as part of the people, as men who are expressing the urgent needs of certain classes in our society.** You will see that these soldiers—who stand closest to the politically least developed peasantry, who are drilled, downtrodden and browbeaten by the officers—that these “dumb brutes” are going immeasurably further in their demands than the Cadet programmes!

The Cadets, and the Cadet Duma, like to claim that they are voicing the demands of the people. Many simpletons believe this. But look at the facts. Look at the demands the broad masses of the people are actually making, at the struggle they are actually waging, and you will see that the Cadets and the Cadet Duma are curtailing and distorting the demands of the people.

Look at the facts. The men of the Preobrazhensky Regiment put forward the demand: support the Trudovik Group in the struggle for land and freedom. Please note: not support the Duma, but support the Trudovik Group; the Group which the Cadets accused of “grossly insulting” the State Duma by

introducing the Land Bill of the 33 deputies, which proposed to abolish the private ownership of land! Obviously, the soldiers are going much further than the Cadets. These “dumb brutes” want more than the enlightened bourgeoisie....

An infantry regiment in St. Petersburg demanded the following: “... we soldiers must be allowed to elect our deputies to the State Duma to voice our soldiers’ needs.” **The soldiers do not want to keep out of politics.** The soldiers do not agree with the Cadets. **The soldiers are advancing a demand that obviously amounts to the abolition of the caste army, of the army that is isolated from the people,** and its replacement by an army of free and equal citizens. **Now this is exactly the same thing as the abolition of the standing army and the arming of the people.**

The soldiers in the Warsaw Area are demanding a constituent assembly. They are demanding freedom of assembly and of association for soldiers “without the consent or presence of officers”. They are demanding that “military service be performed in the soldiers’ native districts”, the right to wear civilian dress when off duty, and the right to elect soldiers’ representatives to supervise the soldiers’ mess and to act as judges to try offences committed by soldiers.

Does this in any way resemble the Cadets’ conception of army reform? Or does it come very close to the institution of a national and fully democratic militia?

The soldiers are voicing the real demands of the people, demands that are common to the overwhelming majority of the people, far better than those gentlemen, the enlightened bourgeoisie. The character and the main features of the

movement among the armed forces express far more accurately the essence of the main and fundamental forms of the struggle for emancipation under present conditions than the tactics of the Cadets. The movement of the workers and peasants confirms this even more strongly. Our duty is not to attempt to squeeze this movement into the narrow limits of paltry Cadet politics, not to degrade it by adapting it to fit paltry Cadet slogans, but to support, expand and develop it in the spirit of genuine, consistent, determined and militant democracy.

Lenin

### **The Proletariat and its Ally in the Russian Revolution**

December 10 (23), 1906

Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 365-375.

Such is the heading Karl Kautsky gave to the last chapter of his article "The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution", published in the latest numbers of *Neue Zeit*. As in the case of other works of Kautsky's, a Russian translation of this article will undoubtedly soon be published. This is an article that all Social-Democrats should certainly read, not because a German theoretician of Marxism can be expected to supply answers to the current problems of our tactics (the Russian Social-Democrats would not be worth much if they waited for such answers from afar), but because Kautsky gives us a remarkably logical analysis of the underlying principles of the whole tactics of the Social-Democrats in the Russian bourgeois revolution. To all members of our Party, to all class-conscious workers, overburdened with the humdrum tasks of everyday work, stunned with the hackneyed banalities of unscrupulous bourgeois-liberal scribblers, such works by thoughtful, well-informed and experienced Social-Democrats are especially valuable, for they help us to rise above everyday matters, to get an insight into the fundamental questions of the tactics of the proletariat, and to obtain a clearer idea of the theoretical tendencies and the actual mode of thought of the various trends in the Social-Democratic movement.

Kautsky's latest article is particularly important in this respect, for it enables us to coin pare the character of the questions put

by Plekhanov to Kautsky (among other foreign socialists) with Kautsky's method of answering some of these questions.

Plekhanov, whom the Cadet Melgunov, in today's *Tovarishch* (December 10), aptly called the "former leader and theoretician of Russian Social-Democracy", asked Kautsky: (1) What is the "general character" of the Russian revolution: bourgeois or socialist. (2) What should be the attitude of the Social-Democrats towards the bourgeois democrats? and (3) What tactics should the Social-Democrats adopt in the Duma elections.

The leader of the Russian opportunists was angling for Kautsky's approval of blocs with the Cadets. The leader of the German revolutionary Social-Democrats guessed that the questioner was trying to suggest his reply on a point not directly mentioned in the questions, and preferred to answer Plekhanov with a dispassionate, circumstantial, propagandist explanation of how a Marxist should formulate questions concerning bourgeois revolution and bourgeois democracy in general. Let us examine Kautsky's explanation closely.

It would be superficial to regard the Russian revolution merely as a movement for the overthrow of absolutism. It must be regarded as the awakening of the mass of the people to independent political activity. Such is Kautsky's main premise.

This means the following. It would be a superficial analysis of the tasks of the Social-Democratic movement that merely pointed to the attainment of political liberty (the overthrow of absolutism) and to the "common" character of this task for various classes. It is necessary to examine the position of the masses, their objective conditions of life, the different classes

among them, the real nature of the liberty for which they are in fact striving. We must not deduce from a common phraseology that there are common interests, nor must we conclude from "political liberty" in general that there must be a joint struggle of different classes. On the contrary, by a precise analysis of the position and interests of the various classes, we must ascertain how far, and in what respects, their fight for freedom, their aspirations for freedom, are identical, or coincide (or whether they coincide at all). We must reason, not like the Cadets, not like the liberals, not like Prokopovich & Co., but like Marxists.

Next. If our point of departure is the interests of the masses, then the crux of the Russian revolution is the agrarian question. We must judge of the defeat or victory of the revolution not from government violence and the manifestations of "reaction" (which engages all the attention of many of our Cadet-like Social-Democrats), but from the position of the masses in their struggle for land.

Agriculture is the basis of the national economy of Russia. Agriculture is declining, the peasants are ruined. Even liberals (Kautsky quotes the Cadets Petrunkevich and Manuilov) realise this. Kautsky, however, is not content with pointing to the unanimity of the liberals and the socialists on this point. He does not let this lead him to the Cadet conclusion: "Therefore, the Social-Democrats should support the Cadets." He at once proceeds to analyse the class interests concerned and shows that the liberals will inevitably be half-hearted in regard to the agrarian question. While admitting the decline of agriculture in general, they fail to understand the capitalist character of agriculture and the resulting problem of the special causes which retard this capitalist, and not some other, evolution.

And Kautsky minutely analyses one of these special causes, namely, the shortage of capital in Russia. Foreign capital plays a particularly important part in our country. This retards the capitalist development of agriculture. Kautsky's conclusion is: "The decline of agriculture, alongside the growing strength of the industrial proletariat, is the main cause of the present Russian revolution."

You see: Kautsky makes a careful and conscientious study of the specific character of the bourgeois revolution in Russia and does not evade it as the Cadets and the Cadet-like Social-Democrats do by doctrinaire references to the "general character" of every bourgeois revolution.

Next, Kautsky analyses the solution of the agrarian question. Here, too, he is not content with the stock liberal phrase: You see, even the Cadet Duma is in favour of land for the peasants (see the writings of Plekhanov). No. He shows that the mere increase in size of holdings is no good to the peasants unless they obtain enormous financial assistance. The autocracy is incapable of really helping the peasantry. And the liberals? They demand redemption payments. But such compensation can only ruin the peasants. "Confiscation of the large estates" (Kautsky's italics) is the only way by which the peasant's landholding can be substantially increased without imposing new burdens upon him. But the liberals are most emphatically opposed to confiscation.

**This argument of Kautsky's is worth considering in detail.** Anyone at all familiar with the party shadings in the revolutionary circles of Russia knows that on this question of redemption payments the opportunists of both revolutionary parties have not only been contaminated with the liberal view

but have also distorted what Kautsky says in this connection. Our Mensheviks, at the Unity Congress and at a number of meetings in St. Petersburg (e.g., Dan in his reports on the Congress to the St. Petersburg workers in the summer), criticised as wrong that clause of the agrarian programme which was adopted with the support of the Bolsheviks, who categorically insisted on the substitution of "confiscation" for "alienation" (see Maslov's original draft). Our Mensheviks said this was wrong, that only vulgar revolutionaries could insist on confiscation, that for the social revolution it was unimportant whether there was compensation or not, and in this connection they referred to Kautsky's pamphlet *The Social Revolution*, in which, with reference to the socialist revolution in general, Kautsky explains that compensation is permissible. And the Socialist-Revolutionary Mensheviks, and the semi-Cadet Popular Socialists, have used exactly the same arguments to defend their turn towards liberalism on the question of compensation (in one of the issues of *Narodno-Sotsialisticheskoye Obozreniye*), and they, too, cited Kautsky.

Kautsky is probably unaware of the behaviour of the Mensheviks on this question, or of the significance of the policy pursued by the Popular Socialists and their group. But in his formulation of the question of compensation in the Russian revolution he has again given all our opportunists an excellent lesson on how one should not argue. It is wrong to draw a conclusion about compensation in Russia in 1905-06 from general premises about the relation between compensation and confiscation in various revolutions, or in the socialist revolution in general. One must proceed the other way round. One must ascertain which classes in Russia gave rise to the special features of our formulation of the question of compensation and



deduce the political significance of this question in this revolution from the interests of these classes, and only then decide whether the views held by the different parties are right or wrong.

It is quite obvious that, as a result of taking this course, Kautsky did not blur the difference between the liberals and the revolutionaries on the question of compensation (as the Plekhanovites and Popular Socialists always do) but revealed the depth of this difference. Plekhanov, in putting his questions to Kautsky, concealed the difference between the "opposition" and "revolutionary" movements by avoiding concrete questions. Kautsky swept Plekhanov's concealment aside, brought the important question of compensation into the light of day, and showed Plekhanov that not only the Black Hundreds, but the liberals as well, are "in their own way" fighting against the revolutionary movement of the peasants.

Kautsky writes: "**Without the abolition of the standing army, and of naval armament construction**, without the confiscation of the entire property of the royal family and of the monasteries, without state bankruptcy, without the confiscation of the big monopolies, insofar as they are still in private hands, the railways, oilfields, mines, iron and steel works, etc., it will be impossible to obtain the enormous sums necessary to extricate Russian agriculture from its terrible plight."

Recall the customary Menshevik talk about the utopian and visionary ideas of the Bolsheviks; for instance, Plekhanov's speeches at the Congress on the subject of the demand that cardinal agrarian demands should be linked **with cardinal political issues** (abolition of the standing army, election of officials by the people, etc.). Plekhanov scoffed at the idea of

abolishing the standing army and of the people electing government officials! Plekhanov's "Sovremennaya Zhizn" approves the line of Nashe Dyelo, calling political opportunism "political materialism" (??), counterposing it to "revolutionary romanticism".

It turns out that the circumspect Kautsky goes much further than the most extreme Bolshevik and makes far more "utopian" and "romantic" (from the opportunist standpoint) demands in connection with the agrarian question!

Kautsky demands not only the confiscation of the landlords' estates, not only the abolition of the standing army, but also the confiscation of big capitalist monopolies!

And Kautsky quite logically observes immediately after the above-quoted passage: it is clear, however, that **the liberals are frightened by such gigantic tasks**, such radical changes in existing property relations. Basically, they want no more than to continue the present policy without encroaching on the basis for the exploitation of Russia by foreign capital. **They are firmly in favour of a standing army**, which alone, in their opinion, can maintain order and save their property..."

Plekhanov protests that he has not been treated fairly. He only asked Kautsky's opinion on the question of supporting the opposition parties in the Duma elections, and he was given a reply on a different subject! Duma elections and—the abolition of the standing army! What a freak of anarchist fancy, what revolutionary romanticism instead of the "political materialism" demanded by the opportunist!

But Kautsky continues his "tactless" criticism of the liberals in answer to the question about the Duma elections. He accuses

them of wanting to go on extorting billions of rubles from the Russian people for armaments and interest on loans. "They [the liberals] imagine that the establishment of a Duma will suffice to conjure billions of rubles out of the air." "Liberalism is just as incapable [of satisfying the Russian peasants] as tsarism." Kautsky devotes a special chapter to explaining the attitude of liberalism to Social-Democracy. He points out that in Russia there are no bourgeois democrats of the old type, among whom the urban petty bourgeoisie occupied a primary place. In Russia, unlike the West, the urban petty bourgeoisie "will never be a reliable support of the revolutionary parties".

"In Russia the firm backbone of a bourgeois democracy is absent". Kautsky draws this conclusion both from an analysis of the special position of the urban petty bourgeoisie and from the consideration that the class antagonism between the capitalists and the proletariat is now far more developed in Russia than it was in the period of bourgeois revolutions of the "old type". This conclusion is of enormous importance. It forms the very kernel of Kautsky's "amendment" to Plekhanov's formulation of the question, an amendment which is virtually a radically different formulation.

In his questions Plekhanov employs the old types of bourgeois democracy, and nothing more. He uses a hackneyed term, quite forgetting to determine on the basis of Russian data the degree of democracy, and its stability, etc. possessed by the different strata that are now coming forward in Russia as bourgeois democrats. It is Kautsky's merit that he pointed to this basic omission of Plekhanov's and proceeded to explain to him in a practical manner the method which must be applied in order to reach a real understanding of bourgeois democracy in Russia.

And through Kautsky's skilful analysis the outlines of the vital social forces of Russia begin to emerge from the old, hackneyed formula. the urban petty bourgeoisie; the landlord class, with its penny-worth of liberalism and pounds-worth of support of the counter-revolutionary Black Hundreds, the capitalists, with their mortal dread of the proletariat; and, finally, the peasantry.

The nebulous question of the attitude to be adopted to wards "bourgeois democracy" (of the type found in France in the forties of the last century?) has disappeared. The fog has been dispelled. It was this fog that our Prokopoviches, Kuskovas, Izgoyevs, Struves and other liberals used to cloud the vision of the people, and Plekhanov is now playing into their hands. In place of the fog of old stereotyped formulas, a genuine Marxist analysis has shown us the quite special relationships of the democracy of the various strata and elements of the Russian bourgeoisie.

By means of this analysis Kautsky determines that peculiar relation between Russian liberalism and the revolutionary character of the peasants, which the Cadets deliberately conceal, and to which many Social-Democrats are blind! "The more the peasants become revolutionary, the more do the big landowners become reactionary, the more does liberalism cease to find in them the support it previously had, the more unstable become the liberal parties, and the more the liberal professors and lawyers in the towns shift-to the right, so as not to lose all connection with their previous mainstay." This process "is only accelerating the bankruptcy of liberalism".

Only after laying bare the roots of this bankruptcy of liberalism in the present Russian revolution does Kautsky proceed to give a direct answer to Plekhanov's questions. Before answering the

question whether we should support the “opposition”, we must understand (Kautsky explains) the class foundations and the class nature of this “opposition” (or Russian liberalism), and in what relation the development of the revolution and of the revolutionary classes stands to the position and interests of liberalism. In elucidating this at the outset, Kautsky proceeds, firstly, to reveal the bankruptcy of liberalism, and only then to explain to the reader the question that interests Plekhanov: Should we support the opposition in the Duma elections? It is not surprising that Kautsky had no need to answer two-thirds of Plekhanov’s questions....

Although Kautsky’s answers do not satisfy Plekhanov, they will help the rank-and-file Russian Social-Democrats to think properly.

(1) Is the revolution in Russia a bourgeois or a socialist revolution?

That is not the way to put the question, says Kautsky. That is the old stereotyped way of putting it. Of course, the Russian revolution is not a socialist revolution. The socialist dictatorship of the proletariat (its “undivided sway”) is out of the question. But neither is it a bourgeois revolution, for “the bourgeoisie is not one of the driving forces of the present revolutionary movement in Russia”. “Wherever the proletariat comes out independently, the bourgeoisie ceases to be a revolutionary class.”

And Kautsky declares with a vehemence even greater than the “tactlessness” the Bolsheviks usually display towards the liberals, that our bourgeoisie fears revolution more than reaction; that it hates absolutism because it engenders

revolution; that it wants political freedom in order to stop the revolution! (And Plekhanov, in his questions, naively identified the struggle of the opposition against the old order with the struggle against the government's attempts to crush the revolutionary movement!)

This first answer of Kautsky's is a brilliant vindication of the fundamental principles of Bolshevik tactics. Beginning with the Geneva newspapers *Vperyod* and *Proletary*, and continuing with the pamphlet *Two Tactics*, the Russian Bolsheviks have always regarded as the main issue in their struggle against the Mensheviks the Right-wing Social-Democrats' distortion of the concept: "bourgeois revolution". We have said hundreds of times and have backed our statements with innumerable declarations by the Mensheviks, that to interpret the category "bourgeois revolution" in the sense of recognising the leadership and guiding role of the bourgeoisie in the Russian revolution is to vulgarise Marxism. A bourgeois revolution in spite of the instability of the bourgeoisie, by paralysing the instability of the bourgeoisie—that is how the Bolsheviks formulated the fundamental task of the Social-Democrats in the revolution.

Kautsky's analysis satisfies us completely. He has fully confirmed our contention that we are defending the position of revolutionary Social-Democracy against opportunism, and not creating any "peculiar" Bolshevik trend, and this confirmation is the more valuable for having been given by expounding the essence of the matter, and not by a mere staff officer's "endorsement" of this or that group.

(2) Kautsky not only considers it "quite possible" that "in the course of the revolution victory will fall to the lot of the Social-

Democratic Party", but declares also that it is the duty of the Social-Democrats "to inspire their supporters with this confidence in victory, for it is impossible to fight successfully if one renounces victory before hand".

This conclusion of Kautsky's is a second brilliant vindication of Bolshevik tactics. Anyone who is at all familiar with the publications of the two trends in the Social-Democratic movement must know that the Mensheviks have most strenuously disputed the possibility and expediency of a Social-Democratic victory in the present Russian revolution. As far back as the spring of 1905, the Mensheviks at their conference (which Plekhanov, Axelrod and others attended) adopted a resolution saying that the Social-Democratic Party must not strive to win power. And since then this idea that the Social-Democrats cannot strive for the victory of Social-Democracy in the bourgeois revolution has run like a red (or black?) thread through the whole literature and the whole policy of Menshevism.

This policy is opportunism. The victory of Social-Democracy in the present Russian revolution is quite possible. It is our duty to inspire all adherents of the workers' party with confidence in this victory; it is impossible to fight success fully if one renounces victory beforehand.

These simple and obvious truths, which have been obscured by Plekhanov's sophistry and scholasticism, must be pondered over and mastered by the whole of our Party.

(3) To imagine that "all the classes and parties which are striving for political freedom have simply to work together in

order to achieve it", means "seeing only the political surface of events".

This is the third vindication of Bolshevism. A mere reference to the fact that the Cadets "are fighting for freedom in their own way" is not enough to justify joint action with them. This is the ABC of Marxism, which Plekhanov, Axelrod and their admirers have temporarily obscured.

(4) Which class can help the Social-Democratic proletariat to achieve victory in the present revolution, can support the proletariat and determine the limits of the immediately realisable changes? In Kautsky's opinion, this class is the peasantry. Only this class has "stable, common economic interests with the proletariat throughout the whole period of the revolution". "The common interests of the industrial proletariat and the peasants are the basis of the revolutionary strength of Russian Social-Democracy and of the possibility of its victory; but at the same time these common interests determine the limits within which this victory can be utilised".

This means: not the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, but the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. In other words, Kautsky has formulated the old premise underlying the whole tactics of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, as distinguished from both the opportunists and the "enthusiasts". Marx said that every genuine and complete victory of a revolution can only be a dictatorship, having in mind, of course, the dictatorship (i.e., unrestricted power) of the masses over the few, and not vice versa. But the important thing for us, of course, is not any particular formulation of their tactics by the Bolsheviks, but the essence of these tactics, which Kautsky has entirely endorsed.



Anyone who wants to think like a Marxist and not like a Cadet about the role of the proletariat in our revolution, and about its possible and necessary “ally”, must come round to the views of revolutionary and not opportunist Social Democracy on the principles of proletarian tactics.

Leon Trotsky

### **Our Revolution 1907**

The history of the Soviet is a history of fifty days. The Soviet was constituted on October 18th; its session was interrupted by a military detachment of the government on December 3rd. Between those two dates the Soviet lived and struggled.

What was the substance of this institution? What enabled it in this short period to take an honorable place in the history of the Russian proletariat, in the history of the Russian Revolution?

The Soviet organized the masses, conducted political strikes, led political demonstrations, tried to arm the workingmen. But other revolutionary organizations did the same things. The substance of the Soviet was its effort to become an organ of public authority. The proletariat on one hand, the reactionary press on the other, have called the Soviet "a labor government"; this only reflects the fact that the Soviet was in reality an embryo of a revolutionary government. In so far as the Soviet was in actual possession of authoritative power, it made use of it; in so far as the power was in the hands of the military and bureaucratic monarchy, the Soviet fought to obtain it.

Prior to the Soviet, there had been revolutionary organizations among the industrial workingmen, mostly of a Social-Democratic nature. But those were organizations among the proletariat; their immediate aim was to influence the masses. The Soviet is an organization of the proletariat; its aim is to fight for revolutionary power.

At the same time, the Soviet was an organized expression of the mill of the proletariat as a class. In its fight for power the Soviet

applied such methods as were naturally determined by the character of the proletariat as a class: its part in production; its numerical strength; its social homogeneity. In its fight for power the Soviet has combined the direction of all the social activities of the working class, including decisions as to conflicts between individual representatives of capital and labor. This combination was by no means an artificial tactical attempt: it was a natural consequence of the situation of a class which, consciously developing and broadening its fight for its immediate interests, had been compelled by the logic of events to assume a leading position in the revolutionary struggle for power.

The main weapon of the Soviet was a political strike of the masses. The power of the strike lies in disorganizing the power of the government. The greater the "anarchy" created by a strike, the nearer its victory. This is true only where "anarchy" is not being created by anarchic actions. The class that puts into motion, day in and day out, the industrial apparatus and the governmental apparatus; the class that is able, by a sudden stoppage of work, to paralyze both industry and government, must be organized enough not to fall the first victim of the very "anarchy" it has created. The more effective the disorganization of government caused by a strike, the more the strike organization is compelled to assume governmental functions.

The Council of Workmen's Delegates introduces a free press. It organizes street patrols to secure the safety of the citizens. It takes over, to a greater or less extent, the post office, the telegraph, and the railroads. It makes an effort to introduce the eight hour workday. Paralyzing the autocratic government by

a strike, it brings its own democratic order into the life of the working city population.

After January 9th the revolution had shown its power over the minds of the working masses. On June 14th, through the revolt of the Potyom'kin Tavritchesky it had shown that it was able to become a material force. In the October strike it had shown that it could disorganize the enemy, paralyze his will and utterly humiliate him. By organizing Councils of Workmen's Deputies all over the country, it showed that it was able to create authoritative power. Revolutionary authority can be based only on active revolutionary force. Whatever our view on the further development of the Russian revolution, it is a fact that so far no social class besides the proletariat has manifested readiness to uphold a revolutionary authoritative power. The first act of the revolution was an encounter in the streets of the proletariat with the monarchy; the first serious victory of the revolution was achieved through the class-weapon of the proletariat, the political strike; the first nucleus of a revolutionary government was a proletarian representation. The Soviet is the first democratic power in modern Russian history. The Soviet is the organized power of the masses themselves over their component parts. This is a true, unadulterated democracy, without a two-chamber system, without a professional bureaucracy, with the right of the voters to recall their deputy any moment and to substitute another for him. Through its members, through deputies elected by the workingmen, the Soviet directs all the social activities of the proletariat as a whole and of its various parts; it outlines the steps to be taken by the proletariat, it gives them a slogan and a banner. This art of directing the activities of the masses on the basis of organized self-government, is here applied for the first time on Russian

soil. Absolutism ruled the masses, but it did not direct them. It put mechanical barriers against the living creative forces of the masses, and within those barriers it kept the restless elements of the nation in an iron bond of oppression. The only mass absolutism ever directed was the army. But that was not directing, it was merely commanding. In recent years, even the directing of this atomized and hypnotized military mass has been slipping out of the hands of absolutism. Liberalism never had power enough to command the masses, or initiative enough to direct them. Its attitude towards mass-movements, even if they helped liberalism directly, was the same as towards awe-inspiring natural phenomenon, earthquakes or volcanic eruptions. The proletariat appeared on the battlefield of the revolution as a self-reliant aggregate, totally independent from bourgeois liberalism.

The Soviet was a class organization, this was the source of its fighting power. It was crushed in the first period of its existence not by lack of confidence on the part of the masses in the cities, but by the limitations of a purely urban revolution, by the relatively passive attitude of the village, by the backwardness of the peasant element of the army. The Soviet's position among the city population was as strong as could be.

The Soviet was not an official representative of the entire half million of the working population in the capital; its organization embraced about two hundred thousand, chiefly industrial workers; and though its direct and indirect political influence was of a much wider range, there were thousands and thousands of proletarians (in the building trade, among domestic servants, day laborers, drivers) who were hardly, if at all, influenced by the Soviet. There is no doubt, however, that

the Soviet represented, the interests of all these proletarian masses. There were but few adherents of the Black Hundred in the factories, and their number dwindled hour by hour. The proletarian masses of Petersburg were solidly behind the Soviet. Among the numerous intellectuals of Petersburg the Soviet had more friends than enemies. Thousands of students recognized the political leadership of the Soviet and ardently supported it in its decisions. Professional Petersburg was entirely on the side of the Soviet. The support by the Soviet of the postal and telegraph strike won it the sympathy of the lower governmental officials. All the oppressed, all the unfortunate, all honest elements of the city, all those who were striving towards a better life, were instinctively or consciously on the side of the Soviet. The Soviet was actually or potentially a representative of an overwhelming majority of the population. Its enemies in the capital would not have been dangerous had they not been protected by absolutism, which based its power on the most backward elements of an army recruited from peasants. The weakness of the Soviet was not its own weakness, it was the weakness of a purely urban revolution.

The fifty day period was the period of the greatest power of the revolution. The Soviet was its organ in the fight for public authority.

The class character of the Soviet was determined by the class differentiation of the city population and by the political antagonism between the proletariat and the capitalistic bourgeoisie. This antagonism manifested itself even in the historically limited field of a struggle against absolutism. After the October strike, the capitalistic bourgeoisie consciously blocked the progress of the revolution, the petty middle class

turned out to be a nonentity, incapable of playing an independent role. The real leader of the urban revolution was the proletariat. Its class-organization was the organ of the revolution in its struggle for power.

The struggle for power, for public authority, this is the central aim of the revolution. The fifty days of the Soviet's life and its bloody finale have shown that urban Russia is too narrow a basis for Such a struggle, and that even within the limits of the urban revolution, a local organization cannot be the central leading body. For a national task the proletariat required an organization on a national scale. The Petersburg Soviet was a local organization, yet the need of a central organization was so great that it had to assume leadership on a national scale. It did what it could, still it remained primarily the Petersburg Council of Workmen's Deputies. The urgency of an all-Russian labor congress which undoubtedly would have had authority to form a central leading organ, was emphasized even at the time of the first Soviet. The December collapse made its realization impossible. The idea remained, an inheritance of the Fifty Days.

The idea of a Soviet has become ingrained in the consciousness of the workingmen as the first prerequisite to revolutionary action of the masses. Experience has shown that a Soviet is not possible or desirable under all circumstances. The objective meaning of the Soviet organization is to create conditions for disorganizing the government, for "anarchy," in other words for a revolutionary conflict. The present lull in the revolutionary movement, the mad triumph of reaction, make the existence of an open, elective, authoritative organization of the masses impossible. There is no doubt, however, that the first new Wave of the revolution Will lead to the creation of Soviets all over the

country. An All-Russian Soviet, organized by an All-Russian Labor Congress, will assume leadership of the local elective organizations of the proletariat. Names, of course, are of no importance; so are details of organization; the main thing is: a centralized democratic leadership in the struggle of the proletariat for a popular government. History does not repeat itself, and the new Soviet will not have again to go through the experience of the Fifty Days. These, however, will furnish it a complete program of action.

This program is perfectly clear.

To **establish revolutionary cooperation with the army**, the peasantry, and the plebeian lower strata of the urban bourgeoisie. To abolish absolutism. To destroy the material organization of absolutism by reconstructing and partly dismissing the army. To break up the entire bureaucratic apparatus. To introduce an eight hour workday. To arm the population, starting with the proletariat. To turn the Soviets into organs of revolutionary self-government in the cities. To create Councils of Peasants' Delegates (Peasants' Committees) as local organs of the agrarian revolution. To organize elections to the Constituent Assembly and to conduct a preelection campaign for a definite program on the part of the representatives of the people.

It is easier to formulate such a program than to carry it through. If, however, the revolution will ever win, the proletariat cannot choose another. The proletariat will unfold revolutionary accomplishment such as the world has never seen. The history of Fifty Days will be only a poor page in the great book of the proletariat's struggle and ultimate triumph.



Lenin

**The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907**

December 1907

Collected Works, Volume 13, pages 217-429.

4. The Scope of the Political and of the Agrarian Revolutions

A difficult “choice”, we said, meaning of course not the subjective choice (which is the more desirable), but the objective outcome of the struggle of the social forces that are deciding the historical issue. Those who say that my agrarian programme, which links the republic with nationalisation, is optimistic, have never thought out what the “difficulty” involved in a favourable outcome for the peasantry really is. Here is Plekhanov’s argument on the subject:

“Lenin evades the difficulty of the question by means of optimistic assumptions. That is the usual method of utopian thinking. The anarchists, for instance, say: ‘there is no need for any coercive organisation’, and when we retort that the absence of coercive organisation would enable individual members of the community to injure the community if they so desired, the anarchists reply: ‘that cannot be’. In my opinion, that means evading the difficulty of the question by means of optimistic assumptions. And that is what Lenin does. He raises a whole series of optimistic ‘ifs’ around the possible consequences of the measure he proposes. To prove this, I shall quote the reproach which Lenin levelled at Maslov. On page 23 of his pamphlet he says: ‘Maslov’s draft tacitly assumes a situation in which the demands of our political minimum programme have not been

carried out in full, the sovereignty of the people has not been ensured, the standing army has not been abolished, officials are not elected, and so forth. In other words, it assumes that our democratic revolution, like most of the democratic revolutions in Europe, has not reached its complete fulfilment and that it has been curtailed, distorted, "rolled back", like all the others. Maslov's draft is especially intended for a half-way, inconsistent, incomplete, or curtailed democratic revolution, "made innocuous" by reaction.' Assuming that the reproach Lenin levelled at Maslov is justified, the passage quoted still shows that Lenin's own draft programme will be good only in the event of all his 'ifs' coming true. But if those 'ifs' are not realised, the implementation of his draft will prove harmful. But we have no need of such drafts. Our draft programme must be armed at all points, i. e., ready to meet unfavourable 'ifs'." (Minutes of the Stockholm Congress, pp. 44-45.)

I have quoted this argument in full because it clearly indicates Plekhanov's mistake. He has completely failed to understand the optimism which scares him. The "optimism" is not in assuming the election of officials by the people, etc., but in assuming the victory of the peasant agrarian revolution. The real "difficulty" lies in securing the victory of the peasant agrarian revolution in a country which, at least since 1861, has been developing along Junker-bourgeois lines; and since you admit the possibility of this fundamental economic difficulty, it is ridiculous to regard the difficulties of political democracy as all but anarchism. It is ridiculous to forget that the scope of the agrarian and of the political changes cannot fail to correspond, that the economic revolution presupposes a corresponding political superstructure. Plekhanov's cardinal mistake on this question lies in this very failure to understand the root of the

“optimism” of our common, Menshevik and Bolshevik, agrarian programme.

Indeed, picture to yourselves concretely what a “peasant agrarian revolution”, involving confiscation of the landlords’ estates, means in contemporary Russia. There can be no doubt that during the past half-century capitalism has paved the way for itself through landlord farming, which now, on the whole, is unquestionably superior to peasant farming, not only as regards yields (which can be partly ascribed to the better quality of the land owned by the landlords), but also as regards the wide use of improved implements and crop rotation (fodder grass cultivation). There is no doubt that landlord farming is bound by a thousand ties not only to the bureaucracy, but also to the bourgeoisie. Confiscation undermines a great many of the interests of the big bourgeoisie, while the peasant revolution, as Kautsky has rightly pointed out, leads also to the bankruptcy of the state, i.e., it damages the interests not only of the Russian, but of the whole international bourgeoisie. It stands to reason that under such conditions the victory of the peasant revolution, the, victory of the petty bourgeoisie over both the landlords and the big bourgeoisie, requires an exceptionally favourable combination of circumstances; it requires what, from the standpoint of the philistine, or of the philistine historian, are very unusual “optimistic” assumptions; it requires tremendous peasant initiative, revolutionary energy, class-consciousness, organisation, and rich narodnoye tvorchestvo (the creative activity of the people). All that is beyond dispute, and Plekhanov’s philistine jokes at the expense of that last phrase are only a cheap way of dodging a serious issue. And since commodity production does not unite or centralise the peasants, but disintegrates and disunites them, a

peasant revolution in a bourgeois country is possible only under the leadership of the proletariat—a fact which is more than ever rousing the opposition of the most powerful bourgeoisie in the world to such a revolution.

Does that mean that Marxists must abandon the idea of a peasant agrarian revolution altogether? No. Such a deduction would be worthy only of those whose philosophy is nothing but a liberal parody of Marxism. What it does mean is only, first, that Marxism cannot link the destiny of socialism in Russia with the outcome of the bourgeois democratic revolution; second, that Marxism must reckon with the two possibilities in the capitalist evolution of agriculture in Russia and clearly show the people the conditions and significance of each possibility, and third, that Marxism must resolutely combat the view that a radical agrarian revolution is possible in Russia without a radical political revolution.

(1) The Socialist-Revolutionaries, in common with all the Narodniks who are at all consistent, fail to understand the bourgeois nature of the peasant revolution and link with it the whole of their own quasi-socialism. A favourable outcome of the peasant revolution, in the opinion of the Narodniks, would mean the triumph of Narodnik socialism in Russia. Actually, such an outcome would be the quickest and most decisive bankruptcy of Narodnik (peasant) socialism. The fuller and the more decisive the victory of the peasant revolution, the sooner will the peasantry be converted into free, bourgeois farmers, who will “give the sack” to Narodnik “socialism”. On the other hand, an unfavourable outcome would prolong the agony of Narodnik socialism for some time, making it possible to some extent to maintain the illusion that criticism of the land lord-

bourgeois variety of capitalism is criticism of capitalism in general.

Social-Democracy, the party of the proletariat, does not in any way link the destiny of socialism with either of the possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution. Either outcome implies the development of capitalism and the oppression of the proletariat, whether under a landlord monarchy with private ownership of land, or under a farmers' republic, even with the nationalisation of the land. Therefore, only an absolutely independent and purely proletarian party is able to defend the cause of socialism "whatever the situation of democratic agrarian reforms" may be, as time concluding part of my agrarian programme declares (that part was incorporated in the resolution on tactics of the Stockholm Congress).

(2) But the bourgeois nature of both possible outcomes of the agrarian revolution by no means implies that Social-Democrats can be indifferent to the struggle for one or the other outcome. It is undoubtedly in the interests of the working class to give the most vigorous support to the peasant revolution. More than that: it must play the leading part in that revolution. In fighting for a favourable outcome of the revolution we must spread among the masses a very clear understanding of what keeping to the land lord path of agrarian evolution means, what incalculable hardships (arising not from capitalism, but from the inadequate development of capitalism) it has in store for all the toiling masses. On the other hand, we must also explain the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasant revolution, and the fallacy of placing any "socialist" hopes in it.

Moreover, since we do not link the destiny of socialism with either of the possible outcomes of the bourgeois revolution, our

programme cannot be identical for both a favourable and “unfavourable case”. When Plekhanov said that we do not need drafts specially providing for both the one and the other case (that is, drafts built upon “ifs”), he said it simply without thinking; for it is precisely from his standpoint, from the standpoint, of the probability of the worst outcome, or of the necessity of reckoning with it, that it is particularly necessary to divide the programme into two parts, as I did. It needs to be said that on the present path of landlord-bourgeois development the workers’ party stands for such and such measures, while at the same time it helps the peasantry with all its might to abolish landlordism entirely and thus create the possibility for broader and freer conditions of development. I dealt with this aspect of the matter in detail in my Report (the point about rent, the necessity of including that point in the programme in the “worst case”; and its omission in Maslov’s draft). I shall merely add that Plekhanov’s mistake is more obvious than ever at the present moment, when the actual conditions for Social-Democratic activity give least grounds for optimistic assumptions. The Third Duma can in no way induce us to give up the struggle for the peasant agrarian revolution; but for a certain space of time we shall have to work on the basis of agrarian relations which entail the most brutal exploitation by the landlords. Plekhanov, who was particularly concerned about the worst case, now finds himself with no programme to meet it.

(3) Since we set ourselves the task of assisting the peasant revolution, we must clearly see the difficulty of the task and realise that the political and agrarian changes must correspond. Otherwise we shall get a scientifically unsound and, in practice, reactionary combination of agrarian “optimism” (confiscation

plus municipalisation or division) with political “pessimism” (Novosedsky’s democratisation “of a comparative degree” at the centre).

The Mensheviks, as if in spite of themselves, accept the peasant revolution, but do not want to give the people a clear and definite picture of it. One can detect in what they say the opinion expressed with such inimitable naïveté by the Menshevik Ptitsyn at Stockholm: “The revolutionary turmoil will pass away, bourgeois life will resume its usual course, and unless a workers’ revolution takes place in the West, the bourgeoisie will inevitably come to power in our country. Comrade Lenin will not and cannot deny that” (Minutes, p. 91). Thus, a superficial, abstract conception of the bourgeois revolution has obscured the question of one of its varieties, namely, the peasant revolution! All of this last is mere “turmoil”, and the only thing that is real is the “usual course”. The philistine point of view and failure to understand what the struggle is about in our bourgeois revolution could hardly be expressed in clearer terms.

The peasantry cannot carry out an agrarian revolution without abolishing the old regime, the standing army and the bureaucracy, because all these are the most reliable mainstays of landlordism, bound to it by thousands of ties. That is why the idea of achieving a peasant revolution by democratising only the local institutions without completely breaking up the central institutions is scientifically unsound. In practice it is reactionary because it plays into the hands of petty-bourgeois obtuseness and petty-bourgeois opportunism, which sees the thing in a very “simple” way: we want the land; as to politics, God will take care of that! The peasant agrees that all the land

must be taken; but whether all political power has to be taken as well, whether all political power can be taken, and how it should be taken, are things he does not bother about (or did not bother until the dissolution of two Dumas made him wiser). Hence, the extremely reactionary standpoint of the "peasant Cadet" Mr. Peshekhonov, who already in his Agrarian Problem wrote: "Just now it is far more necessary to give a definite answer on the agrarian question than, for instance, on the question of a republic" (p. 114). And that standpoint of political imbecility (the legacy of the arch-reactionary Mr. V. V.) has, as we know, left its mark on the whole programme and tactics of the "Popular-Socialist" Party. Instead of combating the short sightedness of the peasant who fails to see the connection between agrarian radicalism and political radicalism, the P.S.'s ("Popular Socialists") adapt themselves to that short-sightedness. They believe it is "more practical that way", but in reality, it is the very thing which dooms the agrarian programme of the peasantry to utter failure. Needless to say, a radical political revolution is difficult, but so is an agrarian revolution; the latter is impossible apart from the former, and it is the duty of socialists not to conceal this from the peasants, not to throw a veil over it (by using rather vague, semi-Cadet phrases about the "democratic state", as is done in our agrarian programme), but to speak out, to teach the peasants that unless they go the whole way in politics it is no use thinking seriously of confiscating the landlords' land.

It is not the "ifs" that are important here in the programme. The important thing is to point out in it that the agrarian and the political changes must correspond. Instead of using the word "if", the same idea can be put differently: "The Party explains that the best method of taking possession of the land in



bourgeois society is by abolishing private ownership of land, nationalising the land, and transferring it to the state, and that such a measure can neither be carried out nor bear real fruit without complete democratisation not only of the local institutions, but of the whole structure of the state, including the establishment of a republic, the abolition of the standing army, election of officials by the people, etc.”

By failing to include that explanation in our agrarian programme we have given the people the false idea that confiscation of the landlords’ estates is possible without the complete democratisation of the central government. We have sunk to the level of the opportunist petty bourgeoisie, i.e., the “Popular Socialists”; for in both Dumas it so happened that their programme (the Bill of the 104) as well as ours linked agrarian changes with democratisation only of the local institutions. Such a view is philistine obtuseness, of which the events of June 3, 1907, and the Third Duma should have cured many people, the Social Democrats above all.

Lenin

**The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.**

JULY 17 (30)–AUGUST 10 (23), 1908

SPEECH IN THE DEBATE ON THE GENERAL POLITICAL  
DEMANDS OF THE PARTY PROGRAMME

JULY 31 (AUGUST 13)

The word “militia” does not say anything new and makes for confusion. The words “universal arming of the people” are clear and quite Russian. I find Comrade Lieber’s amendment superfluous.

In the discussion of § 12 of the general political demands of the draft programme (§ 9 of the Iskra draft), which said that the standing army should be substituted by the “universal arming of the people”, Lieber proposed that the word “militia” should be used instead of the “universal arming of the people”. Lieber’s proposal was rejected by the Congress. p. 87

Leon Trotsky

### **The Young Turks**

Kievskaya Mysl, No.3, 3 January 1909.

The “Young Turks” have reached the zenith of their influence. They have a majority in Parliament in which one of them is the Speaker. The Sultan does not stop giving accolades to former mutineers whom the European diplomacy would like to choke with kisses...

Many years have gone by since the day when Ahmed Riza, an emigré living in Paris, editor of a clandestine paper, appealed for the defence the Turkish people against the tyranny unleashed by Constantinople at the first international conference at The Hague. The Turkish emigré was thrown out without hesitation. Not one diplomatic ear was ready to listen. The Dutch government threatened to expel the “foreigner troublemaker”. He tried in vain to address influential members of Parliament but they refused to see him. The Socialist Van Kol was the only one to give him any support, organizing a meeting under his chairmanship where Ahmed Riza called for support. Today, on the contrary the semi-official representatives of the European governments hasten to assure the new president of Turkey that he will gain legitimately from the goodwill of all the governments of Europe.

Bulow does not hesitate to declare to the Reichstag that he holds the Turkish officer heroes of the revolutionary coup d’etat in high regard (“We will remember what you said, Mr. Chancellor of the Reich”, Parvus was to write, commenting on this speech.)

Victory is strongest of arguments and success constitutes the most effective of the recommendations. But what is the secret of victory and what is the explanation of this astonishing success? On this subject, the Rech newspaper has written, criticising the left in Turkey, that the different classes of the country had jointly fought to preserve the existing economic hierarchy, the economically dominant classes thus preserving their hegemony over the masses in the revolution – from whose efforts victory had come.

And Novoye Vremya for its part, in a hypocritical moralising tone, addressed to the Cadet Party stressed that the “Young Turks”, contrary to the doctrinaire liberals of Russia, firmly upheld the flag of patriotic nationalism and did not separate themselves for an instant from the monarchist and religious beliefs of the people – and because of that they gained power.

In the political field as in private life, there is nothing easier than moralism, nothing is easier but more useless. A lot of people, nevertheless, find a certain attraction in this because they do not have to examine the reality of events.

What explains the resounding triumph of the “Young Turks” and their victory gained almost without either sacrifice or effort?

In its real significance, a revolution is a fight for control of the State. That rests directly on the Army. This is why all revolutions in history sharply raised the question: on whose side is the army? And one way or another, in every case, this question had to be answered. In the case of the revolution in Turkey – and that gives it its specific features – it is the army itself which put forward these liberating ideas. Consequently, a

new social class did not have to overcome the armed resistance of the Ancien Régime but, on the contrary it could be satisfied with the role of supporting chorus for the revolutionary officers who led their men against the government of the Sultan.

In its historical origins and its traditions, Turkey is a military state. Currently, it is the first among the European Nations as regards the relative size of its army. A large army requires a considerable number officers some of whom had risen from the ranks because of long service. But the Yildiz (the Palace of the Sultan), in spite of its barbaric resistance to the needs of historical development, was forced to Europeanise its army to a certain extent and to open it to educated people. The latter did not wait to benefit from this. The unimportance of Turkish industry and low level of urban culture left the Turkish intelligentsia with hardly any other choice than a military or civil service career. So the State organized at its centre the militant vanguard of the bourgeois nation in process of formation: the critical and dissatisfied intelligentsia. The last few years has seen an uninterrupted series of disorders in the Turkish army due to non-payment of salaries or delays in promotions. The troops seized a telegraphic station and started direct negotiations with the Palace. The Sultan's camarilla had no other choice but to yield and, in this way, regiment after regiment, the army was taught in the school of rebellion.

After the success of the revolt, numerous European politicians and journalists spoke of a mysterious ambience of brilliant organisation created by the "Young Turks" who they said had extended their tentacles everywhere. This naive idea did nothing but reflect the obsessive superstitions which are caused by success.

In fact, the revolutionary links between the officers, especially in the garrisons of Constantinople and Adrianople were manifestly inadequate. As Niazy Bey and Enver Bey themselves admitted, the revolt broke out when the "Young Turks" were "largely unprepared" for it. What helped them, was the automatic organization of an army. The spontaneous dissatisfaction of the ragged and starving soldiers led them naturally to support the officers who opposed the government politically. Thus, the mechanical discipline of the army was transformed naturally into the internal discipline of the revolution. A collapse of the bureaucratic machine combined with the revolt of the army. In a little book written by the former Serb minister Vladan Georgievic, we find the information that at the beginning of the revolt, Kaimakams and Moutessarifs (administrators and assistant administrators of the districts of Turkey) of three Macedonian districts invited the inhabitants to send to the Sultan's palace telegrams calling for a return to the Constitution of 1876. Under these conditions, Abdul Hamid would have nothing else to do but propose himself as honorary president of Shura I Umet committees (the Committees Union and Progress).

By the tasks which it must achieve (economic independence, the unity of nation and state, and political freedoms), the Turkish revolution corresponds to the self determination of the bourgeois nation and in this sense points to its links with the traditions of the 1789 and 1848 revolutions. But the army, led by its officers, functioned like the executive body of the nation, and that gave events from the start the planned character of military manoeuvres. It would nevertheless be pure stupidity (and many people were guilty of this error) to see in the events in Turkey of last July a simple pronunciamiento and to treat them

as similar to some other militaro-dynastic coup d'état in Serbia. The power of the Turkish officers and the secret of their success does not lie in a brilliantly organized plan or conspiratorial talents of diabolical skill, but the active sympathy shown to them by the most advanced classes in society: merchants, craftsmen, workmen, sections of the administration and of the clergy and finally masses in the countryside exemplified by the peasantry.

But all these classes bring with them, not simply their "sympathy" but also their interests, their claims and their hopes. Their social aspirations, stifled for a long time, are now openly expressed while a Parliament provides them an arena to put them forward. Bitter disillusion awaits those who think that the Turkish revolution is already over. Among those who will be disappointed, will be not only Abdul Hamid but also it would seem the "Young Turk" Party.

In the first place and before anything else there is the national question. The mixed composition of the Turkish population as far as nationalities and religion are concerned will lead to the emergence of powerful centrifugal tendencies. The Ancien Régime hoped to overcome them by the mechanical weight of the army, recruited exclusively from Moslems. In fact, it is that which led to the disintegration of the State. During the reign of Abdul Hamid, Turkey lost Bulgaria, Eastern Roumelia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Egypt, Tunisia and the Dodbruja. Asia Minor became the impotent prey of an economic and political dictatorship by Germany. At the start of the revolution, Austria was about to build a railway line crossing the Sanjak (district) of Novibazar to provide a strategic route towards Macedonia.

In addition, Britain, in opposition to Austria, openly supported the idea of Macedonian autonomy ... There was no visible end to the dismemberment of Turkey. However, an economically unified demarcated territory is an essential condition for economic development. That applies not only to Turkey but to the entire Balkan Peninsula. It is not its national diversity but the fact that it is split up into many States which weighs on it like a curse. The customs borders artificially divide it into separate fragments. The machinations of the capitalist powers are linked with the bloody intrigues of the Balkan dynasties. If these conditions continue, the peninsula of Balkans will remain a Pandora's box. Only a single state of all the Balkan nationalities, on a democratic and federal basis similar to the Swiss or United States model, can bring internal peace to the Balkans and ensure the conditions for a broad development of its productive forces.

The "Young Turks" for their part definitively rejected this approach. Representing the dominant nationality and having their own national army, they hold to and remain national centralisers. The right wing consistently opposes self-government, even at the provincial level. The struggle against powerful centrifugal tendencies makes the "Young Turks" favour a solid central authority and pushes them towards an agreement with the Sultan "quand même" (in French in the original Russian text). That means that as soon as this knot of national contradictions begins to break out in Parliament, the right wing of the "Young Turks" will openly move to the side of counter-revolution.

After the national question, comes the social question. First, there is the peasantry. It carries the heavy burden of militarism



and is subjected to a kind of semi-serfdom. A fifth of the peasants are landless, the peasants have a large payment to demand of the new regime. And yet, only one organization in Macedonia and Adrianople (the Bulgarian group of Sandanski) and the Armenian revolutionary organizations (Dashnaks and Henchaks) presented a more or less radical agrarian program. With regard to the party leading the "Young Turks", in which Beys and landowners dominate, its national-liberal blindness leads it to deny that there ever existed an agrarian question. Obviously, the "Young Turks" hope that handing-over to a new administration, using the forms and procedures of parliamentarism, will be enough to satisfy the peasants. They are so wrong. Dissatisfaction in the countryside with regard to the new order of things will moreover ineluctably find a greater reflection within the army which consists of peasants. The consciousness of the soldiers has grown considerably in the last few months. And if a party which is based on officers, after having given nothing to the peasants, tries to tighten discipline in the army, it could easily happen that the soldiers rise once again but this time against their officers as previously these same officers had opposed Abdul Hamid.

Alongside the agrarian question, there is the labour question. Turkish industry is, we said it, very weak. Not only has the sultan's regime undermined the economic foundations of the country, but it deliberately created obstacle to the construction of factories, motivated by a healthy fear of the proletariat. Nevertheless, it proved to be impossible to completely preserve the regime against this danger. The first weeks of the Turkish revolution were marked by strikes in the public bakeries, printing works, textiles, transport, the tobacco factories, the workers in the ports and the railwaymen. The boycott of the

Austrian goods should have mobilized and inspired the young proletariat of Turkey even more – especially the dockers – who played a decisive role in this campaign. But how did the new regime respond to the political birth of the working class? By a law imposing forced labour for a strike. The program of the “Young Turks” does not have a word concerning any precise measure to help the workers. And yet, to treat the Turkish proletariat as a “quantité négligeable” (in French in the original Russian text) means to run the risk of serious unexpected events. The importance of a class should never be evaluated simply by its numbers. The power of the contemporary proletariat, even when its number is small, rests on the fact that it holds in its hands the concentrated productive capacity of the country and the control of the most significant means of communication. The “Young Turk” party will run up against this elementary fact of capitalist political economy and hard reality.

Such are major social contradictions, even if they are hidden, in the context of which the Turkish Parliament has to function. Of these 240 deputies, the “Young Turks” have support from approximately 140. About 80 deputies, primarily Arabs and Greeks, form the block of the “decentralizers”. Prince Saba-ed-Din seeks influence and a political base by an alliance with them – it is difficult to say today if he is just a dilettante dreamer lacking any clear direction or an intriguer who has not yet shown his hand. On the extreme left, are the Armenian and Bulgarian revolutionists who include in their rows some social democrats.

Such is the external aspect of the representative assembly of Turkey. But the “Young Turks” and the “decentralisers” still

present unclear policies whose contours will take shape in response to social problems. Still more significant however for the fate of Turkish parliamentarism, are the forces which operate outside Parliament, namely the foreigners, the peasants, the workers, the mass of the soldiers. Each one of these groups wants to obtain the broadest possible place for itself under the roof of the new Turkey. Each one has its own interests and follows its own course in the revolution. To estimate in advance the result of all these forces in the Turkish Parliament is a pure gamble, i.e. by calculations carried out in an office or a library is an enterprise which has meaning only for the doctrinaire utopians of liberalism. History never happens like this.

There will be a hard clash between the living forces of the country and they will be forced to get a "result" as a consequence of the struggle. This is why I maintain that the military revolt in Macedonia of last July, which led to the calling of Parliament, was only the prologue to the revolution: the drama is still before us.

What will it happen to Turkey in the immediate future? It would be futile to try to guess. One thing is clear, which is that victory for the revolution will mean the victory of democracy in Turkey, democratic Turkey would be the foundation of a Balkan federation and this Balkan federation would clean out once and for all the "hornets' nest" of the Near East, with its capitalist and dynastic intrigues which stormily threaten, not only this unhappy peninsula but the whole of Europe.

The restoration of the Sultan and his despotism would mean the end of Turkey, leaving the Turkish State to the mercy of those who want to carve it up. The victory of Turkish democracy, on

the contrary, would mean peace. Nothing has been decided! And while behind the warm smiles of the European diplomats at the Turkish Parliament the jaws of predatory capitalists are outlined, ready to benefit at the first opportunity from its internal difficulties to tear Turkey to pieces, European democracy supports with all its strength by its sympathy and its support the "New" Turkey – a Turkey which does not yet exist which is only about to be born.

Lenin

## **The Bourgeoisie and Peace**

Pravda No. 103, May 7, 1913

Collected Works, Volume 19, pages 83-84.

The conference of French and German parliamentarians held in Berne last Sunday, May 11 (April 28 O.S.), reminds us once more of the attitude of the European bourgeoisie to war and peace.

The initiative in calling the conference was taken by representatives from Alsace-Lorraine and Switzerland. Socialist deputies from France and Germany turned up in full force. Of the bourgeois deputies quite a number of French Radicals and Radical-Socialists (petty-bourgeois democrats who are, in fact, alien and, for the greater part, hostile to socialism). An insignificant number of bourgeois deputies from Germany attended. The National-Liberals (midway between the Cadets and the Octobrists, something like our "Progressists") confined themselves to sending greetings. From the party of the "Centre" (the Catholic petty-bourgeois party in Germany that loves playing at democracy) two promised to come but—decided not to turn up!

Among the, prominent socialists who spoke at the conference were Greulich, a veteran Swiss Social-Democrat, and August Bebel.

A resolution condemning chauvinism and declaring that the overwhelming majority of the two nations, French and German, want peace and demand the settlement of international conflicts by courts of arbitration, was adopted unanimously.

There is no doubt that the conference was an impressive demonstration in favour of peace. But it would be a huge mistake to trust the tender-hearted speeches of those few bourgeois deputies who attended the conference and voted for the resolution. If they seriously wanted peace those bourgeois deputies should have condemned outright the increase in Germany's armaments (the German army is to be increased by 140,000 officers and men; this new government proposal will no doubt be adopted by the bourgeois parties of Germany despite the vigorous protests of the socialists); they should also have condemned in exactly the same way the French government proposal to increase army service to three years.

That was something the bourgeois deputies would not venture to do. Still less were they capable of making a resolute demand for a militia, that is, for the replacement of the standing army by arming the entire people. This measure, which does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois society, is the only one that can democratise the army and advance the question of peace even one step forward in a manner at all serious.

But no, the European bourgeoisie clings frantically to the militarists and reactionaries out of fear of the working-class movement. The insignificant number of petty-bourgeois democrats is not capable of a strong desire for peace and still less capable of bringing it about. Power is in the hands of the banks, the trusts and big capital in general. The one guarantee of peace is the organised, conscious movement of the working class.

Lenin

September 1916,

Collected Works, Volume 23, pp. 77-87.

**The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution:**

To this must be added the following general consideration.

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, wage-labor, 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 of 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 to 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 arguments is applicable also to the present militarization of the population. Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarizes the youth as well as the adults; tomorrow, it may begin militarizing 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 militarization 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!" Woman and teenage 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 labor movement, disorganized more by the opportunists than by the governments—there will undoubtedly 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 militarized. 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 militarization 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.

Lenin

**Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Soldiers of the Izmailovsky Regiment April 10 (23), 1917**

Pravda No. 30, April 12, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 107-109.

Comrade soldiers! The question of the state system is now on the order of the day. The capitalists, in whose hands the state power now rests, desire a parliamentary bourgeois republic, that is, a state system where there is no tsar, but where power remains in the hands of the capitalists who govern the country by means of the old institutions, namely: the police, the bureaucracy, and the standing army.

We desire a different republic, one more in keeping with the interests of the people, more democratic. The revolutionary workers and soldiers of Petrograd have overthrown tsarism, and have cleaned out all the police from the capital. The workers of all the world look with pride and hope to the revolutionary 'workers and soldiers of Russia as the vanguard of the world's liberating army of the working class. The revolution, once begun, must be strengthened and carried on. We shall not allow the police to be re-established! All power in the state, from the bottom up, from the remotest little village to every street block of Petrograd, must belong to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants' and other Deputies. The central state power uniting these local Soviets must be the Constituent Assembly, National Assembly, or Council of Soviets—no matter by what name you call it.

Not the police, not the bureaucracy, who are unanswerable to the people and placed above the people, not the standing army, separated from the people, but the people themselves, universally armed and united in the Soviets, must run the state. It is they who will establish the necessary order, it is they whose authority will not only be obeyed, but also respected, by the workers and peasants.

Only this power, only the Soviets of Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, can solve the great question of the land in a non-bureaucratic way and not in the interests of the landowners. The land must not belong to the landowners. The peasant committees must take the land away at once from the landowners, while carefully guarding all the property against damage, and seeing to it that grain production is increased in order that the soldiers at the front be better supplied. All the land must belong to the whole nation, and its disposal must be the concern of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. In order that the rich peasants—who are themselves capitalists—may not wrong and deceive the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, it will be necessary for the latter either to confer, to combine, to unite separately, or to set up Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies of their own.

Do not allow the police to be re-established, do not let the state power or the administration of the state pass into the hands of the bureaucracy, who are non-elective, undisplaceable, and paid on a bourgeois scale; get together, unite, organise yourselves, trusting no one, depending only on your own intelligence and experience—and Russia will be able to move with a firm, measured, unerring tread toward the liberation of

both our own country and of all humanity from the yoke of capital as well as from the horrors of war.

Our government, a government of the capitalists, is continuing the war in the interests of the capitalists. Like the German capitalists, headed by their crowned brigand Wilhelm, the capitalists of all the other countries are carrying on the war only for a division of capitalist profits, for domination over the world. Hundreds of millions of people, almost all the countries in the world, have been dragged into this criminal war. Hundreds of billions of capital have been invested in "profitable" undertakings, bringing death, hunger, ruin, and barbarism to the peoples and staggering, scandalously high profits to the capitalists. There is only one way to get out of this frightful war and conclude a truly democratic peace not imposed by force, and that is by transferring all the state power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The workers and poor peasants, who are not interested in preserving the profits of the capitalists and robbing the weaker nations, will be able to do effectively what the capitalists only promise, namely, end the war by concluding a lasting peace that will assure liberty to all peoples without exception.

Lenin

**The Petrograd City Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)**

April 14–22 (April 27–May 5), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 139-166.

Two Remarks During the Debate On the Resolution Concerning the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government April 15 (28)

I.

After yesterday's debate I can confine myself to brief remarks. The resolution shows a way out. The situation is determined not only by the fact that definite classes are represented in the Provisional Government, but also by the fact that the latter leans upon the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. The inference is not that we must yield to this petty bourgeoisie, but that we must form independent groups, not in order to separate ourselves from the petty bourgeoisie, but in order to impel it to go forward. The seizure of all the land is a step forward on the part of the revolutionary people. The replacement of the standing army by a militia is a step forward.

II.

Comrade Kamenev is shifting to the policy of Chkheidze and Steklov. Of course, no one will say that the Provisional Government is putting off the Constituent Assembly, if we do not say it. Everybody wants to carry on the war. The point at issue is the organisation of counter-revolution. In revolutionary times control means deception. The date for the elections could be arranged in three days. By listing "sins", we provide ammunition for propaganda. To seek the truth in the Contact

Commission is impossible. There can be no control without power. To control by means of resolutions, etc., is sheer nonsense. Control means dispelling the petty-bourgeois illusions, fog.

Lenin

### **Congress of Peasants' Deputies**

Pravda No. 34, April 16, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 167-170.

[ Description of the Congress ]

A Congress of representatives of peasants' organisations and Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, who have met to draw up regulations for the convocation of an All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies and to set up similar local Soviets, has been in session in the Taurida Palace since April 13.

According to *Dyelo Naroda*, representatives from more than 20 gubernias are attending the Congress.

Resolutions have been adopted urging the need for the speediest organisation of the "peasantry" from bottom to "top". "Soviets of Peasants' Deputies functioning in the various areas" have been declared to be the "best form of organisation of the peasantry".

Bykhovsky, a member of the provisional bureau for the convocation of the present Congress, has pointed out that a decision to organise the peasantry by setting up an All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies had been taken by the Moscow Co-operative Congress, representing an organised membership of twelve million, or fifty million of the population.

This is an undertaking of tremendous importance, which must be given every support. If it is carried out without delay, if the peasantry, in spite of Shingaryov, takes over all the land immediately by a majority decision and not by "voluntary



agreement" with the landowners as he would have it, then not only the soldiers, who would receive more bread and meat, but also the cause of freedom would gain by it.

For the organisation of the peasants, carried out from below without the officials and without the "control and Supervision" of the landowners and their hangers-on, is the only reliable pledge of success for the revolution, for freedom, for the liberation of Russia from the yoke and bondage of the landowners.

There is no doubt that all members of our Party, all class-conscious workers, will do their utmost to support the organisation of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, will see to it that their numbers are increased and their strength consolidated, and will exert every effort to work inside these Soviets along consistent and strictly proletarian class lines.

To carry on this work, it is necessary to organise separately the proletarian elements (agricultural labourers, day-labourers, etc.) within the general peasant Soviets, or (sometimes and) set up separate Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Our object is not to scatter forces; on the contrary, in order to strengthen and broaden the movement, we must arouse the "lowest"—to use the terminology of the landowners and capitalists—section of society, or, more correctly, class.

To build up the movement, we must free it from the Influence of the bourgeoisie; we must try to rid it of the inevitable weaknesses, vacillations, and mistakes of the petty bourgeoisie.

This work must be done by means of friendly persuasion, without anticipating events, without hurrying to "consolidate"

organisationally that which the representatives of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians have not yet fully realised, thought out, and digested for themselves. But it must be done, and a start must be made at once everywhere.

The practical demands and slogans, or, more properly, the proposals that have to be made to gain the attention of the peasants, should be based on vital and urgent issues.

The first issue is that of the land. The rural proletarians will be for the complete and immediate transfer of all the land without exception to the whole people, and for its being taken over immediately by the local committees. But you cannot eat land. The millions of households that have no horses, implements, or seeds will gain nothing from the transfer of the land to the "people".

The question of continuing to run the big farms, wherever at all possible, as large-scale enterprises, directed by agricultural experts and the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and using the best machines, seeds, and most efficient farming methods, must be discussed and practical measures taken without delay.

We cannot conceal from the peasants, least of all from the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, that small-scale farming under commodity economy and capitalism cannot rid humanity of mass poverty, that it is necessary to think about going over to large-scale farming conducted on public lines and to tackle this job at once by teaching the masses, and in turn learning from the masses, the practical expedient measures for bringing about such a transition.

Another vital and pressing issue is that of the organisation and administration of the state. It is not enough to preach democracy, not enough to proclaim it and decree it, not enough to entrust the people's "representatives" in representative institutions with its implementation. Democracy must be built at once, from below, through the initiative of the masses themselves, through their effective participation in all fields of state activity, without "supervision" from above, without the bureaucracy.

Replacement of the police, the bureaucracy, and the standing army by the universal arming of the whole people, by a universal militia of the entire people, women included, is a practical job that can and should be tackled immediately. The more initiative, variety, daring, and creativeness the masses contribute to this, the better. Not only the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasantry probably will follow us if we explain our proposals clearly, simply, and intelligibly by demonstrating examples and lessons from real life, Our proposals are:

—not to allow the restoration of the police;

—not to allow the restoration of the absolute powers of officials who, in effect, are undisplaceable and who belong to the landowner or capitalist class;

—not, to allow the restoration of a standing army separated from the people, for such an army is the surest guarantee that attempts of all kinds will be made to stamp out freedom and restore the monarchy;

—to teach the people, down to the very bottom, the art of government not only in theory but in practice, by beginning to

make immediate use everywhere of the experience of the masses.

Democracy from below, democracy without an officialdom, without a police, **without a standing army**; voluntary social duty **by a militia formed from a universally armed people**—this is a guarantee of freedom which no tsars, no swash-buckling generals, and no capitalists can take away.

Lenin

**The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.  
(B.)**

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 409-429.1.

APRIL 24–29 (MAY 7–12), 1917

PRELIMINARY DRAFT ALTERATIONS IN THE R.S.D.L.P.  
PARTY PROGRAMME

At the end of the preamble (after the words “the standpoint of the proletariat”) insert:

World capitalism has at the present time, i.e., since about the beginning of the twentieth century, reached the stage of imperialism. Imperialism, or the epoch of finance capital, is a high stage of development of the capitalist economic system, one in which monopolist associations of capitalists—syndicates, cartels and trusts—have assumed decisive importance: in which enormously concentrated banking capital has fused with industrial capital; in which the export of capital to foreign countries has assumed vast proportions: in which the whole world has been divided up territorially among the richer countries, and the economic carve-up of the world among international trusts has begun.

Imperialist wars, i.e., wars for world domination, for markets for banking capital and for the subjugation of small and weaker nations, are inevitable under such a state of affairs. The first great imperialist war, the war of 1914–17, is precisely such a war.

The extremely high level of development which world capitalism in general has attained, the replacement of free

competition by monopoly capitalism, the fact that the banks and the capitalist associations have prepared the machinery for the social regulation of the process of production and distribution of products, the horrors, misery, ruin, and brutalisation caused by the imperialist war—all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution.

That era has dawned.

Only a proletarian socialist revolution can lead humanity out of the impasse which imperialism and imperialist wars have created. Whatever difficulties, the revolution may have to encounter, whatever possible temporary setbacks or waves of counter-revolution it may have to contend with, the final victory of the proletariat is inevitable.

Objective conditions make it the urgent task of the day to prepare the proletariat in every way for the revolution and resolutely break with the bourgeois perversion of socialism, which has taken the upper hand in the official Social-Democratic parties in the form of a social-chauvinist trend (that is, socialism in words, chauvinism in fact, or the use of the “defend your country” slogan to cover up defence of capitalist interests in imperialist wars), and also in the form of a Centre trend (i.e., unprincipled, helpless vacillation between social-chauvinism and revolutionary internationalist proletarian struggle) {1} for the conquest of political power in order to carry out the economic and political measures which are the sum and substance of the socialist revolution.

\*

The fulfilment of this task, which calls for the fullest trust, the closest fraternal ties, and direct unity of revolutionary action on the part of the working class in all the advanced countries, is impossible without an immediate break in principle with the bourgeois perversion of socialism, which has gained the upper hand among the leadership of the great majority of the official Social-Democratic parties. Such a perversion is, on the one hand, the social-chauvinist trend, socialism in word and chauvinism in deed, the defence of the predatory interests of "one's own" national bourgeoisie under the guise of "defence of one's country"; and, on the other hand, the equally wide international trend of the so-called Centre, which stands for unity with the social-chauvinists and for the preservation or correction of the bankrupt Second International, and which vacillates between social-chauvinism and the internationalist revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the achievement of a socialist system.

\*

The experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, which created the Soviets of Workers' Deputies and a number of similar organisations, thereby confirmed the experience of the Paris Commune, which consisted in the fact that the proletariat must have a state for the period of transition to socialism, but this state must not be a conventional type of state, but the immediate, massive and wholesale organisation of the armed workers to substitute for the old instruments of administration: the standing army, the police and the civil service. Explanation to the proletariat of the tasks of such a state—capable both of consolidating the gains of the revolution in general and of ensuring the most peaceful and balanced

transition to socialism—must constitute one of the principal tasks of the proletarian party alongside its struggle against the representatives of the bankrupt Second (1889–1914) International, who have distorted Marxism and betrayed socialism on the dictatorship of the proletariat question.

Monopoly capitalism, which has been developing into state-monopoly capitalism in a number of advanced countries with especial rapidity during the war, means gigantic socialisation of production and, consequently, complete preparation of the objective conditions for the establishment of a socialist society.

\*

In the minimum programme, the whole beginning (from the words “On the path” down to § 1) should be crossed out, and replaced by the following:

In Russia at the present moment, when the Provisional Government, which is part and parcel of the landowner and capitalist class and enjoys the confidence—necessarily unstable—of the broad mass of the petty-bourgeois population, has undertaken to convene a Constituent Assembly, the immediate duty of the party of the proletariat is to fight for a political system which will best guarantee economic progress and the rights of the people in general, and make possible the least painful transition to socialism in particular.

The party is fighting and helping the masses to wage an immediate struggle for a democratic republic, starting the implementation of the freedoms by the masses’ organisation on their own, from below, and working for the establishment not of a bourgeois parliamentary republic, with its special guarantees both for the domination of the capitalists and for the



possibility of using force against the masses through the retention of the old organs of mass oppression: the police, the standing army and the civil service, but of a more democratic proletarian-peasant republic in which the retention of these organs of oppression is impossible and inadmissible, and where the state power belongs directly to the workers and peasants who are armed to a man.

§ 1. Supreme power in the state must be vested entirely in the people's representatives, who shall be elected by the people and be subject to recall at any time, and who shall constitute a single popular assembly, a single chamber.

§ 2. Add:

Proportional representation at all elections; all delegates and elected officials, without exception, to be subject to recall at any time upon the decision of a majority of their electors.

§ 3. Add:

No supervision or control from above over the decisions and acts of regional and local self-governments.

§ 9 to read:

The right of all member nations of the state to freely secede and form independent states. The republic of the Russian nation must attract other nations or nationalities not by force, but exclusively by voluntary agreement on the question of forming a common state. The unity and fraternal alliance of the workers of all countries are incompatible with the use of force, direct or indirect, against other nationalities.

§ 11 to read:

Judges and all other officials, both civil and military, to be elected by the people with the right to recall any of them at any time by decision of a majority of their electors. Salaries to all officials to be not above the wages of a skilled worker, 300–500 rubles, depending on the number of family members and their earnings; unconditional prohibition for officials to supplement their salaries with income from other sources.

§ 12 to read:

The police and standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people; workers and other employees to receive regular wages from the capitalists for the time devoted to public service in the people's militia.

\*

§ 14 of the political section, § 5 and others of the economic section should be, like the whole of the economic section, specially re-examined by commissions consisting of trade union workers and teachers.

Alter the fiscal clause of the programme (following the words "on incomes and inheritances") insert:

The high level of development of capitalism already achieved in banking and in the trustified branches of industry, on the one hand, and the economic disruption caused by the imperialist war, everywhere evoking a demand for state and public control of the production and distribution of all staple products, on the other, induce the party to demand the nationalisation of the banks, syndicates (trusts), etc.

\*

The agrarian programme should be replaced by an agrarian resolution (see its text separately) or rewritten in accordance with it.

\*

The concluding part of the programme (the last two paragraphs from the words: "In the endeavour to achieve") to be entirely deleted.

FOR THE PROGRAMME

BETTER VARIANT

The party of the proletariat cannot rest content with a bourgeois parliamentary democratic republic, which throughout the world preserves and strives to perpetuate the monarchist instruments for the oppression of the masses, namely, the police, the standing army, and the privileged bureaucracy.

The party fights for a more democratic workers' and peasants' republic, in which the police and the standing army will be abolished and replaced by the universally armed people, by a people's militia; all officials will be not only elective, but also subject to recall at any time upon the demand of a majority of the electors; all officials, without exception, will be paid at a rate not exceeding the average wage of a competent worker; parliamentary representative institutions will be gradually replaced by Soviets of people's representatives (from various classes and professions, or from various localities), functioning as both legislative and executive bodies.

**REMARKS IN THE DEBATE ON THE RESOLUTION ON  
THE CURRENT SITUATION**

APRIL 29 (MAY 12)

1

Question from the floor. Does control over the syndicates and banks imply measures recommended only on a state-wide scale or are such measures as control over private enterprises, etc., also included?

No, that is not here, because this living practice has been given expression in another resolution where it is in a better perspective. This particular resolution deals with another subject—the steps to be taken towards socialism.

2

Solovyov motions an amendment: a few words about the characteristic of the state in this transition period—that is very essential, because it determines the overall direction of the activities of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies....

Lenin objects to Comrade Solovyov's amendment:

In some resolutions we keep coming up against concrete definitions. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies can operate without the police, because they have their armed soldiers. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are institutions which can substitute for the old civil service.

The old agrarian programme ... has not been realised, but we should say: "The Party demands a peasant-proletarian republic without a police, a standing army or a civil service." Consequently, the conference has predetermined this issue, so all we have to do now is to formulate.

Lenin

**The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.  
(B.)**

APRIL 24–29 (MAY 7–12), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 409-429.1.

REPORT ON THE QUESTION OF REVISING THE PARTY  
PROGRAMME

APRIL 28 (MAY 11)

NEWSPAPER REPORT

The commission has proposed the adoption of a resolution on the direction in which the Party programme should be changed: 1) evaluation of imperialism in connection with the approaching social revolution; 2) amending the paragraphs on the state—the state without a standing army, a police, or a privileged bureaucracy; 3) elimination of what is out of date in the political programme (about tsarism, etc.); 4) altering the minimum programme; 5) re writing the economic section of the programme, which is obviously out of date, and the school section of the programme; 6–7) inserting demands flowing from the changing structure of capitalist society (nationalization of the syndicated branches of industry, etc.); 8) adding an analysis of the trends in socialism.

Lenin

### **Our Views**

A Reply To The Resolution Of the Executive Commission Of  
The Soviet Of Soldiers' Deputies

Pravda, No. 35, May 1 (April 18), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 172-175.

The newspapers for April 16 carried the following resolution:

“Having discussed comrades’ reports concerning the spread of disruptive propaganda carried on under a revolutionary and often even under a Social-Democratic banner, particularly propaganda by those who call themselves Leninists; regarding such propaganda to be no less harmful than any other counter-revolutionary propaganda from the right; and realising at the same time that it is impossible to take repressive measures against propaganda so long as it remains merely propaganda, the Executive Commission of the Soviet of Soldiers’ Deputies considers it essential that measures should be taken to counteract this propaganda by our own propaganda and agitation. We must make our organisations strong enough to be able at any moment to meet a counter-revolutionary action, no matter where it comes from, by effective actions of our own. We express our earnest wish that the Executive Committee launch a systematic campaign in the press, and especially in the army units, against the disruptive propaganda.”

If we compare this resolution with the statement made in Izvestia’s leading article (for April 17) against the “dishonourable and outrageous persecution”, we see at once the political division on the subject which has made itself

manifest in practice, namely: Russkaya Volya, the chief hounding agency; Mr. Plekhanov's Yedinstvo, which repeats "such a method of struggle"; both recognised as such by Dyelo Naroda.

A different stand is taken by the Executive Commission of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies, which simply declares that "it is impossible to take repressive measures against propaganda so long as it remains merely propaganda".

That is why we reprint the resolution of the Executive Commission in full and consider it useful to examine it on its merits.

The resolution declares Lenin's propaganda to be "no less harmful than any other counter-revolutionary propaganda from the right".

Let us examine the gist of the differences between (1) counter-revolutionary propaganda from the right, (2) the propaganda for and in support of the Provisional Government, and (3) our own propaganda.

The Rights are out for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the restoration of the monarchy.

The Provisional Government has promised to act in agreement with the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Our propaganda is: all power in the state to be turned over to the Soviets alone, because the Soviets unquestionably represent the overwhelming majority of the nation. To achieve this, we want by "explanation" (as Lenin distinctly stated in his theses the very first day) to make the majority of the nation see the necessity for such a transfer of power.

The Rights, then, are for a monarchic government. The capitalists are for a capitalist government (for that is what the Provisional Government is); they promise to act in agreement with the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

We want to convince the majority of the people that power must reside solely in the Soviets.

It is perfectly obvious that even from the point of view of those who advocate an agreement with the Provisional Government, our propaganda cannot be regarded as "no less harmful than any other counter-revolutionary propaganda from the right". The advocates of an agreement now have the backing of the majority of the people! How then can they maintain that our propaganda urging the majority to take overall the power is "no less harmful than propaganda from the right"?

This is a glaring inconsistency.

The Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies can hardly uphold this view of its Executive Commission for long.

To proceed.

What essentially are our differences?

We differ mainly on three points:

1. On the question of the land. We are for the peasants taking all the land immediately by a decision of their own majority in each locality, thus increasing production of grain and meat for the soldiers.

The Provisional Government is for an "agreement" between the peasants and the landowners, i.e., an "agreement" between three hundred peasants and one landowner.



The future will show whether the majority of the people are with us or with the Provisional Government on this question.

2. We are for a republic where, from the bottom up, there will be no police, no standing army (instead of a standing army, we believe, there should be a universal arming of the whole people), no bureaucracy, who, in effect, are undisplaceable and privileged by high bourgeois salaries. We want all public officers to be elective and displaceable at any time, and their pay to be on a proletarian scale.

The Provisional Government is for restoring the police of the usual type; it is for a standing army, for the usual kind of officials.

3. The Provisional Government is for continuing the war and the kind of war which Nicholas the Bloody started. The Provisional Government is for confirming the secret, predatory treaties concluded by him without consulting the will of the people and even without making them public.

We are against such a war, we are against the confirmation of the treaties, against their non-publication.

We urge all nations, without exception, to put an end to the war by concluding, not a coercive, but a truly democratic peace, that would give freedom to all nations and nationalities. We want to show the people that in order to end the war by a truly non-coercive peace it is necessary that the state power be placed wholly and exclusively in the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

For so long as the capitalists and landowners (Guchkov, Lvov, Milyukov) are in power, the war will remain a capitalist-

directed one, all promises of peace without annexations will remain mere promises, and distrust of the capitalists' government on the part of the world's working masses will continue; and that means the war will drag on.

Question: What if the state power in Russia passed to the Soviets but Germany failed to effect a revolution that would rid it of both Wilhelm II and the German Guchkovs and Milyukovs (for if the German Nicholas II were replaced by the German Guchkovs and Milyukovs, there would be no change whatever as far as the war is concerned)?

Our answer is: Power in the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies would be the power of the majority of the people, and that majority consists of workers and poor peasants. They are really not interested in annexations, they will renounce them not in word, but indeed; they will really stop being watchdogs of the capitalists' profits.

Under such conditions we too would agree to a revolutionary war against the capitalists of any country, because that would really be a war against the interests of Capital in general, and not a war in the interest of the capitalists of one particular country.

Question: How can we advance the cause of peace right now, immediately and practically, if it is impossible to end the war by simply sticking the bayonets into the ground?

Our answer is: The war cannot be terminated by the simple expedient of sticking the bayonets into the ground, or generally by the unilateral withdrawal of any of the warring nations. There is, and can be, only one practical and immediate way of hastening peace (apart from the victory of the workers'

revolution over the capitalists), and that is the fraternisation of the soldiers at the front.

We must immediately, in the most energetic manner, and by all the means at our disposal encourage fraternisation of the soldiers of both warring groups at the front.

This fraternisation has already begun. Let us help it along.

These are our views. We are firmly convinced that the majority of the people will not say that they are “no less harmful than any other counter-revolutionary propaganda from the right”.

Lenin

### **A Proletarian Militia**

Pravda No. 36, May 3 (April 20), 1917.

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 179-182.

On April 14 our paper [Pravda] published a report from a correspondent in Kanavino, Nizhni-Novgorod Gubernia, to the effect that “a workers’ militia paid for by the factory managements has been introduced at practically all the factories”.

Kanavino district, our correspondent reports, has sixteen factories and about thirty thousand workers, not counting railway employees. The organisation of a workers’ militia paid for by the capitalists therefore embraces a considerable number of the largest enterprises in the locality.

The organisation of a workers’ militia to be paid for by the capitalists is a measure of tremendous—it will be no exaggeration to say, gigantic and decisive—importance, both practically and in principle. The revolution cannot be made safe, its gains cannot be assured, its further development is impossible, until this measure has become general, until it is carried through all over the country.

The bourgeois and landowner republicans, who turned republican after they saw that it was impossible to rule the people otherwise, are trying to establish a republic that would be as monarchical as possible; something like that in France, which Shchedrin called a republic without republicans.

At the present time, when the landowners and capitalists have come to realise the strength of the revolutionary masses, the most important thing for them is to safeguard the most essential institutions of the old regime, **to safeguard the old instruments of oppression: the police, the bureaucracy, the standing army.** They are trying to reduce the "civil militia" to an institution of the old type, i.e., to small detachments of armed men standing apart from the people and as close as possible to the bourgeoisie and under the command of men from among the bourgeoisie.

**The minimum programme of the Social-Democrats calls for the replacement of the standing army** by a universal arming of the people. Most of the official Social-Democrats in Europe and most of our own Menshevik leaders, however, have "forgotten" or put aside the Party's programme, substituting chauvinism ("defencism") for internationalism, reformism for revolutionary tactics.

Yet now of all times, at the present revolutionary moment, it is most urgent and essential that **there be a universal arming of the people.** To assert that, while we have a revolutionary army, there is no need to arm the proletariat, or that there would "not be enough" arms to go around, **is mere deception and trickery.** The thing is to begin organising a universal militia straight away, so that everyone should learn the use of arms even if there is "not enough" to go around, for it is not at all necessary that the people have enough weapons to arm everybody. The people must learn, one and all, how to use arms, they must belong, one and all, to the militia which is to replace the police and the standing army.

The workers do not want an army standing apart from the people; what they want is that the **workers and soldiers should merge into a single militia consisting of all the people.**

**Failing this, the apparatus of oppression will remain in force,** ready today to serve Guchkov and his friends, the counter-revolutionary generals, and tomorrow Radko Dmitriev or some pretender to the throne and builder of a plebiscite monarchy.

The capitalists need a republic now, because they cannot “manage” the people otherwise. But what they need is a “parliamentary” republic, i.e., one where democracy would be limited to democratic elections, to the right of sending to parliament individuals who, as Marx aptly remarked, represent the people and oppress the people.

The opportunists of contemporary Social-Democracy, who have substituted Scheidemann for Marx, have memorised the rule that parliamentarism “should be utilised” (which is absolutely correct), but have forgotten what Marx taught concerning proletarian democracy as distinguished from bourgeois parliamentarism.

The people need a republic in order to educate the masses in the methods of democracy. We need not only representation along democratic lines, but the building of the entire state administration from the bottom up by the masses themselves, their effective participation in all of life’s steps, their active role in the administration. **Replacement of the old organs of oppression,** the police, the bureaucracy, the standing army, by a universal arming of the people, by a really universal militia, is the only way to guarantee the country a maximum of security against the restoration of the monarchy and to enable it to go

forward firmly, systematically and resolutely towards socialism, not by “introducing” it from above, but by raising the vast mass of proletarians and semi-proletarians to the art of state administration, to the use of the whole state power.

Public service through a police force standing above the people, through bureaucrats, who are the most faithful servants of the bourgeoisie, and through a standing army under the command of landowners and capitalists—that is the ideal of the bourgeois parliamentary republic, **which is out to perpetuate the rule of Capital.**

Public service through a really universal people’s militia, composed of men and women, a militia capable partly of replacing the bureaucrats—this, combined with the principle of elective office and displaceability of all public officers, with payment for their work according to proletarian, not “master-class”, bourgeois standards, is the ideal of the working class.

This ideal has not only become a part of our programme, it has not only won a place in the history of the labour movement in the West, namely, in the experience of the Paris Commune; it has not only been evaluated, stressed, explained and recommended by Marx, but it was actually put into practice by the Russian workers in the years 1905 and 1917.

The Soviets of Workers’ Deputies, in point of significance, in point of the type of government they create, are institutions of precisely that kind of democracy which does away with the old organs of oppression and takes the road of a universal militia.

But how can the militia be made universal when the proletarians and semi-proletarians are herded in the factories,

crushed by unbearable labour for the landowners and the capitalists?

There is only one way: the workers' militia must be paid for by the capitalists.

The capitalists must pay the workers for the hours and days which they give to public service.

This reliable method is being adopted by the working masses themselves. The example of the Nizhni-Novgorod workers should become a model for all Russia.

Comrade workers, make the peasants and the rest of the people see the need for a universal militia in place of the police and the old bureaucracy! Introduce such and only such a militia! Introduce it through the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, through the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, through the organs of local self-government that fall into the hands of the working class. Do not under any circumstances be content with a bourgeois militia. Draw the women into public service on an equal footing with the men. See to it that the capitalists pay the workers for days devoted to public service in the militia!

Learn the methods of democracy by actual practice, right now, on your own, from the bottom up—rouse the masses to effective, immediate, universal participation in government—this and this alone will assure the full triumph of the revolution and its unswerving, purposeful and systematic advance.



Lenin

**An Open Letter to the Delegates to the All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies**

May 17, 1917, Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 370-374.

Comrades, peasant deputies,

The Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks), to which I have the honour to belong, wanted me to represent our Party at the Peasant Congress, but illness has prevented me from carrying out this commission. I therefore take the liberty of addressing this open letter to you in order to greet the all-Russia union of the peasantry and briefly to point out the deep-seated differences that divide our Party on the one hand and the party of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Menshevik Social-Democrats on the other.

These profound differences concern the three most important issues: the land, the war, and state organisation.

All the land must belong to the people. All the landed estates must be turned over to the peasants without compensation. This is clear. The dispute here is whether or not the peasants in the local areas should take all the land at once, without paying any rent to the landowners, or wait until the Constituent Assembly meets.

Our Party believes that they should, and advises the peasants locally—to take over all the land without delay, and to do it in as organised a way as possible, under no circumstances allowing damage to property and exerting every effort to increase the production of grain and meat since the troops at

the front are in dire straits. In any case, although the final decision on how to dispose of the land will be made by the Constituent Assembly, a preliminary settlement now, at once, in time for the spring sowing, can be made only by local bodies, inasmuch as our Provisional Government, which is a government of the landowners and capitalists, is putting off the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and so far has not even fixed a date for it.

Only local bodies are able preliminarily to take charge of the land. The fields must be sown to crops. Most of the peasants in the local areas are quite capable of making use of the land in an organised way, of ploughing and putting it all under crops. This is essential if the supply of food to the soldiers at the front is to be improved. Hence, to wait for the Constituent Assembly is out of the question. We by no means deny the right of the Constituent Assembly finally to institute public ownership of the land and to regulate its disposal. In the meantime, however, right now, this spring, the peasants themselves must decide locally what to do with it. The soldiers at the front can and should send delegates to the villages.

Further. For all the land to pass over to the working people, a close alliance of the urban workers and the poor peasants (semi-proletarians) is essential. Unless such an alliance is formed, the capitalists cannot be defeated. And if they are not defeated, no transfer of the land to the people will deliver them from poverty. You cannot eat land, and without money, without capital, there is no way of obtaining implements, livestock, or seed. The peasants must trust not the capitalists or the rich muzhiks (who are capitalists too), but only the urban workers. Only in alliance with the latter can the poor peasants ensure that

the land, the railways, the banks, and the factories become the property of all the working people; if this is not done, the mere transfer of the land to the people cannot abolish want and pauperism.

Workers in certain localities in Russia are already beginning to establish their supervision (control) over the factories. Such control by the workers is to the peasants' advantage, for it means increased production and cheaper products. The peasants must give their fullest support to this initiative on the part of the workers and not believe the slander which the capitalists spread against the workers.

The second question is the question of the war.

This war is a war of conquest. It is being waged by the capitalists of all countries with predatory aims, to increase their profits. To the working people this war can spell only ruin, suffering, devastation, and brutalisation. That is why our Party, the party of class-conscious workers and poor peasants, emphatically and unqualifiedly condemns this war, refuses to justify the capitalists of the one country as against the capitalists of another, refuses to support the capitalists of any country whatever, and is working for the speediest termination of the war through the overthrow of the capitalists in all countries, through a workers' revolution in all countries.

In our new Provisional Government, there are ten ministers belonging to the landowner and capitalist parties and six to the Narodnik (Socialist-Revolutionary) and Menshevik Social-Democratic parties. In our opinion the Narodniks and Mensheviks have made a grave and fatal mistake in joining the capitalist government and in general agreeing to support it.

Men like Tsereteli and Chernov are hoping to induce the capitalists to bring the present predatory war to a speedy and more honourable end. But these leaders of the Narodnik and Menshevik parties are mistaken: they are, in effect, helping the capitalists to prepare an offensive by the Russian troops against Germany, that is, to drag out the war, to add to the incredibly enormous sacrifices the Russian people have made in the war.

We are convinced that the capitalists in all countries are deceiving the people by promising an early and just peace when they are actually prolonging the war of conquest. The Russian capitalists, who controlled the old Provisional Government and continue to control the new one, did not even wish to publish the secret predatory treaties ex-Tsar Nicholas Romanov concluded with the capitalists of Britain, France, and other countries with the object of wresting Constantinople from the Turks, Galicia from the Austrians, Armenia from the Turks, and so on. The Provisional Government has confirmed these treaties.

Our Party maintains that these treaties are just as criminal and predatory as the treaties the German brigand-capitalists and their brigand-Emperor Wilhelm have with their allies.

The blood of the workers and peasants must not be shed for the sake of such predatory aims of the capitalists.

This criminal war must be brought to a speedy end, not by a separate peace with Germany, but by a universal peace, not by a capitalist peace, but by a peace of the working masses against the capitalists. There is only one way to do this, and that is by transferring all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies both in Russia and in other countries.

Only such Soviets will be able effectively to prevent the capitalists from deceiving the peoples, and prevent the war being dragged on by the capitalists.

This brings me to the third and last of the questions I have mentioned: the question of state organisation.

Russia must become a democratic republic. Even the majority of the landowners and capitalists, who have always stood for the monarchy but now see that the people of Russia will on no account allow it to be restored, are in agreement with this. The capitalists now have directed all their efforts at making the Russian republic as much like a monarchy as possible so that it might be changed back into a monarchy with the least difficulty (this has happened time and again in many countries). For this purpose the capitalists want to preserve the bureaucracy, which stands above the people, to preserve the police and the standing army, which is separated from the people and commanded by non-elective generals and other officers. And the generals and other officers, unless they are elected, will almost invariably be landowners and capitalists. That much we know from the experience of all the republics in the world.

Our Party, the party of class-conscious workers and poor peasants, is therefore working for a democratic republic of another kind. We want a republic where there is no police that browbeats the people; where all officials, from the bottom up, are elective and displaceable whenever the people demand it, and are paid salaries not higher than the wages of a competent worker; where all army officers are similarly elective and where the standing army separated from the people and subordinated to classes alien to the people is replaced by the universally armed people, by a people's militia.

We want a republic where all state power, from the bottom up, belongs wholly and exclusively to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies.

The workers and peasants are the majority of the population. The power must belong to them, not to the landowners or the capitalists.

The workers and peasants are the majority of the population. The power and the functions of administration must belong to their Soviets, not to the bureaucracy.

Such are our views, comrade peasant deputies. We are firmly convinced that experience will soon show the broad masses how erroneous the policy of the Narodniks and Mensheviks is. Experience will soon show the masses that compromise with the capitalists cannot save Russia, which, like Germany and other countries, is standing on the brink of disaster, cannot save the war-wearied peoples. The transfer of all state power directly to the majority of the population alone can save the peoples.

Lenin

### **They Have Forgotten the Main Thing**

THE MUNICIPAL PLATFORM OF THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

Pravda No. 49, May 18 (5), 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 350-353.

Elections to the district councils being close at hand, the two petty-bourgeois democratic parties, the Narodniks and the Mensheviks, have come out with high-sounding platforms. These platforms are exactly the same as those of the European bourgeois parties who are engaged in angling for the gullible uneducated mass of voters from among the petty proprietors, etc., such as, for instance, the platform of the Radical and Radical-Socialist Party of France. The same specious phrases, the same lavish promises, the same vague formulations, the same silence on or forgetfulness of the main thing, namely, the actual conditions on which the practicability of these promises depends.

At present these conditions are: (1) the imperialist war; (2) the existence of a capitalist government; (3) the impossibility of seriously improving the condition of the workers and the whole mass of working people without revolutionary encroachment on the "sacred right, of capitalist private property"; (4) the impossibility of carrying out the reforms promised by those parties while the old organs and machinery of government remain intact, while there exists a police force which is bound to back the capitalists and put a thousand and one obstacles in the way of such reforms.

For example: "House rents is in war time to be controlled", "such stocks to be requisitioned for the public needs" (that is stocks of foodstuffs kept in stores or by private individuals) "communal stores, bakeries, canteens, and kitchens to be organized" —write the Mensheviks. "Proper attention to be paid to sanitation and hygiene," echo the Narodniks (the Socialist-Revolutionaries)

Excellent wishes, to be sure. The trouble is that they cannot be carried out unless one stops supporting the imperialist war, stops supporting the loan (which is profitable to the capitalists), stops supporting the capitalist government, which safeguards capitalist profits, stops preserving the police, who are bound to obstruct, thwart, and kill any such reform, even if the government and the capitalists themselves did not present an ultimatum to the reformers (and they certainly will, once capitalist profits are involved).

The trouble is that once we forget the harsh and rigid conditions of capitalist domination, then all such platforms, all such lists of sweeping reforms are empty words, which in practice turn out to be either harmless "pious wishes", or simple hoodwinking of the masses by ordinary bourgeois politicians.

We must face the truth squarely. We must not gloss it over, we must tell it to people in a straightforward manner. We must not brush the class struggle under the carpet, but clarify what relation it bears to the high-sounding, specious, delightful "radical" reforms.

Comrade workers, and all other citizens of Petrograd! In order to give the people all those pressing and essential reforms of which the Narodniks and the Mensheviks speak, one must



throw over the policy of support for the imperial 1st war and war loans, support for the capitalist government and for the principle of the inviolability of capitalist profits. To carry out those reforms, one must not allow the police to be reinstated, as the Cadets are now doing, but have it replaced by a people's militia. This is what the party of the proletariat should tell the people at elections, this is what it must say against the petty-bourgeois parties of the Narodniks and the Mensheviks. This is the essence of the proletarian municipal platform that is being glossed over by the petty-bourgeois parties.

Foremost in this platform, topping the list of reforms, there must be, as a basic condition for their actual realisation, the following three fundamental points:

1. No support for the imperialist war (either in the form of support for the war loan, or in any other form).
2. No support to the capitalist government.
3. No reinstatement of the police, which must be replaced by a people's militia.

Unless attention is focused on these cardinal questions, unless it is shown that all municipal reforms are contingent upon them, the municipal programme inevitably becomes (at best) a pious wish.

Let us examine point 3.

In all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic, the police (like the standing army) is the chief instrument of oppression of the masses, an instrument making for a possible restoration of the monarchy. The police beats up the "common people" in the police stations of New York, Geneva, and Paris; it favours the

capitalists either because it is bribed to do so (America and other countries), or because it enjoys wealthy “patronage” and “protection” (Switzerland), or because of a combination of both (France). Separated as it is from the people, forming a professional caste of men trained in the practice of violence upon the poor, men who receive somewhat higher pay and the privileges that go with authority (to say nothing of “gratuities”), the police everywhere, in every republic, however democratic, where the bourgeoisie is in power, always remains the unfailing weapon, the chief support and protection of the bourgeoisie. No important radical reforms in favour of the working masses can be implemented through the police. That is objectively impossible.

**A people’s militia instead of the police force and the standing army is a prerequisite of effective municipal reforms in the interests of the working people.** At a time of revolution this prerequisite is practicable. And it is on this that we must concentrate the whole municipal platform, for the other two cardinal conditions apply to the state as a whole, and not only to municipal governments.

Just how this people’s militia can be brought into existence is something which experience will show. To enable the proletarians and semi-proletarians to serve in this militia, the employers must be made to pay them their full wages for the days and hours they spend in service. This is practicable. Whether we should first organise a workers’ militia by drawing upon the workers employed at the large factories, i.e.. the workers who are best organised and most capable of fulfilling the task of militiamen, or whether we should immediately organise general compulsory service for all adult men and

women, who would devote to this service one or two weeks a year and so on, is not a question of fundamental importance. There is no harm in the different districts adopting different procedures—in fact, it would make for richer experience, and the process of organisation would develop more smoothly and come closer to life's practical requirements.

A people's militia would mean education of the masses in the practices of democracy.

A people's militia would mean government of the poor by the people themselves, chiefly by the poor, and not by the rich, not through their police.

A people's militia would mean that control (over factories, dwellings, the distribution of products, etc.) would be real and not merely on paper.

A people's militia would mean distribution without any bread queues, without any privileges for the rich.

A people's militia would mean that quite a number of the serious and radical reforms listed also by the Narodniks and the Mensheviks would not remain mere pious wishes.

Comrades, working men and women of Petrograd! Go to the district council elections. Protect the interests of the poor population. Come out against the imperialist war, against support of the capitalist government, against the restoration of the police and for the immediate unqualified replacement of the police by a people's militia.

Lenin

### **A Regrettable Deviation From the Principles of Democracy**

Pravda No. 55, May 25 (12), 1917

Collected Works, pages 385-387.

Today's Izvestia carries a report of the meeting of the Soldiers' Section of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. This meeting, among other things,

“considered the question of whether soldiers could perform the duties of militiamen. The Executive Committee proposed to the meeting a resolution to the following effect:

“In view of the fact that soldiers must perform their direct duty, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies declared against the soldiers' participation in the militia and proposes that all soldiers serving in the militia be immediately returned to their units.’

“After a brief debate, the resolution was passed with an amendment permitting soldiers discharged from active service as well as wounded soldiers to perform militia duties.”

It is to be regretted that the exact texts of the resolution and the amendment have not been published. More regrettable still is the fact that the Executive Committee proposed, and the meeting adopted a resolution which is a complete abandonment of the fundamental principles of democracy.

**There is hardly a democratic party in Russia** that does not include in its programme **a demand for the universal arming of the people as a substitute for the standing army.** There is hardly a Socialist-Revolutionary or a Menshevik Social-Democrat **who would dare oppose such a demand.** The trouble is that it has become a “custom” “nowadays”, under the cover of high-sounding phrases about ‘revolutionary democracy”, to accept democratic (the more so socialist) programmes “in principle”, but reject them in practice.

To oppose the participation of soldiers in the militia on the ground that “soldiers must perform their direct duty” is to forget completely the principles of democracy and involuntarily, unconsciously, perhaps, to adopt the idea of a standing army. The soldier is a professional; his direct duty is not social service at all—such is the point of view of those who are for a standing army. It is not a democratic point of view. It is the point of view of the Napoleons. It is the point of view of old supporters of the old regime and the capitalists, who dream of an easy transition backward, from a republic to a constitutional monarchy.

A democrat is opposed to such a view on principle. Soldiers’ participation in the militia amounts to breaking down the wall that separates the army from the people. It amounts to breaking with the accursed “barrack” past where a special group of citizens, detached from and opposed to the people, were trained, “knocked into shape” and drilled for the “direct task” of following only a military profession. Soldiers’ participation in the militia is a cardinal issue involving the re-education of the “soldiers” into militiamen citizens, the re-education of the population into public-spirited armed citizens. Democracy will

remain an idle deceitful phrase, or merely a half-measure, unless the entire people is given a chance immediately and unqualifiedly to learn how to handle arms. Without the systematic, regular, and widespread participation of the soldiers in the militia this will be impossible.

The objection may be raised that soldiers should not be deflected from their direct duties. No one said they should. To make a point of this is as ridiculous as saying that a physician engaged at the bedside of a patient who is dangerously ill has no right to leave that bedside in order to go and hand in his voting-paper, or that a worker engaged in production, which admittedly must not be interrupted, has no right to go away to exercise his political rights until he is relieved by another worker. Such arguments would simply be frivolous and even unscrupulous.

Participation in the militia is one of the cardinal and basic principles of democracy, one of the most important guarantees of freedom. (We might add, parenthetically, that there is no better way of enhancing the purely military strength and capacity of the army than by substituting the universal arming of the people for the standing army, and by using the soldiers to instruct the people; this method has always been used and always will be used in every truly revolutionary war.) The immediate, unqualified, universal organisation of a people's militia and the widest participation of soldiers in that militia are in the vital interests of the workers, peasants, and soldiers, that is to say, the vast majority of the population, a majority that is not interested in safeguarding the profits of the landowners and the capitalists.

Lenin

From **Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat**

July 1917

Collected Works, Progress Publishers, 1964, Moscow, Volume 24, pages 93-106.

4) WHAT FORM OF GOVERNMENT DO THEY WANT AT PRESENT?

A. (to the right of the C.D.). A constitutional monarchy, the absolute power of the bureaucracy and the police.

B. (G.D.). A bourgeois parliamentary republic, i.e., the consolidation of the rule of the capitalists, while retaining the old bureaucracy and the police.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). A bourgeois parliamentary republic, with reforms for the workers and peasants.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). A republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies. Abolition of the standing army and the police, who are to be replaced by the arming of the whole people; officials to be not only elective, but also displaceable; their pay not to exceed that of a competent worker.

10) DOES THE STATE NEED THE USUAL TYPE OF POLICE AND A STANDING ARMY?

A. (to the right of the C.D.) and B. (C.D.). It certainly does, for they are the only firm guarantee of the rule of the capitalists; in

case of need, as the, experience of all countries has shown, the return from a republic to a monarchy is thus greatly facilitated.

C. (S.D. and S.R.). On the one hand, they are perhaps not necessary. On the other hand, is not so radical a change premature? However, we shall raise the matter in the Contact Commission.

D. ("Bolsheviks"). It definitely does not. The arming of the entire people must be proceeded with everywhere immediately and unreservedly, and they must be merged with the militia and the army. The capitalists must pay the workers for days served in the militia.



Lenin

**The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, (Draft Platform for the Proletarian Party)**

September 1917

Collected Works, Volume 24, pages 55-92.

**A NEW TYPE OF STATE EMERGING FROM OUR REVOLUTION**

11. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies are not understood, not only in the sense that their class significance, their role in the Russian revolution, is not clear to the majority. They are not understood also in the sense that they constitute a new form or rather a new type of state.

The most perfect, the most advanced type of bourgeois state is the parliamentary democratic republic: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of the customary kind: **the standing army**, the police, and the bureaucracy—which in practice is displaceable, **is privileged and stands above the people.**

Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, revolutionary epochs have advanced a higher type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels put it, ceases to be a state, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word". This is a state of the Paris Commune type, one in which **standing army and police divorced from the people are replaced by the direct arming of the people themselves.** It is this feature that constitutes the very essence of the Commune, which has been so misrepresented and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and

to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of immediately “introducing” socialism.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution began to create in 1905 and in 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’, Peasants’, and other Deputies, united in an All-Russia Constituent Assembly of people’s representatives or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is already being realized in our country now, at this juncture. It is being realized by the initiative of the nation’s millions, who are creating a democracy on their own, in their own way without waiting until the Cadet professors draft their legislative bills for a parliamentary bourgeois republic, or until the pedants and routine-worshippers of petty-bourgeois “Social-Democracy”, like Mr. Plekhanov or Kautsky, stop distorting the Marxist teaching on the state.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises the need for a state and for state power in the period of revolution in general, and in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in particular.

**Marxism differs from the petty-bourgeois, opportunist “Social-Democratism” of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co.** in that it recognises that what is required during these two periods is not a state of the usual parliamentary bourgeois republican type, but a state of the Paris Commune type.

The main distinctions between a state of the latter type and the old state are as follows.

It is quite easy (as history proves) to revert from a parliamentary bourgeois republic to a monarchy, for all the machinery of oppression—**the army, the police, and the**

**bureaucracy**—is left intact. The Commune and the Soviet smash that machinery and do away with it.

The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the masses their direct participation in the democratic organisation of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.

The latter reproduce the type of state which was being evolved by the Paris Commune and which Marx described as “the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour”.

We are usually told that the Russian people are not yet prepared for the “introduction” of the Commune. This was the argument of the serf-owners when they claimed that the peasants were not prepared for emancipation. The Commune, i.e., the Soviets, does not “introduce”, does not intend to “introduce”, and must not introduce any reforms which have not absolutely matured both in economic reality and in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the people. The deeper the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war, the more urgent becomes the need for the most perfect political form, which will facilitate the healing of the terrible wounds inflicted on mankind by the war. The less the organisational experience of the Russian people, the more resolutely must we proceed to organisational development by the people themselves and not merely by the bourgeois politicians and “well-placed” bureaucrats.

The sooner we shed the old prejudices of pseudo-Marxism, a Marxism falsified by Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more actively we set about helping the people to organise Soviets of

Workers' and Peasants' Deputies everywhere and immediately, and helping the latter to take life in its entirety under their control, and the longer Lvov and Co. delay the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the easier will it be for the people (through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, or independently of it, if Lvov delays its convocation too long) to cast their decision in favour of a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Errors in the new work of organisational development by the people themselves are at first inevitable; but it is better to make mistakes and go forward than to wait until the professors of law summoned by Mr. Lvov draft their laws for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, for the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and for the strangling of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

If we organise ourselves and conduct our propaganda skillfully, **not only the proletarians**, but nine-tenths of the peasants **will be opposed to the restoration** of the police, will be opposed to a displaceable and privileged bureaucracy and **to an army divorced from the people**. And that is all the new type of state stands for.

12. The substitution of a people's militia for the police is a reform that follows from the entire course of the revolution and that is now being introduced in most parts of Russia. We must explain to the people that in most of the bourgeois revolutions of the usual type, this reform was always extremely short-lived, and that the bourgeoisie—even the most democratic and republican—restored the police of the old, tsarist type, a police divorced from the people, commanded by the bourgeoisie and capable of oppressing the people in every way.

There is only one way to prevent the restoration of the police, and that is **to create a people's militia** and to fuse it with the army (**the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people**). Service in this militia should extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five without exception, if these tentatively suggested age limits may be taken as indicating the participation of adolescents and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants, etc., for days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism. And such "police" functions as care of the sick and of homeless children, food inspection, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on an equal footing with men, not merely nominally but in reality.

**The tasks** which the proletariat must put before the people in order to safeguard, consolidate and develop the revolution are **prevention of the restoration of the police and enlistment of the organisational forces** of the entire people in forming a people's militia.

Lenin

September 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381-492

**From "The State and Revolution"**

2. The Revolution Summed Up

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

"But the revolution is throughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'etat], it had completed one half of its preparatory work. It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the executive power, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organization, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten."

The first French Revolution developed centralization, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery". The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labor"....

"... Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralization of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

pp.98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg, 1907)

In this remarkable argument, Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the Communist Manifesto. In the latter, the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been completely ignored by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, distorted (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The Communist Manifesto gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organized as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a summing up of experience, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

**The centralized state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism.** Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the **bureaucracy and the standing army.** In their works, Marx and



Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognize this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society--a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes" all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a parasitic organism to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defence of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection, and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeois who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen, and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet,

and respectable jobs raising the holders above the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks, and Social-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the "spoils", which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "redistributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the whole of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine.

This course of events compels the revolution "to concentrate all its forces of destruction" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine, but of smashing and destroying it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of what was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution had approached the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of "smashing" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalize the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts. In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels wrote:

"France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the

Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere." (p.4, 1907 edition)

The last remark is out of date insomuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavia countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the "spoils" of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power", of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the last three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a

swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism--the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism--has clearly shown an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune.

Lenin

September 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381-492

**From "The State and Revolution"**

2. Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, etc.

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 costs a prolonged struggle against the old organization according to generations or tribes.

"The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a **self-acting armed organization 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 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 organization”.

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 19th 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 organization 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 irreconcilable antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the “self-acting armed organization of the population” would differ from the primitive organization

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 organization would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilized 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 organization 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 organization of the population". We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels' exposition.

He points out that sometimes — in certain parts of North America, for example — this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonists predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:



"It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state."

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels' last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism — meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth — was only just beginning in France and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then "rivalry in conquest" has taken a gigantic stride, all the more because by the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century the world had been completely divided up among these "rivals in conquest", i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "swallowing" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels' could, as early as 1891, point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many time intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defence of the predatory interests of "their own" bourgeoisie

with phrases about “defence of the fatherland”, “defence of the republic and the revolution”, etc.!

Lenin

September 1917

Collected Works, Volume 25, p. 381-492

**From "The State and Revolution"**

**2. WITH WHAT IS THE SMASHED STATE MACHINE TO BE REPLACED?**

In 1847, in the Communist Manifesto, Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one, or, to speak more correctly, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the Communist Manifesto was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organized as the ruling class," by the "winning of the battle of democracy."

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the experience of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to what specific forms this organization of the proletariat as the ruling class will assume and as to the exact manner in which this organization will be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy."

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meagre as it was, to the most careful analysis in The Civil War in France. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the nineteenth century "the centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature." With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labour, "the State power

assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organized for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism. After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the State power stands out in bolder and bolder relief." After the Revolution of 1848-49, the State power became "the national war engine of capital against labour." The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was "the positive form" of "a Republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class-rule itself."

What was this "positive" form of the proletarian, the socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

". . . The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."

This demand now figures in the program of every party claiming the name of Socialist. But the real worth of their programs is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, actually refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. . . . Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the

responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the Administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at workmen's wages. The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of State disappeared along with the high dignitaries them selves. . . .

"Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old Government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the 'parson-power'. . . .

"The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence . . . they were to be elective, responsible, and revocable."

Thus the Commune appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different order. This is exactly a case of "quantity becoming transformed into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois democracy into proletarian democracy; from the state (= a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is really no longer the state.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush its resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat is that it did not do this with sufficient determination. But the organ of suppression is now the

majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage slavery. And since the majority of the people itself suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is no longer necessary ! In this sense the state begins to wither away. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power devolve upon the people as a whole the less need is there for the existence of this power.

In this connection the following measures of the Commune emphasized by Marx are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges in the case of officials, the reduction of the remuneration of all servants of the state to the level of "workmen's wages." This shows more clearly than anything else the turn from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to the democracy of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "special force" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the general force of the majority of the people -- the workers and the peasants. And it is precisely on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the teachings of Marx have been most completely forgotten! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. It is "good form" to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naïveté," just as the Christians, after their religion had been given the status of a state religion, "forgot" the "naïveté" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of the highest state officials seems to be "simply" a demand of naïve, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat, Eduard Bernstein, has more than once indulged in repeating the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and like the present Kautskyites, he utterly failed to understand that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to Socialism is impossible without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and, secondly, that "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or precapitalist times. Capitalist culture has created large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and on this basis the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages," and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur."

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall at any time, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages" -- these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to Socialism. These measures concern the reconstruction of the state, the purely political reconstruction of society; but, of course, they acquire

their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure -- the standing army and State functionarism."

From the peasantry, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top," "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do people, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there is a peasantry (as there is in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of the peasants are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for "cheap" government. This can be achieved only by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reconstruction of the state.



Lenin

### **Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?**

October 1, 1917

Collected Works, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 87-136

Extract

The third plea, that the proletariat "will not be able technically to lay hold of the state apparatus" is, perhaps, the most common and most frequent. It deserves most attention for this reason, and also because it indicates one of the most serious and difficult tasks that will confront the victorious proletariat. There is no doubt that these tasks will be very difficult, but if we, who call ourselves socialists, indicate this difficulty only to shirk these tasks, in practice the distinction between us and the lackeys of the bourgeoisie will be reduced to nought. The difficulty of the tasks of the proletarian revolution should prompt the proletariat's supporters to make a closer and more definite study of the means of carrying out these tasks.

The state apparatus is primarily the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. By saying that the proletariat will not be able technically to lay hold of this apparatus, the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* reveal their utter ignorance and their reluctance to take into account either facts or the arguments long ago cited in Bolshevik literature.

All the *Novaya Zhizn* writers regard themselves, if not as Marxists, then at least as being familiar with Marxism, as educated socialists. But Marx, basing himself on the experience of the Paris Commune, taught that the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and use it for its own

purposes, that the proletariat must smash this machine and substitute a new one for it (I deal with this in greater detail in a pamphlet, the first part of which is now finished and will soon appear under the title *The State and Revolution. A Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*). This new type of state machinery was created by the Paris Commune, and the Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are a "state apparatus" of the same type. I have indicated this many times since April 4, 1917; it is dealt with in the resolutions of Bolshevik conferences and also in Bolshevik literature. *Novaya Zhizn* could, of course, have expressed its utter disagreement with Marx and with the Bolsheviks, but for a paper that has so often, and so haughtily, scolded the Bolsheviks for their allegedly frivolous attitude to difficult problems to evade this question completely is tantamount to issuing itself a certificate of mental poverty.

The proletariat cannot "lay hold of" the "state apparatus" and "set it in motion". But it can smash everything that is oppressive, routine, incorrigibly bourgeois in the old state apparatus and substitute its own, new apparatus. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. are exactly this apparatus.

That *Novaya Zhizn* has completely forgotten about this "state apparatus" can be called nothing but monstrous. Behaving in this way in their theoretical reasoning, the *Novaya Zhizn* people are, in essence, doing in the sphere of political theory what the Cadets are doing in political practice. Because, if the proletariat and the revolutionary democrats do not in fact need a new state apparatus, then the Soviets lose their *raison d'être*, lose their right to existence, and the Kornilovite Cadets are right in trying to reduce the Soviets to nought!

This monstrous theoretical blunder and political blindness on the part of Novaya Zhizn is all the more monstrous because even the internationalist Mensheviks (with whom Novaya Zhizn formed a bloc during the last City Council \* See present edition, Vol. 25.—Ed. elections in Petrograd) have on this question shown some proximity to the Bolsheviks. So, in the declaration of the Soviet majority made by Comrade Martov at the Democratic Conference, we read:

"The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, set up in the first days of the revolution by a mighty burst of creative enthusiasm that stems from the people themselves, constitute the new fabric of the revolutionary state that has replaced the outworn state fabric of the old regime. . . ."

This is a little too flowery; that is to say, rhetoric here covers up lack of clear political thinking. The Soviets have not yet replaced the old "fabric", and this old "fabric" is not the state fabric of the old regime, but the state fabric of both tsarism and of the bourgeois republic. But at any rate, Martov here stands head and shoulders above Novaya Zhizn.

The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people. From the military point of view this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the people, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so easily verifiable and renewable, that nothing even remotely like it existed in the previous state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that its

personnel is elected and subject to recall at the people's will without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most varied professions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without red tape. Fifthly, it provides an organisational form for the vanguard, i.e., for the most class-conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, and so constitutes an apparatus by means of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, train, educate, and lead the entire vast mass of these classes, which has up to now stood completely outside of political life and history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both legislative and executive functions. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance.

In 1905, our Soviets existed only in embryo, so to speak, as they lived altogether only a few weeks. Clearly, under the conditions of that time, their comprehensive development was out of the question. It is still out of the question in the 1917 Revolution, for a few months is an extremely short period and—this is most important—the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have prostituted the Soviets, have reduced their role to that of a talking shop, of an accomplice in the compromising policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying alive under the leadership of the Liebers, Dans, Tseretelis and Chernovs. The Soviets will be able to develop properly, to display their potentialities and capabilities to the full only by

taking over full state power; for otherwise they have nothing to do, otherwise they are either simply embryos (and to remain an embryo too long is fatal), or playthings. "Dual power" means paralysis for the Soviets.

If the creative enthusiasm of the revolutionary classes had not given rise to the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been a hopeless cause, for the proletariat could certainly not retain power with the old state apparatus, and it is impossible to create a new apparatus immediately. The sad history of the prostitution of the Soviets by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, the history of the "coalition", is also the history of the liberation of the Soviets from petty-bourgeois illusions, of their passage through the "purgatory" of the practical experience of the utter abomination and filth of all and sundry bourgeois coalitions. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has steeled rather than weakened the Soviets.

(...)

This is the chief difficulty, the chief task that faces the proletarian, i.e., socialist, revolution. Without the Soviets, this task would be impracticable, at least in Russia. The Soviets indicate to the proletariat the organisational work which can solve this historically important problem.

This brings us to another aspect of the question of the state apparatus. In addition to the chiefly "oppressive" apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy—the modern state possesses an apparatus which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work, if it may be expressed this way. This apparatus must not,

and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be cut off, lopped off, chopped away from this apparatus; it must be subordinated to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. And this can be done by utilising the achievements already made by large-scale capitalism (in the same way as the proletarian revolution can, in general, reach its goal only by utilising these achievements).

Leon Trotsky

## **The History of the Russian Revolution**

Volume One: The Overthrow of Tzarism

Chapter 13

### **The Army and the War**

In the months preceding the revolution discipline in the army was already badly shaken. You can pick up plenty of officers' complaints from those days: soldiers disrespectful to the command; their treatment of horses, of military property, even of weapons, indescribably bad; disorders in the military trains. It was not equally serious everywhere. But everywhere it was going in the same direction – toward ruin.

To this was now added the shock of revolution. The uprising of the Petrograd garrison took place not only without officers, but against them. In the critical hours the command simply hid its head. Deputy-Octoberist Shidlovsky conversed on the 27th of February with the officers of the Preobrazhensky regiment obviously in order to feel out their attitude to the Duma – but found among these aristocrat-cavaliers a total ignorance of what was happening, perhaps a half-hypocritical ignorance, for they were all frightened monarchists.

“What was my surprise,” says Shidlovsky, “when the very next morning I saw the whole Preobrazhensky regiment marching down the street in military formation led by a band, their order perfect and without a single officer!” To be sure, a few companies arrived at the Tauride with their officers – more accurately, they brought their officers with them. But the officers felt that in this triumphal march they occupied the

position of captives. Countess Kleinmichel, observing these scenes while under arrest, says plainly: "The officers looked like sheep led to the slaughter."

The February uprising did not create the split between soldiers and officers but merely brought it to the surface. In the minds of the soldiers the insurrection against the monarchy was primarily an insurrection against the commanding staff. "From the morning of the 28th of February," says the Kadet Nabokov, then wearing an officer's uniform, "it was dangerous to go out, because they had begun to rip off the officers' epaulets." That is how the first day of the new régime looked in the garrison.

The first care of the Executive Committee was to reconcile soldiers with officers. That meant nothing but to subordinate the troops to their former command. The return of the officers to their regiments was supposed, according to Sukhanov, to protect the army against "universal anarchy or the dictators of the dark and disintegrated rank-and-file." These revolutionists, just like the liberals, were afraid of the soldiers, not of the officers. The workers on the other hand, along with the "dark" rank-and-file, saw every possible danger exactly in the ranks of those brilliant officers. The reconciliation therefore proved temporary.

Stankevich describes in these words the mental attitude of the soldiers to the officers who returned to them after the uprising: "The soldiers, breaking discipline and leaving their barracks, not only without officers, but in many cases against their officers and even after killing them at their posts, had achieved, it turned out, a great deed of liberation. If it was a great deed, and if the officers themselves now affirm this, then why didn't they lead the soldiers into the streets? That would have been



easier and less dangerous. Now, after the victory, they associate themselves with this deed. But how sincerely and for how long?" These words are the more instructive that the author himself was one of those "left" officers to whom it did not occur to lead his soldiers into the streets.

On the morning of the 28th, on Sampsonievsky Prospect, the commander of an engineers' division was explaining to his soldiers that "the government which everybody hated is overthrown," a new one is formed with Prince Lvov at the head therefore it is necessary to obey officers as before. "And now I ask all to return to their places in the barracks." A few soldiers cried: "Glad to try". The majority merely looked bewildered: "Is that all?"

The scene was observed accidentally by Kayurov. It jarred him. "Permit me a word, Mr. Commander ..." And without waiting for permission, Kayurov put this question: "Has the workers' blood been flowing in the streets of Petrograd for three days merely to exchange one landlord for another?" Here Kayurov took the bull by the horns. His question summarised the whole struggle of the coming months. The antagonism between the soldier and the officer was a refraction of the hostility between peasant and landlord.

The officers in the provinces, having evidently got their instructions in good season, explained the events all in the same way: "His Majesty has exceeded his strength in his efforts for the good of the country, and has been compelled to hand over the burden of government to his brother." The reply was plain on the faces of the soldiers, complains an officer in a far corner of the Crimea: "Nicholas or Mikhail – it's all the same to us." When, however, this same officer was compelled next morning

to communicate the news of the revolutionary victory, the soldiers, he tells us, were transformed. Their questions, gestures, glances, testified to the "prolonged and resolute work which somebody had been doing on those dark and cloudy brains, totally unaccustomed to think." What a gulf between the officer, whose brain accommodates itself without effort to the latest telegram from Petrograd, and those soldiers who are, however stiffly, nevertheless honestly, defining their attitude to the events, independently weighing them in their calloused palms!

The high command, although formally recognising the revolution, decided not to let it through to the front. The chief of staff ordered the commander-in-chief of all the fronts, in case revolutionary delegations arrived in his territory – delegations which General Alexeiev called "gangs" for short – to arrest them immediately and turn them over to court-martial. The next day the same general, in the name of "His Highness," the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievich, demanded of the government "an end of all that is now happening in the rear of the army" – in other words, an end of the revolution.

The command delayed informing the active army about the revolution as long as possible, not so much through loyalty to the monarchy as through fear of the revolution. On several fronts they established a veritable quarantine: stopped all letters from Petrograd and held up newcomers. In that way the old régime stole a few extra days from eternity. The news of the revolution rolled up to the line of battle not before the 5th or 6th of March – and in what form? About the same as above: "The grand duke is appointed commander-in-chief; the czar has abdicated in the name of the Fatherland; everything else as

usual." In many trenches, perhaps even in the majority, the news of the revolution came from the Germans before it got there from Petrograd. Could there have been any doubt among the soldiers that the whole command was in a conspiracy to conceal the truth? And could those same soldiers trust those same officers to the extent of two cents, when a couple of days later they pinned on a red ribbon?

The chief of staff of the Black Sea fleet tells us, that the news of the events in Petrograd at first made no marked impression on the soldiers. But when the first socialist papers arrived from the capital, "in the wink of an eye the mood changed, meetings began, criminal agitators crawled out of their cracks." The admiral simply did not understand what was happening before his eyes. The newspapers did not create this change of mood. They merely scattered the doubt of the soldiers as to the depth of the revolution, and permitted them to reveal their true feelings without fear of reprisals from the staff. The political physiognomy of the Black Sea staff, his own among them, is characterised by the same author in a single phrase: "The majority of the officers of the fleet thought that without the czar the Fatherland would perish." The democrats also thought that the Fatherland would perish – unless they brought back bright lights of this kind to the "dark" sailors!

The commanding staff of the army and fleet soon divided into two groups. One group tried to stay in their places, tuning in on the revolution, registering as Social Revolutionaries. Later a part of them even tried to crawl into the Bolshevik camp. The other group strutted a while and tried to oppose the new order, but soon broke out in some sharp conflict and were swept away by the soldier flood. Such groupings are so natural that they

have been repeated in all revolutions. The irreconcilable officers of the French monarchy, those who in the words of one of them "fought as long as they could," suffered less over the disobedience of the soldiers than over the knuckling under of their noble colleagues. In the long run the majority of the old command were pushed out or suppressed, and only a small part re-educated and assimilated. In a more dramatic form the officers shared the fate of those classes from which they were recruited.

An army is always a copy of the society it serves – with this difference, that it gives social relations a concentrated character, carrying both their positive and negative features to an extreme. It is no accident that the war did not create one single distinguished military name in Russia. The high command was sufficiently characterised by one of its own members: "Much adventurism, much ignorance, much egotism, intrigue, careerism, greed, mediocrity and lack of foresight" – writes General Zalessky – "and very little knowledge, talent or desire to risk life, or even comfort and health." Nikolai Nikolaievich, the first commander-in-chief, was distinguished only by his high stature and august rudeness. General Alexeiev, a grey mediocrity, the oldest military clerk of the army, won out through mere perseverance. Kornilov was a bold young commander whom even his admirers regarded as a bit simple; Kerensky's War Minister, Verkhovskiy, later described him as the lion heart with the brain of a sheep. Brussilov and Admiral Kolchak a little excelled the others in culture, if you will, but in nothing else. Denikin was not without character, but for the rest, a perfectly ordinary army general who had read five or six books. And after these came the Yudeniches, the Dragomirovs the Lukomskies, speaking French or not speaking it, drinking

moderately or drinking hard, but amounting to absolutely nothing.

To be sure, not only feudal, but also bourgeois and democratic Russia had its representatives in the officers' corps. The war poured into the ranks of the army tens of thousands of petty bourgeois youths in the capacity of officers, military engineers. These circles, standing almost solid for war to complete victory, felt the necessity of some broad measures of reform, but submitted in the long run to the reactionary command. Under the czar they submitted through fear, and after the revolution through conviction – just as the democracy in the rear submitted to the bourgeoisie. The conciliatory wing of the officers shared subsequently the unhappy fate of the conciliatory parties – with this difference, that at the front the situation developed a thousand times more sharply. In the Executive Committee you could hold on for a long time with ambiguities; in the face of the soldiers it was not so easy.

The ill-will and friction between the democratic and aristocratic officers, incapable of reviving the army, only introduced a further element of decomposition. The physiognomy of the army was determined by the old Russia, and this physiognomy was completely feudal. The officers still considered the best soldier to be a humble and unthinking peasant lad, in whom no consciousness of human personality had yet awakened. Such was the “national” tradition of the Russian army – the Suvorov tradition – resting upon primitive agriculture, serfdom and the village commune. In the eighteenth century Suvorov was still creating miracles out of this material. Leo Tolstoy, with a baronial love, idealised in his Platon-Karatayev the old type of Russian soldier, uncomplainingly submitting to nature, tyranny

and death (War and Peace). The French revolution, initiating the magnificent triumph of individualism in all spheres of human activity, put an end to the military art of Suvorov. Throughout the nineteenth century, and the twentieth too – throughout the whole period between the French and Russian revolutions – the czar’s army was continually defeated because it was a feudal army. Having been formed on that “national” basis, the commanding staff was distinguished by a scorn for the personality of the soldier, a spirit of passive Mandarinism, an ignorance of its own trade, a complete absence of heroic principles, and an exceptional disposition toward petty larceny. The authority of the officers rested upon the exterior signs of superiority, the ritual of caste, the system of suppression, and even a special caste language – contemptible idiom of slavery – in which the soldier was supposed to converse with his officer. Accepting the revolution in words and swearing fealty to the Provisional Government, the czar’s marshals simply shouldered off their own sins on the fallen dynasty. They graciously consented to allow Nicholas II to be declared scapegoat for the whole past. But farther than that, not a step! How could they understand that the moral essence of the revolution lay in the spiritualisation of that human mass upon whose inertness all their good fortune had rested? Denikin, appointed to command the front, announced at Minsk: “I accept the revolution wholly and irrevocably. But to revolutionise the army and bring demagogism into it, I consider ruinous to the country.” A classic formula of the dull-wittedness of major-generals! As for the rank-and-file generals, to quote Zalessky, they made but one demand: “Only keep your hands off us – that is all we care about!” However, the revolution could not keep its hands off them. Belonging to the privileged classes,

they stood to win nothing, but they could lose much. They were threatened with the loss not only of officer privileges, but also of landed property. Covering themselves with loyalty to the Provisional Government, the reactionary officers waged so much the more bitter a campaign against the soviets. And when they were convinced that the revolution was penetrating irresistibly into the soldier mass, and even into their home estates, they regarded this as a monstrous treachery on the part of Kerensky, Miliukov, even Rodzianko – to say nothing of the Bolsheviks.

The life conditions of the fleet even more than the army nourished the live seeds of civil war. The life of the sailors in their steel bunkers, locked up there by force for a period of years, was not much different, even in the matter of food, from that of galley slaves. Right beside them the officers, mostly from privileged circles and having voluntarily chosen naval service as their calling, were identifying the Fatherland with the czar, the czar with themselves, and regarding the sailor as the least valuable part of the battleship. Two alien and tight-shut worlds thus live in close contact, and never out of each other's sight. The ships of the fleet have their base in the industrial seaport towns with their great population of workers needed for building and repairing. Moreover, on the ships themselves, in the engineering and machine corps, there is no small number of qualified workers. Those are the conditions which convert the fleet into a revolutionary mine. In the revolutions and military uprisings of all countries the sailors have been the most explosive material; they have almost always at the first opportunity drastically settled accounts with their officers. The Russian sailors were no exception.

In Kronstadt the revolution was accompanied by an outbreak of bloody vengeance against the officers, who attempted, as though in horror at their own past, to conceal the revolution from the sailors. One of the first victims to fall was Admiral Viren, who enjoyed a well-earned hatred. A number of the commanding staff were arrested by the sailors. Those who remained free were deprived of arms.

In Helsingfors and Sveaborg, Admiral Nepenin did not admit the news of the insurrection in Petrograd until the night of March 4, threatening the soldiers and sailors meanwhile with acts of repression. So much the more ferocious was the insurrection of these soldiers and sailors. It lasted all night and all day. Many officers were arrested. The most hateful were shoved under the ice. "Judging by Skobelev's account of the conduct of the officers of the fleet and the Helsingfors authorities," writes Sukhanov, who is by no means indulgent to the "dark rank-and file," "it is a wonder these excesses were so few."

But in the land forces too there were bloody encounters, several waves of them. At first this was an act of vengeance for the past, for the contemptible striking of soldier. There was no lack of memories that burned like ulcers. In 1915 disciplinary punishment by flogging had been officially introduced into the czar's army. The officers flogged soldiers upon their own authority – soldiers who were often the fathers of families. But it was not always a question of the past. At the All-Russian Conference of Soviets, a delegate speaking for the army stated that as early as the 15th or 17th of March an order had been issued introducing corporal punishment in the active army. A deputy of the Duma, returning from the front, reported that the



Cossacks said to him, in the absence of officers: "Here, you say, is the order. [Evidently the famous Order Number 1, of which we will speak further.] We got it yesterday, and yet today an officer socked me on the jaw." The Bolsheviks went out to try to restrain the soldiers from excesses as often as the Conciliators. But bloody acts of retribution were as inevitable as the recoil of a gun. The liberals had no other ground for calling the February revolution bloodless except that it gave them the power.

Some of the officers managed to stir up bitter conflicts about the red ribbons, which were in the eyes of the soldiers a symbol of the break with the past. The commander of the Sumsky regiment got killed in this way. Another commander, having ordered newly arrived reinforcements to remove their ribbons, was arrested by the soldiers, and locked up in the guard house. A number of encounters also resulted from the czar's portraits, not yet removed from the official quarters. Was this out of loyalty to the monarchy? In a majority of cases it was mere lack of confidence in the revolution, an act of personal insurance. But the soldiers were not wrong in seeing the ghost of the old régime lurking behind those portraits.

It was not thought-out measures from above, but spasmodic movements from below, which established the new régime in the army. The disciplinary power of the officers was neither annulled nor limited. It merely fell away of itself during the first weeks of March. "It was clear," said the chief of the Black Sea staff, "that if an officer attempted to impose disciplinary punishment upon a soldier, the power did not exist to get it executed." In that you have one of the sure signs of a genuinely popular revolution.

With the falling away of their disciplinary power, the practical bankruptcy of the staff of officers was laid bare. Stankevich, who possessed both a gift of observation and an interest in military affairs, gives a withering account in this respect of the commanding staff. The drilling still went on according to the old rules, he tells us, totally out of relation to the demands of the war. "Such exercises were merely a test of the patience and obedience of the soldiers." The officers, of course, tried to lay the blame for this, their own bankruptcy, upon the revolution.

Although they were quick with cruel reprisals, the soldiers were also inclined to childlike trustfulness and self-forgetful acts of gratitude. For a short time, the deputy Filomenko, a priest and a liberal, seemed to the soldiers at the front a standard-bearer of the idea of freedom, a shepherd of the revolution. The old churchly ideas united in funny ways with the new faith. The soldiers carried this priest on their hands, raised him above their heads, carefully seated him in his sleigh. And he afterward, choking with rapture, reported to the Duma: "We could not finish our farewells. They kissed our hands and feet." This deputy thought that the Duma had an immense authority in the army. What had authority in the army was the revolution. And it was the revolution that threw this blinding reflection on various accidental figures.

The symbolic cleansing carried out by Guchkov in the upper circles of the army – the removal of a few score of generals – gave no satisfaction to the soldiers, and at the same time created a state of uncertainty among the high officers. Each one was afraid that he would lose his place. The majority swam with the current, spoke softly and clenched their fists in their pockets. It was still worse with the middle and lower officers, who came

face to face with the soldiers. Here there was no governmental cleansing at all. Seeking a legal method, the soldiers of one artillery battery wrote to the Executive Committee and the State Duma about their commander: "Brothers, we humbly request you to remove our domestic enemy, Vanchekhaza." Receiving no answer to such petitions, the soldiers would employ what means they had: disobedience, crowding out, even arrest. Only after that the command would wake up, remove the arrested or assaulted officer, sometimes trying to punish the soldiers, but oftener leaving them unpunished in order to avoid complicating things. This created an intolerable situation for the officers, and yet gave no clear definition to the situation of the soldiers.

Even many fighting officers, those who seriously cared about the fate of the army, insisted upon the necessity of a general clean-up of the commanding staff. Without that, they said, it is useless to think of reviving the fighting ability of the troops. The soldiers presented to the deputies of the Duma no less convincing arguments. Formerly, they said, when they had a grievance, they had to complain to the officers, who ordinarily paid no attention to their complaint. And what were they to do now? The officers were the same – the fate of their complaints would be the same. "It was very difficult to answer that question," a deputy confesses. But nevertheless, that question contained the whole fate of the army and fore-ordained its future.

“One thing alone is certain: the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing. Which of course by no means excludes defensive wars of various kinds.” Engels

“Everywhere, in all countries, the standing army is used not so much against the external enemy as against the internal enemy. Everywhere the standing army has become the weapon of reaction, the servant of capital in its struggle against labour, the executioner of the people’s liberty. Let us not, therefore, stop short at mere partial demands in our great liberating revolution. Let us tear the evil up by the roots. Lenin