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**THE TASKS OF
THE PROLETARIAT
IN
OUR REVOLUTION**

BY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THE present volume (No. 9) of the *Little Lenin Library* is the second in the series (vols. 8—14 inclusive) containing Lenin's main writings in the crucial period between the overthrow of the Tsar, March 1917, and the taking of power by the workers and peasants, led by the Bolsheviks, in November 1917.

In his *Letters from Afar* (Vol. 8) Lenin had made a first analysis of the position in Russia immediately after the overthrow of the Tsar and the setting up of a Provisional Government of landlords and capitalists on the one hand, and of the Councils (Soviets) of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies on the other. There he had already indicated the policy to be pursued by the Bolsheviks. The more comprehensive statements made by him immediately after his return to Russia (Petrograd) on April 3, 1917, are included in the present volume; the first of these, 'The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution' became known as the 'April Theses'. The lines along which the Bolsheviks must work in order to carry the revolution beyond its first stage are here laid down, and, despite the opposition of some who later became traitors to the Party, were adopted at the Party Conference held on April 24, 1917 (*Little Lenin Library*, Vol. 10), when the Party also carried out Lenin's proposal (p. 6) that it should cease to call itself a 'Social-Democratic' Party, and should take a 'new name' (Communist).

The study of the writings of Lenin in this period is the study of the strategy and tactics which led to victory in November 1917.

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THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION

I ARRIVED in Petrograd on the night of April 16 (3) and I could therefore, of course, deliver a report at a meeting on April 17 (4) on the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat only upon my own responsibility, and with reservations as to insufficient preparation.

The only thing I could do to facilitate matters for myself and for *honest* opponents was to prepare *written* theses. I read them, and gave the text to Comrade Tseretelli. I read them very slowly, *twice*: first at a meeting of Bolsheviks, than at a meeting of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I publish these personal theses with only the briefest explanatory comments. The comments were developed in far greater detail in the report.

THESIS

(1) In our attitude towards the war not the slightest concession must be made to 'revolutionary defencism',¹ for even under the new government of Lvov and Co. the war on Russia's part unquestionably remains a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government.

The class conscious proletariat can consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: (a) that the power of government pass to the proletariat and the poor sections of the peasantry bordering on the proletariat; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deed as well as in words; (c) that a complete and real break be made with all capitalist interests.

In view of the undoubted honesty of the mass of the rank-and-file believers in revolutionary defencism, who accept the war as a necessity only and not as a means of conquest; in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary thoroughly, persistently and patiently to explain their error to them, to explain the indissoluble connection between capital and

¹ See pp. 29 and 30.—ED.

the imperialist war, and to prove that *it is impossible* to end the war by a truly democratic, non-coercive peace without the overthrow of capital.

The widespread propaganda of this view among the army on active service must be organized.

Fraternization.

(2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class consciousness and organization of the proletariat, led to the assumption of power by the bourgeoisie—to the *second stage*, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poor strata of the peasantry.

This transition is characterized, on the one hand, by a maximum of freedom (Russia is *now* the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence in relation to the masses, and, finally, by the naive confidence of the masses in the government of capitalists, the worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This specific situation demands on our part an ability to adapt ourselves to the specific requirements of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

(3) No support must be given to the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises must be exposed, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure, and not the unpardonable illusion-breeding 'demand' that this government, a government of capitalists, should *cease* to be an imperialist government.

(4) The fact must be recognized that in most of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies our Party is in a minority, and so far in a small minority, as against a *bloc of all* the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements, who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and are the conveyers of its influence to the proletariat, from the Narodni-Socialists¹ and the Socialist-Revolutionaries down to the Organization Committee (Chkheidze, Tseretelli, etc.), Steklov, etc. etc.

It must be explained to the masses that the Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the *only possible* form of revolutionary government

¹ The Narodni-Socialist Party occupied a position midway between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Constitutional-Democrats.—Ed.

and that therefore our task is, as long as *this* government submits to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of its errors and tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of criticizing and exposing errors and at the same time advocate the necessity of transferring the entire power of state to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the masses may by experience overcome their mistakes.

(5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a republic of Soviets of Workers' Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army¹ and the bureaucracy.

The salaries of all officials, who are to be elected and be subject to recall at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

(6) The agrarian programme must be centred around the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalization of *all* lands in the country, the disposal of such lands to be in the charge of the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. The organization of separate Soviets of Deputies of the Poor Peasants. The creation of model farms on each of the large estates (varying from 100 to 300 dessiatins,² in accordance with local and other conditions, at the discretion of the local institutions) under the control of the Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and for the public account.

(7) The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, control over which shall be exercised by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

(8) Our *immediate* task shall be not the 'introduction of socialism', but to bring social production and distribution of products at once only under the *control* of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

¹ *I.e.*, the standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people.

² Dessiatin—2.7 acres.—Ed. Eng. ed.

(9) Party tasks:

- (a) Immediate summoning of a Party congress.
- (b) Alteration of the Party programme, mainly:
 1. On the question of imperialism and the imperialist war;
 2. On the question of our attitude towards the state and our demand for a 'commune state'.¹
 3. Amendment of our antiquated minimum programme.
- (c) A new name for the Party.²

(10) A new International.

We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International, an International directed against the *social-chauvinists* and against the 'Centre'.³

In order that the reader may understand what induced me to emphasize as a rare exception the 'case' of honest opponents, I would ask him to compare the above theses with the following objection of Mr. Goldenberg: 'Lenin,' he said, 'has planted the banner of civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy' (quoted in No. 5 of Mr. Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo* [*Unity*]).

A gem, is it not?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: 'In view of the undoubted honesty of *the mass of the rank-and-file* believers in revolutionary defencism . . . in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary thoroughly, persistently and patiently to explain their error to them.'

But the bourgeois gentlemen who call themselves Social-Democrats, who *do not* belong either to the broad masses or to the rank-and-file believers in defencism, have the effrontery to present my views thus: 'The banner' [!] of civil war [of which there is

¹ *I.e.*, a state after the model of the Paris Commune.

² Instead of 'Social-Democrats', whose official leaders throughout the world have betrayed socialism by deserting to the bourgeoisie (the 'defencists' and the vacillating 'Kautskians'), we must call ourselves a *Communist Party*.

³ The 'Centre' in the international Social-Democratic movement is the tendency which vacillates between the chauvinists ('defencists') and internationalists, *i.e.*, Kautsky and Co. in Germany, Longuet and Co. in France, Chkheidze and Co. in Russia, Turati and Co. in Italy, Macdonald and Co. in England, etc.

not a word in the theses and not a word in my speech!] has been planted [!] in the midst [!!] of revolutionary democracy. . . .'

What does this mean? In what way does this differ from pogrom agitation, from *Russkaya Volya* (*Russian Will*)?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: 'The Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and therefore our task is . . . to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of its errors and tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.'

But opponents of a certain type present my views as a call to 'civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy'!

I attacked the Provisional Government because it has not appointed an early date, or any date at all, for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and because it is confining itself to vague promises. I argued that without the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible.

And the view is attributed to me that I am opposed to the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly!!!

I would call this 'raving', had not long years of political struggle taught me to regard honesty in opponents as a rare exception.

Mr. Plekhanov in his paper called my speech 'raving'. Very good, Mr. Plekhanov! But how awkward, uncouth, and slow-witted you are in your polemics! If I delivered a raving speech for two whole hours, how is it that an audience of hundreds tolerated those ravings? Further, why does your paper devote a whole column to an account of my 'ravings'? Clumsy, very clumsy!

It is, of course, much easier to shout, scold, and protest than to attempt to recall, to relate, and to explain what Marx and Engels said in 1871, 1872 and 1875 of the experience of the Paris Commune and of the *kind* of state the proletariat needs.

Mr. Plekhanov, the former Marxist, presumably does not care to recall Marxism.

I quoted the words of Rosa Luxemburg, who, on August 4, 1914, called *German* Social-Democracy a 'stinking corpse'.

And Messrs. Plekhanov, Goldenberg and Co. are 'offended'. On whose account? On account of the *German* chauvinists, because they were called chauvinists!

They have got into a tangle, these poor Russian social-chauvinists—Socialists in word, and chauvinists in deed.

April 20 (7), 1917.

LETTERS ON TACTICS

PREFACE

ON April 17 (4), 1917, I had occasion to speak in Petrograd on the subject indicated in the title. I spoke first at a meeting of Bolsheviks. They were delegates to the All-Russian Conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, who were about to return to their homes and therefore could not allow me to postpone my speech. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, the chairman, Comrade G. Zinoviev, proposed on behalf of the whole assembly that I should immediately repeat my speech at a joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates, who wished to consider the question of uniting the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Difficult though it was for me to repeat my speech forthwith, I nevertheless did not feel justified in refusing, since it was the request of *my comrades* as well as of the Mensheviks, who, because of their impending departure, were really unable to grant me a respite.

In the course of my speech I read the theses which were published in No. 26 of *Pravda*, on April 20 (7), 1917.¹

Both the theses and my report created dissension even among the Bolsheviks and the editors of *Pravda*. After a number of consultations, we unanimously concluded that the most expedient thing would be to discuss our differences *openly*, thus providing material for the All-Russian Conference of our Party (the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united under the Central Committee) to be held in Petrograd on May 3 (April 20), 1917.

It is in pursuance of this decision calling for a discussion that I now publish the following letters. In them I do not pretend to make an *exhaustive* study of the question, but wish only to outline the principal arguments, which especially and essentially affect the practical tasks of the working class movement.

¹ See 'The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution,' in this volume, p. 3.—Ed.

An Estimate of the Present Situation

Marxism demands an extremely precise and objectively verifiable analysis of the interrelation of classes and of the concrete peculiarities of each historical moment. We Bolsheviks have always tried faithfully to fulfil this demand, since it is absolutely imperative for a scientific foundation of politics.

'Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action,' Marx and Engels used to say; and they ridiculed, and rightly ridiculed, the learning and repetition by rote of 'formulas' which at best are capable of giving only an outline of *general* tasks that are necessarily liable to be modified by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each particular *phase* of the historical process.

What, then, are the clearly established objective *facts* that must guide the party of the revolutionary proletariat at present in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

Both in my first *Letter from Afar (The First Stage of the First Revolution)*, published in Nos. 14 and 15 of *Pravda*, of April 3 and 4 (March 21 and 22), 1917,¹ and in my theses, I define as the 'specific feature of the present situation' in Russia the fact that it is a period of *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second. And I therefore considered the basic slogan, the 'task of the day', at *that* moment to be: 'Workers, you have displayed marvels of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism; you must display marvels of organization, organization of the proletariat and the people, in order to prepare for victory in the second stage of the revolution.' (*Pravda*, No. 15.)

In what does the first stage consist?

In the transfer of the power of state to the bourgeoisie.

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

Now, after that revolution, the state power is in the hands of *another* class, a new class, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

¹ Pp. 3-12 *Little Lenin Library*, Vol. 8.—ED.

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

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

At this point we hear the clamour of the objectors, of those who so readily call themselves 'old Bolsheviks'; Did we not always maintain, they say, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is completed only by the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'? Has the agrarian revolution, which is also a bourgeois-democratic revolution, ended? On the contrary, is it not a fact *that it has not even begun*?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas *in general* have been fully corroborated by history; but *concretely*, things have turned out *differently* than could have been anticipated (by anyone): they are more original, more specific, more variegated.

Had we ignored or forgotten this fact, we should have resembled those 'old Bolsheviks' who have more than once played so sorry a part in the history of our Party by repeating a formula meaninglessly *learned by rote*, instead of *studying* the specific and new features of actual reality.

'The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' has *already* become a reality¹ in the Russian revolution; for this 'formula' envisages only the *interrelation of classes*, but does not envisage the *concrete political institution which gives effect* to this interrelation, to this co-operation. 'The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies'—here we have the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' already accomplished in reality.

This formula is already antiquated. Events have removed it from the realm of formulas into the realm of reality, clothed it in flesh and blood, lent it concrete form, and *by this very act* modified it.

A new and different task now faces us: to effect a split *within* this dictatorship between the proletarian elements (the anti-defencist, internationalist, 'communist' elements, who stand for a transition to the commune) and the petty-proprietor or *petty-*

¹ In a certain form and to a certain extent.

bourgeois elements (Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Steklov, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and other revolutionary defencists, who are opposed to the movement towards the commune and who favour 'supporting' the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

Whoever speaks *now* of a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' only is behind the times, has consequently in effect *gone over* to the side of the petty bourgeoisie and is against the proletarian class struggle. He deserves to be consigned to the archive of 'Bolshevik' pre-revolutionary antiques (which might be called the archive of 'old Bolsheviks').

The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has already been realized, but in an extremely original form, and with a number of highly important modifications. I will deal with them in one of my subsequent letters. For the present it is essential to realize the incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of actual events, of the precise facts of *reality*, and must not cling to a past theory, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, and only *approximates* to an inclusive grasp of the complexities of living reality.

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

He who continues to regard the 'completion' of the bourgeois revolution *in the old way* sacrifices living Marxism to the dead letter.

According to the old conception, the rule of the proletariat and peasantry, their dictatorship, can and must come after the rule of the bourgeoisie.

But in actual fact, it has already turned out differently: an extremely original, novel and unprecedented *interlacing of the one with the other* has taken place. Side by side, existing together and simultaneously, we have both the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) and a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, the latter *voluntarily* ceding power to the bourgeoisie and voluntarily transforming itself into an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that in Petrograd the power is actually in the hands of the workers and soldiers: the new government does not and cannot use violence against them, for there is no police, no army separate from the people, no officialdom standing omnipotently above the people. This is a fact; and it is

the kind of fact that is characteristic of a state of the type of the Paris Commune.¹ This fact does not fit into the old schemes. One must know how to adapt schemes to facts, rather than repeat words regarding a 'dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry' *in general*, words which have become meaningless.

In order the better to illuminate the question, let us approach it from another angle.

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

That is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

My reply is that it is quite possible. But, when analysing any given situation, a Marxist must proceed *not from the possible*, but from the actual.

And actuality reveals the *fact*—that the freely elected soldiers' and peasants' deputies freely enter the second, the parallel government and freely supplement, develop and complete it. And, just as freely, they *surrender* their power to the bourgeoisie; which phenomenon does not in the least 'undermine' the theory of Marxism, for, as we have always known and have repeatedly pointed out, the bourgeoisie maintains itself not only by virtue of force but also by virtue of the lack of class consciousness, the clinging to old habits, the timidity and lack of organization of the masses.

In view of this present-day actuality it is simply ridiculous to turn one's back on this fact and speak of 'possibilities'.

It is possible that the peasantry may seize all the land and the entire power. Far from forgetting this possibility, far from confining myself to the present moment only, I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian programme in accordance with the *new* phenomenon, *viz.* the profounder cleavage between the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, on the one hand, and the peasant owners, on the other.

But there is another possibility; it is possible that the peasants will hearken to the advice of the petty-bourgeois party of Socialist-

¹ Regarding Lenin's conception of 'a state of the type of the Paris Commune,' cf. 'A Dual Power', Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, p. 27.—Ed.

Revolutionaries, which has succumbed to the influence of the bourgeoisie, has gone over to defencism, and which advises waiting until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, even though the date of its convocation has not yet been fixed.¹

It is possible that the peasants will *preserve* and prolong their pact with the bourgeoisie, a pact which they have now concluded through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in both form and deed.

Many things are possible. It would be a profound mistake to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian programme. But it would be equally mistaken to forget *reality*, and reality reveals the fact that an *agreement*, or—to use a more exact, less legal, but more class-economic expression—that *class collaboration* exists between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry severs itself from the bourgeoisie, when it seizes the land and power in spite of the bourgeoisie, that will be a new stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and of that I will speak separately.

A Marxist who, in view of the possibility of such a stage in the future, were to forget his duties *at the present moment*, when the peasantry is *compromising* with the bourgeoisie, would become a petty bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat *confidence* in the petty bourgeoisie ('the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, must separate itself from the bourgeoisie within the limits of the bourgeois-democratic revolution'). Because of the 'possibility' of so charming and sweet a future in which the peasantry would not form the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Chkheidzes, Tseretellis and Steklovs, would *not* be an appendage of the bourgeois government—because of the 'possibility' of so pleasant a future, he would be forgetting the *unpleasant present*, in which the peasantry still forms the tail of the bourgeoisie, and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Social-Democrats have not yet ceased to

¹ Lest my words be misinterpreted, I shall anticipate and state at once: I am absolutely in favour of the *Soviets* of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants *immediately* taking possession of *all* the land; but they should *themselves* observe the strictest order and discipline, not permit the slightest damage to machinery, structures or livestock, and in no wise disorganize agriculture and the production of cereals, but rather develop them, for the soldiers need twice as much bread, and the people must not be allowed to starve.

be appendages of the bourgeois government, His Majesty Lvov's opposition.

This hypothetical person would be a sugary Louis Blanc, a sugary Kautskian, but not a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to 'skip' over the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which has not yet been completed and has not yet freed itself of the peasant movement—directly to the socialist revolution?

I should be incurring this danger had I said: 'No tsar, but a *workers'* government.' But I did not say *that*; I said something else. I said that there can be no other government (barring a bourgeois government) in Russia but a government of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I said that power in Russia can now pass from Guchkov and Lvov *only* to the Soviets. And the fact is that in these Soviets the peasants predominate, the soldiers predominate—the petty bourgeois predominates, to use a scientific Marxian term, to give a class designation and not a commonplace, philistine, professional designation.

I absolutely insured myself in my theses against skipping over the still existing peasant movement, or the petty-bourgeois movement in general, against the workers' government *playing* at the 'seizure of power', against any kind of Blanquist adventurism; for I directly referred to the experience of the Paris Commune. And this experience, as we know, and as was shown in detail by Marx in 1871 and by Engels in 1891, absolutely excluded Blanquism, absolutely ensured the direct, immediate and unconditional rule of the *majority* and the activity of the masses, but only to the extent of the *conscious* and intelligent action of the majority itself.

In the theses I definitely reduced the question to one of a *struggle for influence within* the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. In order to leave no trace of doubt in this respect, I *twice* emphasized in the theses the necessity for patient and persistent 'explanatory' work 'adapted to the *practical needs of the masses*.'

Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, such as Mr. Plekhanov, may cry anarchism, Blanquism, and so forth. But those who really want to think and learn cannot fail to understand

that Blanquism means the seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are admittedly the direct and immediate organization of the *majority* of the people. Work confined to a struggle for influence *within* these Soviets cannot, absolutely *cannot*, blunder into the swamp of Blanquism. Nor can it blunder into the swamp of anarchism, for anarchism *denies the necessity for a state and for state power in the period of transition* from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat, whereas I, with a precision that excludes all possibility of misunderstanding, *insist* on the necessity for a state in this period, although in accordance with Marx and the experience of the Paris Commune, not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state *without* a standing army, *without* a police opposed to the people, *without* an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov in his newspaper *Yedinstvo* clamorously inveighs against anarchism, he is only giving further proof of his rupture with Marxism. In reply to my challenge in *Pravda* (No. 26)¹ that he should tell what Marx and Engels taught regarding the state in the years 1871, 1872 and 1875, Mr. Plekhanov is and will be obliged to preserve silence on the essence of the question, and indulges instead in outcries in the spirit of the embittered bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has *absolutely* failed to understand the Marxian doctrine of the state. By the way, the germs of this lack of understanding are to be observed in his German pamphlet on anarchism.

* * *

Let us now see how Comrade Kamenev in his article in No. 27 of *Pravda* formulates his 'differences' with my theses and the views expressed above. It will help us to understand them more clearly.

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

¹ See the conclusion of the article 'The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution', in this volume.—Ed.

Here we have two major errors.

The first is that the question of the 'completeness' of the bourgeois-democratic revolution is wrongly *formulated*. It is formulated in an abstract, simplified, monochromatic way, if we may so express it, which *does not* correspond to objective reality. Those who formulate the question *thus*, those who *now* ask, 'Is the bourgeois democratic revolution completed?' *and nothing more*, deprive themselves of the possibility of understanding the real situation, which is extraordinarily complicated and, at least, 'bichromatic'. This—as regards theory. In practice, they impotently capitulate to *petty-bourgeois revolutionism*.

And, indeed, in reality we find *both* the transfer of power to the bourgeoisie (a 'completed' bourgeois-democratic revolution of the ordinary type) *and* the existence, side by side with the actual government, of a parallel government, which represents a 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'. This 'also-government' has *voluntarily* ceded power to the bourgeoisie and has *voluntarily* chained itself to the bourgeois government.

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

No, that formula is antiquated. It is worthless. It is dead. And all attempts to revive it will be in vain.

Secondly, a practical question. Who can say whether a special 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', *detached* from the bourgeois government, is now still possible in Russia? Marxist tactics must not be based on unknown factors.

But if it is still possible, then there is one, and only one way to obtain it, namely, the immediate, decisive and irrevocable severance of the proletarian communist elements from the petty-bourgeois elements.

Why?

Because it is not by chance but by necessity that the whole petty bourgeoisie has turned towards chauvinism (defencism), towards 'supporting' the bourgeoisie, that it has accepted dependence on the bourgeoisie and fears to do without the bourgeoisie.

How can the petty bourgeoisie be 'pushed' into power, when the petty bourgeoisie could assume power now, but *does not wish to*?

Only the severance of the proletarian, Communist Party and only a proletarian class struggle exempt from the timidity of the petty bourgeois; only the consolidation of proletarians exempt from the influence of the petty bourgeoisie, both in deed and in word, can make things so 'hot' for the petty bourgeoisie that, under certain circumstances, it will be *obliged* to assume power. It is not even impossible that Guchkov and Milyukov—again under certain circumstances—will be in favour of full and undivided power being assumed by Chkheidze, Tseretelli, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Steklov, because, after all, they are all 'defencists'!

Those who at once, immediately and irrevocably, separate the proletarian elements of the Soviets (i.e. the proletarian, Communist Party) from the petty-bourgeois elements, will correctly express the interests of the movement in both eventualities: *both* in the eventuality that Russia will still pass through a special 'dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', not subordinated to the bourgeoisie, *and* in the eventuality that the petty bourgeoisie will not be able to sever itself from the bourgeoisie and will for ever (that is, until socialism is established) waver between us and it.

Those who in their activities are guided by the simple formula, 'The bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed,' give, as it were, a certain guarantee that the petty bourgeoisie is capable of becoming independent of the bourgeoisie; and by that very fact they hopelessly surrender themselves to the tender mercies of the petty bourgeoisie.

Incidentally, on the subject of the 'formula', the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, it would not be amiss to recall that in my article 'Two Tactics' (July 1905) I particularly pointed out (*Twelve Years*, p. 435)¹ that:

'Like everything else in the world, the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has a past and a future. Its past is autocracy, serfdom, monarchy and privileges. . . . Its future is the struggle against private property, the struggle

¹ See p. 52.

of the wage worker against his master, the struggle for socialism.

. . .¹
The mistake made by Comrade Kamenev is that even now, in 1917, he sees only the *past* of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, when, as a matter of fact, its *future* has already begun, for the interests and policies of the wage earner and the master have already become sundered *in fact*, and, moreover, on such an important question as 'defencism', the attitude towards the imperialist war.

And this brings me to the second mistake in the remarks of Comrade Kamenev quoted above. He reproaches me with the fact that my scheme 'is calculated on the immediate transformation of that [bourgeois-democratic] revolution into a socialist revolution'.

That is not true. Far from 'calculating' on the 'immediate transformation' of our revolution into a *socialist* revolution, I actually caution against it, and in Thesis No. 8 plainly state: 'Our *immediate* task' is *not* the 'introduction of socialism. . . .'

Is it not obvious that if one calculates on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a socialist revolution one cannot be opposed to the introduction of socialism as an *immediate* task?

Moreover, it is not possible to establish even a 'commune state' (i.e. a state organized on the type of the Paris Commune) in Russia 'immediately', since that would require that the *majority* of the deputies in all (or in most of) the Soviets should clearly recognize the utter erroneousness and perniciousness of the tactics and policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Chkheidze, Tseretelli, Steklov, etc. And I explicitly declared that in this respect I calculate only on 'patient' explanation (is it necessary to be patient in order to bring about a change which can be realized 'immediately'?)

Comrade Kamenev rather 'impatiently' let himself go and repeated the bourgeois prejudice regarding the Paris Commune, namely, that it wanted to introduce socialism 'immediately'. That is not so. The Commune, unfortunately, was far too slow in introducing socialism. The real essence of the Commune lies not where the bourgeois usually looks for it, but in the creation of a

¹ See Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. III, 'The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution', p. 99.

particular type of *state*. A state of this type has *already* been born in Russia: it is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Comrade Kamenev has not pondered over the fact and the significance of the *existing* Soviets, their identity as to type and social and political character with the state of the Commune; and instead of studying a *fact*, he talks of what I allegedly calculated on as a thing of the 'immediate' future. The result is, unfortunately, a repetition of the trick practised by many bourgeois: attention is diverted from the question of the *nature* of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of whether they are a type superior to the parliamentary republic, whether they are more *beneficial* to the people, more *democratic* and more *adapted*, for instance, to the struggle for bread—attention is diverted from this essential, immediate question, rendered urgent by the force of events, to the frivolous, pseudo-scientific, but in reality hollow and professorially lifeless question of 'calculations on an immediate transformation'.

A frivolous question falsely stated. I 'calculate' *solely* and *exclusively* on the workers, soldiers and peasants being able to tackle better than the officials, better than the police, the *practical* and difficult problems of increasing the production of foodstuffs and their better distribution, the better provisioning of the soldiers, etc. etc.

I am profoundly convinced that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will develop the independent activity of the *masses* of the people far more quickly and far more effectively than a parliamentary republic (I will make a comparison of the two types of state in greater detail in another letter). They will decide more effectively, more practically, and more correctly what steps can be taken towards socialism, and how. Control over a bank, amalgamation of all banks into one, is not *yet* socialism, but it is a *step* towards socialism. Today such steps are being taken in Germany by the *Junkers* and the bourgeoisie against the interests of the people. Tomorrow, if the entire power of the state is in its hands, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will more effectively take these steps to the advantage of the people.

And what renders these steps *essential*?

Famine. Economic disorganization. Impending collapse. The horrors of war. The horror of the wounds being inflicted on mankind by the war.

Comrade Kamenev concludes his article with the statement that 'in a broad discussion he hopes to carry his point of view, the only possible point of view for the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party, if it wishes, as it must, to remain to the end the party of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat, and not to become transformed into a group of Communist propagandists'.

It seems to me that these words betray a completely erroneous estimate of the situation. Comrade Kamenev contrasts a 'party of the masses' and a 'group of propagandists'. But just now the 'masses' have yielded to the intoxication of 'revolutionary' defencism. Is it not more worthy of internationalists at this moment to be able to resist 'mass' intoxication than to 'wish to remain' with the masses, i.e. to succumb to the general epidemic? Have we not seen how the chauvinists in all the belligerent countries of Europe justified themselves by the wish to 'remain with the masses'? Is it not essential to be able for a while to remain in a minority as against the 'mass' intoxication? Is it not the work of the propagandists which at the present moment is the main factor in *clearing* the proletarian line of defencist and petty-bourgeois 'mass' intoxication? It was just this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, without distinction of class differences among those masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak with contempt of a 'group of propagandists' advocating a *proletarian* line is, we think, not altogether becoming.

April 1917

THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

DRAFT OF A PLATFORM FOR THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

The historical moment through which Russia is now passing is marked by the following main characteristics:

THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION

(1) The old tsarist power, representing a handful of feudal landlords who commanded the entire machinery of state (the army, the police and the bureaucracy), has been broken and set aside, but not utterly destroyed. Formally, the monarchy has not been abolished. The Romanov gang continues to hatch its monarchist intrigues. The vast landed possessions of the feudal landlords have not been abolished.

(2) The state power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new *class*, namely, the bourgeoisie and the landlords who have turned bourgeois. *To that extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia has been completed.

Having come to power, the bourgeoisie formed a *bloc* with openly monarchist elements, notorious for their exceptionally ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-14 (Guchkov and others to the Right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. attempted to negotiate with the Romanovs for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. While making a noisy play of revolutionary phrases, this government filled positions of authority with partisans of the old régime. It strove to reform the machinery of state (the army, the police and the bureaucracy) as little as possible, and has turned it over to the bourgeoisie. This government has already begun to hinder the revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by the people *from below*, which is the *sole* guarantee of any real success of the revolution.

The government has not yet fixed a date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. It is not laying a finger on the landed estates, the material foundation of feudal tsarism. The government does not even contemplate starting an investigation

and making public the activities of the monopolistic financial concerns, such as the large banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc., or of exercising control over them.

The chief, the decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the Ministry for the Interior and the Ministry for War, i.e. the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy and the entire machinery for the oppression of the masses) are filled by notorious monarchists and supporters of agrarian landlordism. The Cadets, those day-old republicans, those involuntary republicans, have been assigned posts of secondary importance, having no direct relation to the exercise of power over the people or to the machinery of state. A. Kerensky, a Trudovik,¹ an 'also-Socialist', has no function whatsoever, except to lull the vigilance and attention of the people with well-sounding phrases.

For the reasons enumerated, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the confidence of the proletariat even in the sphere of internal politics, and no support of that government by the proletariat is permissible.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

(3) In the domain of foreign policy, which has come to the forefront owing to objective circumstances, the new government stands for the continuation of the imperialist war, a war waged in concert with the imperialist powers, Great Britain, France, and others, for the division of capitalist spoils and for the strangling of small and feeble nations.

Subordinated to the interests of Russian capital and of its powerful protector and master, Anglo-French imperialist capital, the most wealthy in the world, the new government, notwithstanding the wishes expressed in the most definite fashion on behalf of the undoubted majority of the peoples of Russia by the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, has taken no real steps whatsoever to put a stop to the slaughter of nations in the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of a frankly predatory character (for the partition of Persia, the spoliation of China, the spoliation of Turkey, the partition of Austria, the annexation of Eastern Prussia, the annexation of

¹ Trudoviki, or Group of Toil, the name adopted by the peasant representatives in the Duma.—Ed. Eng. ed.

the German colonies, etc.), which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French predatory imperialist capital. It has *confirmed* these treaties concluded by tsarism, which for centuries robbed and oppressed more peoples than other tyrants and despots, and which not only oppressed, but also disgraced and debauched, the Great-Russian people by transforming it into an executioner of other peoples.

The new government has confirmed these shameful cut-throat treaties and has not proposed an immediate armistice to all the belligerent peoples, in spite of the clearly expressed demand of the majority of the peoples of Russia, voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue with the help of solemn, sonorous, ceremonious, but absolutely empty declarations and phrases, such as in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats have always served, and still serve, to deceive the confiding and gullible masses of the oppressed people.

(4) Hence, the new government is not deserving of the slightest confidence in the field of foreign policy; and to demand that it should make known the will for peace of the peoples of Russia, that it should renounce annexations, and so forth, is in practice to deceive the people, to inspire them with hopes that cannot be realized, to retard their mental enlightenment, indirectly to reconcile them to the continuation of a war the social character of which is determined not by good intentions, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, Great Britain, France, etc., by *the real and actual policy* which that class is pursuing.

A PECULIAR DUAL POWER AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

(5) The main peculiarity of our revolution, a peculiarity urgently requiring the most thoughtful analysis, is the *dual power* which was established in the very first days of the triumph of the revolution.

This dual power is manifested in the existence of *two* governments: one is the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the 'Provisional Government' of Lvov and Co., which controls all the organs of power; the other is a supple-

mentary and parallel government, a 'supervisory' government in the shape of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which possesses no organs of state power, but which derives its authority directly from a clear and indisputable majority of the people, from the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class significance of this dual power consist in the fact that the March Revolution not only swept away the tsarist monarchy completely, not only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *approached very closely* to the point of a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry. The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies represent precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a government power resting not on law but on the direct force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.

(6) The second peculiarity of the Russian revolution, a highly important one, is the circumstance that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring the power of the state, is voluntarily surrendering its own supremacy, to the bourgeoisie and its Provisional Government; and, having entered into an agreement to support the latter, is limiting its own function to that of an observer supervising the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date of which has not yet even been announced by the Provisional Government).

This extremely peculiar circumstance, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two dictatorships*: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the Provisional Government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, i.e. a power based not on law, nor on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt that such an 'interlocking' cannot last long. Two powers *cannot* exist in a state. One of them is bound to give way; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already straining every nerve, is everywhere striving in every possible way to remove and enfeeble the Soviets of Workers' and

Soldiers' Deputies, to compel them to give way, and to establish the sole power of the bourgeoisie.

The dual power expresses but a *transitional* phase in the development of the revolution, in which it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, but *has not yet reached* a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

The class significance (and class explanation) of this transitional and unstable situation is as follows: like all revolutions, our revolution, in the struggle against tsarism, demanded the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the masses and moreover immediately *drew* unprecedentedly vast numbers of ordinary citizens *into the movement*.

From the point of view of science and practical politics, one of the chief symptoms of *every* real revolution is the rapid, sudden, and sharp increase in the number of 'ordinary citizens' who begin to participate actively, independently and vigorously in political life and in *the organization of the state*.

Such is the case in Russia. Russia at present is seething. Millions of people who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landlords and manufacturers *have awakened and been drawn into politics*. Who are these millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, people midway between the capitalists and the wage workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers, but also ideologically; that is, it has infected wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois outlook on politics.

The petty bourgeois are in reality dependent upon the bourgeoisie, for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their place in social production), and follow the bourgeoisie in their way of thinking.

An attitude of unreasoning confidence in the capitalists—the worst foes of peace and socialism—characterises the politics of the Russian masses at the present moment; such is the fruit that has *grown* with revolutionary rapidity on the social and economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois of European countries. That is the *class* basis for the 'agreement' between the Provisional

Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (I must emphasise that I am referring not so much to a formal agreement as to the *practical* support, the tacit understanding, the naïvely trustful surrender of power), an agreement which has presented the Guchkovs with a choice morsel—real power, and the Soviet with promises and honours (for the time being), with flattery, phrases, assurances, and the bowings and scrapings of the Kerenskys.

The reverse side of the medal is the inadequate numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia and its insufficient class consciousness and organization.

The Narodnik¹ parties, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries, have always been petty-bourgeois. This is also true of the party of the Organization Committee (Chkheidze, Tseretelli, etc.). The independent revolutionaries (Steklov and others) have similarly drifted with the tide, or have not succeeded in battling the tide.

THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF THE TACTICS WHICH FOLLOW FROM THE ABOVE

(7) For the Marxist, who must reckon with objective facts, with the masses, classes, and so on, rather than with individuals, the specific nature of the present situation as described above must determine the specific tactics of the *present* moment.

The specific character of these tactics calls for the necessity of 'pouring vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-democratic eloquence' (as a fellow member of the Central Committee of our Party, Teodorovich, so aptly expressed it at yesterday's session of the All-Russian Congress of Railwaymen in Petrograd). Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *class conscious* proletarian Communist Party, and of *releasing* the proletariat from the general petty-bourgeois enchantment.

This may appear to be 'nothing more' than propaganda work, but in reality it is extremely practical revolutionary work; for there is no advance for a revolution that has come to a standstill,

¹ The Narodnik or 'populist' parties, representatives of a petty-bourgeois, peasant socialism, originated in Russia in the middle of the last century.—Ed. Eng. ed.

that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps marking time, *not because of external obstacles, not because of the violence of the bourgeoisie* (so far Guchkov only threatens to use violence against the soldiers), but because of the naïve trustfulness of the masses.

Only by combating this naïve trustfulness (and one can combat it only ideologically, by comradesly persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience*) can we escape the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrases* and make real progress in stimulating the class consciousness both of the proletariat and of the masses in general, as well as in stimulating their bold and determined initiative *in the localities* and the arbitrary realization, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and of the principle of the ownership of all the land by the people.

(8) The world-wide experience of bourgeois and landlord governments has developed two methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, called Nicholas Palkin,¹ and Nicholas II, the Bloody, demonstrated to the Russian people the maximum of what can and cannot be done by this hangman's method. But there is another method, best developed by the English and French bourgeoisie, who 'learnt their lesson' in a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. That is the method of deception, flattery, fine phrases, numberless promises, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential.

The specific feature of the present moment in Russia is a dizzy transition from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to *flattering* and deceiving the people by false promises. Vaska the cat listens, but goes on eating.² Milyukov and Guchkov hold power, they are protecting the profits of capitalism and conducting an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, and they deliver themselves of promises, declamations and impressive statements when replying to the speeches of 'cooks' like Chkheidze, Tseretelli and Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand and declare. . . . Vaska the cat listens, but goes on eating.

¹ From the Russian word *palka*, meaning stick, club.—ED. Eng. ed.

² A quotation from a fable by Krylov. The cook finds the cat, Vaska, swallowing a chicken; the cook uses moral suasion. The cat listens, but goes on eating.—ED. Eng. ed.

But from day to day trustful naïveté and naïve trustfulness will diminish, especially among the proletarians and poor peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty-bourgeoisie 'must' teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust the bourgeoisie.

REVOLUTIONARY DEFENCISM AND ITS CLASS NATURE

(9) *Revolutionary defencism* must be regarded as the most important and striking manifestation of the petty-bourgeois wave that has overwhelmed 'nearly everything'. There can be no greater hindrance to the progress and success of the Russian revolution.

Those who have yielded on this point and are unable to extricate themselves are lost to the revolution. But the masses yield in a different way from the leaders; and they extricate themselves *differently*, by a different course of development, by different means.

Revolutionary defencism is, on the one hand, a result of the deception practised on the masses by the bourgeoisie, a result of the naïve trustfulness of the peasants and a section of the workers; it is, on the other, an expression of the interests and the viewpoint of the small master, who is to some extent interested in annexations and bank profits, and who 'religiously' guards the traditions of tsarism, which demoralized the Great-Russians by doing hangman's work among the other peoples.

The bourgeoisie deceives the people by playing upon the noble pride of the revolution and by pretending that the *social and political* character of the war, as far as Russia is concerned, underwent a change with this stage of the revolution, with the substitution of the bourgeois near-republic of Guchkov and Milyukov for the tsarist monarchy. The people believe it—for the time being—owing in a large degree to old-time prejudices, by virtue of which they regard the other peoples of Russia, i.e. the non-Great-Russians, almost as the property and patrimony of the Great-Russians. This vile demoralization of the Great-Russian people by the tsarist government, which taught them to regard the other peoples as something inferior, something belonging 'by right' to Great Russia, could not be cured instantly.

What is required of us is the *ability* to explain to the masses that the social and political character of the war is determined not by the 'good intentions' of individuals or groups, or even of peoples, but by the position of the *class* which conducts the war, by the class *policy* of which the war is a continuation, by the *ties* of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society, by the *imperialist character* of international capital, by Russia's dependence in finance, banking and diplomacy upon Great Britain, France, etc. To explain this to the masses skilfully and in a comprehensible way *is not easy*; none of us could do it at once without committing errors.

But such, and only such, must be the direction or, rather, the contents of our propaganda. The slightest concession to revolutionary defencism is *treason to socialism* and a complete renunciation of *internationalism*, no matter by what fine phrases and 'practical' considerations it is justified.

The slogan 'Down with the war' is, of course, a correct one. But it fails to take into account the specific nature of the tasks of the present moment and of the necessity of approaching the masses in a *different* way. It is, in my opinion, similar to the slogan 'Down with the tsar', with which the inexperienced agitator of the 'good old days' went simply and directly to the country districts—and received a beating. The rank-and-file supporters of revolutionary defencism are *sincere*, not in the personal, but in the class sense, i.e. they belong to *classes* (workers and poor peasants) which *in actual fact* have nothing to gain from annexations and the strangulation of other peoples. Their position is different from that of the bourgeois and the intellectuals, who know very well that *it is impossible* to renounce annexations without renouncing the rule of capital, and who unscrupulously deceive the masses with fine phrases, with unlimited promises and endless assurances.

The rank-and-file believer in defencism regards the matter in a simple, matter-of-fact way: 'I don't want annexations, but the German is after me; therefore I am defending a just cause and not imperialist interests.' It must be explained very patiently to a man like this that it is not a question of his personal wishes, but of mass, *class*, political relations and conditions, of the connection between the war and the interests of capital, the international net-

work of banks, and so forth. Only such a struggle against defencism will be serious and promising of success—perhaps not a rapid success, but one that will be real and durable.

HOW CAN THE WAR BE ENDED?

(10) The war cannot be ended 'at will'. It cannot be ended by the decision of one party. It cannot be ended by 'sticking your bayonet in the ground', as one soldier, a defencist, expressed it.

The war cannot be ended by an 'agreement' between the Socialists of the various countries, by the 'action' of the proletarians of all countries, by the 'will' of the peoples, and so forth. Phrases of this kind, which fill the articles of the defencist and semi-defencist—semi-internationalist papers and innumerable resolutions, appeals and manifestoes, and the resolutions of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, are nothing but empty, innocent and pious wishes of the petty bourgeois. Nothing is more pernicious than such phrases as 'ascertaining the will of the peoples for peace', as the *sequence* of revolutionary action of the proletariat (after the Russian proletariat comes the 'turn' of the German), etc. All this is in the spirit of Louis Blanc, daydreaming, a game of 'political campaigning', and in reality but a repetition of the fable of Vaska the cat.

The war is not a product of the evil will of rapacious capitalists, although it is undoubtedly being fought *solely* in their interests and they alone are being enriched by it. The war is a product of half a century of development of world capitalism and of its million threads and connections. One *cannot* escape from the imperialist war, one *cannot* achieve a democratic, non-oppressive peace without first overthrowing the power of capital and without the transfer of the power of state to another class, the proletariat.

The Russian revolution of February–March 1917 was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. The revolution took the *first* step towards ending the war; but it requires a *second* step, namely, the transfer of the power of state to the proletariat, to make the end of the war a certainty. This will be the beginning of a 'breach in the front' on a world-wide scale, a breach in the front of the interests of capital; and only after having broken *this* front *can* the proletariat

save mankind from the horrors of war and endow it with the blessings of a durable peace.

To such a 'breach in the front' of capitalism the Russian revolution has already brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

THE NEW TYPE OF STATE DEVELOPING IN OUR REVOLUTION

(11) The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies are not understood; not only in the sense that their class character, their part in the *Russian* revolution, is not clear to the majority, but also in the sense that they constitute a new form, or rather a *new type of state*.

The most perfect and 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: a standing army, a police and a bureaucracy which in practice is permanent and privileged and stands *above* the people.

But since the end of the nineteenth century, revolutionary epochs have been producing a *superior* type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels puts it, ceases to be a state, is 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the world'.* This state is of the type of the Paris Commune, one in which a standing army and police severed from the people are *replaced* by the directly armed people themselves. *This feature* constituted the very essence of the Commune, which has been so maligned and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of 'introducing' socialism immediately.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution *began* to create in the years 1905 and 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies, united in an All-Russian Constituent Assembly of the people's representatives, or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is *being realized* in our country now, at this juncture, by the initiative of millions of people who, of their own accord, are creating a democracy *in their own way*, without waiting until Messieurs the Cadet professors draft their legislative projects for a parliamentary bour-

geois republic, or until the pedants and routine worshippers of petty-bourgeois 'Social-Democracy', like Plekhanov and Kautsky, renounce their distortions of the teaching of Marxism on the subject of the state.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognizes *the necessity for the state* and for state power in a 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-Democracy' of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. in that it recognizes that during the said periods what is required is a state not of the customary parliamentary bourgeois republican type, but of the type of the Paris Commune.

The main differences between a state of the latter type and the bourgeois state are as follows.

It is extremely easy (as history proves) to revert from a bourgeois republic to a monarchy, since all the machinery of repression, viz. the army, the police, and the bureaucracy, is left intact. The Commune and the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants' and other Deputies *smash* and abolish that machinery.

A parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses* and their direct participation in the *democratic* organization of the life of the state from top to bottom. The contrary is the case with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

The latter reproduce the type of state that was being evolved by the Paris Commune and that Marx said was 'the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labour'.¹

The objection is usually offered that the Russian people are not yet prepared for the 'introduction' of the Commune. This was the argument of the serfowners, who claimed that the peasants were not prepared for freedom. The Commune, i.e. the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, does not 'introduce', does not intend to 'introduce', and must not introduce reforms which have not absolutely matured both in economic reality and in the consciousness of the overwhelming majority of the people. The greater the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war,

¹ Marx: *Civil War in France*, p. 43, Marxist-Leninist Library No. 5.

the more urgent becomes the need for a more perfect political form, which will *facilitate* the healing of the frightful wounds inflicted by the war upon mankind. The less the organizational experience of the Russian people, the more determinedly must we *proceed* to the organizational development of the people themselves, and not merely of the bourgeois politicians and well-placed bureaucrats.

The sooner we cast off the old prejudices of a Marxism falsified and distorted by Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more diligently we set about helping the people to organize Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies everywhere and immediately, and the latter to take *all aspects* of life under their control, and the longer Messrs. 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 the Constituent Assembly, if Lvov delays its convocation too long) to cast their decision in favour of a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Blunders during the new process of organizational development of the people themselves are at first inevitable; but it is better to blunder and go forward than to *wait* until the professors of law summoned by Mr. Lvov have drafted 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 organize and conduct our propaganda efficiently, not only the proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasantry will be opposed to the re-establishment of the police, will be opposed to an irremovable and privileged bureaucracy and to an army separated from the people. And that alone makes up the new type of state.

(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 localities of Russia. We must explain to the masses that in the majority of revolutions of the usual bourgeois type, this reform has never been long-lived, and that even the most democratic and republican bourgeoisie soon re-established the police of the old tsarist type, a police separated from the people, controlled by the bourgeoisie and adapted in every way to oppressing the people.

There is only one means of *preventing* the re-establishment of the police, namely, to organize a national militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the universally armed people). Service in this militia shall extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five, if these tentatively suggested age limits determine the participation of youths and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants and others for the 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 idle to speak even of a complete and stable democracy, let alone socialism. Certain 'police' functions, such as the care of the sick and of homeless children, pure food supervision, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on a footing of perfect equality with men, not only on paper but in reality.

The tasks which the proletariat must put before the masses in order to protect, consolidate and develop the revolution are to prevent the re-establishment of the police and to mobilize the organizational forces of the entire people for the creation of a universal militia.

THE AGRARIAN AND THE NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

(13) At the present moment it is impossible to say for certain whether a powerful agrarian revolution will develop in the Russian countryside in the near future. We cannot say how profound is the class cleavage, which has undoubtedly grown more profound latterly, between the agricultural labourers, wage workers, and poor peasants ('semi-proletarians') on the one hand, and the well-to-do and middle peasants (capitalists and petty capitalists) on the other. Such questions will be decided, and can be decided, only by actual experience.

But as the party of the proletariat we are in duty bound not only to announce an agrarian programme immediately, but also to advocate practical measures which are immediately realizable in the interests of the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalization of *all* the land, i.e. that all land in the state should become the possession of the central

state power. This power shall fix the size, etc., of the migration fund,¹ issue laws for the conservation of forests, for land improvement, etc., and absolutely prohibit the intermediary of middlemen between the owner of the land, i.e. the state, and the tenant, i.e. the tiller (prohibit all private transfer of land). But the *disposal* of the land, the determination of the local regulations governing land tenure and use, must in no case be left in the hands of bureaucrats and officials, but must be vested exclusively in the local and regional *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*.

In order to improve the technique of grain growing and to increase output, and in order to develop rational cultivation on a large scale under public control, we must endeavour through the Peasants' Committees to secure the transformation of every confiscated estate into a large model farm controlled by the *Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies*.

In order to counteract the petty-bourgeois phrases and policy prevailing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries, particularly the idle talk concerning 'consumption standards', 'labour standards',² the 'socialisation of the land', etc., the party of the proletariat must make it clear that small peasant farming under a commodity production system *offers no escape* for mankind from the poverty and oppression of the masses.

Without necessarily splitting the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies at once, the party of the proletariat must make clear the necessity of organizing separate Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and separate Soviets of deputies from the poor (semi-proletarian) peasants or, at least, of holding regular separate conferences of deputies *of this class position* in the shape of separate fractions or parties within the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. Otherwise all the sugary petty-bourgeois talk of the Narodniki regarding the peasants in general will but serve as a shield for the deceit played on the propertyless mass by the well-to-do peasants, who are but a variety of *capitalists*.

To counteract the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic sermons preached by many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Soviets

¹ Lands assigned for allotment to peasants desirous of migrating from congested areas.—Ed. Eng. ed.

² Consumption standard: an allotment sufficiently large to supply the requirements of a peasant household. Labour standard: an allotment that can be cultivated by the members of the peasant's household.—Ed. Eng. ed.

of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who advise the peasants not to seize the landlords' estates and not to start agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to set about putting agrarian reform into effect at once, on their own initiative, and to confiscate the landlords' estates immediately upon the decision of the local peasants' deputies.

At the same time, it is particularly important to insist on the necessity of increasing the production of foodstuffs for the soldiers at the front and for the towns, and on the absolute inadmissibility of any damage to livestock, tools, machinery, structures, etc.

(14) As regards the national question, the proletarian party first of all must insist on the promulgation and immediate realization of complete freedom of secession from Russia for all nations and peoples who were oppressed by tsarism, or who were forcibly annexed to, or forcibly retained within, the boundaries of the state.

All statements, declarations and manifestoes concerning the renunciation of annexations which are not accompanied by the realization of the right of secession are but bourgeois deceptions practised on the people, or else pious petty-bourgeois aspirations.

The proletarian party strive to create as large a state as possible, for that is to the advantage of the toilers; it strives to bring about *closer ties* between nations and the *further fusion* of nations; but it desires to achieve this aim not by force, but by a free, fraternal union of the workers and the toiling masses of all nations.

The more democratic the Russian republic is and the more successfully it organizes itself into a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, the more powerful will be the force of *voluntary* attraction towards such a republic on the part of the toiling masses of *all* nations.

Complete freedom of secession, the broadest local (and national) autonomy, and detailed guarantees of the rights of national minorities—such is the programme of the revolutionary proletariat.

NATIONALIZATION OF THE BANKS AND CAPITALIST SYNDICATES

(15) The party of the proletariat cannot set itself the aim of 'introducing' socialism in a country of small peasantry as long

as the overwhelming majority of the population has not realized the necessity for a socialist revolution.

But only bourgeois sophists, who hide behind 'near-Marxist' phrases, can derive from this truth a justification of a policy of postponing immediate revolutionary measures, the time for which has become ripe, *which have been frequently resorted to during the war by a number of bourgeois states*, and which are absolutely essential in order to combat impending total economic disorganization and famine.

Such measures as the nationalization of the land and of the banks and syndicates of capitalists or, at least, the immediate establishment of the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies over them, measures which do not in any way imply the 'introduction' of socialism, must be absolutely insisted on, and, whenever possible, introduced by revolutionary means. Without such measures, which are only steps towards socialism, and which are entirely feasible economically, it will be impossible to heal the wounds of the war and to prevent the impending collapse. The party of the revolutionary proletariat will never hesitate to lay hands on the fabulous profits of the capitalists and bankers who are scandalously enriching themselves on the war.

THE SITUATION WITHIN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

(16) The international obligations of the Russian working class are at the present time assuming prominence.

Everybody swears by internationalism these days. Even the chauvinist-defencists, even Messrs. Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. All the more urgently, therefore, does it become the duty of the proletarian party to draw a clear, precise and definite distinction between internationalism in deeds and internationalism in words.

Mere appeals to the workers of all countries, empty assurances of devotion to internationalism, direct or indirect attempts to establish a 'sequence' of revolutionary proletarian action in the various belligerent countries, efforts to conclude 'agreements' between the Socialists of the belligerent countries on the question of the revolutionary struggle, pother over the summoning of Socialist congresses *for the purpose* of a peace campaign—no matter how sincere the authors of such ideas, efforts, and plans may be—

amount, as far as their objective significance is concerned, to mere talk, and *at best* are innocent and pious wishes, fit only to conceal the *deception* of the masses by the chauvinists. The French social-chauvinists, who are the most adroit and best-versed in methods of parliamentary juggling, have long ago broken the record for incredibly loud and resonant pacifist and internationalist phrases *coupled with* the most brazen betrayal of socialism and the International, the acceptance of posts in governments engaged in the imperialist war, the voting of credits or loans (as Chkheidze, Skobelev, Tseretelli, and Steklov have been doing recently in Russia) active opposition to the revolutionary struggle *in their own country*, etc. etc.

Good people often forget the brutal and savage setting of the imperialist World War. This setting does not tolerate phrases, and mocks at innocent and pious wishes.

There is one, and only one, kind of internationalism in deed: 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) such, and *only such*, a struggle and such a line in *every* country without exception.

Everything else is deception and Manilovism.¹

In the course of the two and half years of war the international Socialist and labour movement in *every* country has evolved three tendencies. Whoever ignores reality and refuses to recognize the existence of these three tendencies, to analyse them, to fight persistently for the tendency that is really internationalist, is doomed to impotence, helplessness and error.

The three tendencies are:

(1) The social-chauvinists, i.e. Socialists in word and chauvinists in action, people who are in favour of 'national defence' in an imperialist war (and particularly in the present imperialist war).

These people are our *class* enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

They include the majority of the official leaders of the official Social-Democratic parties in *all* countries—Plekhanov and Co. in Russia, the Scheidemanns in Germany, Renaudel, Guesde and

¹ See p. 52.

Sembar in France, Bissolati and Co. in Italy, Hyndman, the Fabians and the Labourites in England, Branting and Co. in Sweden, Troelstra and his party in Holland, Stauning and his party in Denmark, Victor Berger and the other 'defenders of the fatherland in America,' and so forth.

(2) The second tendency is what is known as the 'Centre', consisting of people who vacillate between the social-chauvinists and the true internationalists.

All those who belong to the 'Centre' swear that they are Marxists and internationalists, that they are in favour of peace, of bringing every kind of 'pressure' to bear upon the governments, of 'demanding' that their own governments should 'ascertain the will of the people for peace', that they favour all sorts of peace campaigns, that they are for a peace without annexations, etc. etc.—and *for peace with the social-chauvinists*. The 'Centre' is for 'unity', the 'Centre' is opposed to a split.

The 'Centre' is a realm of honeyed petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in word and cowardly opportunism and fawning on the social-chauvinists in deed.

The fact of the matter is that the 'Centre' is not convinced of the necessity for a revolution against one's own government; it does not preach revolution; it does not carry on a wholehearted revolutionary struggle; and in order to evade such a struggle it resorts to the tritest ultra-'Marxist' *excuses*.

The social-chauvinists are our *class enemies*, the *bourgeois* within the labour movement. They represent strata, or groups, or sections of the working class which have virtually been bribed by the bourgeoisie (by better wages, positions of honour, etc.), and which help *their* bourgeoisies to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight for the division of the capitalist spoils.

The 'Centre' consists of routine-worshippers, slaves to rotten legality, corrupted by the atmosphere of parliamentarism, bureaucrats accustomed to snug positions and soft jobs. Historically and economically speaking, they do not represent a *separate* stratum but are a *transition* from a past phase of the labour movement—the phase between 1871 and 1914, which gave much that is valuable to the proletariat, particularly in the indispensable art of slow, sustained and systematic organizational work on a very large scale—to a new *phase*, a phase that became

objectively essential with the outbreak of the first imperialist World War, which inaugurated *the era of social revolution*.

The chief leader and representative of the 'Centre' is Karl Kautsky, the most outstanding authority in the Second International (1889–1914). Since August 1914, he has presented a picture of utterly bankrupt Marxism, of unheard-of spinelessness, and a series of the most wretched vacillations and betrayals. This Centrist tendency includes Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour, and the so-called 'labour group' (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*) in the Reichstag; in France it includes Longuet, Pressemane and the '*minoritaires*' (Mensheviks) in general; in England, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and many other leaders of the Independent Labour Party, and a section of the British Socialist Party; Morris Hillquit and many others in the United States; Turati, Treves, Modigliani and others in Italy; Robert Grimm and others in Switzerland; Victor Adler and Co. in Austria; the party of the Organization Committee,¹ Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Tseretelli and others in Russia, and so forth.

It goes without saying that at times individual persons unconsciously drift from social-chauvinism to 'Centrism', and *vice versa*. Every Marxist knows, however, that classes are distinct, even though individuals may move freely from one class to another; similarly, *currents* in political life are distinct, in spite of the fact that individuals drift freely from one current to another, and in spite of all attempts and efforts to *amalgamate* currents.

(3) The third tendency, the true internationalists, is most closely represented by the 'Zimmerwald Left'. (We reprint as a supplement its manifesto of September 1915, in order that the reader may become acquainted in the original with the inception of this movement.)

It is characterized mainly by its complete break with both social-chauvinism and 'Centrism', and by its relentless war against *its own* imperialist government and against *its own* imperialist bourgeoisie. Its principle is: 'Our greatest enemy is at home'. It wages a ruthless struggle against honeyed social-pacifist phrases (a social-pacifist is a Socialist in words and a bourgeois pacifist in deeds; bourgeois pacifists dream of an everlasting peace *without* the overthrow of the yoke and domination

¹ *I.e.*, the Mensheviks.—Ed.

of capital) and against all *subterfuges* employed to deny the possibility, the appropriateness, the timeliness of a proletarian revolutionary struggle, of a proletarian socialist revolution in *connection* with the present war.

The most outstanding representative of this tendency in Germany is the Spartacus Group or the Group of the International, to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is one of the most celebrated representatives of this tendency and of the *new*, and genuine, proletarian International.

Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to *turn their guns* against their own government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the parliamentary tribune (the Reichstag). He then went out to a demonstration on Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, distributing illegally printed proclamations announcing the slogan 'Down with the government'. He was arrested and sentenced to *hard labour*. He is now serving his term in a German penal prison, like *hundreds*, if not thousands, of other *genuine* German Socialists who have been imprisoned for opposing the war.

Karl Liebknecht in his speeches and letters mercilessly attacked not only the German Plekhanovs and Potresovs (Scheidemann, Legien, David and so forth), but also the German Centrists, the German Chkheidzes and Tseretellis (Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and Co.).

Karl Liebknecht and his friend, Otto Rühle, two out of one hundred and ten deputies, violated discipline, destroyed the 'unity' with the 'Centre' and the chauvinists, and *went against all of them*. Liebknecht *alone* represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. The rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartacus Group), is a '*stinking corpse*'.

Another group of internationalists in deed in Germany is gathered around the Bremen paper *Arbeiterpolitik*.

Closest to the internationalists in deed are: in France, Loriot and his friends (Bourderon and Merrheim have degenerated to social-pacifism), as well as the Frenchman, Henri Guilbeaux, who publishes in Switzerland a paper called *Demain*; in England, the *Trade Unionist*, and some of the members of the British Socialist

Party and of the Independent Labour Party (for instance, Russell Williams, who openly called for a break with the leaders who have betrayed socialism), the Scottish school teacher and Socialist, *John McLean*, who was sentenced to *hard labour* by the bourgeois government of England for his revolutionary fight against the war, and hundreds of British Socialists who are in jail for the same offence. They, and they alone, are internationalists in deed. In the United States, the Socialist Labour Party and the elements within the opportunist Socialist Party who in January 1917 began the publication of the paper *The Internationalist*; in Holland, the party of the 'Tribunists', who publish the paper *Tribune* (Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Wynkoop, and Henrietta Roland-Holst), which, although Centrist at Zimmerwald, has now joined our ranks; in Sweden, the party of the youth, or the Left, led by Lindhagen, Ture Nerman, Carlson, Ström and Z. Höglund, who at Zimmerwald was personally active in the organization of the Zimmerwald Left, and who is now in prison for his revolutionary fight against the war; in Denmark, Trier and his friends, who have left the now purely bourgeois 'Social-Democratic' Party, headed by the Minister, Stauning; in Bulgaria, the 'Tesniaki'; in Italy, the nearest are Constantino Lazzari, secretary of the party, and Serrati, editor of the central organ, *Avanti*; in Poland, Karl Radek, Hanecki and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the 'District Administration', and Rosa Luxemburg, Tyszko, and the other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the 'Central Administration'; in Switzerland, those Lefts who drew up the argument for the 'referendum' (January 1917) directed against the social-chauvinists and the 'Centre' of their *own* country, and who at the Zurich Cantonal Socialist Convention, held at Töss on February 11, 1917, introduced a consistently revolutionary resolution against the war; in Austria, the young Left-Wing friends of Friedrich Adler, who acted partly through the Karl Marx Club in Vienna, now closed by the extremely reactionary Austrian government, which is torturing Adler for his heroic but ill-considered attempt upon the life of a minister, and so on.

We are dealing here not with the shades of opinion, which certainly exist even among the Lefts. We have here a *tendency*. The fact is that it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deed

during a frightful imperialist war. Such people are few ; but it is on such people alone that the future of Socialism depends; they *alone are the leaders of the masses*, and not the corrupters of the masses.

The difference between the reformists and revolutionaries among the Social-Democrats and Socialists generally was objectively bound to undergo a change in the circumstances of an imperialist war. Those who confine themselves to 'demanding' that the bourgeois governments should conclude peace or 'ascertain the will of the peoples for peace' are virtually reformists. *For, objectively, the problem of war can be solved only in a revolutionary way.*

There is no way out of this war, no hope of a democratic, non-coercive peace and the liberation of the peoples from the burden of paying billions in interest to the capitalists, who have grown rich by the war, except by a revolution of the proletariat.

The most various reforms can be and must be demanded of the bourgeois governments, but without being guilty of Manilovism and reformism one cannot demand that people and classes who are entangled by the thousand threads of imperialist capital should *break* those threads. And unless they are broken, all talk of a war against war is idle and deceitful prattle.

The 'Kautskians', the 'Centre', are revolutionaries in word and reformists in deed; they are internationalists in word and coadjutors of the social-chauvinists in deed.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE ZIMMERWALD INTERNATIONAL— THE NEED FOR A THIRD INTERNATIONAL

(17) From the very outset, the Zimmerwald International adopted a vacillating, 'Kautskian', 'Centrist' position, which immediately compelled the *Zimmerland Left* to dissociate itself, to separate itself from the rest, and to issue its own manifesto (published in Switzerland in Russian, German and French).

The chief defect of the Zimmerwald International, and the cause of its *collapse* (for from a political and ideological point of view it has already collapsed), was its vacillation and indecision on the extremely important question, one of *crucial* practical significance, the question of breaking completely with the social-

chauvinists and the old social-chauvinist International, headed by Vandervelde and Huysmans at the Hague (Holland).

It is not as yet known in Russia that the Zimmerwald majority are *really Kautskians*, Yet this is an important fact, one which cannot be ignored, and which is now generally known in Western Europe. Even that chauvinist, that extreme German chauvinist, Heilmann, editor of the ultra-chauvinist *Cehmnitzer Volksstimme* and contributor to the ultra-chauvinist *Glocke* of Parvus (a 'Social-Democrat', of course, and an ardent partisan of Social-Democratic 'unity'), was compelled to acknowledge in the press that the 'Centre', or 'Kautskyism', and the *Zimmerwald majority* are one and the same thing.

This fact was definitely established at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917. In spite of the fact that social-pacifism was condemned by the Kienthal Manifesto, the *whole* Zimmerwald Right, the *entire* Zimmerwald majority, sank to social-pacifism: Kautsky and Co. in a series of utterances in January and February 1917; Bourderon and Merrheim, in France, who cast their votes *in unanimity* with the social-chauvinists for the pacifist resolutions of the Socialist Party (December 1916) and of the *Confédération Général du Travail* (the national organization of the French labour unions, also in December 1916); Turati and Co. in Italy, where the entire party took up a social-pacifist position, while Turati himself, in a speech delivered on December 17, 1916, 'slipped' (not by accident, of course) into *nationalist* phrases tending to present the imperialist war in a favourable light.

In January 1917, the chairman of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences, Robert Grimm, joined hands with the social-chauvinists of *his own* party (Greulich, Pflüger, Gustav Müller and others) against the true internationalists.

At two conferences of Zimmerwaldists of several countries, held in January and February 1917, this equivocal, doubled-faced behaviour of the Zimmerwald majority was formally stigmatized by the Left internationalists of several countries: by Münzenberg secretary of the international youth organization and editor of the excellent internationalist publication, *Die Jugendinternationale*; by Zinoviev, representative of the Central Committee of our Party; by Karl Radek, of the Polish Social-Democratic Party (the

'District Administration') and by Hartstein, a German Social-Democrat and member of the Spartacus Group.

To the Russian proletariat much has been given. Nowhere on earth has the working class yet succeeded in developing as much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much has been given, of him much is demanded.

The Zimmerwald bog can no longer be tolerated. We must not, for the sake of the Zimmerwald 'Kautskians', continue the semi-alliance with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and Scheidemanns. We must break with this International immediately. We must remain in Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information.

It is we who must found, and immediately, without delay, a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International; or rather, we must not fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is *already established* and working.

This is the International of those 'internationalists in deed' whom I specifically enumerated above. They alone represent the revolutionary, internationalist masses, they and not the corrupters of the masses.

True, there are few Socialists of *that type*; but let every Russian worker ask himself how many really conscious revolutionaries there were in Russia on the eve of the February-March Revolution of 1917.

The question is not one of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policy of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The essential thing is not to 'proclaim' internationalism, but to remain an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying.

Let us not deceive ourselves with hopes of agreements and international congresses. As long as the imperialist war lasts, international relations will be held in a vice by the military dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. If even the 'republican' Milyukov, who is obliged to tolerate the 'parallel government' of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, *did not allow* Fritz Platten, the Swiss Socialist, secretary of the party, an internationalist and participant in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences, to enter Russia in April 1917, although Platten is married to a Russian and was on a visit to his wife's relatives, and although he had taken part in the Revolution of 1905 in Riga, for

which he had been confined in a Russian prison, had given bail to the tsarist government for his release and desired to have that bail returned—if the republican Milyukov could do such a thing in April 1917 in Russia, one may judge how much stock may be taken in the promises and offers, phrases and declarations of the bourgeoisie on the subject of peace without annexations, and so on.

And how about the arrest of Trotsky by the British government? How about the refusal to allow Martov to leave Switzerland, and the attempt to lure him to England, where Trotsky's fate awaited him?

Let us harbour no illusions. We must not deceive ourselves.

'To wait' for international congresses or conferences is simply to betray internationalism, since it has been shown that neither Socialists loyal to internationalism *nor even their letters* are allowed to enter here, even from Stockholm, despite the fact that an absolutely rigorous military censorship can be, and is being, exercised.

Our Party must not 'wait', but must immediately *found* a Third International. Hundreds of Socialists imprisoned in Germany and England will thereupon heave a sigh of relief; thousands and thousands of German workers who are now organizing strikes and demonstrations in an attempt to frighten that scoundrel and brigand, Wilhelm, will learn from *illegal* leaflets of our decision, of our fraternal confidence in Karl Liebknecht, and in him alone, of *our* decision to fight 'revolutionary defencism' *right away*; they will read and be strengthened in their revolutionary internationalism.

To whom much has been given, of him much is demanded. There is no other land on earth as free as Russia is *now*. Let us make use of this freedom not to advocate support of the bourgeoisie, of bourgeois 'revolutionary defencism', but to organize in a bold, honest, proletarian, Liebknecht way *the foundation for a Third International*, an International uncompromisingly hostile to the social-chauvinist traitors and to the vacillators of the 'Centre'.

(18) After what has been said, one need not waste many words in explaining that a union of Social-Democrats in Russia is out of the question.

It is better to remain alone, like Liebknecht, *and that means remaining with the revolutionary proletariat*, than to entertain even for a moment any thought of a union with the party of the

Organization Committee, with Chkheidze and Tseretelli, who can tolerate a *bloc* with Potresov in *Rabochaya Gazeta*, who voted for the war loan in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and who have degenerated to 'revolutionary defencism'.

Let the dead bury their dead.

Whoever wants to help the vacillating must first stop vacillating himself.

A SCIENTIFICALLY SOUND NAME FOR OUR PARTY,
ONE THAT WILL HELP TO CLARIFY PROLETARIAN
CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

(19) I am coming to the last point, the name of our Party. We must call ourselves a *Communist Party*—just as Marx and Engels called themselves Communists.

We must repeat that we are Marxists and that we take as our basis *The Communist Manifesto*, which has been perverted and betrayed by the Social-Democrats on two important points: (1) the workers have no country; 'national defence' in an imperialist war is a betrayal of socialism; and (2) the Marxist doctrine of the state has been perverted by the Second International.

The term 'Social-Democracy' is scientifically incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894. From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e. to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism is bound to pass gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

That is my first argument.

Here is the second: the second part of the name of our Party (Social-Democrats) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is but one form of the state, whereas we Marxists are opposed to all and every kind of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Messrs. Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, have vulgarized and perverted Marxism.

The difference between Marxism and anarchism is that Marxism recognizes *the necessity of the state* for the purpose of the transition to socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not* a state of the type of the usual, parliamentary, bourgeois, democratic republic, but a state like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third argument: *the course of events*, the revolution, has already *actually* established in our country, although in a weak and embryonic form, this new type of 'state', which is not a state in the true sense of the word.

This is *already* a matter of the practical action of the masses and not merely of theories of the leaders.

The state, in the true sense of the term, is the power exercised over the masses by detachments of armed men separated from the people.

Our new state, *now in process of being born*, is also a state, for we too need detachments of armed men; we too need the *strictest* order, and must *ruthlessly* and forcibly crush all attempts at either a tsarist or a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our new state, *now in process of being born*, is no longer a state in the true sense of the term, for in many parts of Russia these detachments of armed men are the *masses themselves*, the entire people, and not merely privileged individuals, placed above and separated from the people, who in practice cannot be removed and replaced.

We must look forward, and not backward to the usual bourgeois type of democracy, which consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the old, *monarchist*, organs of government—the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the new democracy which is in process of being born, and which is already ceasing to be a democracy. For democracy means the rule of the people, whereas the armed people cannot rule over themselves.

The term democracy is not only scientifically incorrect when applied to a Communist Party; it has now, since March 1917, simply become a *blinker* covering the eyes of the revolutionary people and *preventing* them from boldly and freely, on their own initiative, building up the new: the Soviets of Workers' Soldiers', and all other Deputies, as *the sole power* in the state and as the harbinger of the 'withering away' of the state in every form.

My fourth argument: we must reckon with the actual situation in which Socialism finds itself internationally.

It is not what it was during the years 1871 to 1914, when Marx and Engels consciously reconciled themselves to the inaccurate, opportunist term 'Social-Democracy'. For *in those days*, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history demanded slow organizational and educational work. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The anarchists wrongly estimated the character of the times, for they did not understand the world situation: the worker of England corrupted by imperialist profits; the Commune defeated in Paris; the recent triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they realized that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be slow.

We, in our turn, must also understand the peculiarities and the tasks of the new era. Let us not imitate those sorry Marxists of whom Marx said: 'I have sown dragons and have gathered a harvest of fleas.'

The objective needs of capitalism grown into imperialism brought about the imperialist war. The war has brought mankind to the *brink of a precipice*, to the destruction of civilization, to the brutalization and destruction of countless millions of human beings.

There is *no* escape except in a proletarian revolution.

And at the very moment when such a revolution begins, when it is taking its first awkward, timorous, uncertain and groping steps, steps betraying too great a confidence in the bourgeoisie, at that moment the majority (that is the truth, that is a fact) of the 'Social-Democratic' leaders, of the 'Social-Democratic' parliamentarians and of the 'Social-Democratic' papers—and these are the organs for influencing the masses—*betray* socialism and go over to the side of 'their' national bourgeoisies.

The masses are confused, they have been put off the track, deceived by *these* leaders.

And are we to aid and abet that deception by retaining the old and antiquated Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International?

Let it be granted that 'many' workers accept Social-Democracy in good faith; but it is time we knew how to distinguish the subjective from the objective.

Subjectively, such Social-Democratic workers are the loyal leaders of the proletarian masses.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the masses and *impede* the onward march; for everywhere, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e. the people whose voice carries farthest, whose acts are most prominent; yet they are all 'also-Social Democrats', they are all 'for unity' with the betrayers of socialism, with the social-chauvinists; and they are all presenting for payment the old bills issued by 'Social Democracy'. . . .

And what are the opposing arguments? We shall be confused with the anarchist-communists, we are told. . . .

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the social-nationalists, the social-liberals, or the radical-socialists, the foremost and most adroit bourgeois party in the French Republic in deceiving the masses?

We are told: The masses have grown used to the name, the workers have learnt to 'love' their Social-Democratic Party.

That is the only argument. But it is an argument that disregards the teachings of Marxism, the tasks of the immediate morrow in the revolution, the objective position of world Socialism, the shameful collapse of the Second International, and the injury done to the practical cause by the pack of 'also-Social-Democrats' who surround the proletarians.

It is an argument of routine, somnolence, and inertia.

But we are out to rebuild the world. We want to put an end to the imperialist World War, in which hundreds of millions of people and the interests of billions and billions of capital are involved, and which can be ended in a truly democratic peace only by the greatest proletarian revolution in the history of mankind.

Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the 'dear old' soiled short. . . .

But it is time to cast off the soiled short and don a clean one.

NOTES

- p. 18. *Twelve Years*. A collection of articles by Lenin published in 1908. It was originally intended to appear in several volumes, but the very first volume, containing Lenin's most important writings during the period of the old *Iskra* and the second Party Congress (i.e. down to 1905), was confiscated by the Tsarist Government.
- p. 39. *Manilovism*. Sweet sentimental day dreaming, from the name of Manilov, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

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