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COMMUNISM

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Lenin Thought



- ▶ Learning from Lenin Guiding Thought
- ▶ Lenin – Lessons of the Moscow Uprising
- ▶ Lenin – Guerrilla Warfare
- ▶ Lenin – Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution
- ▶ Lenin – The Development of Capitalism in Russia

This number is the second one and has been published in November, 2016, as a common initiative from Belgium and France. We promote the following websites as revolutionary media:

massline.net from Afghanistan,
sarbaharapath.com du Bangladesh,
centremlm.be from Belgium,
lesmaterialistes.com from France.

“We Communists must be able to integrate ourselves with the masses in all things. If our Party members spend their whole lives sitting indoors and never go out to face the world and brave the strong, what good will they be to the Chinese people?

None at all, and we do not need such people as Party members. We Communists ought to face the world and brave the storm the great world of mass struggle and the mighty storm of mass struggle.”

Mao Zedong – “Get Organized!” (November 29, 1943)

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Learning from Lenin Guiding Thought

Next year, all the genuine revolutionaries in the world shall hail the October Revolution, the seizure of power in Russia in 1917. With the great Lenin at the head of the “Bolsheviks” forming the majority of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, the revolutionaries were able to overthrow the reactionary state and establish Socialism.

As Communists following the path of 1917, we want to profit from this hundred anniversary coming to point out a very important aspect of the October Revolution : the question of the direction, i.e. the importance of Lenin.

If we want to understand historically the October Revolution and if we want to stress next year its importance, then we will have to present it with all his content and therefore also to express the signification of Leninism.

The October Revolution was not a coup d’etat, but a leap in the revolutionary process led by Lenin. We call here to study two documents of importance and written by Lenin during the year 1906.

Both the “Lessons of the Moscow Uprising” and “Guerrilla Warfare” give very important lessons to revolutionaries on the spirit necessary to go in the direction of the general insurrection.

When we speak of People’s War as universal military theory of the proletariat, we don’t mean by that that the 1917 revolution is in



Да здравствует 95-я годовщина Великого Октября!



contradiction with this theory elaborated by Mao Zedong and explained by Gonzalo.

On the contrary, Lenin went in the sense of People's War, because he was a genuine revolutionary, understanding that Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun. As Lenin points it out :

“A Marxist bases himself on the class struggle, and not social peace.

In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct civil war, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people. In such periods a Marxist is obliged to take the stand of civil war.

Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism.”

The October Revolution couldn't happen without this scientific approach of Lenin, which lacked for example people knowing as well Marxism as Georgi Plekhanov and Karl Kautsky. Both played historically an important role, but were not able to understand imperialism and the question of the state, and therefore of revolution.

That's why finally, Lenin opposed them. Already in 1906, Lenin presented the situation which was coming, where armed struggle would be unavoidable and the key in the battle for power. He said, then :

“Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. It will be an armed uprising. It must, as far as possible, be simultaneous.

The masses must know that they are entering upon an armed, bloody and desperate struggle.

Contempt for death must become widespread among them and will ensure victory.

The onslaught on the enemy must be pressed with the greatest vigour; attack, not defence, must be the slogan of the masses; the ruthless extermination of the enemy will be their task; the organisation of the struggle will become mobile and flexible; the wavering elements among the troops will be drawn into active participation.

And in this momentous struggle, the party of the class-conscious proletariat must discharge its duty to the full.”

The revolutionary Party knows that the reactionary state has to be destroyed ; the destruction of the state apparatus is the very strategical aim.

The revolutionary process consists precisely in this destruction, with the construction of New State through the Red Army, in a non-linear process where the People's War progress can not be historically stopped by the reaction, because it carries the New against the Ancient.

And this is true also for the World Revolution, as World People's War. The October Revolution was the first component of the first wave of it, followed by the Chinese Revolution of 1949 and The Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution beginning in 1966.

Now, we follow this path, opened by Lenin, working to be a part of the second wave of the World Revolution.

For this reason, we want to call to use a new concept : the one of Lenin Thought. The concept of Guiding Thought of revolution is the heart of Maoism ; it explains that a Leadership is generated in the revolutionary process, that a person synthesizes in a Dialectical Materialist way the understanding of the situation, showing the path to follow.

In the case of Russia, two works particularly show the ability of Lenin to understand the society, its history, its culture, its development. Published in 1899, The Development of Capitalism in Russia is a work explaining how capitalism has developed itself in the countryside and why therefore the populist ideology of the “Narodniks” is wrong.

Published in 1908, Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution



give very important indications on the evolution of the mentality of Russian society, seen through the works of a great artist.

It is obvious that Lenin was a great Leader who, like Mao, understood the historical situation, and therefore, in the same way that there was a Mao Zedong Thought, there was a Lenin Thought, carrying both an aspect particular to the Russian Revolution and another being universal.

We think also that the use of this concept will help to understand the role of Stalin in a proper way. Stalin understood the importance of Lenin and developed Leninism as the second stage of Marxism.



Stalin said, in the *The Foundations of Leninism* :

“Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to the situation in Russia.

This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way.

But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to Russia it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian and only a Russian, phenomenon.

We know, however, that Leninism is not merely a Russian, but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development. That is why I think this definition suffers from one-sidedness (...).

Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.

Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period, (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability.

But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets.

That is why Leninism is the further development of Marxism."

Stalin did not nearly understand the Lenin Thought. He always put himself in the propaganda as Lenin's best disciple ; Stalin's Party Card from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (bolshevik) was only the number two, the honour of the number one being given to Lenin, who was already dead.

Nevertheless, Stalin didn't know the concept of Thought and of course, this brought problems in the understanding of what is universal and what is particular in Leninism. As the Communist International was for example based on Leninism without any distinction of the difference of it with Lenin Thought, it brought some errors, producing an administrative way of understanding.

In the same way, the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks): Short Course was certainly a valuable book for all the communists in the world. But it was not possible to understand the



situation in its own country only with this book – and it was the most printed book by the International Communist Movement, until the “little red book” published in China.

It shows how rich historically Leninism was, with a dialectical character : a particular and an universal one. Of course, here a great attention must be given to the attempt made by the Revisionists to pretend that the universal aspect was in fact a particular one : this is how the Khrushchevists deformed Marxism-Leninism.

In hailing the October Revolution next year, we will so to be very careful to protect the content of Leninism, explain its universal and its particular aspects, condemning the Leftists the attempts to negate the Leninist stage, without falling into the trap of Revisionism who will try to deform it.

Without that, we won't be able next year to call to understand the meaning of the October Revolution for today's world, to study Maoism as third stage of Marxism, to practice People's War as universal revolutionary way.

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Lenin – Lessons of the Moscow Uprising

(*Proletary*, No. 2, August 29, 1906)

The publication of the book *Moscow* in December 1905 (*Moscow*, 1906) could not have been more timely.

It is an urgent task of the workers' party to assimilate the lessons of the December uprising. Unfortunately, this book is like a barrel of honey spoilt by a spoonful of tar: most interesting material—despite its incompleteness—and incredibly slovenly, incredibly trite conclusions.

We shall deal with these conclusions on another occasion ; at present we shall turn our attention to the burning political question of the day, to the lessons of the Moscow uprising.

The principal forms of the December movement in Moscow were the peaceful strike and demonstrations, and these were the only forms of struggle in which the vast majority of the workers took an active part.

Yet, the December action in Moscow vividly demonstrated that the general strike, as an independent and predominant form of struggle, is out of date, that the movement is breaking out of these narrow bounds with elemental and irresistible force and giving rise to the highest form of struggle—an uprising.

In calling the strike, all the revolutionary parties, all the Moscow unions recognised and even intuitively felt that it must inevitably grow into an uprising. On December 6 the Soviet of Workers' Deputies resolved to "strive to transform the strike into an armed uprising".

As a matter of fact, however, none of the organisations were prepared for this.

Even the Joint Council of Volunteer Fighting Squads spoke (on December 9!) of an uprising as of something remote, and it is quite evident that it had no hand in or control of the street fighting that took place.

[The Joint Council of Volunteer Fighting Squads was formed in Moscow at the end of October 1905. It was created at the outset for the practical struggle against the Black Hundreds but it was kept in existence during the December uprising.

It included representatives of the volunteer squads of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., the Moscow group of Social-Democrats, the Moscow committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and also of the volunteer



squads bearing the names “Free District”, “University”, “Typographical” and “Caucasian”.

The S.-R.-Menshevik majority of the Joint Council was responsible for disorganising its activity; during the days of the December armed uprising it lagged behind the revolutionary events and was incapable of acting as the operational general staff of the uprising.]

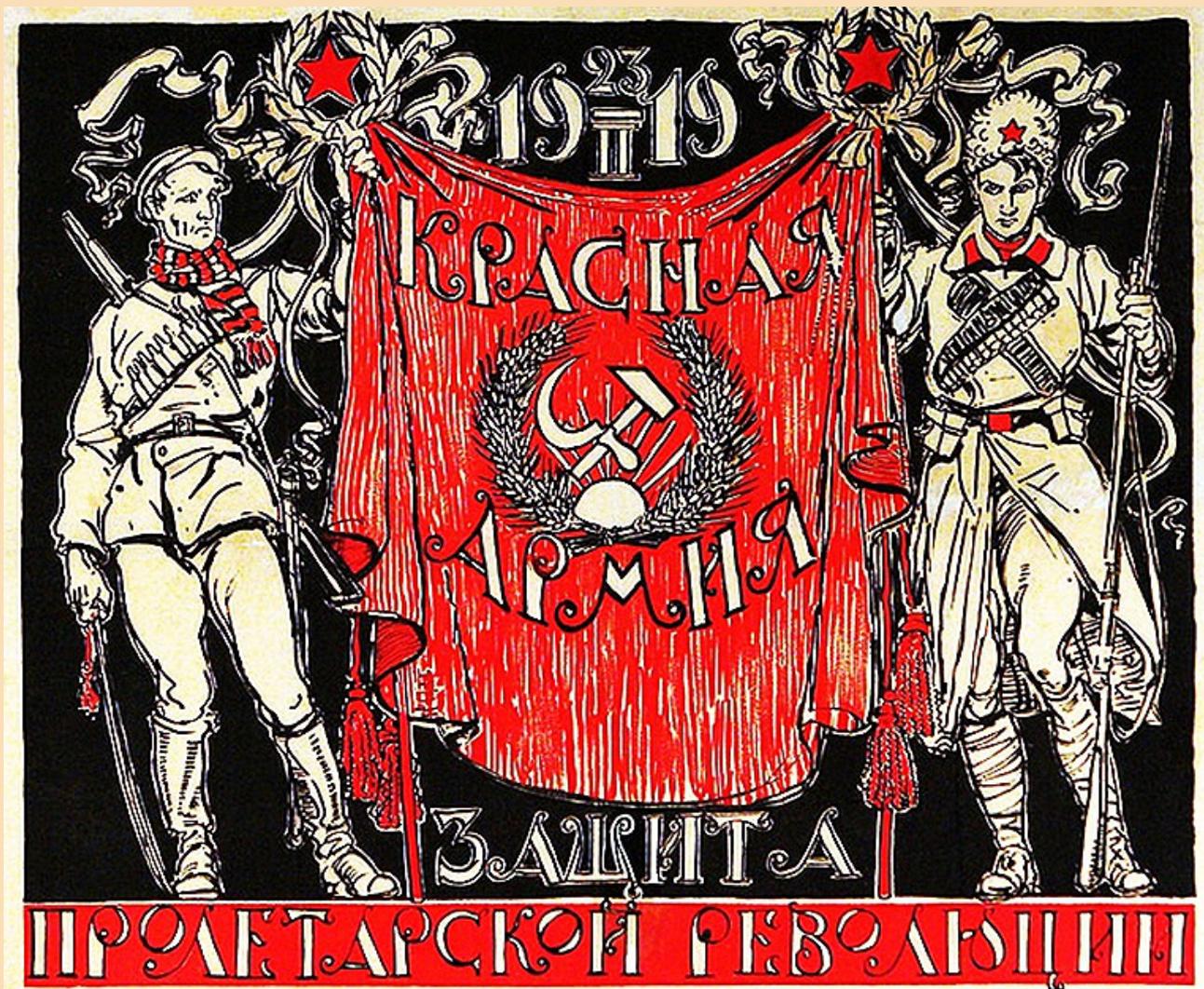
The organisations failed to keep pace with the growth and range of the movement.

The strike was growing into an uprising, primarily as a result of the pressure of the objective conditions created after October. A general strike could no longer take the government unawares: it had already organised the forces of counter-revolution, and they were ready for military action.

The whole course of the Russian revolution after October, and the sequence of events in Moscow in the December days, strikingly confirmed one of Marx’s profound propositions [in *Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1860*]: revolution progresses by giving rise to a strong and united counter-revolution, i.e., it compels the enemy to resort to more and more extreme measures of defence and in this way devises ever more powerful means of attack.

December 7 and 8: a peaceful strike, peaceful mass demonstrations. Evening of the 8th: the siege of the Aquarium.

[During the evening of December 8 (i.e. the 21st), 1905, soldiers and police



cordoned off the “Aquarium” garden (at the Sadovo-Triumfalnaya Square) where a crowded meeting was being held in the theatre.

Thanks to the selfless efforts of the workers’ volunteer squads guarding the meeting, bloodshed was avoided; those who possessed arms were enabled to escape through a broken fence, but the other participants in the meeting who went out through the gate were searched, beaten up and in many cases arrested.].

The morning of the 9th: the crowd in Strastnaya Square is attacked by the dragoons. Evening: the Fiedler building is raided.

[This school building (at Chistiye Prudy) was regularly used for party meetings. During the evening of December 9 (22), 1905, when a meeting was being held there, it was surrounded by troops. The participants in the meeting, mostly members of volunteer squads, refused to surrender and barricaded themselves in the building.

The troops opened fire using artillery and machine-guns. During the destruction of the building more than 30 persons were killed or wounded; 120 were arrested.].

Temper rises. The unorganised street crowds, quite spontaneously and hesitatingly, set up the first barricades.

The 10th: artillery fire is opened on the barricades and the crowds in the streets. Barricades are set up more deliberately, and no longer in isolated cases, but on a really mass scale. The whole population is in the streets; all the main centres of the city are covered by a network of barricades.

For several days the volunteer fighting units wage a stubborn guerrilla battle against the troops, which exhausts the troops and compels [Governor-General of Moscow] Dubasov to beg for reinforcements.

Only on December 15 did the superiority of the government forces become complete, and on December 17 the Semyonovsky Regiment [sent from St. Petersburg to Moscow] crushed Presnya District, the last stronghold of the uprising.

From a strike and demonstrations to isolated barricades. From isolated barricades to the mass erection of barricades and street fighting against the troops. Over the heads of the organisations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising.

This is the greatest historic gain the Russian revolution achieved in December 1905; and like all preceding gains it was purchased at the price of enormous sacrifices. The movement was raised from a general political strike to a higher stage. It compelled the reaction to go to the limit in its resistance, and so brought vastly nearer the moment when the revolution will also go to the limit in applying the means of attack.

The reaction cannot go further than the shelling of barricades, buildings and crowds. But the revolution can go very much further than the Moscow volunteer fighting units, it can go very, very much further in breadth and depth.

And the revolution has advanced far since December. The base of the revolutionary crisis has become immeasurably broader—the blade must now be sharpened to a keener edge.

The proletariat sensed sooner than its leaders the change in the objective conditions of the struggle and the need for a transition from the strike to an



uprising.

As is always the case, practice marched ahead of theory. A peaceful strike and demonstrations immediately ceased to satisfy the workers; they asked: What is to be done next?

And they demanded more resolute action. The instructions to set up barricades reached the districts exceedingly late, when barricades were already being erected in the centre of the city. The workers set to work in large numbers, but even this did not satisfy them; they wanted to know: what is to be done next?— they demanded active measures.

In December, we, the leaders of the Social-Democratic proletariat, were like a commander-in-chief who has deployed his troops in such an absurd way that most of them took no active part in the battle. The masses of the workers demanded, but failed to receive, instructions for resolute mass action.

Thus, nothing could be more short-sighted than Plekhanov's view, seized upon by all the opportunists, that the strike was untimely and should not have been started, and that "they should not have taken to arms".

On the contrary, we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine things to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was necessary.

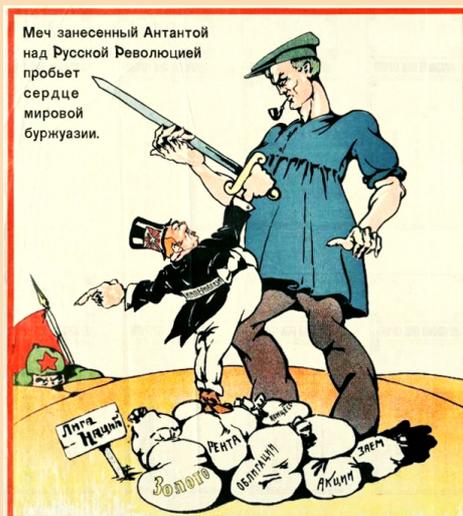
And now we must at last openly and publicly admit that political strikes are inadequate; we must carry on the widest agitation among the masses in favour of an armed uprising and make no attempt to obscure this question by talk about "preliminary stages", or to befog it in any way.

We would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we concealed from the masses the necessity of a desperate, bloody war of extermination, as the immediate task of the coming revolutionary action.

Such is the first lesson of the December events. Another lesson concerns the character of the uprising, the methods by which it is conducted, and the conditions which lead to the troops coming over to the side of the people.

An extremely biased view on this latter point prevails in the Right wing of our Party. It is alleged that there is no possibility of fighting modern troops; the troops must become revolutionary.

Of course, unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle.



That we must work among the troops goes without saying. But we must not imagine that they will come over to our side at one stroke, as a result of persuasion or their own convictions.

The Moscow uprising clearly demonstrated how stereotyped and lifeless this view is. As a matter of fact, the wavering of the troops, which is inevitable in every truly popular movement, leads to a real fight for the troops whenever the revolutionary struggle becomes acute.

The Moscow uprising was precisely an example of the desperate, frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution. Dubasov himself declared that of the fifteen thousand men of the Moscow garrison, only five thousand were reliable.

The government restrained the waverers by the most diverse and desperate measures: they appealed to them, flattered them, bribed them, presented them with watches, money, etc.; they doped them with vodka, they lied to them, threatened them, confined them to barracks and disarmed them, and those who were suspected of being least reliable were removed by treachery and violence.

And we must have the courage to confess, openly and unreservedly, that in this respect we lagged behind the government. We failed to utilise the forces at our disposal for such an active, bold, resourceful and aggressive fight for the wavering troops as that which the government waged and won. We have carried on work in the army and we will redouble our efforts in the future ideologically to “win over” the troops. But we shall prove to be miserable pedants if we forget that at a time of uprising there must also be a physical struggle for the troops.

In the December days, the Moscow proletariat taught us magnificent lessons in ideologically “winning over” the troops, as, for example, on December 8 in Strastnaya Square, when the crowd surrounded the Cossacks, mingled and fraternised with them, and persuaded them to turn back.

Or on December 10, in Presnya District, when two working girls, carrying a red flag in a crowd of 10,000 people, rushed out to meet the Cossacks crying: “Kill us! We will not surrender the flag alive!” And the Cossacks were disconcerted and galloped away, amidst the shouts from the crowd: “Hurrah for the Cossacks!” These examples of courage and heroism should be impressed forever on the mind of the proletariat.

But here are examples of how we lagged behind Dubasov. On December 9, soldiers



were marching down Bolshaya Serpukhovskaya Street singing the Marseillaise, on their way to join the insurgents.

The workers sent delegates to meet them. Malakhov himself galloped at breakneck speed towards them. The workers were too late, Malakhov reached them first. He delivered a passionate speech, caused the soldiers to waver, surrounded them with dragoons, marched them off to barracks and locked them in.

Malakhov reached the soldiers in time and we did not, although within two days 150,000 people had risen at our call, and these could and should have organised the patrolling of the streets. Malakhov surrounded the soldiers with dragoons, whereas we failed to surround the Malakhovs with bomb-throwers.

We could and should have done this; and long ago the Social-Democratic press (the old Iskra) pointed out that ruthless extermination of civil and military chiefs was our duty during an uprising.

[Iskra (The Spark)—the first all-Russian illegal Marxist revolutionary newspaper. It was founded by Lenin in 1900, and it played a decisive part in building the Marxist revolutionary party of the Russian working class.

After the Party, at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903, had split into a revolutionary (Bolshevik) wing and an opportunist (Menshevik) wing, Iskra passed into the hands of the Mensheviks and became known as the “new” Iskra in contrast to Lenin’s old Iskra.]

What took place in Bolshaya Serpukhovskaya Street was apparently repeated in its main features in front of the Nesvizhskiy Barracks and the Krutitskiy Barracks, and also when the workers attempted to “withdraw” the Ekaterinoslav Regiment, and when delegates were sent to the sappers in Alexandrov, and when the Rostov artillery on its way to Moscow was turned back, and when the sappers were disarmed in Kolomna, and so on. During the uprising we proved unequal to our task in the fight for the wavering troops.

The December events confirmed another of Marx’s profound propositions, which the opportunists have forgotten, namely, that insurrection is an art and that the principal rule of this art is the waging of a desperately bold and irrevocably determined offensive.

[This refers in fact to Engels’s *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, 1848 (New York Daily Tribune, 18.IX. 1852) which was published in 1851-52 as a series of articles in the newspaper New York Daily Tribune over the signature of Marx, who originally intended to write them but, being preoccupied with his economic researches, handed over the task to Engels.

In writing the articles Engels constantly consulted Marx, who also read them through, before they were sent to the press.

Not until 1913, as a result of the publication of the correspondence between Marx and Engels, did it become known that the work had been written by Engels.]

We have not sufficiently assimilated this truth. We ourselves have not sufficiently learned, nor have we taught the masses, this art, this rule to attack at all costs.

We must make up for this omission with all our energy. It is not enough to take sides on the question of political slogans; it is also necessary to take sides on the question of an armed uprising.

Those who are opposed to it, those who do not prepare for it, must be ruthlessly dismissed from the ranks of the supporters of the revolution, sent packing to its enemies, to the traitors or cowards; for the day is approaching when the force of events and the conditions of the struggle will compel us to distinguish between enemies and friends according to this principle. It is not passivity that we should preach, not mere “waiting” until the troops “come over”.

No! We must proclaim from the house tops the need for a bold offensive and armed attack, the necessity at such times of exterminating the persons in command of the enemy, and of a most energetic fight for the wavering troops.

The third great lesson taught by Moscow concerns the tactics and organisation of the forces for an uprising. Military tactics depend on the level of military technique. This plain truth Engels demonstrated and brought home to all Marxists.

Military technique today is not what it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. It would be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers. Kautsky was right when he wrote that it is high time now, after Moscow, to review Engels’s conclusions, and that Moscow had inaugurated “new barricade tactics”.

These tactics are the tactics of guerrilla warfare. The organisation required for such tactics is that of mobile and exceedingly small units, units of ten, three or even two persons. We often meet Social-Democrats now who scoff whenever units of five or three are mentioned.

But scoffing is only a cheap way of ignoring the new question of tactics and organisation raised by street fighting under the conditions imposed by modern military technique. Study carefully the story of the Moscow uprising, gentlemen, and you will understand what connection exists between “units of five” and the question of “new barricade tactics”.

Moscow advanced these tactics, but failed to develop them far enough, to apply them to any considerable extent, to a really mass extent.

There were too few volunteer fighting squads, the slogan of bold attack was not issued to the masses of the workers and they did not apply it; the guerrilla detachments were too uniform in character, their arms and methods were inadequate, their ability to lead the crowd was almost undeveloped.

We must make up for all this and we shall do so by learning from the experience



of Moscow, by spreading this experience among the masses and by stimulating their creative efforts to develop it still further.

And the guerrilla warfare and mass terror that have been taking place throughout Russia practically without a break since December, will undoubtedly help the masses to learn the correct tactics of an uprising.

Social-Democracy must recognise this mass terror and incorporate it into its tactics, organising and controlling it of course, subordinating it to the interests and conditions of the working-class movement and the general revolutionary struggle, while eliminating and ruthlessly lopping off the "hooligan" perversion of this guerrilla warfare which was so splendidly and ruthlessly dealt with by our Moscow comrades during the uprising and by the Letts during the days of the famous Lettish republics.

[In December 1905 various Lettish towns were seized by armed detachments of insurgent workers, agricultural labourers and peasants. Guerrilla war against the tsarist troops began. In January 1906 the uprising in Latvia was suppressed by punitive expeditions under tsarist generals.]

There have been new advances in military technique in the very recent period. The Japanese War produced the hand grenade.

The small-arms factories have placed automatic rifles on the market. Both these weapons are already being successfully used in the Russian revolution, but to a degree that is far from adequate.

We can and must take advantage of improvements in technique, teach the workers' detachments to make bombs in

large quantities, help them and our fighting squads to obtain supplies of explosives, fuses and automatic rifles.

If the mass of the workers takes part in uprisings in the towns, if mass attacks are launched on the enemy, if a determined and skilful fight is waged for the troops, who after the Duma, after Sveaborg and Kronstadt are wavering more than ever—and if we ensure participation of the rural areas in the general struggle—victory will be ours in the next all-Russian armed uprising.

Let us, then, develop our work more extensively and set our tasks more boldly, while mastering the lessons of the great days of the Russian revolution.

The basis of our work is a correct estimate of class interests and of the requirements of the nation's development at the present juncture. We are



rallying, and shall continue to rally, an increasing section of the proletariat, the peasantry and the army under the slogan of overthrowing the tsarist regime and convening a constituent assembly by a revolutionary government.

As hitherto, the basis and chief content of our work is to develop the political understanding of the masses. But let us not forget that, in addition to this general, constant and fundamental task, times like the present in Russia impose other, particular and special tasks.

Let us not become pedants and philistines, let us not evade these special tasks of the moment, these special tasks of the given forms of struggle, by meaningless references to our permanent duties, which remain unchanged at all times and in all circumstances.

Let us remember that a great mass struggle is approaching. It will be an armed uprising. It must, as far as possible, be simultaneous. The masses must know that they are entering upon an armed, bloody and desperate struggle.

Contempt for death must become widespread among them and will ensure victory.

The onslaught on the enemy must be pressed with the greatest vigour; attack, not defence, must be the slogan of the masses; the ruthless extermination of the enemy will be their task; the organisation of the struggle will become mobile and flexible; the wavering elements among the troops will be drawn into active participation. And in this momentous struggle, the party of the class-conscious proletariat must discharge its duty to the full.



СЛАВА ВЕЛИКИМ ВОЖДЯМ ОКТЯБРЯ!

Lenin – Guerrilla Warfare (Proletary, No. 5, September 30, 1906)

The question of guerrilla action is one that greatly interests our Party and the mass of the workers. We have dealt with this question in passing several times, and now we propose to give the more complete statement of our views we have promised.

I



Let us begin from the beginning. What are the fundamental demands which every Marxist should make of an examination of the question of forms of struggle?

In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle.

It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not “concoct” them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement.

Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack.

Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only,

recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the given social situation, changes.

In this respect Marxism learns, if we may so express it, from mass practice, and makes no claim what ever to teach the masses forms of struggle invented by “systematisers” in the seclusion of their studies.

We know—said Kautsky, for instance, when examining the forms of social revolution—that the coming crisis will introduce new forms of struggle that we are now unable to foresee.

In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely historical examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism.

At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn.

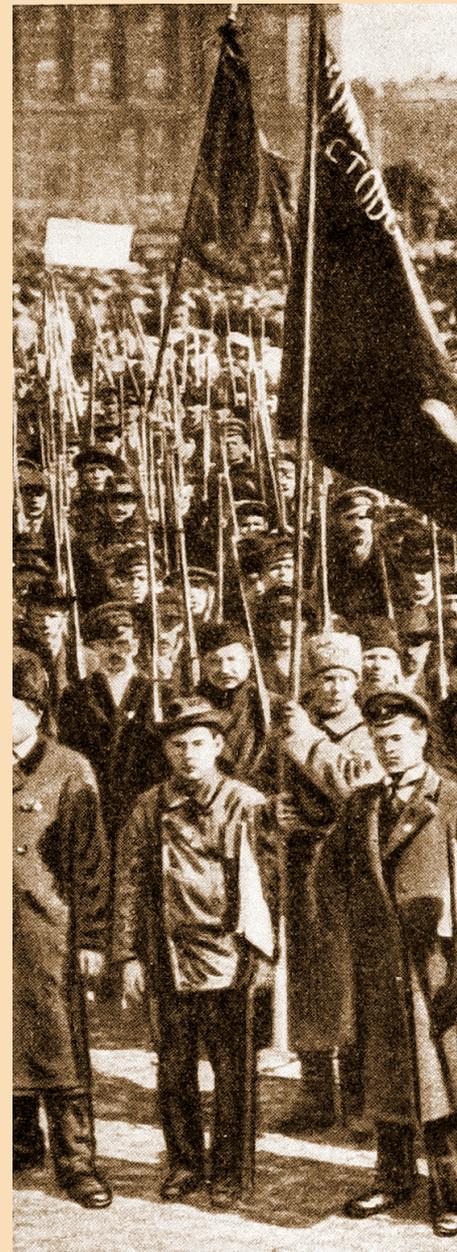
To attempt to answer yes or no to the question whether any particular means of struggle should be used, without making a detailed examination of the concrete situation of the given movement at the given stage of its development, means completely to abandon the Marxist position.

These are the two principal theoretical propositions by which we must be guided.

The history of Marxism in Western Europe provides an infinite number of examples corroborating what has been said. European Social-Democracy at the present time regards parliamentarism and the trade union movement as the principal forms of struggle; it recognised insurrection in the past, and is quite prepared to recognise it, should conditions change, in the future—despite the opinion of bourgeois liberals like the Russian Cadets and the Bezzaglavtsi.

[Bezzaglavtsi—a semi-Cadet, semi-Menshevik group of the Russian bourgeois intelligentsia (S. N. Prokopovich, Y. D. Kuskova, V. Y. Bogucharsky, V. V. Portugalov, V. V. Khizhnyakov, and others), formed in the period of the incipient decline of the 1905-07 revolution.

The group derived its name from the political weekly magazine *Bez Zaglavii* (Without a Title) published in St. Petersburg in January-May



1906 under the editorship of Prokopovich; later the Bezzaglavtsi were grouped around the Left-Cadet news paper *Tovarishch* (Comrade).

Under cover of their formal non-partisanship, the Bezzaglavtsi propagated the ideas of bourgeois liberalism and opportunism and supported the revisionists of Russian and international Social-Democracy.]

Social-Democracy in the seventies rejected the general strike as a social panacea, as a means of overthrowing the bourgeoisie at one stroke by non-political means—but Social-Democracy fully recognises the mass political strike (especially after the experience of Russia in 1905) as one of the methods of struggle essential under certain conditions.

Social-Democracy recognised street barricade fighting in the forties, rejected it for definite reasons at the end of the nineteenth century, and expressed complete readiness to revise the latter view and to admit the expediency of barricade fighting after the experience of Moscow, which, in the words of K. Kautsky, initiated new tactics of barricade fighting.

II

Having established the general Marxist propositions, let us turn to the Russian revolution. Let us recall the historical development of the forms of struggle it produced.

First there were the economic strikes of workers (1896-1900), then the political demonstrations of workers and students (1901-02), peasant revolts (1902), the beginning of mass political strikes variously combined with demonstrations (Rostov 1902, the strikes in the summer of 1903,



January 9, 1905), the all-Russian political strike accompanied by local cases of barricade fighting (October 1905), mass barricade fighting and armed uprising (1905, December), the peaceful parliamentary struggle (April-June 1906), partial military revolts (June 1905-July 1906) and partial peasant revolts (autumn 1905-autumn 1906).

Such is the state of affairs in the autumn of 1906 as concerns forms of struggle in general. The “retaliatory” form of struggle adopted by the autocracy is the Black-Hundred pogrom, from Kishinev in the spring of 1903 to Sedlets in the autumn of 1906.

All through this period the organisation of Black-Hundred pogroms and the beating up of Jews, students, revolutionaries and class-conscious workers continued to progress and perfect itself, combining the violence of Black-Hundred troops with the violence of hired ruffians, going as far as the use of artillery in villages and towns and merging with punitive expeditions, punitive trains and so forth.

Such is the principal background of the picture. Against this background there stands out—unquestionably as something partial, secondary and auxiliary —the phenomenon to the study and assessment of which the present article is devoted.

What is this phenomenon? What are its forms? What are its causes? When did it arise and how far has it spread? What is its significance in the general course of the revolution? What is its relation to the struggle of the working class organised and led by Social-Democracy?

Such are the questions which we must now proceed to examine after having sketched the general background of the picture.

The phenomenon in which we are interested is the armed struggle. It is conducted by individuals and by small groups.

Some belong to revolutionary organisations, while others (the majority in certain parts of Russia) do not belong to any revolutionary organisation.

Armed struggle pursues two different aims, which must be strictly distinguished: in the first place, this struggle aims at assassinating individuals, chiefs and subordinates in the army and police; in the second place, it aims at the confiscation of monetary funds both from the government and from private persons.



The confiscated funds go partly into the treasury of the Party, partly for the special purpose of arming and preparing for an uprising, and partly for the maintenance of persons engaged in the struggle we are describing.

The big expropriations (such as the Caucasian, involving over 200,000 rubles, and the Moscow, involving 575,000 rubles) went in fact first and foremost to revolutionary parties—small expropriations go mostly, and sometimes entirely, to the maintenance of the “expropriators”.

This form of struggle undoubtedly became widely developed and extensive only in 1900, i.e., after the December uprising.

The intensification of the political crisis to the point of an armed struggle and, in particular, the intensification of poverty, hunger and unemployment in town and country, was one of the important causes of the struggle we are describing.

This form of struggle was adopted as the preferable and even exclusive form of social struggle by the vagabond elements of the population, the lumpen proletariat and anarchist groups. Declaration of



martial law, mobilisation of fresh troops, Black-Hundred pogroms (Sedlets), and military courts must be regarded as the “retaliatory” form of struggle adopted by the autocracy.

III

The usual appraisal of the struggle we are describing is that it is anarchism, Blanquism, the old terrorism, the acts of individuals isolated from the masses, which demoralise the workers, repel wide strata of the population, disorganise the movement and injure the revolution.

Examples in support of this appraisal can easily be found in the events reported every day in the newspapers.

But are such examples convincing?

In order to test this, let us take a locality where the form of struggle we are examining is most developed—the Lettish Territory. This is the way *Novoye Vremya* (in its issues of September 9 and 12) complains of the activities of the Lettish Social-Democrats. The Lettish Social-Democratic Labour Party (a section of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party) regularly issues its paper in 30,000 copies.

The announcement columns publish lists of spies whom it is the duty of every decent person to exterminate. People who assist the police are proclaimed “enemies of the revolution”, liable to execution and, moreover, to confiscation of property.

The public is instructed to give money to the Social-Democratic Party only against signed and stamped receipt. In the Party’s latest report, showing a total income of 48,000 rubles for the year, there figures a sum of 5,600 rubles contributed by the Libau branch for arms which was obtained by expropriation. Naturally, *Novoye Vremya* rages and fumes against this “revolutionary law”, against this “terror government”.

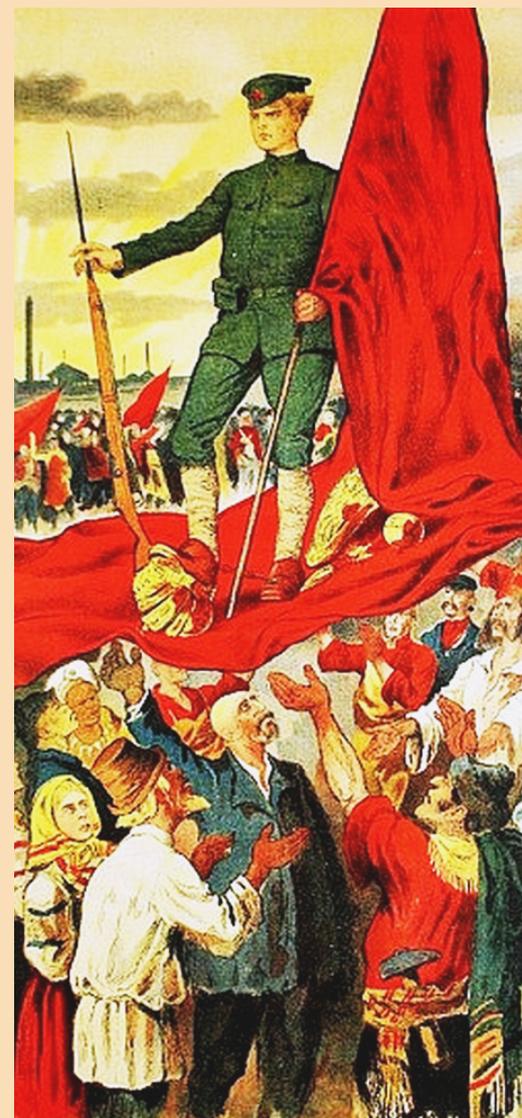
Nobody will be so bold as to call these activities of the Lettish Social-Democrats anarchism, Blanquism or terrorism.

But why?

Because here we have a clear connection between the new form of struggle and the uprising which broke out in December and which is again brewing. This connection is not so perceptible in the case of Russia as a whole, but it exists.

The fact that “guerrilla” warfare became wide spread precisely after December, and its connection with the accentuation not only of the economic crisis but also of the political crisis is beyond dispute.

The old Russian terrorism was an affair of the intellectual conspirator; today as a general rule guerrilla warfare is waged by the worker



combatant, or simply by the unemployed worker.

Blanquism and anarchism easily occur to the minds of people who have a weakness for stereotype; but under the circumstances of an uprising, which are so apparent in the Lettish Territory, the inappropriateness of such trite labels is only too obvious.

The example of the Letts clearly demonstrates how incorrect, unscientific and unhistorical is the practice so very common among us of analysing guerrilla warfare without reference to the circumstances of an uprising.

These circumstances must be borne in mind, we must reflect on the peculiar features of an intermediate period between big acts of insurrection, we must realise what forms of struggle inevitably arise under such circumstances, and not try to shirk the issue by a collection of words learned by rote, such as are used equally by the Cadets and the Novoye Vremya-ites: anarchism, robbery, hooliganism!

It is said that guerrilla acts disorganise our work. Let us apply this argument to the situation that has existed since December 1905, to the period of Black-Hundred pogroms and martial law.

What disorganises the movement more in such a period: the absence of resistance or organised guerrilla warfare?

Compare the centre of Russia with her western borders, with Poland and the Lettish Territory. It is unquestionable that guerrilla warfare is far more widespread and far more developed in the western border regions.

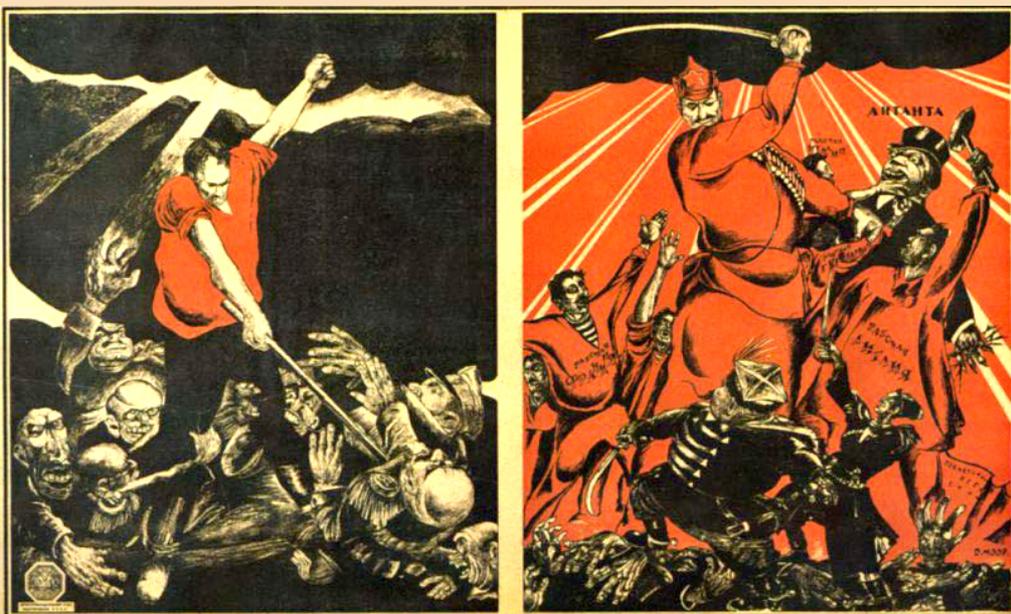
And it is equally unquestionable that the revolutionary movement in general, and the Social-Democratic movement in particular, are more

disorganised in central Russia than in the western border regions.

Of course, it would not enter our heads to conclude from this that the Polish and Lettish Social-Democratic movements are less disorganised thanks to guerrilla warfare. No. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that guerrilla warfare is not to blame for the state of disorganisation of the Social-Democratic working-class movement in Russia in 1906.

Allusion is often made in this respect to the peculiarities of national conditions. But this allusion very clearly betrays the weakness of the current argument.

If it is a matter of national conditions then it is not a matter of anarchism, Blanquism or terrorism—sins that are common to Russia as a whole and even to the Russians especially—but of something else. Analyse this



something else concretely, gentle men!

You will then find that national oppression or antagonism explain nothing, because they have always existed in the western border regions, whereas guerrilla warfare has been engendered only by the present historical period.

There are many places where there is national oppression and antagonism, but no guerrilla struggle, which sometimes develops where there is no national oppression whatever. A concrete analysis of the question will show that it is not a matter of national oppression, but of conditions of insurrection.

Guerrilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of an uprising and when fairly large intervals occur between the "big engagements" in the civil war.

It is not guerrilla actions which disorganise the movement, but the weakness of a party which is incapable of taking such actions under its control.

That is why the anathemas which we Russians usually hurl against guerrilla actions go hand in hand with secret, casual, unorganised guerrilla actions which really do disorganise the Party.

Being in capable of understanding what historical conditions give rise to this struggle, we are incapable of neutralising its deleterious aspects.

Yet the struggle is going on. It is engendered by powerful economic and political causes. It is not in our power to eliminate these causes or to eliminate this struggle.

Our complaints against guerrilla warfare are complaints against our Party weakness in the matter of an uprising.

What we have said about disorganisation also applies to demoralisation. It is not guerrilla warfare which demoralises, but unorganised, irregular, non-party guerrilla acts.

We shall not rid ourselves one least bit of this most unquestionable demoralisation by condemning and cursing guerrilla actions, for



Иллюстрация: Евгений Иванов. Рисование: С. П. Давидов.

Тираж: 1000 экземпляров. Москва, 1931 г.

condemnation and curses are absolutely incapable of putting a stop to a phenomenon which has been engendered by profound economic and political causes.

It may be objected that if we are incapable of putting a stop to an abnormal and demoralising phenomenon, this is no reason why

the Party should adopt abnormal and demoralising methods of struggle.

But such an objection would be a purely bourgeois-liberal and not a Marxist objection, because a Marxist cannot regard civil war, or guerrilla warfare, which is one of its forms, as abnormal and demoralising in general.

A Marxist bases himself on the class struggle, and not social peace.

In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct civil war, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people.

In such periods a Marxist is obliged to take the stand of civil war. Any moral condemnation of civil war would be absolutely impermissible from the standpoint of Marxism.

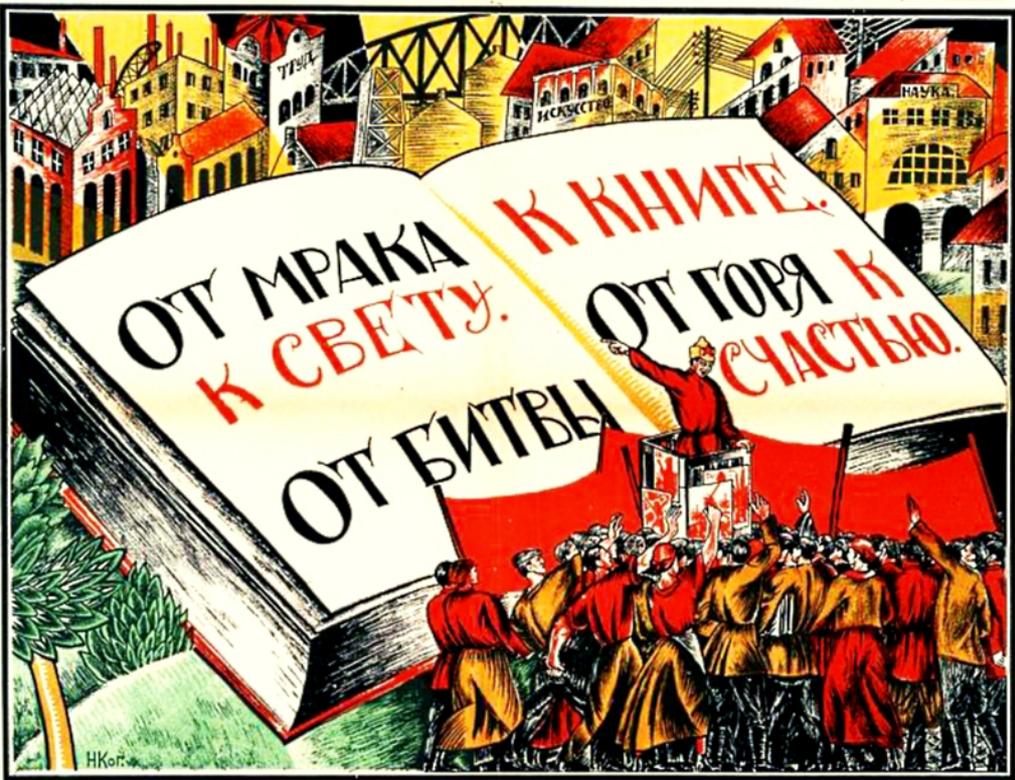
In a period of civil war the ideal party of the proletariat is a fighting party.

This is absolutely incontrovertible. We are quite prepared to grant that it is possible to argue and prove the inexpediency from the standpoint of civil war of particular forms of civil war at any particular moment.

We fully admit criticism of diverse forms of civil war from the standpoint of military expediency and absolutely agree that in this question it is the Social-Democratic practical workers in each particular locality who must have the final say.

But we absolutely demand in the name of the principles of Marxism that an analysis of the conditions of civil war should not be evaded by hackneyed and stereo typed talk about anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism, and that senseless methods of guerrilla activity adopted by some organisation or other of the Polish Socialist Party at some moment or other should not be used as a bogey when discussing the question of the participation of the Social-Democratic Party as such in guerrilla warfare in general.

The argument that guerrilla warfare disorganises the movement must be



regarded critically. Every new form of struggle, accompanied as it is by new dangers and new sacrifices, inevitably “disorganises” organisations which are unprepared for this new form of struggle. Our old propagandist circles were disorganised by recourse to methods of agitation.

Our committees were subsequently disorganised by recourse to demonstrations. Every military action in any war to a certain extent disorganises the ranks of the fighters.

But this does not mean that one must not fight. It means that one must learn to fight. That is all.

When I see Social-Democrats proudly and smugly declaring “we are not anarchists, thieves, robbers, we are superior to all this, we reject guerrilla warfare”,—I ask myself: Do these people realise what they are saying?

Armed clashes and conflicts between the Black-Hundred government and the population are taking place all over the country. This is an absolutely inevitable phenomenon at the present stage of development of the revolution.

The population is spontaneously and in an unorganised way—and for that very reason often in unfortunate and undesirable forms—reacting to this phenomenon also by armed conflicts and attacks.

I can understand us refraining from Party leadership of this spontaneous struggle in a particular place or at a particular time because of the weakness and unpreparedness of our organisation.

I realise that this question must be settled by the local practical workers, and that the remoulding of weak and unprepared organisations is no easy matter.

But when I see a Social-Democratic theoretician or publicist not displaying regret over this unpreparedness, but rather a proud smugness and a self-exalted tendency to repeat phrases learned by rote in early youth about anarchism, Blanquism and terrorism, I am hurt by this degradation of the most revolutionary doctrine in the world.

It is said that guerrilla warfare brings the class-conscious proletarians into close association with degraded, drunken riff-raff.

That is true. But it only means that the party of the proletariat can never



regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism.

And without this latter condition, all, positively all, methods of struggle in bourgeois society bring the proletariat into close association with the various non-proletarian strata above and below it and, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become frayed, corrupted and prostituted.

Strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become corrupted into “alliances”—agreements between the workers and the masters against the consumers.

Parliament becomes corrupted into a brothel, where a gang of bourgeois politicians barter wholesale and retail “national freedom”, “liberalism”, “democracy”, republicanism, anti-clericalism, socialism and all other wares in demand.

A newspaper becomes corrupted into a public pimp, into a means of corrupting the masses, of pandering to the low instincts of the mob, and so on and so forth. Social-Democracy knows of no universal methods of struggle, such as would shut off the proletariat by a Chinese wall from the strata standing slightly above or slightly below it.

At different periods Social-Democracy applies different methods, always qualifying the choice of them by strictly defined ideological and organisational conditions.

[Lenin precises here in a note : The Bolshevik Social-Democrats are often accused of a frivolous passion for guerrilla actions. It would therefore not be amiss to recall that in the draft resolution on guerrilla actions (Partiiniye Izvestia, No. 2, and Lenin’s report on the Congress), the section of the Bolsheviks who defend guerrilla actions suggested the following conditions for their recognition: “expropriations” of private property were not to be permitted under any circumstances; “expropriations” of government property were not to be recommended hut only allowed, provided that they were controlled by the Party and their proceeds used for the needs of an uprising.

Guerrilla acts in the form of terrorism were to be recommended against brutal government officials and active members of the Black Hundreds, hut on condition that 1) the sentiments of the masses he taken into account; 2) the conditions of the working-class movement in the given locality he reckoned with, and 3) care be taken that the forces of the proletariat should not be frittered away.

The practical difference between this draft and the resolution which was adopted at the Unity Congress lies exclusively in the fact that “expropriations” of government property are not allowed.—Lenin]

IV

The forms of struggle in the Russian revolution are distinguished by their colossal variety compared with the bourgeois revolutions in Europe. Kautsky partly foretold this in 1902 when he said that the future revolution (with the exception perhaps of Russia, he added) might be not so much a struggle of the people against the government as a struggle between two sections of the people.

In Russia we undoubtedly see a wider development of this latter struggle than in the bourgeois revolutions in the West.

The enemies of our revolution among the people are few in number, but as the struggle grows more acute they become more and more organised and receive the support of the reactionary strata of the bourgeoisie.

It is therefore absolutely natural and inevitable that in such a period, a period of nation-wide political strikes, an uprising cannot assume the old form of individual acts restricted to a very short time and to a very small area.

It is absolutely natural and inevitable that the uprising should assume the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country, i.e., an armed struggle between two sections of the people. Such a war cannot be conceived otherwise than as a series of a few big engagements at comparatively long intervals and a large number of small encounters during these intervals.

That being so—and it is undoubtedly so—the Social-Democrats must absolutely make it their duty to create organisations best adapted to lead the masses in these big engagements and, as far as possible, in these small encounters as well.

In a period when the class struggle has become accentuated to the point of civil war, Social-Democrats must make it their duty not only to participate but also to play the leading role in this civil war.

The Social-Democrats must train and prepare their organisations to be really able to act as a belligerent side which does not miss a single opportunity of inflicting damage on the enemy's forces.

This is a difficult task, there is no denying. It cannot be accomplished at once. Just as the whole people are being



retrained and are learning to fight in the course of the civil war, so our organisations must be trained, must be reconstructed in conformity with the lessons of experience to be equal to this task.

We have not the slightest intention of foisting on practical workers any artificial form of struggle, or even of deciding from our armchair what part any particular form of guerrilla warfare should play in the general course of the civil war in Russia.

We are far from the thought of regarding a concrete assessment of particular guerrilla actions as indicative of a trend in Social-Democracy.

But we do regard it as our duty to help as far as possible to arrive at a correct theoretical assessment of the new forms of struggle engendered by practical life.

We do regard it as our duty relentlessly to combat stereotypes and prejudices which hamper the class-conscious workers in correctly presenting a new and difficult problem and in correctly approaching its solution.





Lenin – Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution

(Proletary No. 35, September 11, 1908)

To identify the great artist with the revolution which he has obviously failed to understand, and from which he obviously stands aloof, may at first sight seem strange and artificial. A mirror which does not reflect things correctly could hardly be called a mirror.

Our revolution, however, is an extremely complicated thing.

Among the mass of those who are directly making and participating in it there are many social elements which have also obviously not understood what is taking place and which also stand aloof from the real historical tasks with which the course of events has confronted them.

And if we have before us a really great artist, he must have reflected in his work at least some of the essential aspects of the revolution.

The legal Russian press, though its pages teem with articles, letters and comments on Tolstoy's eightieth birthday, is least of all interested in analysing his works from the standpoint of the character of the Russian revolution and its motive forces.

The whole of this press is steeped to nausea in hypocrisy, hypocrisy of a double kind: official and liberal.

The former is the crude hypocrisy of the venal hack who was ordered yesterday to hound Leo Tolstoy, and today to show that Tolstoy is a patriot, and to try to observe the decencies before the eyes of Europe.

That the hacks of this kind have been paid for their screeds is common knowledge and they cannot deceive anybody.

Much more refined and, therefore, much more pernicious and dangerous is liberal hypocrisy. To listen to the Cadet Balalaikins of Rech, one would think that their sympathy for Tolstoy is of the most complete and ardent kind.

[Balalaikin—a character in Saltykov-Shchedrin's *A Modern Idyll*; a liberal windbag, adventurer and liar.]



Actually, their calculated declamations and pompous phrases about the “great seeker after God” are false from beginning to end, for no Russian liberal believes in Tolstoy’s God, or sympathises with Tolstoy’s criticism of the existing social order, lie associates himself with a popular name in order to increase his political capital, in order to pose as a leader of the nation-wide opposition; he seeks, with the din and thunder of claptrap, to drown the demand for a straight and clear answer to the question: what are the glaring contradictions of “Tolstoyism” due to, and what shortcomings and weaknesses of our revolution do they express?

The contradictions in Tolstoy’s works, views, doctrines, in his school, are indeed glaring. On the one hand, we have the great artist, the genius who has not only drawn incomparable pictures of Russian life but has made first-class contributions to world literature. On the other hand we have the landlord obsessed with Christ.

On the one hand, the remarkably powerful, forthright and sincere protest against social falsehood and hypocrisy; and on the other, the

“Tolstoyan”, i.e., the jaded, hysterical sniveller called the Russian intellectual, who publicly beats his breast and wails: “I am a bad wicked man, but I am practising moral self-perfection; I don’t eat meat any more, I now eat rice cutlets.”



On the one hand, merciless criticism of capitalist exploitation, exposure of government outrages, the farcical courts and the state administration, and unmasking of the profound contradictions between the growth of wealth and achievements of civilisation and the growth of poverty, degradation and misery among the working masses.

On the other, the crackpot preaching of submission, “resist not evil” with violence.

On the one hand, the most sober realism, the tearing away of all and sundry masks; on the other, the preaching of one of the most odious things on earth, namely, religion, the striving to replace officially appointed priests by priests who will serve from moral conviction, i. e., to cultivate the most refined and, therefore, particularly disgusting clericalism. Verily:

Thou art a pauper, yet thou art abundant,

Thou art mighty, yet thou art impotent—

—Mother Russia! [From the poem by N. A. Nekrasov “Who Can Be Happy and Free in Russia”.]

That Tolstoy, owing to these contradictions, could not possibly understand either the working-class movement and its role in the struggle for socialism, or the Russian revolution, goes without saying. But the contradictions in Tolstoy’s views and doctrines are not accidental; they express the contradictory conditions of Russian life in the last third of the nineteenth century.

The patriarchal countryside, only recently emancipated from serfdom, was literally given over to the capitalist and the tax-collector to be fleeced and plundered. The ancient foundations of peasant economy and peasant life, foundations that had really held for centuries, were broken up for scrap with extraordinary rapidity.

And the contradictions in Tolstoy's views must be appraised not from the standpoint of the present-day working-class movement and present-day socialism (such an appraisal is, of course, needed, but it is not enough), but from the standpoint of protest against advancing capitalism, against the ruining of the masses, who are being dispossessed of their land—a protest which had to arise from the patriarchal Russian countryside.



Tolstoy is absurd as a prophet who has discovered new nostrums for the salvation of mankind—and therefore the foreign and Russian “Tolstoyans” who have sought to convert the weakest side of his doctrine into a dogma, are not worth speaking of.

Tolstoy is great as the spokesman of the ideas and sentiments that emerged among the millions of Russian peasants at the time the bourgeois revolution was approaching in Russia.

Tolstoy is original, because the sum total of his views, taken as a whole, happens to express the specific features of our revolution as a peasant bourgeois revolution.

From this point of view, the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are indeed a mirror of those contradictory conditions in which the peasantry had to play their historical part in our revolution.

On the one hand, centuries of feudal oppression and decades of accelerated post-Reform pauperisation piled up mountains of hate, resentment, and desperate determination.

The striving to sweep away completely the official church, the landlords and the landlord government, to destroy all the old forms and ways of landownership, to clear the land, to replace the police-class state by a community of free and equal small peasants—this striving is the keynote of every historical step the peasantry has taken in our revolution; and, undoubtedly, the message of Tolstoy's writings conforms to this peasant striving far more than it does to abstract “Christian Anarchism”, as his “system” of views is sometimes appraised.

On the other hand the peasantry, striving towards new ways of life, had a

very crude, patriarchal, semi-religious idea of what kind of life this should be, by what struggle could liberty be won, what leaders it could have in this struggle, what was the attitude of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelligentsia towards the interests of peasant revolution, why the forcible overthrow of tsarist rule was needed in order to abolish landlordism.

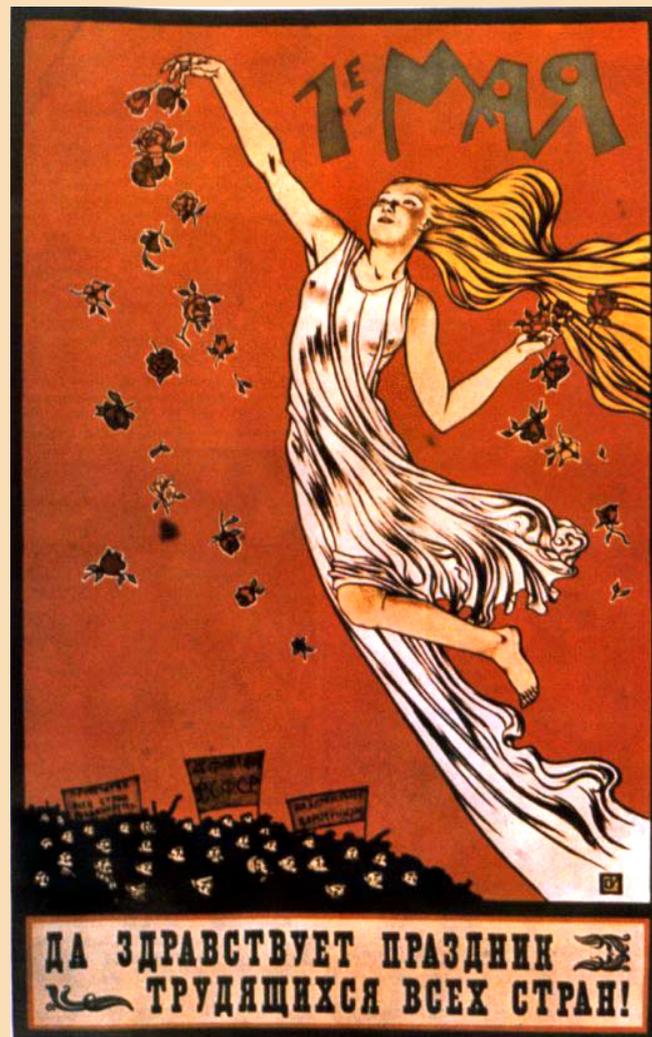
The whole past life of the peasantry had taught it to hate the landowner and the official, but it did not, and could not, teach it where to seek an answer to all these questions. In our revolution a minor part of the peasantry really did fight, did organise to some extent for this purpose; and a very small part indeed rose up in arms to exterminate its enemies, to destroy the tsar's servants and protectors of the landlords. Most of the peasantry wept and prayed, moralised and dreamed, wrote petitions and sent "pleaders"—quite in the vein of Leo Tolstoy.

And, as always happens in such cases, the effect of this Tolstoyan abstention from politics, this Tolstoyan renunciation of politics, this lack of interest in and understanding of politics, was that only a minority followed the lead of the class-conscious revolutionary proletariat, while the majority became the prey of those unprincipled, servile, bourgeois intellectuals who under the name of Cadets hastened from a meeting of Trudoviks to Stolypin's ante room, and begged, haggled, reconciled and promised to reconcile—until they were kicked out with a military jack-boot.

Tolstoy's ideas are a mirror of the weakness, the short comings of our peasant revolt, a reflection of the flabbiness of the patriarchal countryside and of the hidebound cowardice of the "enterprising muzhik".

Take the soldiers' insurrections in 1905-06. In social composition these men who fought in our revolution were partly peasants and partly proletarians.

The proletarians were in the minority; therefore the movement in the armed forces does not even approximately show the same nationwide solidarity, the same party consciousness, as were displayed by



the proletariat, which became Social-Democratic as if by the wave of a hand. Yet there is nothing more mistaken than the view that the insurrections in the armed forces failed because no officers had led them.



On the contrary, the enormous progress the revolution had made since the time of the Narodnaya Volya was shown precisely by the fact that the “grey herd” rose in arms against their superiors, and it was this self-dependency of theirs that so frightened the liberal landlords and the liberal officers.

[Narodnaya Volya (The People’s Will)—an illegal organisation of the revolutionary-minded Narodnik intellectuals founded in 1879 with the object of fighting the autocracy. It existed up to the second half of the eighties.]

The common soldier fully sympathised with the peasants’ cause; his eyes lit up at the very mention of land.

There was more than one case when authority in the armed forces passed to the mass of the rank and file, but determined use of this authority was hardly made at all; the soldiers

wavered; after a couple of days, in some cases a few hours, after killing some hated officer, they released the others who had been arrested, parleyed with the authorities and then faced the firing squad, or bared their backs for the birch, or put on the yoke again—quite in the vein of Leo Tolstoy!

Tolstoy reflected the pent-up hatred, the ripened striving for a better lot, the desire to get rid of the past—and also the immature dreaming, the political inexperience, the revolutionary flabbiness.

Historical and economic conditions explain both the inevitable beginning of the revolutionary struggle of the masses and their unpreparedness for the struggle, their Tolstoyan non-resistance to evil, which was a most serious cause of the defeat of the first revolutionary campaign.

It is said that beaten armies learn well.

Of course, revolutionary classes can be compared with armies only in a

very limited sense. The development of capitalism is hourly changing and intensifying the conditions which roused the millions of peasants—united by their hatred for the feudalist landlords and their government—for the revolutionary- democratic struggle.

Among the peasantry themselves the growth of exchange, of the rule of the market and the power of money is steadily ousting old-fashioned patriarchalism and the patriarchal Tolstoyan ideology.

But there is one gain from the first years of the revolution and the first reverses in mass revolutionary struggle about which there can be no doubt. It is the mortal blow struck at the former softness and flabbiness of the masses.

The lines of demarcation have become more distinct.

The cleavage of classes and parties has taken place. Under the hammer blows of the lessons taught by Stolypin, and with undeviating and consistent agitation by the revolutionary Social-Democrats not only the socialist proletariat but also the democratic masses of the peasantry will inevitably advance from their midst more and more steeled. fighters who will be less capable of falling into our historical sin of Tolstoyism!



Lenin – The Development of Capitalism in Russia

The Process of the Formation of a Home Market for Large-Scale Industry

(PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION)



This book was written in the period preceding the Russian Revolution, during the slight lull that set in after the outbreak of the big strikes of 1895-1896. At that time the working-class movement withdrew, as it were, into itself, spreading in breadth and depth and paving the way for the beginning in 1901 of the demonstration movement.

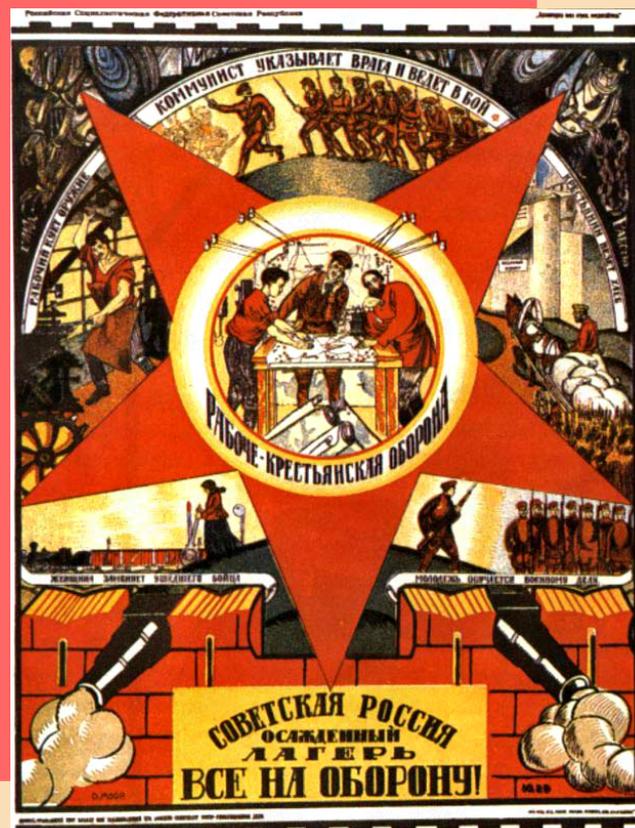
The analysis of the social-economic system and, consequently, of the class structure of Russia given in this work on the basis of an economic investigation and critical analysis of statistics, has now been confirmed by the open political action of all classes in the course of the revolution.

The leading role of the proletariat has been fully revealed. It has also been revealed that the strength of the proletariat in the process of history is immeasurably greater than its share of the total population. The economic basis of the one phenomenon and the other is demonstrated in the present work.

Further, the revolution is now increasingly revealing the dual position and dual role of the peasantry.

On the one hand, the tremendous survivals of corvée economy and all kinds of survivals of serfdom, with the unprecedented impoverishment and ruin of the peasant poor, fully explain the deep sources of the revolutionary peasant movement, the deep roots of the revolutionary character of the peasantry as a mass.

On the other hand, in the course of the revolution, the character of the various political parties, and the numerous ideological-political trends reveal the inherently contradictory class structure of



this mass, its petty-bourgeois character, the antagonism between the proprietor and the proletarian trends within it.

The vacillation of the impoverished small master between the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and the revolutionary proletariat is as inevitable as the phenomenon existent in every capitalist society that an insignificant minority of small producers wax rich, “get on in the world,” turn into bourgeois, while the overwhelming majority are either utterly ruined and become wage-workers or paupers, or eternally eke out an almost proletarian existence. The economic basis of both these trends among the peasantry is demonstrated in the present essay.

With this economic basis the revolution in Russia is, of course, inevitably a bourgeois revolution. This Marxist proposition is absolutely irrefutable. It must never be forgotten. It must always be applied to all the economic and political problems of the Russian Revolution.

But one must know how to apply it. A concrete analysis of the status and the interests of the different classes must serve as a means of defining the precise significance of this truth when applied to this or that problem.

The opposite mode of reasoning frequently met with among the Right-wing Social-Democrats headed by Plekhanov, i.e., the endeavour to look for answers to concrete questions in the simple logical development of the general truth about the basic character of our revolution, is a vulgarisation of Marxism and downright mockery of dialectical materialism.

Of such people, who from the general truth of the character of this revolution deduce, for example, the leading role of the “bourgeoisie” in the revolution, or the need for socialists to support the liberals, Marx would very likely have repeated the words once quoted by him from Heine: “I have sown dragon’s teeth and harvested fleas.”

With the present economic basis of the Russian Revolution, two main lines of its development and outcome are objectively possible:

Either the old landlord economy, bound as it is by thousands of threads to serfdom, is retained and turns slowly into purely capitalist, “Junker” economy.

The basis of the final transition from labour-service to capitalism is the internal metamorphosis of feudalist



landlord economy.

The entire agrarian system of the state becomes capitalist and for a long time retains feudalist features. Or the old landlord economy is broken up by revolution, which destroys all the relics of serfdom, and large landownership in the first place.

The basis of the final transition from labour-service to capitalism is the free development of small peasant farming, which has received a tremendous impetus as a result of the expropriation of the landlords' estates in the interests of the peasantry.

The entire agrarian system becomes capitalist, for the more completely the vestiges of serfdom are destroyed the more rapidly does the differentiation of the peasantry proceed. In other words: either—the retention, in the main, of landed proprietorship and of the chief supports of the old “superstructure”; hence, the predominant role of the liberal-monarchist bourgeois and landlord, the rapid transition of the well-to-do peasantry to their side, the degradation of the peasant masses, not only expropriated on a vast scale but enslaved, in addition, by one or other kind of Cadet - proposed land-redemption payments, and downtrodden and dulled by the dominance of reaction; the executors of such a bourgeois revolution will be politicians of a type approximating to the Octobrists.

Or—the destruction of landlordism and of all the chief supports of the corresponding old “superstructure”; the predominant role of the proletariat and the peasant masses, with the neutralising of the unstable or counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie; the speediest and freest development of the productive forces on a capitalist basis, under the best circumstances for the worker and peasant masses at all conceivable under commodity production;—hence, the establishment of the most favourable conditions for the further accomplishment by the working class of its real and fundamental task of socialist reorganisation.

Of course, infinitely diverse combinations of elements of this or that type of capitalist evolution are possible, and only hopeless pedants could set about solving the peculiar and complex problems arising merely by quoting this or that opinion of Marx about a different historical epoch.

The essay here presented to the reader is devoted to an analysis of the pre-revolutionary economy of Russia. In a revolutionary epoch, life in a country proceeds with such speed and impetuosity that it is impossible to define the major results of economic evolution in the heat of political struggle.

Messrs. The Stolypins, on the one hand, and the liberals on the other (and not only Cadets à la Struve, but all the Cadets in general), are working systematically, doggedly and consistently to accomplish the revolution according to the first pattern.

The coup d'état of June 3, 1907, that we have recently witnessed, marks a victory for the counter-revolution, which is striving to ensure the complete predominance of the landlords in the so-called representative

body of the Russian people.

[June 3, 1907, was the day on which the Second State Duma was disbanded and a new law was promulgated dealing with the elections to the Third State Duma, that ensured a majority for the landlords and capitalists in the Duma. The tsar's government treacherously violated the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, did away with constitutional rights and had the Social-Democratic group in the Second Duma arraigned and sentenced to hard labour. The so-called coup d'état of June 3 marked a temporary victory of the counter-revolution.]

But how far this “victory” is a lasting one is another matter; the struggle for the second outcome of the revolution goes on. Not only the proletariat, but also the broad masses of the peasantry are striving, more or less resolutely, more or less consistently, and more or less consciously, for this outcome.

However much the counter-revolution tries to strangle the direct mass struggle by outright violence, however much the Cadets try to strangle it by means of their despicable and hypocritical counter revolutionary ideas, that struggle, in spite of all, is breaking out, now here and now there, and laying its impress upon the policy of the “labour,” Narodnik parties, although the top circles of petty-bourgeois politicians are undoubtedly contaminated (especially the “Popular Socialists” and Trudoviks) with the Cadet spirit of treachery, Molchalinism [a synonym for sycophancy, toadyism. Derived from the name Molchalin, a character in Griboyedov's play Wit Works Woe.] and smugness characteristic of moderate and punctilious philistines or bureaucrats.

How this struggle will end, what the final result of the first onset of the Russian Revolution will be—it is at present impossible to say. Hence, the time has not yet come (moreover, the immediate Party duties of a participant in the working-class movement leave no leisure) for a thorough revision of this essay.

The second edition cannot overstep the bounds of a characterisation of Russian economy before the revolution. The author had to confine himself to going over and correcting the text and also to making the most essential additions from the latest statistical material. These are recent horse-census data, harvest statistics, returns of the 1897 census of the population of Russia, new data from factory statistics, etc.

The Author

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