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**V. I. LENIN**

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# THE WAR AND THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

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V. I. LENIN



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**EDITOR'S FOREWORD**

ON numerous occasions before the outbreak of the war in 1914, Lenin called the attention to the prevalence in the Second International of the crassest form of opportunism which was eating at the very vitals of the proletarian movement. He was always ready to acknowledge the achievements of the International in building working class mass political parties in the various capitalist countries; but he realised at the same time that the policies and tactics of the reformist leaders were reducing these parties to impotence in the revolutionary class struggle and were totally negating the very purpose of their organisation. French Ministerialism, German Revisionism, British Labourism, and Russian Menshevism were merely different expressions of the reformism and opportunism which were common to all the parties of the Second International to a greater or lesser degree.

The inevitable bankruptcy of the opportunist leadership was brought into bold relief immediately upon the declaration of war. This bankruptcy was easily transformed into an open betrayal of the working masses to the cause of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the various belligerent countries.

Lenin was imprisoned soon after the outbreak of the war in Austria. He was released and permitted to depart for Switzerland on August 26. He returned to Berne on September 5 and on the following day presented to a group of Bolsheviks his thesis on "The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War." After two days' discussion, the theses were adopted as formulated by Lenin and taken to Russia by one of the Bolshevik Duma Deputies who had participated at this informal conference. The resolution was not only discussed by the Russian Central Committee of the Party and the Bolshevik Duma Fraction, but also by workers at some large Petrograd factories. It was also used on an international scale. It was sent to the Italian Party and used as the basis for a resolution on war at the Lugano Conference of the Italian and Swiss Socialist parties, September 27, 1914. The theses, which were published for the first time in volume XVIII (*The Imperialist War*)

of Lenin's *Collected Works*, condemned the voting of war credits by the Socialists and their participation in the bourgeois cabinets. It established the fact of the disintegration of the Second International and ascribed it to bourgeois reformism which had permeated the top layers of the Socialist parties in many countries. "The betrayal of Socialism by the majority of the leaders of the Second International (1889-1914) signifies an ideological and political collapse of the International" read the resolution.

Lenin continues his revolutionary literary activity in attempting to clarify the position of revolutionary Socialists on the war amidst the poisonous chauvinist atmosphere spread within the labour movement by traitorous leaders, launches a merciless attack against the social-patriots, calls upon the workers to annul by revolutionary action the class peace made by their misleaders, and advises internationalist propaganda in the armies.

When George Plekhanov, whose Menshevism was easily transformed into social-chauvinism, announced a lecture at Lausanne on October 11, Lenin attends the lecture and there attacks the open betrayal of Socialism by this erstwhile founder of Russian Marxism. He reminds Plekhanov and his audience that the declaration in the Communist Manifesto about workers not having a fatherland under capitalism was as true then as it was when Marx and Engels penned the Manifesto.

Two days later, Lenin delivers a lecture to make a more extensive reply to Plekhanov's utterings. "The present war is an imperialist war," he declares, and insists that those who do not understand the imperialist nature of the war cannot have a correct opinion on the social and political problems engendered by the war. He calls attention to the resolutions of the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress (1907) and the Basle International Conference (1912) dealing with war and the role of the working class during it which the reformist leadership ostensibly approved during peace time, but flagrantly violated when war broke out. As in his first theses on the war, Lenin again brings forth the slogan of fighting "our own" government. If the struggle against chauvinism is meant seriously, he insists, it must in the first place be a struggle against chauvinism at home. He later gives the following terse formulation of this policy: "A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but wish the defeat of its own government."

But Lenin was not only attacking the openly traitorous and oppor-

tunist Right Wing. He levelled his bitterest attacks against the vacillating would-be internationalist Centre. In a letter to a comrade of October 17, he wrote: "The German Centre, with Kautsky at its head, a hidden evil embellished for diplomatic purposes and dulling the eyes, the intelligence, and the consciousness of the workers, is more dangerous than anything else. Our task at present is a determined and open struggle against international opportunism and those who shield it (Kautsky)." He ridiculed the idea of "simply" re-establishing the shattered International; and against the peace slogan of the Centre, which he declared to be a slogan of Philistines, he countered: "the proletarian slogan must be civil war."

As a result of the discussions on his first theses on the war and on his further utterances on the developing situation, Lenin was able to formulate in October the official declaration of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party on the burning questions which the international working class in general, and the Russian workers in particular, were facing as a result of the war. This first official declaration of the revolutionary leadership of the Socialist Party of a warring country, which is reprinted in this booklet (pages 56-63) succinctly and boldly stated the attitude of the Party toward the nature of the war, analysed the constellation of forces of both belligerent groups, and showed the imperialist designs of each of the participating bourgeois governments. The workers were shown the enormity of the betrayal of the fundamental principles of Socialism by the Social-Democratic leaders which was responsible for the collapse of the Second International.

But the international working class must have its militant organisation, and Lenin voices the need for a new International. "The proletarian International has not perished and will not perish, the working masses will overcome all obstacles and create a new International." It is in the statement of the Bolshevik Central Committee that we find the final formulation of that revolutionary slogan which has always been associated with Lenin, that of "turning the present imperialist war into civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan."

Lenin writes continually; he directs his attacks against the growing chauvinism, classifies the various groupings, eagerly watches for "honest voices" and revolutionary proletarian actions and separates the real Socialists from the renegades. In an article on November 1 he definitely proposes the formation of the Third International "purged not only of



deserters but also of opportunism." In broad strokes he formulates the role of this new International: "The Third International is confronted with the task of organising the forces of the proletariat for a revolutionary onslaught on the capitalist governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all countries, for political power, for the victory of Socialism."

Lenin not only proposes thus to form a new International, but also calls attention to the fact that the name "Social-Democracy" has come to denote social peace, and he poses the following question: "Is it not better to give up the name 'Social-Democrats' that has become polluted and degraded by them and return to the old Marxian name Communists?"

The essay, "The Collapse of the Second International," which is reprinted in this booklet, was written by Lenin in the summer of 1915. His thorough analysis of the forces making for war, of the nature of imperialism, of the treachery of social reformism, of the role of a revolutionary working class party during an imperialist war, makes this essay particularly appropriate at a time when the danger of war looms so much on the horizon.

The Second International is once more attempting to tie the working masses to the chariot of the imperialist bourgeoisie. It supports Chiang-Kai-shek against the Chinese Revolution and MacDonald against the rising Indian masses; it joins in organising counter-revolutionary plots against the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union and ranges itself on the side of the capitalists and landowners in every struggle of workers and peasants. It is the instrument of the international bourgeoisie against the revolutionary upsurge of the exploited and oppressed in the imperialist and colonial countries. Its social reformism of pre-war days has been transformed into social fascism of to-day.

Lenin's essay on the Second International will help to understand the road it has travelled since its "rejuvenation" after the war and the role that it plays at the present time. It should also serve as an aid in the determined and persistent struggle which the workers must wage against their enemies within the labour movement.

ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG.

May, 1931.

## THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

By the collapse of the International one sometimes understands the plain, formal aspect of the thing, namely, the severance of international relations between the Socialist parties of the belligerent countries, the impossibility of convening either an international conference or the International Socialist Bureau, etc. This point of view has been adopted by some Socialists of the small neutral countries, possibly by a majority of the official parties of those countries, also by the opportunists and their defenders. In the Russian press this position was defended by Mr. V. Kossovsky, with a frankness deserving deep gratitude, in No. 8 of the *Information Bulletin* of the Bund, whose editor did not say a word about disagreeing with the author. There is hope that the defence of nationalism by Mr. Kossovsky, who went as far as defending the German Social-Democrats who voted for military appropriations, will help many a worker finally to realise the bourgeois-nationalist character of the Bund.

For the class-conscious workers, Socialism is a serious conviction and not a comfortable cover to hide petty-bourgeois compromises or a tendency of mere nationalist opposition. By the collapse of the International they understand the glaring disloyalty of the majority of the official Social-Democratic parties to their convictions, to the most solemn declarations made in speeches at the Stuttgart and Basle International Congresses, in the resolutions of these congresses, etc. Not to see this disloyalty is possible only for those *who do not wish* to see it, for whom it is unprofitable. In formulating the question scientifically, *i.e.*, from the point of view of the relations between classes in present-day society, we must say that the majority of the Social-Democratic parties, and first of all the German party, the greatest and most influential in the Second International, have joined their general staffs, their governments, their bourgeoisie, thus taking a stand against the proletariat. This is an event of world-wide historic significance, and it is impossible not to dwell on a many-sided analysis of it. It has long been conceded that wars, with all their horrors and miseries, have this more or less outstanding beneficial result, that they mercilessly reveal, unmask,

and destroy much rotten, obsolete, and dead matter in human institutions. The European War of 1914-1915 has undoubtedly begun to yield beneficial results in that it has shown the advanced class of the civilised countries that a hideous, festering abscess has grown within its parties, and that an intolerable putrid stench is issuing from somewhere.

## I

Is it a fact that the chief Socialist parties of Europe have become disloyal to all their convictions and tasks? Obviously, this is not readily discussed either by the traitors themselves or by those who realise clearly, or guess hazily, that they will have to be friendly and tolerant with them. However unpleasant this may be to various "authorities" of the Second International, or to the friends of their faction among the Russian Social-Democrats, we must face the issues squarely and call things by their proper names; we must tell the workers the truth.

Are there facts enough to show how the Socialist parties looked upon their tasks and their tactics before the war and in anticipation of it? Undoubtedly such facts exist. There is the resolution adopted at the Basle International Socialist Congress of 1912. Together with the resolutions adopted at the 1912 Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party, we reprint it below as a reminder of the "forgotten words" of Socialism. This resolution, summing up the enormous propagandist and agitational literature of all the countries against war, represents the most exact and complete, the most solemn and formal exposition of the Socialist views on war and on tactics in relation to war. One cannot fail to qualify otherwise than as betrayal the very fact that none of the authorities of the International of yesterday and of social-chauvinism of to-day, neither Hyndman nor Guesde, neither Kautsky nor Plekhanov, dares to remind his readers of that resolution, preferring either to be silent about it, or, like Kautsky, to quote from it excerpts of secondary importance, omitting everything essential. On the one hand, the most "Left" arch-revolutionary resolutions; on the other hand, a shameless forgetfulness and a renunciation of these resolutions—this is one of the most flagrant manifestations of the collapse of the International. At the same time, it is one of the most striking proofs that a belief in the possibility of "ameliorating" Socialism, of "straightening out its line" by means of resolutions alone can at present be cherished

only by those whose unexampled naiveté goes hand in hand with a shrewd desire to perpetuate their former hypocrisy.

It seems only yesterday that Hyndman, having turned to the defence of imperialism prior to the war, was looked upon by all "decent" Socialists as an unbalanced crank and that nobody spoke of him otherwise than in a tone of disdain. Now the most eminent Social-Democratic leaders of all the countries have sunk to Hyndman's position, differing among themselves only in shades of opinion and temperament. And it is utterly impossible for us to use a more or less parliamentary language when we judge or characterise the civic courage of persons like the writers of the *Nashe Slovo*, who speak of "Mr." Hyndman in tones of contempt, while "Comrade" Kautsky is treated with deference (obsequiousness?) whether he is mentioned directly or not. Is it possible to reconcile such an attitude with respect to Socialism, and generally with respect to a man's convictions? If we are convinced of the falsity and destructiveness of Hyndman's chauvinism, does it not follow that we must direct our criticism and attacks against the *more influential* and more dangerous defender of such views, Kautsky?

Guesde's views have recently been expressed in more detail, perhaps, than elsewhere by a Guesdeist, Charles Dumas, in a pamphlet entitled *La paix que nous voulons*. This "head" of Jules Guesde's "cabinet," as he calls himself on the title page of the pamphlet, naturally quotes the former declarations of the Socialists in a patriotic spirit (the same is done by David, the German social-chauvinist, in his latest pamphlet on the defence of the fatherland), but he does not quote the Basle Manifesto! Plekhanov, in uttering, with unusual conceit, social-chauvinist vulgarities, also keeps quiet concerning that manifesto. Kautsky acts like Plekhanov: in quoting the Basle Manifesto he *omits* all the revolutionary parts of it (*i.e.*, all its vital content!) probably under the pretext of censorship regulations. . . . The police and the military authorities have forbidden, by censorship regulations, the mention of class-struggle or revolution, and this came in "handy" to the betrayers of Socialism!

But does the Basle Manifesto perchance represent some meaningless appeal? Is it perhaps devoid of any definite content, either historical or political, that would have a direct bearing upon this given war?

The reverse is true. There is less idle declamation, there is more definite content in the Basle resolution than elsewhere. The Basle

resolution speaks of the *very same* war which took place later ; it speaks of the very same *imperialist* conflicts which broke out in 1914-1915. The conflicts between Austria and Serbia over the Balkans, between Austria and Italy over Albania, etc., between England and Germany over markets and colonies in general, between Russia and Turkey, etc., over Armenia and Constantinople—this is what the Basle resolution speaks of, anticipating this, the present war. It is of this present war between “ the great nations of Europe ” that the Basle resolution declares that it “ *cannot be justified by even the slightest pretext of being in the interest of the people !* ”

And if Plekhanov and Kautsky—to take two of the most typical Socialist authorities close to us (one of whom writes in Russian and the other is translated into Russian by the Liquidators)—are now picking out, with the aid of Axelrod, all sorts of “ popular justifications ” for the war (or, rather, plebeian ones taken from the yellow press of the bourgeoisie) ; if, with a learned mien and with a stock of false quotations from Marx, they refer to “ examples ” of the wars of 1813 and 1870 (Plekhanov) or of 1854-1871, 1876-1877, 1897 (Kautsky), verily, only people without a shadow of Socialist convictions can take such arguments “ seriously,” can fail to call them monstrous Jesuitism, hypocrisy and prostitution of Socialism ! Let the German party administration (*Vorstand*) anathematise Mehring’s and Rosa Luxemburg’s new magazine, *Die Internationale*, for its just criticism of Kautsky ; let Vandervelde, Plekhanov, Hyndman and Co. treat their adversaries in the same manner with the aid of the police of the Triple Entente ; we will reply by simply reprinting the Basle Manifesto. This will reveal a change in the leaders for which there can be no other name but treason.

The Basle resolution speaks not of a national war, not of a people’s war, the like of which took place in Europe, a war that was even typical for the period of 1789-1871 ; it does not speak of a *revolutionary war* (which the Social-Democrats never rejected), but of a *present-day* war as an outcome of “ capitalist imperialism ” and “ dynastic ” interests, as an outcome of “ the policy of conquests ” pursued by *both* groups of belligerent nations, the Austro-German and the Anglo-Franco-Russian group. Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. are deceiving the workers outright when they repeat the selfish lie of the bourgeoisie of all countries, which strives with all its power to paint this imperialist, colonial, predatory war as a people’s war and a war of defence (on whatever side) ; they are

deceiving the workers when they pick up justifications for this war from the realm of historic examples of *non-imperialist* wars.

The question as to the imperialist, predatory, anti-proletarian character of the present war has long outgrown the stage of pure theoretical reasoning. Not only has imperialism, in its main characteristics, been theoretically appraised as the struggle of the perishing, senile, and rotten bourgeoisie for the division of the world, and for the enslavement of the “ small ” nations ; not only have these conclusions been repeated thousands of times in the vast newspaper literature of the Socialists of *all* countries ; not only did, for instance, a representative of an “ Allied ” nation, the Frenchman Delaisi, in the pamphlet *La guerre qui vient* (1911 !) explain in a popular fashion the predatory character of the present war as far as the French bourgeoisie was concerned, but more than that happened. The representatives of the proletarian parties of all countries unanimously and formally expressed at Basle their unshakable conviction that a war of an imperialist character would come, and they drew the *tactical* conclusions. It is for this reason that, among other things, we must reject pointblank as obvious sophisms all reference to the fact that the difference between national and international tactics has not been sufficiently discussed (compare Axelrod’s last interview in the *Nashe Slovo*, Nos. 87 and 90), and so forth and so on. Such assertions are sophisms because they confuse a many-sided scientific analysis of imperialism, which analysis only now begins and which analysis in its essence is infinite even as science is infinite, with the essentials of Socialist tactics against capitalist imperialism, which tactics have been pointed out in millions of copies of Social-Democratic papers and in the decisions of the International. The Socialist parties are not debating clubs, but organisations of the fighting proletariat. When a number of battalions have gone over to the enemy, we must call them by name and brand them as traitors, without allowing ourselves to be “ captured ” by hypocritical assertions to the effect that not all understand imperialism “ in the same way,” or that the chauvinist Kautsky and the chauvinist Cunow can write volumes about it, or that the question has not been “ sufficiently discussed,” and many other excuses of the same kind. Capitalism in *all* the manifestations of its plunder, and in all the minutest ramifications of its historical development and its national peculiarities, will *never* be completely and *exhaustively* studied. Scholars, particularly pedants, will never cease disputing details. To give up Socialist struggle

against capitalism "on that account," to give up opposing those who become traitors in this struggle, would be ridiculous, and is not this what Kautsky, Cunow, Axelrod, etc., propose?

It is a fact that after the outbreak of the war nobody even as much as attempted to analyse the Basle resolution or to show its incorrectness!

## II

But is it not possible that while sincere Socialists stood for the Basle resolution because they anticipated the emergency of a revolutionary situation from the war, they have been proven wrong by the course of events, because a revolution appears impossible?

It is by means of such sophistry that Cunow (in his pamphlet entitled *Parteizusammenbruch?* [*Collapse of the Party?*] and in a series of articles) attempts to justify his joining the camp of the bourgeoisie. We find similar "arguments" hinted at in the works of all the other social chauvinists, with Kautsky at their head. The hopes for a revolution proved an illusion, to fight for an illusion is not the task of a Marxist, Cunow reasons. This Struveist does not mention that the "illusions" were shared by all the signatories of the Basle Manifesto; like an eminently noble gentleman, he tries to put the blame on the extreme Left, such as Pannekoek and Radek!

Let us examine the substance of the argument which says that the authors of the Basle Manifesto sincerely anticipated the coming of a revolution, that events, however, proved their error. The Basle Manifesto says: (1) that the war creates an economic and political crisis; (2) that the workers will look upon their participation in war as upon a crime, a criminal "firing at each other for the profits of capitalists, the ambitions of dynasties, the greater glory of secret diplomatic treaties," that the war calls forth among the workers "indignation and revolt"; (3) that the Socialists are obliged to take advantage of the above crisis and of the workers' state of mind in order "to arouse the people and hasten the downfall of capitalism"; (4) that the governments, all without exception, can start a war only at their own peril; (5) that the governments are afraid of a proletarian revolution; (6) that the governments must "remember" the Paris Commune (*i.e.*, civil war), the 1905 Revolution in Russia, etc. All these are perfectly clear thoughts; they do not contain a *guarantee* that a revolution will happen; they lay stress on an exact characterisation of the *facts and tendencies*. The

man, who, after hearing such thoughts and reasonings, declares that the anticipated revolution proved an illusion, shows not a Marxist but a Sturveist attitude towards the revolution, an attitude typical of police and renegades.

For a Marxist there is no doubt that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, we know that not every revolutionary situation leads to revolution. What are, generally speaking, the characteristics of a revolutionary situation? We can hardly be mistaken when we indicate the following three outstanding signs: (1) it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their power unchanged; there is a crisis "higher up," taking one form or another; there is a crisis in the policy of the ruling class; as a result, there appears a crack through which the dissatisfaction and the revolt of the oppressed classes burst forth. If a revolution is to take place, it is usually insufficient that "one does not wish way below," but it is necessary that "one is incapable up above" to continue in the old way; (2) the wants and sufferings of the oppressed classes become more acute than usual; (3) in consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses who in "peace time" allow themselves to be robbed without protest, but in stormy times are drawn both by the circumstances of the crises and by the "higher-ups" themselves into independent historic action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent not only of the will of separate groups and parties but even of separate classes, a revolution, as a rule, is impossible. The co-existence of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. This situation existed in 1905 in Russia and in all the periods of revolution in the West, but it also existed in the seventh decade of the last century in Germany; it existed in 1859-1861 and in 1879-1880 in Russia, though there was no revolution in these latter instances. Why? Because a revolution emerges not out of every revolutionary situation, but out of such situations where, to the above-mentioned objective changes, subjective ones are added, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *classes* to carry out revolutionary mass actions *strong* enough to break (or to undermine) the old government, it being the rule that never, not even in a period of crises, does a government "fall" of itself without being "helped to fall."

This is how the Marxist views a revolution. These views were advanced



many, many times, and were recognised as indisputable by all Marxists ; for us Russians they were corroborated in a particularly clear fashion by the experience of 1905. What, then, did the Basle Manifesto assume in 1912 in this respect, and what happened in 1914-1915 ?

It assumed a revolutionary situation which it briefly described as "an economic and political crisis." Has such a situation materialised ? Undoubtedly so. The social-chauvinist Lensch, who more directly, more openly and more honestly defends chauvinism than the hypocrites, Cunow, Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co., went as far as to say : "We are now going through a *revolution*" (p. 6. of his pamphlet entitled *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Weltkrieg* [German Social-Democracy and the World War] 1915). There is a political crisis at hand ; none of the governments is sure of the near future ; none is secure against the danger of financial collapse, loss of territory, expulsion from its country (the way the Belgian government was expelled). All governments live on a volcano, all appeal, *of their own accord*, to the initiative and heroism of the masses. The political regime of Europe has all been shaken, and probably nobody will deny that we have entered (and are getting ever deeper into—I write this on the day when Italy has declared war) an era of the greatest political perturbations. When on October 2nd 1914, two months after the declaration of war, Kautsky wrote in the *Neue Zeit* that "never are governments as strong, never are parties as weak as at the beginning of a war," it was a sample of those falsifications of the science of history which Kautsky undertakes in order to please Südekum and the other chauvinists. Never are governments so much in need of peace among all the parties of the ruling classes, and of a "peaceful" submission to this rule by the oppressed classes, as in time of war. On the other hand, assuming even that, "at the beginning of the war," the government *appears* to be all-powerful, particularly in a country that expects a speedy victory,—who ever said that a revolutionary situation must necessarily coincide with the "beginning" of the war ? And who ever said that the *appearance* of strength coincides with *actual strength* ?

Everybody knew, saw and recognised that a European war would be of unparalleled gravity. The experience of the war proves this more and more. The war widens. The political mainstays of Europe are shaking more and more. The sufferings of the masses are terrible, and the efforts of the governments, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to hush up those sufferings are suffering ever more frequent defeats.

The war profits of certain groups of capitalists are monstrously, scandalously, large. The sharpening of conflicting forces is tremendous. The inarticulate indignation of the masses, the hazy yearning of the down-trodden and unenlightened strata of society for a nice ("democratic") peace, the beginning of rumblings "down below"—all these are facts. The longer the war is drawn out, and the more acute it becomes, the more the governments themselves develop, and must develop, the initiative of the masses, urging them, as they do, to abnormal strain and sacrifices. The experiences of the war, as the experiences of every crisis in history, of every great calamity and every sudden turn in human life, dull and break one set of people, *while they enlighten and harden others*. And taking the history of the world as a whole, it has been proven that, barring individual cases of decadence and fall of a state, the number and the strength of the latter have been generally greater than that of the former.

The conclusion of peace will not only fail to terminate all these sufferings and all this sharpening of conflicting forces "immediately" ; on the contrary, in many respects it will make the sufferings more keenly felt and more clearly understood by the most backward masses of the population.

In a word, a revolutionary situation in a majority of the advanced countries and the great nations of Europe is there. In this respect, the anticipations of the Basle Manifesto have been fully vindicated. To deny this truth directly or indirectly, or to pass over it in silence, as do Cunow, Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., is to be telling the greatest untruth, to deceive the working class, and to be servile to the bourgeoisie. We have quoted facts (in the *Sotsial-Demokrat*, Nos. 34, 40, 41) proving that people who are afraid of the revolution—petty-bourgeois Christian priests, general staffs, newspapers of millionaires—are compelled to recognise the symptoms of a revolutionary situation in Europe.

Will this situation continue for a long while ? How far more acute will it become ? Will it lead to revolution ? We do not know, and nobody can know that. Only the *experience* of the development of revolutionary sentiments and the beginning of revolutionary actions on the part of the advanced class, the proletariat, will show that. One cannot speak in this connection either of "illusions" or of their repudiation, since no Socialist anywhere ever undertook to guarantee that the revolution would emerge from this and not from the following war, from to-day's and not from to-morrow's revolutionary situation. The

question at issue is the most undisputed and most fundamental duty of all Socialists: the duty to reveal to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, to make clear its scope and depth, to awaken the revolutionary consciousness and the revolutionary determination of the proletariat, to help it to pass to revolutionary actions, and to create organisations befitting the revolutionary situation for work in this direction.

No influential or responsible Socialist ever dared doubt this duty of Socialist parties. Just this was imposed on the Socialists by the Basle Manifesto without spreading or cherishing the least "illusions": the duty to awaken, to "stir" the people, and not to lull them to sleep by chauvinism, as do Plekhanov, Axelrod and Kautsky; to "take advantage" of the crisis for "hastening" the collapse of capitalism; to be guided by the *examples* of the Commune and of October-December, 1905. The fact that the present parties failed to do their duty is their betrayal, their political death, their repudiation of their rôle, their joining the side of the bourgeoisie.

### III

But how was it possible that the most eminent representatives and leaders of the Second International betrayed Socialism? We shall dwell on this question later, after we have examined the attempts at "theoretically" justifying this betrayal. Let us try first to characterise the main theories of the social-chauvinists, who, we may fairly say, are represented by Plekhanov (he reiterates in most cases the arguments of the Anglo-French chauvinists, Hyndman and his new adherents) and by Kautsky, who advances much more subtle arguments that have the appearance of considerably greater theoretical solidity.

The most primitive theory seems to be the one that points at an "offender" state. "We have been attacked," it says, "we defend ourselves; the interests of the proletariat demand resistance to the disturber of European peace." This tune is repeated in the declarations of all the governments and in the declamations of all the bourgeois and yellow press the world over. Even this threadbare vulgarity Plekhanov has managed to embellish by a Jesuit reference to "dialectics" so habitual with this writer; he asserts that in order to take stock of a given situation, we must first of all find the offender and give him his due, postponing all other questions for another occasion

(see Plekhanov's pamphlet *On the War*, Paris, 1914, and the repetition of its arguments by Axelrod in *Golos*, Nos. 86 and 87). Plekhanov has beaten the record in the noble sport of substituting sophistry for dialectics. The sophist picks one out of many "arguments," and it is Hegel who long ago correctly noticed that it is possible to find "arguments" for everything in the world. The dialectic method demands a many-sided investigation of a given social phenomenon in its development; it demands that we proceed from the exterior, from the apparent, to the fundamental moving forces, to the development of productive forces and to the class struggle. Plekhanov picks out one quotation from the German Social-Democratic press: the Germans themselves, prior to the war, he says, recognised that Austria and Germany were the "offenders," and that is enough for him; that the Russian Socialist repeatedly exposed tsarist plans of conquest in relation to Galicia, Armenia, etc., Plekhanov does not mention. He does not make the slightest attempt to study the economic and diplomatic history, at least of the last three decades, which history proves conclusively that it was the conquest of colonies, the grabbing of foreign countries, the expulsion and ruining of the more successful competitors that were the main axes of the politics of both groups of the now belligerent nations.\*

\*Very instructive is *The War of Steel and Gold* [London, 1914, a book bearing the date of March, 1914 !], by the English pacifist Brailsford, who is not averse to parading as a Socialist. The author clearly recognises that the problems of nationality no longer occupy the forefront, that they have been solved [p. 35]; that this is not the issue at present, the "the typical question of modern diplomacy [p. 36] is the Bagdad railroad, the delivery of rails for it, the mines of Morocco and the like." The author rightly considers one of the "most instructive incidents in the recent history of European diplomacy" the fact that the French patriots and the English imperialists fought against the attempts of Caillaux, in 1911 and 1913, to make peace with Germany on the basis of an agreement concerning the division of colonial spheres of influence and the admittance of German securities to the Paris Bourse. The English and the French bourgeoisie, he says, *frustrated* such an agreement [pp. 38-40]. The aim of imperialism, he asserts, is the export of capital to the weaker countries [p. 74]. The profit from such capital amounted in England in 1899 to £90—100,000,000 sterling (Giffen); in 1909, to £140,000,000 sterling, almost 2,000,000,000 rubles. Foul machinations and bribing the Turkish nobility, posts for favourite sons in India and Egypt, these are the main things, in Brailsford's opinion [pp. 85-87]. An insignificant minority gains from armaments and wars, he says, but this minority is backed by "Society" and by the financiers, whereas behind the adherents of peace there is a scattered population [p. 93]. A pacifist who at present talks of disarmament and arbitration will to-morrow work for a party which is dependent on the war contractors [p. 161]. When the Triple Entente is dominant, it seizes Morocco and divides Persia; when the Triple Alliance recovers its lead, it takes Tripoli, assures its hold in Bosnia, and penetrates Asiatic Turkey [p. 167]. London and Paris gave billions to Russia in March, 1906, helping tsarism to crush the movement for freedom [pp. 225-228]; now England helps Russia to throttle Persia [p. 229]. Russia has arranged the Balkan War [p. 230]. [cont. p. 18.]

Applied to wars, the main thesis of dialectics so shamelessly distorted by Plekhanov to please the bourgeoisie consists in this, that "war is nothing but a continuation of political relations by other (i.e., forcible) means." This formula belongs to Clausewitz,\* one of the greatest writers on the history of war, whose ideas were fertilised by Hegel. And this was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who looked upon every war as a continuation of the politics of given interested nations—and various classes inside of them—at a given time.

The theoretical foundation of Plekhanov's crass chauvinism becomes that of the more subtle and sugary chauvinism of Kautsky, when the latter, in sanctifying the shifting of the Socialists of all countries to the side of "their" capitalists, uses the following arguments :

Everybody has a right and a duty to defend his fatherland ; true internationalism consists in recognising this right for the Socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation . . . (see *Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914, and other works by the same author).

This matchless reasoning is such a sordidly flagrant travesty of Socialism that the best answer to it would be to coin a medal with the portraits of Wilhelm II and Nicholas II on one side, of Plekhanov and Kautsky on the other. True internationalism, mind you, consists in justifying the firing at German workers by the French workers, and at the French by the Germans, in the name of "defence of the fatherland."!

However, if we examine more closely the theoretical premises of Kautsky's reasoning, we find an idea ridiculed by Clausewitz about eighty years ago. When war begins, Kautsky seems to think, all political relations between peoples and classes resulting from an historical development cease to exist ; a totally new situation is there ! There are, he thinks only attackers and defenders as such, and the "fatherland's foes"

All this is not new, is it ? All this is common knowledge, and was repeated in Social-Democratic papers of the whole world. On the eve of the war, a bourgeois Englishman sees all this as clearly as can be. In face of these simple and commonly known facts, what indecent nonsense, what intolerable hypocrisy, what sugary lies are the theories of Plekhanov and Potresov concerning Germany's guilt, or the theory of Kautsky concerning the "prospects of disarmament and lasting peace under capitalism."

\*Karl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, Works, Berlin, 1834, Vol. I, p. 28. Compare Vol. III, pp. 139-140 : "Everybody knows that wars are created only by political relations between governments and peoples ; but ordinarily one pictures the situation as if, with the beginning of the war, these relations cease and a new situation is created subject to its own laws. We assert, on the contrary, that war is nothing but a continuation of political relations by other means."

must be repelled ! The oppression of a great number of nations, which form over half of the globe's population, by the imperialist peoples striving towards national aggrandisement ; the competition between the bourgeoisie of these countries for a share of the loot ; the desire of the capitalists to split and oppress the labour movement, all this of a sudden has disappeared from the field of vision of Plekhanov and Kautsky, although it was such "politics" that they themselves had been pointing at for decades prior to the war.

False referenees to Marx and Engels form in this connection the "trump" argument of the two chiefs of social-chauvinism ; Plekhanov recalls Prussia's national war of 1813 and Germany's of 1870, while Kautsky proves, with a most learned air, that Marx examined the question as to whose success (i.e., the success of which bourgeoisie) was more desirable in the wars of 1854-1855, 1859, 1870-1871, and that the Marxists did likewise in the wars of 1876-1877 and 1897. It is the method of all the sophists of all times to quote examples obviously relating to basically dissimilar cases. The wars of the past referred to were a "continuation of the politics" of age-long national movements of the bourgeoisie, movements against the oppression of a foreign nation, of an outsider, and against absolutism, Turkish and Russian. There could be no other question at that time than the question as to which bourgeoisie's success was to be preferred. The Marxists were in a position to make propaganda among the peoples in favour of such wars, to fan national hatred in the manner in which Marx appealed in favour of the war in 1848 and later in favour of war with Russia, in the manner in which Engels in 1859 fanned the national hatred of the Germans against their oppressors, Napoleon III and Russian tsarism.\*

To compare that "continuation of politics" which was a struggle against feudalism and absolutism—the politics of a bourgeoisie in its struggle for liberty—with this "continuation of politics" of a bourgeoisie

\*Mr. Gardenin in *Zhizn* [Life] labels as "revolutionary chauvinism," but none the less as chauvinism, Marx's stand in 1848 for a revolutionary war against the peoples of Europe who in practice had shown themselves to be counter-revolutionary, the Slavs and the Russians in particular. Such blame on Marx proves once more the opportunism (or rather the total lack of earnestness) of this "Left" Socialist-Revolutionist. We Marxists have always stood, and do stand, for a revolutionary war against counter-revolutionary peoples. For instance, if Socialism were to be victorious in America or in Europe in 1920 while, let us say, Japan or China were advancing their Bismarcks against us—even if it were at first only diplomatically—then we certainly would be for an aggressive revolutionary war against them. It seems strange to you, Mr. Gardenin ! The trouble is you are a revolutionist of the Ropshin type !

which has become decrepit, i.e., imperialist, which has plundered the whole world, and, being reactionary, forms an alliance with the feudal masters to crush the proletariat, means to compare yards with pounds. It is on a par with comparing the "representatives of the bourgeoisie," Robespierre, Garibaldi, Zhelyabov, with such "representatives of the bourgeoisie" as Millerand, Salandra, Guchkov. One cannot be a Marxist without feeling the deepest respect for the great bourgeois revolutionist who had a world-wide historic right to speak in the name of "bourgeois" fatherlands, who aroused tens of millions of people of new nations to a civilised life in their struggle against feudalism. And one cannot be a Marxist without feeling contempt for the sophistry of Plekhanov and Kautsky who speak of the "defence of the fatherland" in relation to the throttling of Belgium by the German imperialists, or in relation to the pact of the imperialists of England, France, Russia and Italy concerning the plunder of Austria and Turkey.

There is another "Marxist" theory of social-chauvinism: Socialism, it says, is based on a rapid development of capitalism; the victory of "my" country will hasten the development of its capitalism and consequently the arrival of Socialism; a defeat of "my" country will thwart its economic development, and consequently the arrival of Socialism. Such Struveist theory is being propounded in Russia by Plekhanov, among the Germans by Lensch and others. Kautsky argues against this crude theory, against Lensch who defends it outright, against Cunow who fights for it covertly, but Kautsky's argument only aims to bring about a reconciliation of the social-chauvinists of all countries on the basis of a more subtle, more Jesuit chauvinist theory.

We need not dwell on the analysis of this crude theory. Struve's *Critical Notes* appeared in 1894. During these twenty years the Russian Social-Democrats have become thoroughly familiar with this "manner" of the enlightened Russian bourgeois who advance their ideas and advocate their desires under the cloak of a kind of Marxism which has been *purged* of revolutionary substance. Struveism is not a purely Russian phenomenon; as the recent events prove clearly, there is an international tendency of the bourgeois theoreticians to kill Marxism by "gentleness," to choke it in their embraces, by an apparent acceptance of "all" the "truly scientific" sides and elements of Marxism *except* its "agitational," "Demagogic," "Blanqui-like," "Utopian" side. In other words, they take from Marxism all that is acceptable for the

liberal bourgeoisie, including the struggle for reforms, including the class struggle (without the proletarian dictatorship), including a "general" recognition of "Socialist ideals" and the substitution of a "new order" for capitalism; they repudiate "only" the living soul of Marxism, "only" its revolutionary content.

Marxism is the theory of the movement of the proletariat for liberation. It is clear, therefore, that the class-conscious workers must pay the utmost attention to the process of substituting Struveism for Marxism. The moving forces of his process are manifold and varied. We shall point out only the main three: (1) The development of science presents more and more material to prove that Marx was right. This makes it necessary to fight against him hypocritically, without warring openly against the foundations of Marxism, apparently recognising it but at the same time castrating its substance by sophistry, transforming Marxism into a holy "ikon" harmless for the bourgeoisie; (2) The development of opportunism among the Social-Democratic parties facilitates such a "recasting" of Marxism, fitting it to justify every kind of concession to opportunism; (3) The epoch of imperialism is an epoch when the world is divided among the "great" privileged nations which oppress all the others. Crumbs of the loot coming from these privileges and this oppression undoubtedly fall on the table of certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie, and of the aristocracy and also bureaucracy of the working class. Such strata, being an insignificant minority of the proletariat and the working masses, gravitate towards "Struveism," because it gives them a justification of their alliance with "their" national bourgeoisie against the oppressed masses of *all* nations. We shall have to deal with this below in connection with the question of the causes of the collapse of the International.

#### IV

The most subtle theory of social-chauvinism most skilfully counterfeited to appear scientific and international is the theory of "ultra imperialism" advanced by Kautsky. Here is the clearest, most precise and most recent exposition of it made by the author himself:

The weakening of the protectionist movement in England; the lowering of the tariffs in America; the tendency towards disarmament; the rapid decrease, in the last years before the war, of capital export from France and Germany; finally, the growing mutual inter-



national entanglement of the various cliques of finance capital—all this has caused me to weigh in mind whether the present imperialist policy cannot be supplanted by another, an ultra-imperialist one, which would substitute for the mutual struggle of national groups of finance capital a general exploitation of the world by united international finance capital. Such a new phase of capitalism is conceivable, to say the least. Whether it is realisable, we cannot say at present because there is not sufficient data in existence. (*Neue Zeit*, No. 5, April 30, 1915, p. 144).

. . . The course and the outcome of the present war may prove decisive in this respect. It may entirely crush the weak beginnings of ultra-imperialism by fanning to the highest degree the national hatreds also among the finance capitalists, by increasing armaments and the race for them, by making a new world war inevitable. Under such conditions, the thing I foresaw and formulated in my pamphlet, *Der Weg zur Macht*, would come true in horrifying proportions; class antagonisms would become sharper and sharper and with it would come the moral decadence [verbatim: "the refusal to function," *Abwirtschftung*, collapse] of capitalism. . . . [It must be noted that by this fancy word Kautsky understands simply the "hatred" of capitalism on the part of the intermediary strata between the proletariat and finance capital: namely, the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeois, even petty capitalists.] But [says Kautsky] the war may end otherwise. It may lead to the strengthening of the weak beginnings of ultra-imperialism. . . . Its lesson [attention, please!] may hasten developments which would take a long time under peace conditions. Should it come to an agreement between nations, to disarmament, to a lasting peace, then the worst of the causes that led to a growing moral decadence of capitalism before the war, may disappear.

The new phase will, of course, bring "new sufferings" to the proletariat, Kautsky says, "perhaps worse sufferings than before," but "for a time," he says, "ultra-imperialism may be in a position to create an era of new hopes and expectations within the framework of capitalism" [p.145].

How does the justification of social-chauvinism follow from this "theory"?

It follows in a manner that is very strange for a "theoretician."

The Left Wing Social-Democrats in Germany assert that imperialism, and the wars generated by imperialism, are not an accident but an inevitable product of capitalism, which brought about the domination of

finance-capital. Therefore, they say, a revolutionary struggle of the masses is on the order of the day, since the period of comparatively peaceful development has ended. The Right Wing Social-Democrats bluntly declare: Once imperialism is "necessary," we also must be imperialists. Now Kautsky in the role of the "centre" tries to reconcile them both:

Against the imperialism that is inevitable [he writes in his pamphlet, *Nationalstaat, imperialistischer Staat und Staatenbund* (*National State, Imperialist State, and the League of States*), Nuremberg, 1915], the extreme Left wishes to "promote" Socialism, i.e., not only the propaganda of Socialism which we, for half a century, have been practicing in opposition to all forms of capitalist domination, but the immediate introduction of Socialism. This seems very radical, but it is only capable of driving *every one who does not believe* in the immediate practical realisation of Socialism into the camp of imperialism. [P. 17. Italics ours.]

When Kautsky speaks of the immediate introduction of Socialism, he "perpetrates" a sleight of hand; he takes advantage of the fact that one is debarred from speaking of revolutionary action in Germany, particularly under military censorship. Kautsky knows very well that what the Left Wing demands is immediate propaganda in favour of, and preparations for revolutionary action on the part of the party, not at all an "immediate practical realisation of Socialism."

The Left Wing deduces the necessity of revolutionary action from the fact that imperialism cannot be avoided. The "theory of ultra-imperialism," on the other hand, serves Kautsky to justify the opportunists, to present the situation in such a light as if they did not join the bourgeoisie but simply "did not believe" in introducing Socialism immediately, because they expected a "new era" of disarmament and lasting peace. The "theory" reduces itself to this and *only* to this, that Kautsky utilises the *hope* for a new peaceful era of capitalism to justify the opportunists and the official Social-Democratic parties who joined the bourgeoisie and repudiated revolutionary, i.e., proletarian, tactics during the *present stormy era*, the solemn declarations of the Basle resolution notwithstanding!

Note that while doing so, Kautsky not only fails to state that this new phase will of necessity follow from such and such circumstances

and conditions, but, on the contrary, he openly declares: "I cannot even decide as yet whether this new phase can at all be realised." Look what "tendencies" leading towards the new era have been indicated by Kautsky. Is it not amazing that among the economic factors making for the new era Kautsky finds also the "tendency towards disarmament"? He is simply running away from undisputed facts that cannot be made to fit the theory of diminishing contradictions; he is simply hiding under the shadow of innocent philistine conversations and dreams. Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism"—this word, by the way, does not at all express what the author wants to say—is understood to be a tremendous *lessening* of the contradictions of capitalism. Kautsky speaks of the "weakening of protectionism in England and America." But is there any sign here of a tendency towards a new era? American protectionism, having reached the very limit, is now less rampant, but protectionism remains, nevertheless, so do the privileges, the preferential tariffs of the English colonies in favour of England. Let us remember what caused the change from the former "peaceful" period of capitalism to the present imperialist era: free competition was replaced by monopoly combinations of capitalists; the globe was divided up. It is obvious that both these facts (and factors) have really world-wide significance: free trade and peaceful competition were possible and necessary as long as capital was in a position to increase its colonies without hindrance and to seize unoccupied land in Africa, etc., while concentration of capital was still slight and no monopoly undertakings existed, *i.e.*, undertakings of such magnitude as to dominate a *whole* branch of industry. The appearance and growth of such monopoly undertakings (has this process, perchance, been checked in England or in America? Not even Kautsky will dare to deny that the war has hastened and sharpened it) make old-time free competition impossible. It takes the ground from under its feet, while the division of the globe *compels* the capitalists to pass from peaceful expansion to armed struggle for the redivision of colonies and spheres of influence. It is ridiculous to think that the weakening of protectionism in two countries can change anything in this respect.

Another fact is referred to: the decrease in capital export from *two* countries for a number of years. According to Harms' statistics for 1912, the capital invested abroad by the two countries under consideration, *viz.*, France and Germany, amounted to 35,000,000,000 marks (about

17,000,000,000 rubles) each, while England alone had double the amount.\* The export of capital never did and never could grow on the same scale everywhere under capitalism. Nobody, not even Kautsky, can say that the accumulation of capital has slackened or that the capacity of the home market to absorb commodities has undergone a vital change, say, through a marked improvement in the living standards of the masses. Under such conditions it is utterly impossible to deduce the coming of a new era from a decrease in the capital exports of two countries for several years.

"The growing international interlocking of the cliques of finance capital," this is the only general tendency that is actually in evidence for the last few years; and it relates not only to a few years or to a few countries but to the whole world, to the whole of capitalism. But why must this tendency lead to disarmament, and not to armaments, as hitherto? Let us look at any one of the world-famous producers of cannon (and of war materials in general), for instance, Armstrong. The English *Economist* recently (May 15, 1915) published figures showing that the profits of this firm rose from £606,000 sterling (about 6,000,000 rubles) in 1905, 1906, to £856,000 in 1913, and £940,000 (9,000,000 rubles) in 1914. The interlinking of finance capital is here very pronounced and it keeps growing: German capitalists are "participating" in the affairs of English firms; English firms are constructing submarines for Austria, etc. Capital, internationally interlocked, does splendid business in armaments and wars. To deduce any economic tendency towards disarmament from the combining and interlocking of various national capitals into one international whole, means to offer kindhearted philistine prayers that class antagonism should become dulled where class antagonisms are actually becoming sharpened.

## V

Kautsky speaks of the "lessons" of the war in a spirit that is entirely philistine. He makes these lessons appear as a kind of moral horror before the miseries of the war. This is, for instance, how he argues in the pamphlet entitled *Nationalstaat*, etc.:

\*See Bernhard Harms, *Probleme der Weltwirtschaft* [*Problems of World Economy*], Jena, 1912; George Paish, "Great Britain's Capital Investments in Colonies" in *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. LXXV, 1910-11, p. 167. Lloyd George, in a speech early in 1915, estimated English capital abroad as amounting to £4,000,000,000 sterling, *i.e.*, about 80,000,000,000 marks.

It is beyond doubt and it is not necessary to prove that there are strata of the population having the most urgent interest in universal peace and disarmament. Petty bourgeois and petty peasants, even many capitalists and intellectuals have no interest in imperialism stronger than the damage caused to these strata by war and armaments [p. 21].

This was written in February, 1915! At a time when there was a veritable rush of all propertied classes, including petty bourgeois and the "intelligentsia," to join the imperialists, Kautsky, as if secluded from the rest of the world, with unusual self-sufficiency uses sugary phrases to repudiate facts. He judges the interests of the petty bourgeoisie not by its actions but by the words of some of its members, though these words are at every step given the lie by actions. It is the same as if we were to judge the "interests" of the bourgeoisie in general not by actions but by the mellifluous words of the bourgeois priests who solemnly swear that the present system is saturated with Christian ideals. Kautsky applies Marxism in such a fashion that all its content evaporates. What remains is a little word "interest" with some sort of a supernatural spiritualist meaning, attention being turned not towards economic realities, but towards the innocent desires for general welfare.

Marxism judges "interests" by class antagonisms and class struggle manifested in millions of facts in everyday life. The petty bourgeoisie dreams and prattles of mitigating antagonisms, "arguing" that their sharpening has "harmful" consequences. Imperialism is the subjugation of all strata of the propertied classes to finance capital and the division of the world among five or six "great" nations, the majority of whom are now participating in the war. The division of the world by the great nations means that all their propertied classes are interested in possessing colonies and spheres of influence, in oppressing foreign nations, in more or less lucrative posts and privileges connected with belonging to a "great" and oppressing nation.\*

\*E. Schultze informs us that by 1915 the value of securities in the whole world amounted to 732 billion francs, including state and municipal loans, mortgages and stocks of commercial and manufacturing corporations, etc. In this sum, the share of England, was 130 billion francs, of the United States 115, France 100, and Germany 75, i.e., the share of all four great nations was 420 billion francs, more than half of the total. From this we may judge the extent of the advantages and privileges accruing to the leading great nations that have progressed beyond other nations and oppress and plunder them. (Dr. Emil Schultze, "Das französische Kapital in Russland" ["French Capital in Russia"] in *Finanz-Archiv*, Berlin, 1915, Vol. XXXII, p. 127). "Defence of

It is impossible to live in the old fashion, in comparatively calm, cultured, peaceful surroundings of a capitalism softly gliding on the tracks of evolution, gradually spreading over new countries. It is impossible because a new era has arrived. Finance capital is driving this or that country from the ranks of great nations, and will succeed in doing so; it will take away the colonies and spheres of influence of the vanquished nation, as Germany threatens to do if it wins the war against England. It will take away from the loser's petty bourgeoisie its "great nation" privileges and surplus profits. The war shows this clearly. This is the outcome of that sharpening of antagonisms which has long been recognised by all, including Kautsky in his pamphlet *Der Weg zur Macht*.

Now that the armed conflict for the privileges of a great nation is a fact, Kautsky begins to persuade the capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie that war is a terrible thing while disarmament is a good thing; he does it in the same manner and with exactly the same results as a Christian preacher who from the pulpit persuades the capitalist that love is God's commandment as well as a tendency of the soul and a moral law of civilisation. The thing called by Kautsky economic tendencies towards "ultra-imperialism" is in reality nothing but a petty-bourgeois exhortation, addressed to the financiers, a humble request that they refrain from evil.

Capital export? But more capital is exported into independent countries, such as the United States of America, than into colonies. Seizure of colonies? But they have all been seized, and nearly all of them strive towards liberation. "India may cease to be an English possession, but as an empire it will never fall under the domination of another foreign power" (p. 49 of the above pamphlet). "Every attempt of any industrial capitalist state to acquire for itself a colonial empire sufficient to make it independent from other countries in the acquisition of raw materials, must unite against it all the other capitalist states, must entangle it in endless exhausting wars without bringing it nearer to its aim. Such a policy would be the surest road towards the bankruptcy of the entire economic life of a state" (pp. 72-73).

Is not this a philistine attempt at persuading the financiers to re-

the fatherland" by the great nations is the defence of the right to share in the plunder of foreign countries. In Russia, as is commonly known, capitalist imperialism is weaker, while military-feudal imperialism is stronger.

linquish imperialism? To frighten the capitalists by the prospect of bankruptcy is the same as to advise the stock exchange brokers against making stock transactions on the ground that "there are many who thus lose their fortunes." There is *gain* for capital in the bankruptcy of a competing capitalist or a competing nation, because in this way capital grows more centralised; the sharper, therefore, and the "closer" the economic competition, *i.e.*, the economic pressure driving the opponent to bankruptcy, the stronger is the tendency of the capitalists to add *military* pressure driving him in the same direction. The fewer the remaining countries into which capital can be exported as advantageously as into colonies or dependent states like Turkey—since in such cases the financier reaps a triple profit compared with capital export into a free, independent and civilised country like the United States of America—the more *obstinate* is the struggle for the subjugation and the division of Turkey, China, etc. This is what economic theory says about the era of finance-capital and imperialism. This is what the facts say. As to Kautsky, he turns everything into a vulgar petty-bourgeois moral preaching: "It is not worth while," he says, "to get excited, less so to wage war for the division of Turkey, or for the seizure of India, since it won't last long anyway." Obviously, it would be better for capitalism if it could develop peacefully. Better still would be to develop capitalism and widen the home market by increasing wages; this is perfectly "feasible" and it is a very fitting topic for a clergyman to preach to the financiers. Good-hearted Kautsky nearly succeeds in persuading the German financiers that it is not worth while to wage war against England for the colonies, since these colonies will soon become free, anyway! . . .

English trade with Egypt between 1872 and 1912 did not keep pace with the growth of English foreign trade in general, and Kautsky the "Marxist" draws the moral: "We have no reason to assume that without military occupation of Egypt trade would not have grown as much under the simple pressure of economic factors" (p. 72). "The tendency of capitalists to expand can best be realised not by the violent methods of imperialism but by *peaceful democracy*" (p. 70).

What a wonderfully earnest, scientific "Marxian" analysis! Kautsky has magnificently "corrected" old unreasonable history; he has "proved" that there is no need for the English to take away Egypt from the French, that it was not at all worth while for the German

financiers to start the war, to organise a Turkish campaign and undertake other things in order to drive the English out of Egypt! All this is a mere misunderstanding—the English have not been wise enough to know that it is "best of all" to give up violent methods in Egypt, to start an era of "peaceful democracy" in order to increase the capital export *according to Kautsky!*

"Of course it was an illusion when the bourgeois free-traders thought that free trade would entirely eliminate the economic antagonisms generated by capitalism. Neither free trade nor democracy can eliminate them. What we are most interested in is that these antagonisms should be lived down in a struggle that assumes such forms as would impose on the labouring masses the least amount of suffering and sacrifices" (p. 73).

Grant, O God! God, have mercy!\* "What is a philistine?" Lassalle used to ask, and he answered by quoting a well-known verse: "An empty hose, full of fear and hope for the mercy of God."

Kautsky has degraded Marxism to unheard-of prostitution; he has become a veritable priest. Kautsky the priest *persuades* the capitalists to start an era of peaceful democracy, and this he calls dialectics. If, originally, he says, there was free trade, and then came monopolies and imperialism, why shouldn't there be ultra-imperialism and free trade again? The priest *consoles* the oppressed masses by painting the blessings of this ultra-imperialism, although he does not even undertake to prove that it can be "introduced"! Feuerbach was right when in reply to those who defended religion on the ground that it consoles the people, he pointed out the reactionary meaning of consolation: "Whoever consoles the slave instead of arousing him to revolt against slavery, aids the slaveholder."

All oppressing classes of every description need two social functions to safeguard their domination: the function of a hangman, and the function of a priest. The hangman is to quell the protest and the rebellion of the oppressed, the priest is to paint before them a perspective of mitigated sufferings and sacrifices under the same class rule (which it is particularly easy to do without guaranteeing the "possibility of their realisation" . . .). Thereby he reconciles them to class domination, weans them away from revolutionary actions, undermines their revolutionary spirit, destroys their revolutionary determination. Kautsky

\*Lenin imitates a beggar's chant in the streets in the expectation of alms.—Ed.



has turned Marxism into the most hideous and bigoted counter-revolutionary theory, into the most filthy clerical mush.

In 1909, in his pamphlet, entitled *Der Weg zur Macht*, he admitted the sharpening of antagonisms within capitalism, the approach of a period of wars and revolutions, of a new revolutionary period—all facts that never were and never can be repudiated. There can be no “premature” revolution, he said; to refuse to count on a possible victorious uprising even though there might also be a prospect of defeat, he declared, was a “direct betrayal of our cause.”

Then war came. The antagonisms became *still sharper*. The sufferings of the masses reached gigantic proportions. The war is dragging on. Its area widens. Kautsky writes one pamphlet after the other, meekly submitting to the dictates of the censor; he does not quote the facts of land-grabbing, war horrors, the scandalous profits of war-contractors, the high cost of living, the “military slavery” of the mobilised workers—instead he keeps on consoling the proletariat; he consoles it by the examples of those wars in which the bourgeoisie was revolutionary and progressive, in regard to which Marx himself wished victory to one or the other bourgeoisie; he consoles it by rows and columns of figures which prove that capitalism is “possible” without colonies, and robbery without wars and armaments, and that “peaceful democracy” is preferable. Without daring to deny the sharpening of the sufferings of the masses and the emergence before our very eyes of a revolutionary situation (of this one must not talk, the censor does not permit it . . .), Kautsky, the lackey of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, paints a perspective (whose “possibility of realisation” he does *not guarantee*) of such forms of struggle in a new era when there will be “the least amount of sacrifice and suffering.” . . . Franz Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg were right when for these services they called Kautsky a prostitute (*Madchen fur alle*).

In August, 1905, there was a revolutionary situation in Russia. The Tsar had promised to establish the Bulygin Duma to “console” the restless masses. The Bulygin regime of consultative representation could have been called ultra-autocracy in the same way in which the abandoning of armaments by the financiers and their agreeing on a “lasting peace” can be called ultra imperialism. Let us assume for a moment that to-morrow a hundred of the largest financiers of the world,

interlocked as they are in hundreds of colossal undertakings, *promise* the peoples to stand for disarmament after the war (we make this assumption just for a moment in order to draw political conclusions from Kautsky’s foolish little theory). Even if that happened, it would be a betrayal of the proletariat to dissuade it from revolutionary actions without which all promises, all fine perspectives are a mere sham.

The war has brought the capitalist class not only gigantic profits and splendid perspectives of new robberies (Turkey, China, etc.), new billion contracts, new loans at an increased rate of interest, but it has brought the class of capitalists still greater political advantages in that it has split and demoralised the proletariat. Kautsky aids this demoralisation; he sanctions this international *split* of the fighting proletariat *in the name of unity* with the opportunists of “their own nation,” with the Südekums! And still there are people who do not understand that the unity slogan of the old parties means “unity” of the proletariat with its bourgeoisie within the same nation and a *split* of the proletariat internationally.

## VI

The above lines had been written when the *Neue Zeit* of May 28 (No. 9) appeared, with Kautsky’s concluding arguments on the “collapse of the Social-Democracy” (paragraph 7 of his critical notes on Cunow). Kautsky summed up all his old sophisms in defence of social-chauvinism and added a new one in the following way:

It is simply not true that the war is a purely imperialist one, that at the outbreak of the war the alternative was either imperialism or Socialism, that the Socialist parties and the proletarian masses of Germany, France, and in many respects also of England, obeying the call of a mere handful of parliamentarians, threw themselves into the arms of imperialism, betrayed Socialism and thus caused a collapse unexampled in history.

This is a new sophism and a new deception of the workers: the war, if you please, is not a “purely” imperialist one!

Kautsky is remarkably vacillating as to the character and meaning of the present war; this leader dodges the exact and formal declarations of the Basle and Chemnitz Congresses as carefully as a thief dodges the place of his last theft. In his pamphlet *Nationalstaat*, etc., written in February, 1915, Kautsky asserted that “in the last analysis, the war

is an imperialist one" (p. 64). Now a new reservation is introduced: not a *purely* imperialist one—what else then?

It appears that this is a national war as well! Kautsky arrives at this monstrous conclusion by means of the following somewhat "Plekhanovist" quasi-dialectics:

"The present war," he says, "is the child not only of imperialism but also of the Russian Revolution." He, Kautsky, as early as 1904 foresaw that the Russian Revolution would give rise to Pan-Slavism in a new form, that "democratic Russia would necessarily fan the desires of the Austrian and Turkish Slavs for national independence . . . that the Polish question would then also become acute . . . that Austria would then fall to pieces because, with the collapse of tsarism, the iron ring which at present holds the centrifugal elements together would then be destroyed." (This last phrase is quoted by Kautsky from his 1904 article). . . . "The Russian Revolution . . . has imparted a mighty impetus to the nationalist strivings of the Orient, adding the Asiatic problem to the problems of Europe. *All these problems make themselves felt most acutely in the present war; they acquire a manifoldly decisive significance as regards the mood of the masses of the people, including the proletarian masses, at a time when imperialist tendencies are predominant among the ruling classes.*" (P. 273. Italics ours.)

Here is another lovely sample of prostituting Marxism! "Democratic Russia" would have fanned the strivings of the nations of Eastern Europe towards freedom (which is undisputed), *therefore* the present war that frees no nation and that, whatever its outcome, will oppress many a nation, is not a "purely" imperialist war; "the collapse of tsarism" would have meant a dissolution of Austria due to its undemocratic national composition, *therefore* the temporarily strengthened counter-revolutionary tsarism, robbing Austria and bringing *still greater* oppression to the nationalities of Austria, has lent "the present war" a character that is not purely imperialist but to a certain degree national. "The ruling classes" bamboozle narrow-minded petty bourgeois and browbeaten peasants by means of fables regarding the national aims of the imperialist war, *therefore* a man of science, an authority on Marxism, a representative of the Second International, has a right to reconcile the masses with this bamboozling by means of a "formula" to the effect that the ruling classes have imperialist tendencies, while the "people" and the proletarian masses have "national" tendencies.

"Dialectics become the meanest and basest sophisms. The national element in the present war is represented *only* by the war of Serbia against Austria (which, by the way, was noted in the resolution of the Berne Conference of our party). Only in Serbia and among the Serbs do we find a national movement for freedom, a movement of long standing embracing millions of "national masses," and of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a "continuation." Were this war isolated, *i.e.*, not connected with the general European war, with the selfish and predatory aims of England, Russia, etc., then all Socialists would be *obliged* to wish success to the Serbian *bourgeoisie*—this is the only correct and absolutely necessary conclusion to be drawn from the national element in the present war. Kautsky, the sophist, however, being in the service of the Austrian bourgeois clericals and generals, fails to draw just this particular conclusion!

Further, Marxist dialectics, being the last word of the scientific evolutionary method, forbid an isolated, *i.e.*, a one-sided and distorted view of an object. The national element of the Serbo-Austrian war has *no* significance, and can have none, in the general European war. If Germany wins she will throttle Belgium, swallow up one more portion of Poland, perhaps a portion of France, etc. If Russia wins she will throttle Galicia, swallow up one more portion of Poland, Armenia, etc. If the war ends in a draw, the old national oppression will remain. For Serbia, *i.e.*, perhaps for one per cent. of the participants of the present war, the war is a "continuation of politics" of the bourgeois movement for national freedom. For ninety-nine per cent the war is a continuation of the policy of imperialism, *i.e.*, of the decrepit bourgeoisie capable only of raping, not of freeing, nations. The Triple Entente, while "freeing" Serbia, is *selling* the interest of Serbian freedom to Italian imperialism as a reward for the latter's aid in robbing Austria.

All this is common knowledge, and all this is shamelessly distorted by Kautsky for the purpose of justifying the opportunists. There are no "pure" phenomena, and there can be none, either in nature or in society—this is exactly what Marxian dialectics teach us; they stress the fact that the very idea of purity is a certain narrowness, a one-sidedness of the human mind that cannot embrace an object in all its totality and complexity. There is no "pure" capitalism in the world, and there can be none, but there always are *admixtures* either of feudalism or of the petty bourgeoisie, or something else. To dwell on the fact that the war

is not "purely" imperialist when there is a flagrant deception of "the masses of the people" by the imperialists who notoriously cover the aims of naked robbery by "national" phraseology, means, therefore, to be either an infinitely stupid pedant, or a pettifogger, or a deceiver. The core of the thing is just this, that Kautsky *supports* the deception of the people by the imperialists when he says that "for the mass of the people, including the proletarian masses," the problems of national freedom were of "decisive significance," whereas for the ruling classes the decisive factors were "imperialist tendencies" (p. 273), or when he "reinforces" this by a seemingly dialectic reference to the "infinite variety of reality" (p. 274). Reality is infinitely variegated; no doubt, this is gospel truth! But it is just as indisputably true that, in this infinite variety, there are two main and fundamental elements: the objective contents of the war as a "continuation of the policy" of imperialism, *i.e.*, of the robbing of foreign nations by the decrepit "great nations" bourgeoisie (and their governments), whereas the prevailing subjective ideology consists of "national" phraseology that is being spread to fool the masses.

Kautsky's old sophism, here again repeated, namely, that "at the beginning of the war" the Left Wing looked upon the situation as presenting the alternative of either imperialism or Socialism, has already been analysed. This is a shameless sleight of hand, since Kautsky knows very well that the Left Wing put forth *another* alternative: either the party joins imperialist plunder and deception, or it preaches and prepares for revolutionary action. Kautsky knows also that *only* the censorship guards him against the Left Wing in Germany, making it impossible for them to disclose the true nature of the nonsensical fable which is being spread by him out of servility to Südekum.

As to the relation between the "proletarian masses" and a "handful of parliamentarians," here Kautsky advances one of the most threadbare objections:

Let us leave out the Germans, he writes, so that we may not be defending ourselves; still, who would seriously undertake to assert that such men as Vaillant, Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov have become imperialists overnight, betraying Socialism? Let us leave aside the parliamentarians and the "functionaries" . . . [Kautsky obviously hints here at the magazine of Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring, *Die Internationale*, where due contempt is accorded the policy of the functionaries, *i.e.*, the high official leaders of the

German Social-Democratic Party, its Central Committee, the *Vorstand*, its parliamentary group, etc.]. Who can assert that an order of a handful of parliamentarians alone is sufficient to make four millions of class-conscious German proletarians turn right-about-face within twenty-four hours in direct opposition to their former aims? If this were true, it would prove a terrible collapse, indeed, not only of our party, but also of the *masses* [Kautsky's italics]. If the masses were such a spineless herd of sheep, we could just as well let ourselves be buried [p. 274].

Politically and scientifically, Karl Kautsky, the great authority, has long buried himself by his conduct and by his collection of pitiful evasions. Whoever fails to understand or at least to feel this, is hopeless as far as Socialism is concerned. This is why the only correct tone was assumed in *Die Internationale* by Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg and their adherents when they treated Kautsky and Co. as most despicable characters.

Think of it: On their attitude towards the war only "a handful of parliamentarians" and a handful of officials, journalists, etc., could express themselves more or less freely (*i.e.*, without being seized and taken to the barracks, without directly facing the firing squad). They voted freely, exercising their right, they could openly vote against the war—even in Russia there was no beating, no plunder, not even arrests for such a vote. Now Kautsky nobly puts at the door of the *masses* the betrayal and the supineness of that social *stratum* of whose connection with the tactics and ideology of opportunism the same Kautsky had written scores of times in the course of several years. The first and most fundamental demand of scientific research in general, and of Marxian dialectics in particular, is that a writer should examine the *connection* existing between the present struggle of tendencies within Socialism—the current that cries of treason and sounds the alarm bell and the one that sees no treason at all—and the struggle that preceded it for whole *decades*. Kautsky, however, does not mention a word about this; he does not even wish to raise the question of tendencies and *currents*. There were currents hitherto, he seems to say, there are none any more! There are only high-sounding names of authorities always revered by the souls of lackeys. It is particularly comfortable under such conditions to refer to each other and to cover up each other's "peccadillos" in a friendly fashion after the rule of claw me, claw thee. "What kind of opportunism is it, forsooth," Martov exclaimed at a lecture in Berne

(see No. 36, *Sotsial-Demokrat*) "when . . . Guesde, Plekhanov, Kautsky!" "We must be more cautious in accusing such men as Guesde of opportunism," wrote Axelrod (*Golos*, Nos. 86 and 87). "I will not defend myself," Kautsky seconds in Berlin, "but . . . Vaillant, Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov!" The cuckoo lauds the cock, that the cock may laud the cuckoo!\*

Inspired by the zeal of a lackey, Kautsky in his writings fell so low that he even kissed Hyndman's lordly hand, picturing him as if he had only yesterday taken the side of imperialism, whereas, in the same *Neue Zeit* and in scores of Social-Democratic papers of the whole world, they were writing of Hyndman's imperialism for *many years*! Had Kautsky, in good faith, interested himself in the political biographies of the *persons* mentioned by him, he would have tried to recall whether there had not been in those biographies such traits and events which, not "overnight" but during decades, had prepared their transition to imperialism; whether Vaillant had not been held prisoner by the Jaurésists, and Plekhanov by the Mensheviks and Liquidators; whether Guesde's political line had not been dying off before everybody's eyes in that typically lifeless, colourless, and insipid Guesdeist magazine, *Le Socialisme* [*Socialism*], which was incapable of taking any independent stand on any important question; whether Kautsky himself (we add this for the benefit of those who, quite correctly, put him alongside Hyndman and Plekhanov) had not manifested lack of backbone in the question of Millerandism, at the beginning of the struggle against Bernsteinism, etc.

We do not notice the slightest shadow of interest on the part of Kautsky to examine scientifically the biographies of those leaders. Not an attempt is made to see whether those leaders defend themselves by *their own* arguments or by repeating the arguments of the opportunists and the bourgeoisie; whether the actions of those leaders have acquired a serious political significance due to their own unusual influence or because they have joined somebody else's really "influential" policy supported by a military organisation, namely, the policy of the bourgeoisie! Kautsky does not even make an approach towards examining this question. What he is concerned with is to throw dust into the eyes of the masses, to stun them by the sound of names of authorities, to

\*This is a quotation from one of the fables of Krylov (1768-1844).—*Fd.*

prevent them from putting the disputed question in a clear light and examining it from all sides.\*

". . . An order of a handful of parliamentarians proved sufficient to make four millions of class-conscious . . . proletarians turn right-about-face. . . ."

There is here not a single word of truth. The party organisation of the Germans contained, not four, but one million; the united will of this mass organisation, as is the case with every organisation, was expressed *only* through its united political centre, the "handful" which betrayed Socialism. Before this handful a question was placed; this handful was called to vote; it was in a position to vote; it was in a position to write articles, etc. As to the masses, they were not asked. Not only were they not allowed to vote, they were disunited and driven "by order," not of a handful of parliamentarians, but *by order of the military authorities*. The military organisation was at hand; in *this* organisation there was no betrayal of leaders; it called the masses *individually*, confronting each one with the ultimatum: "Either you go in the army, according to the advice of your leaders, or you will be shot." The masses could not act in an organised fashion because their organisation previously created (an organisation embodied in a "handful" of Legiens, Kautskys, Scheidemanns) had betrayed them. As for the creation of a *new* organisation, time is required, determination to throw out the old, rotten, obsolete organisation is required.

Kautsky attempts to beat his opponents, the Left Wing, by attributing to them a nonsensical idea: he says that, in their conception, the "masses," "in reply" to the war, were to make a revolution "within twenty-four hours," to introduce "Socialism" against imperialism; that otherwise, according to the Left Wing, the "masses" would have manifested "spinelessness and treason." Kautsky gloats here over the kind of drivel which the compilers of ignorant booklets for the bourgeoisie and

\*Kautsky's references to Vaillant and Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov, are characteristic also in another connection. The frank imperialists of the Lensch and Haenisch variety (not to speak of the opportunists) refer to Hyndman and Plekhanov for the justification of *their* policy, and they have a *right* to do so. They tell the truth when they say it is the same policy. However, Kautsky speaks with disdain of Lensch and Haenisch, the radicals who turned towards imperialism. Kautsky thanks God that he does not resemble those Pharisees, that he disagrees with them, that he has remained a revolutionist—Kautsky is proud of it! *In reality* Kautsky's position is the same as theirs. Kautsky, the hypocritical chauvinist using sugary phrases, is much more hideous than the chauvinist simpletons, David and Heine, Lensch and Haenisch.



the police have hitherto used to "beat" the revolutionists. The Left Wing opponents of Kautsky know perfectly well that a revolution cannot be "made," that revolutions grow out of objectively ripened crises and sudden breaks in history that are independent of the will of parties and classes; that masses without organisation are deprived of a unified will; that the struggle against the strong terrorist military organisation of centralised states is a difficult and long affair. When their leaders betrayed them, the masses *could not* do anything at the crucial moment, whereas the "handful" of these leaders *could very well*, and were bound to, vote against appropriations, could take a stand against "civil peace" and the justification of the war, could express themselves as wishing the defeat of *their* governments, could set in motion an international apparatus for the propaganda on fraternisation in the trenches, could organise the distribution of illegal literature\* which would preach the necessity of starting revolutionary activities, etc.

Kautsky knows perfectly well that it is just these or similar actions that the German Left Wing have in mind. They cannot speak of them directly under military censorship. Kautsky's desire to defend the opportunists at all costs leads him to the unexampled infamy of hiding behind the back of the military censors in attributing to the Left Wing obvious absurdities which he knows the censors will protect against refutations.

## VII

The serious scientific and political question which Kautsky consciously evades by means of all sorts of tricks, thereby giving enormous pleasure to the opportunists, is this: How was it possible that the most eminent representatives of the Second International could betray Socialism?

This question must be examined, not from the standpoint of the biographies of one leader or the other. Their future biographers will

\*Let us remember, *apropos* of this, that it would not have been necessary to close all Social-Democratic papers if the government had put a ban on writing about class hatred and class struggle. To agree not to write about this, as the *Vorwarts* did, was mean and cowardly. The *Vorwarts* died politically when it did it, and L. Martov was right when he said so. It was, however, possible to retain the legally appearing papers by declaring that they were non-partisan and *not Social-Democratic*, but serving the technical needs of a section of the workers, *i.e.*, that they were *non-political papers*. An underground Social-Democratic literature containing an *analysis* of the war, and openly published labour literature without such analysis, a literature that does not speak untruth but keeps silent about the truth—why should this not have been possible?

have to analyse the problem from this angle as well, but what interests the Socialist movement at present is not this, but the study of the historical origin, the conditions of existence, the significance and the strength of the social-chauvinist policy as such. (1) Where did social-chauvinism come from? (2) What gave it strength? (3) How must it be combated? Only this approach to the question is worth while, whereas the "personal" approach is practically an evasion, a sophist's trick.

To answer the first question we must examine, first, whether social-chauvinism is not *connected*, politically and ideologically, with some previous trend in Socialism, and second, what relation there is, from the standpoint of actual political divisions, between the present division of Socialists into opponents and defenders of social-chauvinism and those divisions which historically preceded it.

By social-chauvinism we understand the acceptance of the defence of the fatherland idea in the present imperialist war, the justification of an alliance between the Socialists, the bourgeoisie and the governments of "our" countries in this war, a refusal to preach and support proletarian-revolutionary activities against "our" bourgeoisie, etc. It is perfectly clear that the fundamentals of the political ideology of social-chauvinism perfectly coincide with the foundations of opportunism. It is *the same orientation*. Opportunism, in the war environment of 1914-1915, engenders social-chauvinism. The main thing in opportunism is the idea of class collaboration. The war drives this idea to the extreme, adding to its usual factors and stimuli a whole series of new and extraordinary ones, using special threats and violence to drive the sluggish and disunited mass of the population to co-operate with the bourgeoisie. This naturally widens the circle of adherents of opportunism and it explains sufficiently why many former radicals run over to this camp.

Opportunism means sacrificing to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers the fundamental interests of the masses, or, in other words, an alliance of a part of the workers with the bourgeoisie against the mass of the proletariat. The war makes such an alliance compulsory and particularly flagrant. For decades the source of opportunism lay in the peculiarities of such a period in the development of capitalism when the comparatively peaceful and civilised existence of a layer of privileged workers turned them "bourgeois," gave them crumbs from the profits of their own national capital, removed them from the

sufferings, miseries, and revolutionary sentiments of the ruined and impoverished masses. The imperialist war is a direct continuation and a culmination of such a state of affairs, because this is a war for the *privileges* of the great nations, for the reapportionment of the colonies among them, for their domination over other nations. To defend and to strengthen its privileged position of a "higher stratum" of the petty bourgeoisie or the aristocracy (and bureaucracy) of the working class—this is the natural continuation in war time of the petty-bourgeois opportunist hopes and tactics, this is the economic foundation of a social-imperialism of our days.\*

The power of habit, the routine of a comparatively "peaceful" evolution, national prejudices, fear of acute breaks and disbelief in them—these were additional circumstances that strengthen opportunism. These facilitated hypocritical and cowardly reconciliation with opportunism, ostensibly only for a while, ostensibly only due to unusual causes and motives. The war has modified opportunism which had been nurtured for decades; it lifted it to a higher plane; it increased the number

\*Here are a few examples showing how the imperialists and the bourgeoisie value the importance of "great nation" privileges and national privileges in general as a means of dividing the workers and distracting them from Socialism. The English imperialist Lucas, in a book entitled *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* Oxford 1912] recognises the legal disabilities of coloured people in the present British Empire [pp. 96-97] and remarks: "In our own Empire, where white workers and coloured workers are side by side, as in South Africa, it would be fair to say that they do not work on the same level, and that the white man is rather an overseer of, than the fellow-workman with, the coloured man" [p. 103]. Ervin Belger, a former secretary of the imperial alliance against Social-Democrats, in a pamphlet entitled *Social-Democracy after the War* (1915), praises the conduct of the Social Democrats, declaring that they must become a "pure labour party" [p. 43], a "national," a "German labour party" [p. 45], without "international, Utopian," "revolutionary" ideas [p. 44]. The German imperialist Sartorius von Waltershausen, in a book dealing with capital investment abroad (1907), blames the Social-Democrats for ignoring the "national welfare" [p. 438]—which consists in seizing colonies—and praises the English workers for their "realism," for instance for their struggle against immigration. The German diplomat Ruedorffer, in a book on the principles of world politics, accentuates the commonly known fact that the internationalisation of capital by no means eliminates a sharpened struggle of national capitalists for power and influence, for a "majority of stock" [p. 161]. The author notes that this sharpened struggle draws the workers into its current [p. 175]. The date of the book is October, 1913, and the author speaks with perfect clarity of the interests of capital [p. 157] as the cause of modern wars. He says that the question of "national tendency" becomes the "pivot" of Socialism [p. 176], that the governments have nothing to fear from the international manifestations of the Social-Democrats [p. 177], who in reality become more and more national [pp. 103, 110, 176]. International Socialism will be victorious, he says, if it extricates the workers from under the influence of nationality, since by violence alone nothing can be achieved, but it will suffer defeat if the national feeling takes the upper hand [pp. 173-174].

and the variety of its shadings; it augmented the ranks of its adherents; it enriched their arguments by a host of new sophisms; it amalgamated, so to speak, with the main current of opportunism many new streams and rivulets, but the main current has not disappeared. Quite the contrary.

Social-chauvinism is opportunism ripened to such an extent that the existence of this bourgeois abscess inside of the Socialist parties, as it was *hitherto*, becomes impossible.

Those who do not wish to see the most intimate and indissoluble connection that exists between social-chauvinism and opportunism, pick up individual cases and accidents—this or that opportunist, they say, has become an internationalist, this or that radical, a chauvinist. But this argument is entirely non-essential as far as the development of *currents* is concerned. For one thing, the economic foundation of chauvinism and opportunism in the labour movement is the same: it is an alliance between the none too numerous upper strata of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie strata, enjoying crumbs out of the privileges of "their" national capital as opposed to the masses of the proletarians, the masses of the workers and the oppressed in general. In the second place, the political ideology of both currents is the same. In the third place, the old division of Socialists into an opportunist and revolutionary wing characteristic of the period of the Second International (1889-1914), by and large corresponds to the new division into chauvinists and internationalists.

To realise the correctness of the last statement one has to remember that in social sciences, as in science in general, we ordinarily deal with *mass* phenomena, not with individual cases. If we take ten European countries, namely, Germany, England, Russia, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Bulgaria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, we find that in the first eight the new division of Socialists (over the question of internationalism) corresponds to the old one (over the question of opportunism): in Germany the magazine *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which was the fortress of opportunism, has become the fortress of chauvinism, whereas the ideas of internationalism are advanced by the extreme Left group. In England, in the British Socialist Party, about three-sevenths are internationalists (66 votes for an international resolution and 84 against it, as shown by the latest counts), while in the opportunist bloc (Labour Party + Fabians + Independent Labour Party) *less* than one-seventh

are internationalists.\* In Russia the fundamental nucleus of opportunism, the Liquidationist *Nasha Zarya*, became the fundamental nucleus of chauvinism. Plekhanov and Alexinsky make more noise, but we know from five years' experience (1910-1914) that they are incapable of conducting a systematic propaganda among the masses of Russia. The fundamental nucleus of the internationalists in Russia consists of "Pravdism" and of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party as a representative of the advanced workers who re-established the party in January, 1912.

In Italy, the party of Bissolati and Co., a purely opportunist one, became chauvinist. Internationalism there is represented by a labour party. The masses of the workers are for this party; the opportunists, the parliamentarians, the petty bourgeois are for chauvinism. In Italy it was possible for several months to make a free choice, and the choice was made, not by accident, but in conformity with the class situation of the rank and file proletarians on the one hand, and petty-bourgeois groups on the other.

In Holland, the opportunist party of Troelstra is making peace with chauvinism in general (one must not be deceived by the fact that, in Holland, the petty bourgeoisie no less than the big bourgeoisie hates Germany vehemently because the latter could most easily swallow both of them). Unflinching, sincere, ardent, convinced internationalists come from the Marxist party headed by Gorter and Pannekoek. In Sweden, the opportunist leader, Branting, is indignant over the fact that the German Socialists are blamed for betraying Socialism; in the same country, the leader of the Left Wing, Höglund, declares openly that some of his adherents do so blame the German Socialists (see *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 36). In Bulgaria, the opponents of opportunism, the "Tesnyaks," declare in their press [the paper *Novoye Vremya* [New Time] that the German Social-Democrats have "committed a filthy act." In Switzerland, the adherents of the opportunist, Greulich, are inclined to justify the German Social-Democrats (see their organ, the Zurich *Volksrecht* [*People's Right*]), whereas the adherents of the much more radical

\*It is customary to compare the Independent Labour Party alone with the British Socialist Party. This is not correct. One must look, not at the organisational forms, but at the essentials. Take the dailies: there were two of them, one, the *Daily Herald*, belonging to the British Socialist Party, another, the *Daily Citizen*, belonging to the bloc of the opportunists. The daily papers express the actual work of propaganda, agitation and organisation.

R. Grimm have turned the Berne paper [*Berner Tagwacht*] into an organ of the German Left Wing. Exceptions to the rule are only two countries out of ten, France and Belgium, but even here we in reality observe not an absence of internationalists but their excessive weakness and oppressed mood [due partly to causes that are easily understood]. Let us not forget that Vaillant himself has admitted in *L'Humanite* [*Humanity*] that he received from his readers, letters of an international orientation of which he published *not a single one* in full!

If we take trends and currents we cannot fail to realise that, by and large, it was the opportunist wing of European Socialism that betrayed Socialism and went over to chauvinism. Whence comes its power, its seeming omnipotence within the official parties? Kautsky knows very well how to raise historical questions, particularly when he deals with ancient Rome or similar matters not very close to real life, but now, when he is personally concerned, he hypocritically feigns lack of understanding. However, the thing is clear beyond misunderstanding. The gigantic power of the opportunists and chauvinists comes from their alliance with the bourgeoisie, the governments and the general staffs. This is often overlooked in Russia where it is assumed that the opportunists are a section of the Socialist parties, that there always have been and will be two wings within those parties, that the thing to do is to avoid "extremes," etc., etc.—all that stuff which one finds in philistine copybooks.

In reality, the formal adherence of the opportunists to labour parties does by no means do away with the fact that, objectively, they are a political detachment of the bourgeoisie, that they are transmitters of its influence, its agents in the labour movement. When Südekum, the famous opportunist, had openly and brazenly, Herostrates\* fashion, demonstrated this social truth, this class truth, many good people gasped. The French Socialists and Plekhanov pointed their fingers at Südekum (although had Vandervelde, Sembat or Plekhanov looked in the mirror they would have seen nobody but Südekum, with only a few different national traits). The members of the German Central Committee, who now praise Kautsky and are praised by Kautsky, hastened to declare, cautiously, modestly and politely (without naming Südekum), that they were "not in agreement" with Südekum's line.

\*Herostrates burned the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, 356 B.C., in order to perpetuate his name.—Ed.

This is ridiculous, because in reality, in the practical politics of the German Social-Democratic Party, Südekum alone proved at the crucial moment stronger than a hundred Haases and Kautskys (just as the *Nasha Zarya* alone is stronger than all the currents of the Brussels bloc who are afraid to split from it).

Why is it so? Because behind Südekum there stand the bourgeoisie, the government, and the general staff of a great nation. They support Südekum's policies in a thousand ways, whereas the policies of his opponents are frustrated by all means, including prison and the firing squad. Südekum's voice is broadcast by the bourgeois press in millions of copies of papers (so are the voices of Vandervelde, Sembat, Plekhanov), whereas the voice of his opponent *cannot* be heard in the openly published press because there is military censorship.

All agree that opportunism is no accident, no sin, no slip, no betrayal on the part of individual persons, but the social product of a whole historical epoch. Not all, however, are trying to understand the full significance of this truth. Opportunism has been reared by legalism. The labour parties of the period between 1889 and 1914 had to utilise bourgeois legality. When the crisis came, illegal work became a necessity, but this is impossible without the greatest exertion of energy and determination, combined with real military strategy. To prevent such a change Südekum *alone* is sufficient, because back of him there is the whole "old world" (speaking in an historical and philosophical sense), because he, Südekum, has always betrayed and will always betray to the bourgeoisie all the military plans of its class enemy (speaking in the practical political sense).

It is a fact that the whole of the German Social-Democratic party (the same being true about the French *and other parties*) does *only that* which is pleasant to Südekum, or which can be tolerated by Südekum. Nothing else is *possible* legally; everything *honest*, everything really Socialist that is done within the German Social-Democratic Party, is done *against* its centre, is done in *avoiding* its Central Committee and Central Organ, is done by a *breach* of organisational discipline, is done factionally on behalf of anonymous new centres of a new party, as was the case, for instance, with the appeal of the German Left Wing published in the *Berner Tagwacht* on May 31 of the present year. A *new* party actually grows, gains strength, is being organised, a real workers' party, a revolutionary, Social-Democratic party quite different from the old, rotten,

national-liberal party of Legien, Südekum, Kautsky, Haase, Scheidemann and Co.\*

It was, therefore, a profound historic truth that was blurted out by that opportunist, Monitor, when he said in the conservative *Preussische Jahrbucher* that it would be bad for the opportunists (*read: the bourgeoisie*) if present-day Social-Democracy were to move *further to the right*—because the workers would then quit it. The opportunists (and the bourgeoisie) need the party as it exists at present, a party *combining* the "Right" and the "Left" Wings and officially represented by Kautsky, who will reconcile everything in the world by means of smooth, "thoroughly Marxian" phrases. Socialism and revolution in words, for the people, for the masses, for the workers; Südekumism in practice, *i.e.*, joining the bourgeoisie in every serious crisis. We say: *every* crisis, because this is not confined to war time; should a serious political strike take place, "feudal" Germany as well as "free and parliamentary" England or France will *immediately* introduce martial law under one name or another. This cannot be doubted by any one of sound mind and in full possession of his senses.

There follows from here the answer to the question raised before: how to fight against social-chauvinism? Social-chauvinism is opportunism that has so much ripened, has become so strong and brazen during the long period of comparatively "peaceful" capitalism, is so outspoken in its political ideology, and is in such close proximity to the bourgeoisie and the government, that it is *impossible* to tolerate its existence within a Social-Democratic Labour Party. It may be possible to stand thin, flimsy shoe soles when walking over the sidewalks of a small provincial town, but it is impossible to get along without thick hobnailed soles when you climb mountains. Socialism in Europe has

\*What happened prior to the historic voting of August 4 is extremely characteristic. The official party has cast the cloak of bureaucratic hypocrisy over this event, saying that the majority had decided and that all had noted unanimously for the war. Strobel, in the magazine *Die Internationale*, however, unmasked this hypocrisy and told the truth. It appears that there were *two* groups within the Social-Democratic parliamentary fraction, that each one came with its *ultimatum*, *i.e.*, with a factional decision, *i.e.* with a decision meaning a split. One group, that of the opportunists, about thirty strong, decided to vote *for* and to do so *under all circumstances*; the other, a "Left" one, of fifteen men, decided—less resolutely—to vote *against*. When the "centre" or the "swamp," having no firm stand, had voted with the opportunists, the "Left" found themselves crushingly defeated and—they submitted! The "unity" of the German Social-Democracy is rank hypocrisy; it covers up a practically inevitable submission of the "Left" to the ultimatums of the opportunists.



outlived that comparatively peaceful stage when it was confined within the narrow boundaries of nationality. After the war of 1914-1915, it entered a stage of revolutionary action, and a complete break with opportunism, the expulsion of opportunism from the labour parties, has become an imperative necessity.

It is quite obvious that this outline of the tasks facing Socialism in the new era of its international development does not indicate directly how fast and in what definite forms the process of separation of the workers' revolutionary Social-Democratic parties from petty-bourgeois opportunist parties will take place. It does indicate, however, that it is necessary clearly to realise the inevitability of such a separation and to direct accordingly the politics of the workers' parties. The war of 1914-1915 is a break in history of such magnitude that the attitude towards opportunism *cannot* remain as of old. It is impossible to make non-existent the things that have happened, and it is impossible to strike out either from the consciousness of the workers or from the experience of the bourgeoisie, or from the political acquisitions of our epoch the fact that, at the moment of crisis, the opportunists proved to be the nucleus of those elements within the labour parties who went over to the bourgeoisie. Pre-war opportunism—speaking on a general European scale—was in an adolescent stage, as it were. With the war it grew; it can no more be made “innocent” or youthful. There has ripened a social layer of parliamentarians, journalists, labour movement officials, privileged office holders, and some small groups of the proletariat; this layer has become one with its national bourgeoisie and has been appreciated and “assimilated” by it. It is not possible either to turn backwards or to stop the wheel of history—it is possible and it is necessary to go fearlessly ahead, from lawfully existing preparatory organisations of the working class, which have been captured by the opportunists, to revolutionary organisations that know how *not* to confine themselves to legality, that are capable of making themselves immune against opportunist betrayal—organisations of the proletariat that undertake the “struggle for power,” a struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

This, by the way, proves how incorrect are the views of those who befog their minds and the minds of the workers with the question of what to do with such authorities of the Second International as Guesde, Plekhanov, Kautsky, etc. There is no real question involved here. If

those persons will not understand the new tasks, they will have to stay outside or remain in the opportunist captivity in which they find themselves at present. If those persons free themselves from “captivity,” they will hardly encounter *political* obstacles on their way back to the camp of the revolutionists. At any rate, it is senseless to substitute the question of the role of individual persons for the question of the struggle of policies and the sequence of epochs in the labour movement.

## VIII

Legally existing mass organisations of the working class are perhaps the most outstanding feature of the Socialist parties of the epoch of the Second International. In the German party they were the strongest, and it was here that the war of 1914-1915 created the most acute crisis, and rendered the question most urgent. It is obvious that to start revolutionary activities would have meant to see the legally existing organisation disbanded by the police. The old party, from Legien to Kautsky inclusive, sacrificed the revolutionary aims of the proletariat to the maintenance of the present organisations. No amount of denying can vitiate this fact. For a mess of pottage given to the organisations that are recognised by the present police law, the proletarian right of revolution was sold.

Take a pamphlet by Karl Legien, leader of the German Social-Democratic labour unions, entitled *Warum müssen die Gewerkschaftsfunktionäre sich mehr am inneren Parteileben beteiligen* [*Why the Trade Union Functionaries Must Take a More Active Part in the Internal Life of the Party*] (Berlin, 1915). This is a report read by the author on January 27, 1915, before a gathering of labour union officials. Legien read during his report, and incorporated in his pamphlet, a most interesting document, that would not otherwise have been passed by the military censor. This document—the so-called *Referenten-Material des Kreises Neiderbarnim* [*Materials for Speakers in the District of Neiderbarnim*] (a suburb of Berlin)—is an exposition of the views of the Left Wing Social-Democrats, of their protest against the party. The revolutionary Social-Democrats, says the document, did not and could not foresee one event, namely:

The entire organised power of the German Social-Democratic Party and the labour unions taking the side of the belligerent government, and the utilisation of this power to suppress the revolutionary energy of the masses. [P. 34 of Legien's pamphlet.]

This is absolute truth. The following statement contained in the same document is also true :

The vote of the Social-Democratic parliamentary fraction on August 4 proved that a different attitude, even had it been deeply rooted in the masses, could have asserted itself, not under the leadership of the established party, but only against the will of the party leaderships, and by overcoming the resistance of the party and the labour unions. [*Ibid.*]

This is absolute truth.

Had the Social-Democratic parliamentary fraction done its duty on August 4 [the document continues], the present form of organisation would probably have been annihilated ; the spirit, however, would have remained, that which animated the party under the Anti-Socialist Law and helped it to overcome all difficulties. [*Ibid.*]

Legien's pamphlet notes that the company of "leaders" whom he had gathered to listen to his report and whom he calls directors, officers of the labour unions, roared when they heard this. They found it a *ridiculous* idea that it was possible and necessary to organise illegal revolutionary organisations at the moment of crisis as was done under the Anti-Socialist Law. Legien, the most faithful watchdog of the bourgeoisie, beat his breast, exclaiming :

This . . . contains a clear Anarchist thought : to blow up the organisation in order to make the masses solve the problem. There is no doubt in my mind that this is an Anarchist idea !

"Quite right !" exclaimed in a chorus [*ibid.*, p. 37] the lackeys of the bourgeoisie who call themselves leaders of the Social-Democratic organisations of the working class.

An instructive picture. People are so degraded and dulled by bourgeois legality that they cannot even *understand* the idea of the necessity of *other* organisations, *unlawful ones*, leading the revolutionary struggle. People have fallen so low that they imagine that the unions owing their existence to police permits are a limit which cannot be trespassed—as if it were generally conceivable to *maintain* such unions as *leading* organisations in periods of crises ! Here you see the dialectics of opportunism in action : the mere growth of legally existing unions, the mere habit of stupid but conscientious philistines who confine themselves to bookkeeping, creates a situation where, at the time of crises, these

conscientious petty bourgeois prove to be traitors, betrayers, *stranglers* of the revolutionary energy of the masses. And this is no accident either. It is necessary to proceed to the building up of a revolutionary organisation—this is demanded by a changed historical situation, it is demanded by the era of revolutionary activities of the proletariat. To proceed in this direction, however, is possible only *over the heads* of the old leaders, the stranglers of revolutionary energy, *over the heads* of the old party by *destroying it*.

Of course, the counter-revolutionary philistines cry "Anarchism !" as did the opportunist, Edouard David, when he denounced Karl Liebknecht. It appears that in Germany only those leaders have remained honest whom the opportunists revile as Anarchists.

Take the present army. It is one of the good examples of organisation. This organisation is good only because it is *flexible* ; at the same time it knows how to give to millions of people *one uniform will*. To-day these millions are in their homes in various parts of the country. To-morrow a call for mobilisation is issued, and they gather at the appointed centres. To-day they lie in the trenches, sometimes for months at a stretch ; to-morrow they are led into battle in another formation. To-day they perform marvels, hiding themselves from bullets and shrapnel ; to-morrow they do marvels in open combat. To-day their advance detachments place mines under the ground ; to-morrow they move dozens of miles according to the advice of flyers above ground. We call it organisation when, in the pursuit of one aim, animated by one will, millions change the forms of their intercourse and their actions, change the place and the method of their activities, change the weapons and armaments in accordance with changing conditions and the vicissitudes of the struggle.

The same holds true about the fight of the working class against the bourgeoisie. To-day there is no revolutionary situation apparent ; there are no such conditions as would cause a ferment among the masses or heighten their activities ; to-day you are given an election ballot—take it. Understand how to organise for it, to hit your enemies with it, and not to place men in soft parliamentary berths who cling to their seat in fear of prison. To-morrow you are deprived of the election ballot, you are given a rifle and a splendid machine gun equipped according to the last word of machine technique—take this weapon of death and destruction, do not listen to the sentimental whiners who are afraid of

war. Much has been left in the world that *must* be destroyed by fire and iron for the liberation of the working class. And if bitterness and despair grow in the masses, if a revolutionary situation is at hand, prepare to organise new organisations and *utilise* these so useful weapons of death and destruction *against your own government and your bourgeoisie*.

This is not easy, to be sure. It will demand difficult preparatory activities. It will demand grave sacrifices. This is a *new* species of organisation and struggle that *one must learn*, and learning is never done without errors and defeats. The relation of this species of class struggle to participation in elections is the same as storming a fortress is to manoeuvring, marching, or lying in the trenches. This species of struggle is placed on the order of the day in history *very infrequently*, but its significance and its consequences are felt for decades. *Single days* when *such* methods can and must be put on the programme of struggle are equal to *scores of years* of other historic epochs.

Compare K. Kautsky with K. Legien.

As long as the party was small [Kautsky writes], every protest against the war had propaganda value as an act of bravery. . . . As such, the admirable conduct of the . . . Russian and Serbian comrades met with general approval. The stronger a party becomes, the more the propaganda considerations are interwoven with a calculation of the practical consequences in the motives of its decisions, and the more difficult it becomes to give the separate motives equal due; nevertheless, one kind must no more be neglected than the other. Therefore, the stronger we become, the more easily do differences arise between us in every new complicated situation. [*Die Internationalität und der Krieg (Internationalism and the War)*, p. 30.]

These reasonings of Kautsky's differ from Legien's only by their hypocrisy and cowardice. Kautsky, in substance, supports and justifies the contemptible renunciation of revolutionary activities on the part of Legien, but he does it stealthily, without expressing himself definitely, getting off with hints, confining himself to bowing both before Legien and before the revolutionary conduct of the Russians. Such an attitude towards the revolutionists we Russians are wont to find only among the liberals. The liberals are always ready to recognise the "courage" of the revolutionists; at the same time, however, they will not renounce

their arch-opportunist tactics at any price. Self-respecting revolutionists will not accept the expression of "approval" on the part of Kautsky; on the contrary, they will indignantly repudiate such an approach to the question. If there is no revolutionary situation at hand, if it is not imperative to preach revolutionary action, then the conduct of the Russians and Serbians is *incorrect*, then their tactics are wrong. Let such knights as Legien and Kautsky at least have the courage of their convictions, let them say it openly.

If, however, the tactics of the Russian and Serbian comrades deserve "approval," then it is not permissible, it is criminal, to justify the *opposite* tactics of the "strong" parties, the Germans, the French, etc. By means of an intentionally vague expression, "practical consequences," Kautsky *covered up* that plain truth that the great and strong parties *became afraid* of their organisations being disbanded, their treasuries seized, their leaders arrested by the governments. This means that Kautsky justifies betrayal of Socialism by considerations of the unpleasant "practical consequences" that follow revolutionary tactics. If this is not prostituting Marxism, what is?

"We would have been arrested," one of the Social-Democratic Deputies who voted for military appropriations on August 4 is alleged to have declared at a workers' meeting in Berlin. And the workers shouted in reply: "Well, what's wrong with that?"

In the absence of any other sign to serve as a signal for the working masses of Germany *and France*, to convey to them revolutionary sentiments and the idea of preparing for revolutionary activities, the arrest of a Deputy for a courageous speech would have played the excellent role of a clarion call; it would have helped *unite* the proletarians of various countries in revolutionary work. Such uniting is *not easy*: the more obligatory was it for those on top, for those Deputies who have a view of the entire political field, *to take the initiative*.

Not only in war time, but positively in every acute political situation, not to speak of periods of real revolutionary activities on the part of the masses, the governments of even the freest bourgeois countries will threaten to disband the legally existing organisations, to seize their treasuries, to arrest the leaders, and to bring about similar "practical consequences." What, then, shall we do? Justify, with Kautsky, the opportunists? But this would mean to turn the Social-Democratic parties into national-liberal labour parties.

For a Socialist there can be only one conclusion : the pure legalism, the legalism at any price, of the "European" parties, has outlived itself ; in consequence of the development of capitalism in the pre-imperialist stage, it has become the foundation for a bourgeois labour policy. It must be supplemented by the creation of an illegally existing base, an illegally existing organisation, illegal Social-Democratic work, at the same time not giving up any one of the legal positions. *How* this can be done will be shown by experience. Let there only be the wish to take this road, let there be the consciousness of its necessity. The revolutionary Social-Democrats of Russia proved in 1912-1914 that this problem can be solved. The workers' Deputy Muranov, who conducted himself at the trial better than any other, and who was exiled by tsarism to Siberia, proved in practice that, outside of *ministerial* parliamentarism (from Henderson, Sembat, and Vandervelde down to Südekum and Scheidemann who are also perfectly and completely "ministerial," although they are not admitted further than the ante-room !) there can be an *illegal* and *revolutionary* parliamentarism.

Let the Kossovskys and Potresovs be delighted with the "European" parliamentarism of the lackeys—we shall not tire of telling the workers that such legalism, such Social-Democracy as that of Legien, Kautsky, Scheidemann, deserve only contempt.

## IX

Let us sum up. The collapse of the Second International came into the clearest relief in the flagrant betrayal by the majority of the official Social-Democratic parties of Europe of their convictions and of their solemn Stuttgart and Basle resolutions. However, this collapse which means the complete victory of opportunism, the transformation of the Social-Democratic parties into national-liberal labour parties, is only a result of the entire historical epoch of the Second International, which covers the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The objective conditions of this epoch—a transition period from the completion in Western Europe of bourgeois and national revolutions to the beginning of Socialist revolutions—gave birth to and nurtured opportunism. In some countries of Europe we observed at that time a split in the labour and Socialist movement, a split generally defined by the attitude towards opportunism (England, Italy, Holland, Bulgaria, Russia), in others, a long and stubborn struggle of currents

along the same line (Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland). The crisis that was created by the great war has torn off the coverings, has cast away the conventions, has opened the abscess that had long ago become ripe, and has shown opportunism in its true role as an ally of the bourgeoisie. A complete separation of the labour parties from this element, a definite organisational break, has become a necessity. The imperialist epoch cannot tolerate the existence in one party of an advance-guard of the revolutionary proletariat on the one hand, and of the semi-petty-bourgeois aristocracy of the working class which enjoys crumbs from the privileges of the "great nation" situation on the other. The old theory of opportunism as a "legitimate shade" of one-and-the-same party that avoids "extremes," has now turned into the greatest betrayal of the workers and the greatest hindrance to the labour movement. There is less danger in open opportunism, which by one shock repels the working masses, than in this theory of the golden middle road which by Marxian verbiage justifies opportunist practice, and by a series of sophisms proves the untimeliness of revolutionary action, etc. The most notable representative of this theory, at the same time the greatest authority in the Second International, Kautsky, has revealed himself as a first-class hypocrite and virtuoso in the work of prostituting Marxism. In the German party, which is a million strong, there is not one half-way honest, class-conscious and revolutionary Social-Democrat who does not turn away with indignation from such a "leader," who is ardently defended by the Südekums and Scheidemanns.

The proletarian masses, about nine-tenths of whose old leading elements have gone over to the bourgeoisie, find themselves scattered and helpless in face of a debauch of chauvinism, in face of a barrier of martial law and military censorship. However, the objective revolutionary situation created by the war and becoming ever wider and ever deeper, inevitably gives birth to revolutionary sentiments ; it hardens and enlightens the best and most conscious proletarians. A sudden change in the mood of the masses becomes not only possible but more and more probable, a change similar to that which was observed in Russia early in 1905 in connection with the "Gaponade,"\* when backward proletarian masses grew in several months, and sometimes in several weeks, into an army of millions following the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat. It is impossible to know whether a powerful

\*The peaceful demonstration led by the priest Gapon, Jan. 22, 1905.—Ed.

revolutionary movement will develop immediately after *this* war, or during it, etc. At any rate *only* work in this direction deserves the name of Socialist work. The slogan that generalises and directs this work, that helps to unite and consolidate those who wish to aid the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against its government and its bourgeoisie, is the slogan of civil war.

In Russia, the complete separation of the revolutionary Social-Democratic proletarian elements from the petty-bourgeois opportunists has been prepared by the whole history of the labour movement. Bad service is rendered it by those who disregard history, who, declaiming against "factionalism," deprive themselves of the possibility of understanding the real process of the formation of a proletarian party in Russia. That party was actually formed in the course of a struggle against various kinds of opportunism, a struggle lasting several years. Of all the "great" nations participating in the present war, only Russia has recently gone through a revolution. The bourgeois aims of a revolution in which the proletariat played a decisive role could not fail to call forth a split between the bourgeois and proletarian trends in the labour movement. During a period of approximately twenty years (1894-1914) when Russian Social-Democracy existed as an organisation connected with the mass labour movement (and not only as an ideological current as in 1883-1894), a struggle was going on between the proletarian revolutionary and the petty-bourgeois opportunist tendencies. The "Economism" of 1894-1902 was undoubtedly a tendency of the latter kind. A whole series of its arguments and traits of its ideology—the "Struveist" distortion of Marxism, references to the "masses" to justify opportunism, etc.—bear a striking resemblance to the present vulgarised Marxism of Kautsky, Cunow, Plekhanov, etc. It would be a highly useful task to remind the present generation of Social-Democrats of the old *Rabochaya Mysl* [Worker's Thought] and *Rabocheye Dyelo* [Worker's Cause] as a parallel to the Kautsky of to-day.

The "Menshevism" of the following (1903-1908) period was a direct successor, both ideological and organisational, to Economism. During the Russian Revolution it followed tactics that meant, objectively, the dependence of the proletariat upon the liberal bourgeoisie and that were an expression of petty-bourgeois opportunism. When in the following period (1908-1914) the main current of Menshevism gave birth to Liquidationism, the class significance of this current became so

apparent that the best representatives of Menshevism continually protested against the policy of the *Nasha Zarya* group. This group, however—the only one which, in opposition to the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class, conducted systematic work among the masses in the last five or six years—proved in the war of 1914-1915 to be *social chauvinist*! This in a country where absolutism is alive; where the bourgeois revolution is far from being completed; where forty-three per cent. of the population oppresses the majority of "alien" nationalities. The "European" type of development where certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the intelligentsia and an insignificant portion of the labour aristocracy, can "make use" of the privileges accruing to "their" nation as one of the "great nations," has had its counterpart also in Russia.

Both the working class and the workers' Social-Democratic Party of Russia have been prepared by their whole history for "internationalist," i.e., truly revolutionary and consistently revolutionary, tactics.

P.S. This article had been set up when the papers published a "manifesto" of Kautsky and Haase in common with Bernstein. Those gentlemen have noted that the masses are going to the Left, and are now ready to "make peace" with the Left Wing—naturally, at the price of maintaining "peace" with the Südekums. *Mädchen für alle*, indeed!



## THE WAR AND RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

THE European War, which the governments and the bourgeois parties of all countries were preparing for decades, has broken out. The growth of armaments, the sharpening of the struggle for markets in the epoch of the latest, the imperialist, stage in the development of capitalism of the foremost countries, the dynastic interests of the most backward East European monarchies, were inevitably bound to bring about, and did bring about, the present war. To seize lands and to conquer foreign nations, to ruin competing nations, to pillage their wealth, to divert the attention of the labouring masses from the domestic political crises of Russia, Germany, England, and other countries, to disunite the workers and fool them with nationalism, to annihilate their vanguards in order to weaken the revolutionary movement of the proletariat, such is the only real essence, the significance and the meaning of the present war.

Upon Social-Democracy, in the first place, devolves the duty to make clear this real meaning of the war, and mercilessly to unmask the falsehoods, the sophisms and the "patriotic" phrases which are spread by the ruling classes, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, in defence of the war.

One of the belligerent groups of nations is headed by the German bourgeoisie. It has fooled the working class and the labouring masses by asserting that it wages the war for the defence of the fatherland, liberty, and civilisation, for the liberation of the peoples that are oppressed by tsarism, for the destruction of reactionary tsarism. In reality, that same bourgeoisie, servile in face of the Prussian Junkers with Wilhelm II at their head, has always been the most faithful ally of tsarism and the enemy of the revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants in Russia. In reality, that bourgeoisie will, together with the Junkers,

directs all its efforts, no matter what the outcome of the war may be, to support the tsarist monarchy against a revolution in Russia.

In reality, the German bourgeoisie undertook a predatory campaign against Serbia with the aim of subjugating it and throttling the national revolution of the Southern Slavs, at the same time directing the bulk of its military forces against freer countries, Belgium and France, in order to pillage the richer competitor. The German bourgeoisie, spreading the fable of a defensive war on its part, in reality chose the moment which was most propitious for its warfare, utilising its latest improvements in military technique and forestalling the new armaments that had already been mapped out and approved of by Russia and France.

At the head of the other group of belligerent nations are the English and French bourgeoisie which fool the working class and the labouring masses by asserting that this group leads a war for the fatherland, freedom and civilisation against the militarism and despotism of Germany. In reality, this bourgeoisie has long been buying for its billions, and preparing for an attack on Germany, the armies of Russian tsarism, the most reactionary and barbarous monarchy of Europe.

In reality, the task of the struggle of the English and French bourgeoisie is to seize the German colonies and to ruin a competing nation which is distinguished by a more rapid economic development. For this noble aim, the "advanced" democratic nations are helping ferocious tsarism still more to choke Poland, the Ukraine, etc., still more to throttle the revolution in Russia.

Neither of the two groups of belligerent countries is behind the other in robberies, bestialities and endless brutalities of war. But in order to fool the proletarians and detract their attention from the only war for real freedom, namely, a civil war against the bourgeoisie both of "their own" and "foreign" countries, in order to further this noble aim the bourgeoisie of each country strives, by means of patriotic phrases, to extol the significance of "its own" national war and to assert that it strives to vanquish the adversary not for the sake of robbery and seizure of lands, but for the sake of "liberating" all the other peoples except its own.

But the greater the efforts of the governments and the bourgeoisie of all countries to disunite the workers and to pit them one against

the other, the more ferociously they use for this lofty purpose a system of martial law and military censorship (which measures even now, in time of war, are more successful against the "enemy within" than against the enemy without), the more urgent is the duty of the class-conscious proletariat to defend its class solidarity, its internationalism, its Socialist convictions against the orgy of chauvinism of the "patriotic" bourgeois cliques of all countries. To repudiate this task would, on the part of the class-conscious workers, mean to renounce all their striving towards freedom and democracy, not to speak of Socialism.

With a feeling of deepest chagrin it must be stated that the Socialist parties of the leading European countries have not fulfilled this duty of theirs, while the behaviour of the leaders of those parties—particularly that of the German party—borders on direct betrayal of the cause of Socialism. At this moment, which is of the greatest importance in world history, the majority of the leaders of the present, the Second (1889-1914) Socialist International, are attempting to substitute nationalism for Socialism. Thanks to their behaviour, the workers' parties of those countries have not counterposed their position to the criminal behaviour of the governments; on the contrary, they are appealing to the working class to identify its position with the position of the imperialist governments. The leaders of the International committed treachery with regard to Socialism when they voted for military appropriations, when they repeated the chauvinist ("patriotic") slogans of the bourgeoisie of "their" countries, when they justified and defended the war, when they entered the bourgeois cabinets of the belligerent countries, etc., etc. The point of view of the most influential Socialist leaders, and of the most influential organs of the Socialist press of present-day Europe, is chauvinist, bourgeois and liberal, not Socialist at all. The responsibility for thus covering Socialism with shame rests, in the first place, on the German Social-Democrats who were the strongest and most influential party of the Second International. However, one cannot justify the French Socialists either, who took ministerial posts in the government of the same bourgeoisie which betrayed its fatherland and allied itself with Bismarck to crush the Commune.

The German and Austrian Social-Democrats try to justify their support of the war by saying that thereby they struggle against tsarism. We Russian Social-Democrats declare that we consider such a justification to be a downright sophism. The revolutionary movement against

tsarism in our country has again assumed tremendous proportions in the last years. The Russian working class has always marched at the head of this movement. The political strikes of the last years, embracing millions of workers, proceeded under the slogan of overthrowing tsarism and establishing a democratic republic. On the very eve of the war, the President of the French Republic, Poincaré, while visiting Nicholas II, could see with his own eyes barricades constructed by the hands of the Russian workers in the streets of St. Petersburg. The Russian proletariat did not stop before any sacrifice to free humanity from the shame of tsarism. We must say that if there is anything that, under certain conditions, may delay the destruction of tsarism, if there is anything that may help tsarism in its struggle against the whole of Russian democracy, it is the present war, which has placed at the disposal of tsarism for the furthering of its reactionary aims, the purse of the English, French, and Russian bourgeoisie. And if there is anything that can make the revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class against tsarism more difficult, it is the behaviour of the leaders of German and Austrian Social-Democracy, a behaviour continually held up by the chauvinist press of Russia as an example for us.

Even if we assume that German Social-Democracy was so weak that it was compelled to abandon every kind of revolutionary action, even then it should not have joined the chauvinist camp, it should not have taken steps which gave occasion to the Italian Socialists justly to declare that the leaders of the German Social-Democrats were debasing the banner of the proletarian International.

Our party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, has suffered, and will yet suffer, great losses in connection with the war. All our legal labour press has been annihilated. The majority of the labour unions have been closed, a multitude of our comrades have been imprisoned and deported. But our parliamentary representatives—the Russian Social-Democratic Labour fraction in the Imperial Duma—considered it its unquestionable Socialist duty not to vote for military appropriations and even to leave the meeting hall of the Duma in order more energetically to express its protest; it considered it its duty to brand the politics of the European governments as imperialist. Notwithstanding the tenfold increased oppression by the Tsar's government, our comrade workers in Russia are already publishing their first illegal appeals against the war, doing their duty by democracy and by the International.

If the representatives of revolutionary Social-Democracy, the minority of the German Social-Democrats, and the best Social-Democrats in the neutral countries, are experiencing a burning feeling of shame over this collapse of the Second International; if voices of Socialists against the chauvinism of the majority of the Social-Democratic parties are becoming audible both in England and in France; if the opportunists, represented, for instance, by the German monthly, the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, who had long occupied a national-liberal position, are justly celebrating their victory over European Socialism—then the worst service is being rendered to the proletariat by those who vacillate between opportunism and revolutionary Social-Democracy (like the “centre” in the German Social-Democratic Party), who attempt to pass over in silence or to cover up with diplomatic phrases the collapse of the Second International.

On the contrary, it is necessary openly to recognise this collapse and understand its causes in order to be able to build a new, a more lasting Socialist unification of the workers of all countries.

The opportunists have set at naught the decisions of the Stuttgart, Copenhagen, and Basle Congresses, which made it the duty of the Socialists of all countries to fight against chauvinism under all possible conditions, which made it the duty of Socialists to react against any war begun by the bourgeoisie and the governments by increasing propaganda of civil war and social revolution. The collapse of the Second International is the collapse of opportunism which was growing on the soil of a specific (the so-called “peaceful”) historic epoch now passed, and which practically dominated the International in the last years. The opportunists had long been preparing this collapse by rejecting the Socialist revolution and substituting for it bourgeois reformism; by repudiating the class struggle with its inevitable transformation into civil war at certain moments, and by preaching class collaboration; by preaching bourgeois chauvinism under the name of patriotism and defence of the fatherland and ignoring or repudiating the fundamental truth of Socialism early expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*, namely, that the workers have no fatherland; by confining themselves in their struggle against militarism to a sentimental, philistine point of view instead of recognising the necessity of a revolutionary war of the proletarians of all countries against the bourgeoisie of all countries; by turning the necessary utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois

legality into a fetish of this legality and into forgetfulness of the duty to have illegal forms of organisation and agitation in times of crises. A natural “supplement” of opportunism, as bourgeois as the latter and as hostile to the proletarian, i.e., the Marxian, point of view, is the anarcho-syndicalist current which became marked in the present crisis by a no less shamefully self-satisfied repetition of the slogans of chauvinism than that of the opportunists.

It is impossible to carry out the tasks of Socialism at the present time, it is impossible to accomplish a really international unification of the workers without radically breaking with opportunism and without making clear to the masses the inevitability of its fiasco.

It must be the task of the Social-Democracy of every country first of all to struggle against the chauvinism of that country. In Russia this chauvinism has completely embraced the bourgeois liberals (the Cadets) and partly the Narodniks down to the Socialist-Revolutionists and the “Right” Social-Democrats. It is particularly necessary to brand the chauvinist declarations of such men as E. Smirnov, P. Maslov and G. Plekhanov, who have been taken up and widely utilised by the bourgeois “patriotic” press.

Under given conditions, it is impossible to determine from the standpoint of the international proletariat which is the lesser evil for Socialism: the defeat of one or the defeat of the other group of belligerent nations. For us Russian Social-Democrats, however, there cannot exist the least doubt that from the standpoint of the working class and of the labouring masses of all the peoples of Russia, the lesser evil would be the defeat of the tsarist monarchy, the most reactionary and barbarous government oppressing the greatest number of nations and the greatest mass of the populations of Europe and Asia.

The political slogan of the Social-Democrats of Europe for the near future must be the creation of a republican United States of Europe. In contrast to the bourgeoisie, which is ready to “promise” anything in order to draw the proletariat into the general stream of chauvinism, the Social-Democrats will explain that this slogan is false and senseless without a revolutionary overthrow of the German, Austrian and Russian monarchies.

In Russia, due to the greater backwardness of the country, which has not yet completed its bourgeois revolution, the tasks of the Social-Democrats are, as heretofore, the following three fundamental conditions

for a consistent democratic reconstruction : a democratic republic (with full and equal rights for all nationalities, including the right of self-determination), confiscation of the landowners' land, and an eight-hour work-day. In all the other advanced countries, however, the war has placed on the order of the day the slogan of a Socialist revolution, which becomes the more urgent the more heavily the burdens of war are pressing on the shoulders of the proletariat and as it becomes apparent that it will play a more active part in the restoration of Europe after the horrors of the present "patriotic" barbarism aided by the gigantic technical progress of big capitalism. The utilisation by the bourgeoisie of the laws of war time for gagging the proletariat, makes it absolutely necessary to create illegal forms of agitation and organisation. Let the opportunists "save" the legal organisations at the price of betraying their convictions; the revolutionary Social-Democrats will utilise the organisational habits and connections of the working class to organise illegal forms of organisation befitting an epoch of crisis, in order to fight for Socialism and to unite the workers, not with the chauvinist bourgeoisie of their respective countries, but with the workers of all countries. The proletarian International has not perished and will not perish. The working masses will overcome all obstacles and create a new International. The present triumph of opportunism is short-lived. The greater the war losses, the clearer it will become for the working masses that the opportunists betrayed the cause of the workers and that it is necessary to turn the weapons against the governments and the bourgeoisie of the respective countries.

Turning the present imperialist war into civil war is the only correct proletarian slogan. It is indicated by the experience of the Commune, it was outlined by the Basle resolution (1912) and it follows from all the conditions of an imperialist war among highly developed bourgeois countries. However difficult such transformation may appear at one time or another, Socialists will never relinquish systematic, insistent, unflinching preparatory work in this direction once the war has become a fact.

Only along this road will the proletariat be able to break away from under the influence of the chauvinist bourgeoisie, and sooner or later, in one form or another, will it take decisive steps on the road to real freedom of peoples, and on the road to Socialism.

Long live the international brotherhood of the workers united against the chauvinism and patriotism of the bourgeoisie of all countries !  
Long live a proletarian International, free from opportunism !

CENTRAL COMMITTEE,

RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY.



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