



LENIN

Reform  
vs  
Reformism

Erdogan A

**SELECTED WRITINGS**  
**ON**  
**REFORM**  
**AND**  
**REFORMISM**  
**LENIN**

**Selected writings from Lenin researched and compiled for  
various articles on the subject. *E. A***

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## Introduction

### Confusing the "reform" with "reformism"; further shift to the right of reformism

"the entire **minimum programme** of the R.S.D.L.P., which envisaged a struggle for democratic reforms that would facilitate the preparation and transition to the socialist revolution. Like the old "economists," who could not understand the need for the political struggle of the working class under conditions of capitalism, the "imperialist economists" **did not understand the significance of the struggle for democratic reforms** under conditions of imperialism." *Lenin, CW 38, P 582-583*

## REFORM and REFORMISM

To confuse reform with reformism, on one hand, is a result of learning Marxism Leninism by rote and not applying the dialectic of Marxism to the subject, on the other and more often is a result of anarcho-Trotskyite tactics. They lump and equate the meaning and context of each term in order to reject any struggle for reform and **disguise themselves** as anti-reformist, anti-revisionist "revolutionaries". Lenin states:

**" Recognition of revolutionary activity along the lines indicated above, not denial of legal activity and of the struggle for reforms, should be the essence of the "struggle against the Marsh (= wavering, lack of principle, "turn table" ("Drehscheibe"), weathercock). "**  
(Page 173)

**Contrary to misconception that Reforms** (*not reformism*) **excludes revolution**, Lenin says, "Reforms do not, of course, exclude revolution " (page 23), but **reform is not a revolution, but an alternative to the revolution for the forced bourgeoisie**. Lenin continues; "The point is that revolutionaries must not exclude themselves, not give way to **reformism**, i.e., that socialists **should not substitute reformist work** for their revolutionary work." (Page 131)

(*Not Reforms*) **Reformism excludes revolution**, it is **counter-revolutionary ideology that limits change**.

**The concept of "reform"**, " says Lenin," is undoubtedly the **opposite of the concept of "revolution"**. Not remembering this contradiction, not remembering the line separating these two concepts constantly causes serious mistakes in all historical debates. However, **this contrast is not an absolute thing, this line is not a dead thing**, on the contrary, it is a **living and changing thing**, and the individual must **be able to define it in any specific case**. " (Page 29)

In other words, "**reform**" in connection with the revolutionary struggle **cannot be handled in an absolute context** in all situations and periods, such as " it does not serve the **revolution, but serves the counter revolution**," or " **serves the revolution** ". It should be handled in a concrete context with its vitality and variability in the revolutionary **situation and in non-revolutionary situations** and based on the evaluation of any given specific situations.

First of all, **reforms are not a product of "reformists", but they are democratic rights which the working people have gained as a result of their opposition, active reaction and struggle against the power of capital,** that is, even if it was spontaneous, they are the byproduct of a **struggle** . "Reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary struggle" says Lenin (Page 42) And for those who claims otherwise, Lenin says " What have metaphysics got to do with it, **when historical experience,** the experience of England, France, Germany and Russia, the experience of all modern history in Europe and Asia, shows that serious reforms have always been merely the **by-product of a movement completely free of the narrowness of reformism?"** (Page 79)

**Reform and reformism are not one and the same.** Reform, regardless of its extent, refers to **the right gained as a result of the struggle.** **Reformism is the attempt to take the struggle of working people for reforms, the degree of rights gained under control and to prevent it from going further.** One is related to the "gained - or desired to gain" right(s), **the other is the ideology and practice of limiting the struggle to these rights in order to prevent revolutions. Reformists, as Lenin puts it," only recognize reforms, they reject revolution"** (Page 58) "We are by no means opposed to the fight for reforms." (Page 169)

Stalin explains it as follows; " the bourgeoisie may sometimes concede certain partial reforms while remaining on the basis of the existing social-economic system. Acting in this way, it calculates that these concessions are necessary in order to

preserve its class rule. This is the essence of reform. Revolution, however, means the transference of power from one class to another. That is why it is impossible to describe any reform as revolution." (Page 176)

"Reformist tactics," says Lenin, "**are unlikely to achieve real reforms. The most effective way to secure real reforms is to pursue the tactics of the revolutionary class struggle. In fact, reforms are won as a result of the revolutionary class struggle** because of its independence, mass power and determination." (Page 88)

So, the "reforms" are not the achievements of reformists **but of revolutionary struggle.** "In contrast to the reformists fight for reforms to hinder revolutionary struggle, in view of the Marxist Leninists" **all struggles for reforms should be channeled and must be converted into the revolutionary struggle.**" (Page 96)

In other words, the struggle of the Marxist Leninists is not against "reforms", **but against "reformism" and "reformists"**, who take the **struggle for reform and reforms - which are inseparable part of the democratic struggle-** as a final goal, and to limit the struggle of the masses only with "reforms" .

"Unlike anarchists," says Lenin," Marxists **recognize the struggle for reforms**, that is, they **recognize the struggle for measures that improve the conditions of the entire working class**, without destroying the power of the ruling class. **They carry out the most decisive struggle against reformists**, which

directly or indirectly restrict them. **Reformism** is the **bourgeois deceit of workers who will always remain a paid slave**, as long as capital is dominant. " (Page 18)

Therefore, in terms of the tactical approach to reforms, Lenin says, " We shall never reduce our tasks to that of supporting **the slogans of the reformist** bourgeoisie that are **most in vogue**. " And continues," We pursue an independent policy and **put forward only such reforms** as are undoubtedly **favourable to the interests of the revolutionary struggle**, that undoubtedly enhance the independence, class-consciousness and fighting efficiency of the proletariat. Only by such tactics can **reforms from above**, which are always half-hearted, always hypocritical, and always conceal some bourgeois or police snare, be made innocuous. " (Page 88)

Lenin summarizes the difference. Marxist Leninists and class-conscious "**workers struggle for better conditions** and use them to **speed up the fight** against wage-slavery. **The reformists** try to divide and deceive the workers with little concessions to take them apart **from the class struggle**. But workers use **reforms to develop and expand the class struggle, seeing the false nature of reformism**. " (Page 18)

" **Revolutionaries**, " says Lenin," **they played a tremendous historical role in the social struggle** and in all social crises, **even if the immediate result of these crises was semi-voluntary reforms**. "And it reveals the essence of what reform is; "**Revolutionaries are leaders of the social forces that affect**



**all changes; reforms are by-products of the revolutionary struggle".** (Page 42)

Only those who have no ties with the masses, do not trust the masses, have been participating in the choir of religious or otherwise reactionaries for years, singing the same songs with them, would consider **the** reaction, struggle and achievements of the **working peoples** as the **gain of "reformism"**. Since, aside from being indifferent to the democratic demands of the **masses**, they take a stand against these demands, **do not understand** and **do not believe the power of the masses, according to them any gain is only the gain of** or this or that **party in order to soften the anger and hatred of the masses** and to try channeling it in the interests of the system. **And again, according to them**, any democratization in the political system is simply a deception without any benefit to the working people and their struggle. According Lenin, however, "**The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism**, not lack of rights." (Page 172)

For those phrasemakers who argue that the fight for reforms is not "class" struggle, but a conciliatory one; " "The **class perspective** " on the political struggle, says Lenin, "**requires the proletariat to provide a driving force for every democratic movement.** The **political demands** of working-class democracy are in **principle** not different from **those of bourgeois democracy, the difference is quantitative** ... we have many allies in the struggle for political liberation, and we should **not be indifferent to them.** "" (Page 104)

Likewise, "**The revolutionary proletariat**," says Lenin, " will reject such a theory with contempt. .... the demand for the republic, for arming the people, for the separation of the Church from the State, for full democratic liberties, and for decisive economic reforms." (Page 115)

Unlike revisionists and left-wing phrasemakers rejecting to fight for reforms at every situation, Lenin says; "**everywhere the Marxist workers are ahead of the liquidators, in the direct, immediate, "day-to-day" activity of agitation, organisation, fighting for reforms and using them.**" (Page 18)

Marxist Leninists "**has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities.**" (Page 126) But unlike reformists, ML "**subordinates the struggle for reforms,** as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism." (Page 126) In the same way, Lenin states that the "**Marxists are working tirelessly, not missing a single "possibility" of winning and using reforms, and not condemning,** but supporting, painstakingly developing every step beyond reformism in propaganda, agitation, mass economic struggle, etc." (Page 18)

"" **Those who refrain from making efforts in this way... make the liberals dominate,** hand over the political education of the workers to their hands and **leave the sovereignty in the political struggle to the leaders of the bourgeois democracy in the final analysis.**" (Page 104)

As a result of the uneven development of capitalism in different countries, the "bourgeoisie" says Lenin, " as

represented by their ideologists and political leaders, are coming out increasingly **in defense of so-called social reforms as opposed to the idea of social revolution**. Not liberalism versus socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution—is the formula of the modern, “advanced”, educated bourgeoisie. " (Page 58)

To stop the evolving struggles of the masses and **channeling them into reformism**, " everywhere the bourgeoisie seek, in one way or another, to corrupt the workers and turn them into contented slaves who have given up all thought of doing away with slavery. " (Page 18)

**It is an illusion to expect revolutionarism** from the "**masses**" **while being** isolated from them **and disinterested in their economic and democratic demands**. Inevitably, due to desperation and lack of leadership, the masses will be under the influence of reformists. And as Lenin puts it; "**The stronger the reformist influence among workers, the weaker the workers, the more they depend on the bourgeoisie**. " (Page 18)

Stalin summarizes the difference between Marxism Leninism and reformism as follows;

"" **To a reformist**, reforms are everything, while revolutionary work is something incidental, something just to talk about, mere eyewash. That is why, with reformist tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are inevitably transformed into an instrument for strengthening that rule, an instrument for

disintegrating the revolution. .... **To a revolutionary**, on the contrary, the main thing is revolutionary work and not reforms; to him reforms are a byproduct of the revolution. That is why, with revolutionary tactics under the conditions of bourgeois rule, reforms are naturally transformed into an instrument for disintegrating that rule, into an instrument for strengthening the revolution, into a strongpoint for the further development of the revolutionary movement. "" . (Page 176)

Mixing the **"reform"** and the struggle for **"reforms"** with **"reformism"** and **"reformist"** means moving away from the ABCs of Marxism and breaking its wings. **Especially in times when there is no revolutionary situation**, in Lenin's words, **" A period of reform. The absence of a revolutionary situation. This is the essence of the work."** (Page 16)

"The liquidators are reformers ..." says Lenin and continues; " If there were a group that **denied the use of reforms and partial improvements**, we could not join it, because that would be a **non-Marxist policy**, a policy harmful to the workers. Neither could we join the liquidators, because repudiation and abuse of the **"underground"**, repudiation and relegation of the two **"pillars"**, the advocacy in present-day Russia of a struggle for a legal party and the possibility of political reforms—all this is a betrayal of the working class, desertion to the bourgeoisie. " (Page 24)

In these seemingly complicated words, Lenin emphasizes that the rejection of reforms and the struggle for them **is anti-Marxist**, as well as betrayal of the working class in association with reformists, **that is, he reveals the difference between reform and reformism.**

In terms of the importance of struggle for reforms, it is useful to quote the following words of Lenin in evaluating a period;

" Yes, we are undoubtedly passing through an era of reforms..... **Of course, these are not the reforms that denote a down-grade in political development....** Such reforms are always foretokens and precursors of revolution. " (Page101)

"We try to help the working class to get the smallest possible" says Lenin, "but real improvement (economic & political) in their situation and we add always that no reform can be durable, sincere, serious if not seconded by revolutionary methods of struggle of the masses. We preach always that a socialist party **not uniting this struggle for reforms with the revolutionary methods** of working-class movement can **become a sect, can be severed from the masses**, and that is the most pernicious menace to the success of the clear-cut revolutionary socialism." (Page 167)

**The struggle for "reforms" and for the demands as such, is not** only carrying an important weight for the "preparatory period" – where a revolutionary situation does not exist. **Any demand for "reform",** in any specific time, at the same time, **may carry within the agitation of revolutionary "uprising".** (Other than Exceptions) The masses will not

spontaneously rise up collectively, most likely, one or more **"reform" demands** of that specific period for **the broadest masses will be the reason for this insurrection and may be the leadership's insurrection agitation.**

Consequently, **"reforms" and "reformist", "reformism" should not be confused.** In pursuit of an "anti-revisionist" appearance, disguise, such "far-left" approaches are **essentially not revolutionary, but reactionary, further to the right of reformists. If the issue is "the fight against revisionism",** as Lenin puts, it is " " **not the denial of legal activity and of the struggle for reforms, (it) should be the essence of the "struggle against the Marsh (revisionism).**" (Page 173) **"The "Kautskyites", the "Centre", are revolutionaries in word and reformists in deed"** (Page 170)

" Divorce the struggle for reforms from the struggle for the final goal—that is what Bernstein's preaching actually amounts to. Divorce the struggle for improvements, for freedom of association, etc., **from the struggle against reformism,** from the defense of Marxism, from its spirit and its political trend—that is what the preaching of D. and the other liquidators actually amounts to." (Page 159)

E.A

30 July 2019

## MAY DAY AND THE WAR

Lenin

April 1915

Proletarskaya Revolutsia No. 1.

Collected Works, Volume 36, pages 322-328.

Extract

### COLLAPSE OF PACIFIST DREAMS

31. Capitalism without imperialism? (Shall we look back?)

32. Theoretically (in the abstract) it is possible even without colonies, etc.

33. Just as with a 4-hour working day, 3,000 workers minimum....

Ad 33: "Capitalism can develop without imperialism, without wars, without colonies, with full freedom of trade."

Is that true?

Capitalism can provide thousands of millions not for war, but in aid of the paupers and the workers, thereby perpetuating the domination of the capitalist class!

Theoretically identical propositions. "Compelling pressure of the working class and humanitarian measures of the bourgeoisie." The whole point is that such things can be compelled not by pressure in general; what is needed is pressure with the force of a real revolution. And the revolution

and counter-revolution will sharpen the struggle to something more essential.

The question boils down to a struggle for reforms. This struggle is legitimate and necessary within definite limits, viz.:

(1) absence of a revolutionary situation; (2) partial character of the reforms, not to sharpen the struggle of classes to the point of revolution.

34. On account of what? On account of the horrors of war? (And what about the terrible profits?)

On account of pressure from the proletariat? (And what about the opportunists' betrayal?)

35. Peace without annexations, "Abolition of secret disarmament, etc., etc. diplomacy"?

Objective meaning: clerical consolations ((Feuerbach: religion consoles. "Utopia or Hell"? N.B. [The review of Forel in Das Volksrecht]

Is it useful?))

36. The struggle for reforms? Yes.—Its limits. Particulars.

An epoch of reforms, the absence of a revolutionary situation.

This is the crux.



## **Marxism and Reformism**

Pravda Truda No. 2, September 12, 1913

Lenin

Collected Works, Volume 19, pages 372-375.

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

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

And conversely, workers who have assimilated Marx's theory, i.e., realised the inevitability of wage-slavery so long as capitalist rule remains, will not be fooled by any bourgeois

reforms. Understanding that where capitalism continued to exist reforms cannot be either enduring or far-reaching, the workers fight for better conditions and use them to intensify the fight against wage-slavery. The reformists try to divide and deceive the workers, to divert them from the class struggle by petty concessions. But the workers, having seen through the falsity of reformism, utilise reforms to develop and broaden their class struggle.

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

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

We are not reformists, the St. Petersburg liquidators wrote, because we have not said that reforms are everything and the

ultimate goal nothing; we have spoken of movement to the ultimate goal; we have spoken of advancing through the struggle for reforms to the fulness of the aims set.

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

First fact. The liquidator Sedov, summarising the statements of all the liquidators, wrote that of the Marxists' "three pillars" two are no longer suitable for our agitation. Sedov retained the demand for an eight-hour day, which, theoretically, can be realised as a reform. He deleted or relegated to the background the very things that go beyond reforms. Consequently, Sedov relapsed into downright opportunism, following the very policy expressed in the formula: the ultimate goal is nothing. When the "ultimate goal" (even in relation to democracy) is pushed further and further away from our agitation, that is reformism.

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

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

Fourth fact. The workers' economic movement evokes the wrath and attacks of the liquidators (who speak of "crazes",

“milling the air”, etc., etc.) as soon as it adopts slogans that go beyond reformism.

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

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

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

discipline and advocacy of reformism and a liberal-labour policy, are only disorganising the working-class movement.

Nor, moreover, should the fact be overlooked that in Russia reformism is manifested also in a peculiar form, in identifying the fundamental political situation in present-day Russia with that of present-day Europe. From the liberal's point of view this identification is legitimate, for the liberal believes and professes the view that "thank God, we have a Constitution". The liberal expresses the interests of the bourgeoisie when he insists that, after October 17, every step by democracy beyond reformism is madness, a crime, a sin, etc.

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

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

## Two Paths

Lenin

Rabochy No. 3, May 24, 1914.

Collected Works, Volume 20, pages 306-308.

In an article which attracted the attention of the class-conscious workers, An, leader of the Caucasian liquidators, recently announced that he disagreed with Luch and its successors, disagreed with their opportunist tactics.

This statement implies the break-up of the "August bloc", a fact no subterfuges or tricks can refute.

At present, however, We wish to draw the readers' attention to something else, namely, to An's argument about Russia's two paths of development. He writes:

"Luch bases its tactic on the possibility of reform, it aims at reform. Pravda bases its tactic on a 'storm', it aims at a break-up."

From this An draws the conclusion that the two tactics have to be united. This conclusion is wrong. It is not a Marxist conclusion.

Let us examine the matter.

By what is Russia's path, the nature and speed of her development, determined?

By the alignment of social forces, by the resultant of the class struggle.

That is obvious.

What social forces operate in Russia? What is the line of the class struggle?

Russia is a capitalist country; she cannot but develop capitalistically. Russia is now undergoing a bourgeois-democratic transformation, a release from the serf-owning system, emancipation. Under conditions of world capitalism Russia's emancipation is inevitable. What we do not yet know is the resultant of the social forces that are working towards emancipation. These forces, in the main, are: 1) bourgeois monarchist liberalism (the capitalists and some of the landlords of the Progressist, Cadet and partly Octobrist parties); 2) the bourgeois democrats (the peasantry, urban petty bourgeois, intellectuals, and so on); 3) the proletariat.

Each of these classes acts—we take only the action of the masses, of course—in line with the economic position of the given class. There can be only one resultant.

In what sense, then, can we speak of Russia's two paths? Only in the sense that, until the outcome of the struggle, we do not and shall not know this resultant, which will approach one of the two simplest and clearest lines visible at once to everybody. The first line is "reform", the second a "storm".

Reform is the name given to changes which leave the power in the country in the hands of the old ruling class. Changes of the

opposite order are called “storms”. The class interests of bourgeois liberalism demand only reforms, since the bourgeoisie is more afraid of “storms” than of reaction, and wishes to keep the old feudal institutions (the bureaucracy, two chambers, and so on) as protection against the workers. The peasantry in all countries of the world without exception, Russia included, vacillates, in the matter of bourgeois-democratic reform, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Such vacillation is inevitable, since the peasants are opposed to the landlords and serfdom while themselves being petty proprietors and petty bourgeois.

As for the proletariat, its interests, which coincide with those of the vast majority of the population, of all the exploited, move in a direction that is not reformist, along a path which is described in Russia as that of the “three pillars”.

If the majority of the peasants and the population follow the liberals, the “path” will be the worst, the least advantageous to the workers and the exploited, and the most painful to them. If the majority of the peasants and the population follow the workers, the reverse will be the case. One resultant or the other will be fully revealed only by the final outcome of the struggle.

We now see the true implications of An’s vague and confused argument. He has sensed rather than understood the liquidators’ opportunism and their betrayal of the working class.



The liquidators are reformists. They pursue, in effect, a liberal-labour, not a Marxist workers' policy. They are trying to subordinate the workers to the bourgeoisie.

The Pravdists are pursuing a Marxist and proletarian policy by defending the interests of the working class in the matter of transforming Russia. Do the Pravdists overlook the possibilities of reform? This question is easily answered by referring to the facts. Take insurance reform, which is something real, and not dreamt up. Everyone sees that the Pravdists seized on this ten times more strongly than the liquidators did: see *Voprosy Strakhovania*[1] and the results of the elections to the All-Russia Insurance Board.

Take the "partial demands" of the economic struggle during strikes. Everyone knows that the Pravdists are conducting this real and not dreamt-up campaign a thousand times more intensely and energetically.

If there were a group that denied the use of reforms and partial improvements, we could not join it, because that would be a non-Marxist policy, a policy harmful to the workers.

Neither could we join the liquidators, because repudiation and abuse of the "underground", repudiation and relegation of the two "pillars", the advocacy in present-day Russia of a struggle for a legal party and the possibility of political reforms—all this is a betrayal of the working class, desertion to the bourgeoisie.

The Pravdists, in the words of An, "aim at a storm and break-up" but, as the facts show, miss no opportunity, how ever

slight, of supporting real reforms and partial improvements and explaining to the masses the sham of reformism. This is the only correct, the only truly Marxist tactic, and that is why it has been adopted by the overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers throughout Russia (this has been proved by the facts, by the number of workers' groups).

Only adherents of petty-bourgeois democracy, the Narodniks and the liquidators, are vainly fighting against the workers, against Pravdism.

## Notes

[1] *Voprosy Strakhovania (Insurance Question)*—a Bolshevik legal journal, published at intervals in St. Petersburg from October 1913 to March 1918. It worked not only for the achievement of workers' insurance but for the Bolshevik "uncurtailed slogans" of an eight-hour day, confiscation of the landed estates and a democratic republic. Prominent insurance campaigners—the Bolsheviks N. A. Skripnik, P. I. Stuchka, A. N. Vinokurov, N. M. Shvernik and others—contributed to the journal.

## **Apropos of an Anniversary**

V. I. Lenin

Mysl, No. 3, February 1911.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 110-118.

The fiftieth anniversary of the so-called Peasant Reform raises many interesting questions. Here we can touch only upon some of the economic and historical issues, deferring publicist topics in the narrower sense of the term to another occasion.

About ten or fifteen years ago, when the controversies between the Narodniks and the Marxists were first brought before the general public, the difference in the appraisal of the so-called Peasant Reform emerged time and again as one of the most important issues of that controversy. The theoreticians of Narodism, for instance, the well-known Mr. V. V., or Nikolai—on, regarded the basic features of the Peasant Reform of 1861 as something fundamentally different from, and hostile to, capitalism. They said that the Regulations of February 19 legalised the “endowment of the producer with means of production” and sanctioned “people’s production” as distinct from capitalist production. They regarded the Regulations of February 19 as an earnest of the non-capitalist evolution of Russia.

Even then the Marxists opposed a fundamentally different view to this theory. The Regulations of February 19 were one of the episodes in the replacement of the serf (or feudal) mode

of production by the bourgeois (or capitalist) mode. According to this view, the Regulations contain no other historico-economic elements. "The endowment of the producer with means of production" is an empty, sentimental phrase which glosses over the plain fact that the peasants, who are small producers in agriculture, were being converted from producers engaged primarily in natural economy into producers of commodities. The precise extent to which commodity production had developed in peasant economy in various parts of Russia during that epoch is another question. But it is beyond doubt that the "emancipated" peasant was entering the sphere of commodity production and none other. "Free labour" in place of serf labour thus meant nothing more than the free labour of the wage-worker or small independent producer under the conditions of commodity production, i.e., of bourgeois social and economic relations. The land redemption payments brought out this nature of the Reform in even bolder relief, for they lent a stimulus to monetary economy, i.e., they increased the peasant's dependence on the market.

The Narodniks saw in the emancipation of the peasants with the provision of land allotments a non-capitalist principle, the "genesis" of what they called "people's production". In the emancipation of the peasants without land they saw the capitalist principle. The Narodniks (particularly Mr. Nikolai-on) based this view on the teachings of Marx, citing in its justification that the freeing of the worker from the means of production is a fundamental condition of the capitalist mode

of production. A singular phenomenon: beginning with the eighties (if not still earlier) Marxism was already such an indisputable, actually dominating force among the progressive social doctrines in Western Europe, that for a long time in Russia theories hostile to Marxism could not be openly expressed. These theories made sophistry of Marxism and falsified it (sometimes unconsciously); they appeared to be Marxist and, "by referring to Marx", tried to deny the application of Marx's theory to Russia! The Narodnik theory of Mr. Nikolai-on claimed to be "Marxist" (in the 1880s and 1890s); subsequently the liberal-bourgeois theory of Messrs. Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky and Co. began by "almost" fully accepting Marxism, these gentlemen developed their views and preached their liberalism under the guise of "the further critical development" of Marxism. We shall probably have more than one occasion to return to this singular feature of the development of Russian social theories since the end of the nineteenth century (up to and including contemporary opportunism—liquidationism, which clings to Marxist terminology in order to cover up its anti-Marxist substance).

What interests us at the present moment is the Narodnik appraisal of the "great Reform". It is a radical mistake to think that the striving to deprive the peasants of land in 1861 represented a capitalist tendency, whereas the striving to endow them with land was anti-capitalist, socialist (the best among the Narodniks saw in the term "people's production" a pseudonym for socialism, a pseudonym imposed by censorship restrictions). This view is a great sin against

historical truth; it transfers Marx's "ready-made" formula (a "formula" which is applicable only to highly developed commodity production) to the conditions of serfdom. Depriving the peasants of land in 1861 in most cases actually meant the creation, not of a free labourer in capitalist production, but of a bonded (i. e., in fact a semi-serf or even almost serf) tenant on the same land that belonged to the "master", the landowner. Actually, the "allotments" of 1861 meant in most cases the creation, not of a free and independent farmer, but of a tenant bound to the land and in fact compelled to perform the same old *corvée* by cultivating the landlord's land with his own farm equipment, in payment for pasture, for meadows, for the necessary arable land, etc.

The peasant entered the sphere of bourgeois social relations to the extent to which he was actually, and not merely nominally, emancipated from serf relations (the essence of these relations was "labour-rent", i. e., the labour performed for the landowner by a peasant endowed with an allotment of land). But this real emancipation from feudal relations was much more complicated than the Narodniks thought. At that time the struggle between those who were in favour of depriving the peasants of land and those in favour of "endowing" them, often expressed merely a struggle between two feudalist camps, a dispute over the question as to whether it was more advantageous to the landowner to have a tenant (or a peasant rendering labour service) without any land or with an "allotment", i. e., one bound to the locality, bound by a patch of land insufficient to provide for his living and therefore

compelling him to hire himself out for a “livelihood” (selling himself into bondage to the landowner).

On the other hand, there is no doubt that the greater the amount of land the peasants received upon their emancipation, and the cheaper the price they had to pay for it, the more rapidly, fully and freely would capitalism have developed in Russia, and the sooner would the survivals of serfdom and bondage have disappeared, the larger the home market would have become, and the more certain would the development of towns, industry and trade have been.

The Narodniks made the mistake of dealing with the problem in a utopian manner, in the abstract, unrelated to the, actual historic circumstances. They declared that the “allotment” was the basis for independent small-scale farming. Insofar as this was true, the peasant “endowed with land” became a commodity producer and found himself in the conditions of bourgeois society. Actually, however, the “allotment” was too often so small, so burdened with excessive payments, situated so unfavourably for the peasant and so “fortunately” for the landlord, that the “allotment” peasant inevitably found himself in a position of unredeemable bondage, his status remained, in fact, the same as under the relations of serfdom; he performed the same old *corvée* service (in the form of labour-service, etc.).

Thus, two tendencies were latent in Narodism, which the Marxists defined even then, when they referred to the liberal-Narodnik views, the liberal-Narodnik appraisal, etc. Insofar as

the Narodniks painted the Reform of 1861 in bright colours, forgetting that in the majority of cases "endowment" actually meant that the landlords' estates were ensured a supply of cheap slave labour, a supply of cheap hands tied to the place of residence, they descended (often without being aware of it) to the point of view of liberalism, the point of view of the liberal bourgeois, or even of the liberal landowner; objectively they became the advocates of the type of capitalist evolution which is most burdened with landowner traditions, is most bound up with the feudal past, of which it is ridding itself most slowly and with the greatest difficulty.

The Narodniks, however, were bourgeois democrats to the extent that they did not idealise the Reform of 1861 but fought ardently and sincerely for the smallest payments and the largest "allotments", for "allotments" without any restrictions, with the utmost cultural, legal, etc., independence for the peasant. Their only shortcoming was that their democracy was by no means always consistent and determined and that, moreover, they failed to realise that it was of a bourgeois nature. Incidentally, it may be said that the most "Left" of our Social-Narodniks even to this day often conceive of the word "bourgeois" in this connotation as smacking of "politics", whereas, in point of fact, the term bourgeois democracy represents the only exact scientific definition from the Marxist point of view.

These two tendencies in Narodism—the liberal and the democratic—were already quite clearly indicated at the time of the Reform of 1861. We cannot dwell here in greater detail



on an analysis of these tendencies, particularly on the connection between utopian socialism and the second of these tendencies. We shall merely mention the difference between the ideological and political trends of, say, Kavelin, on the one hand, and Chernyshevsky, on the other.

When we contemplate, in a general way, the change in the entire system of the Russian state in 1861, we are bound to admit that that change was a step in the transformation of feudal monarchy into a bourgeois monarchy. This is true not only from the economic, but also from the political point of view. We need only recall the nature of the reforms in the sphere of the judiciary, administration, local self-government, etc., which followed the Peasant Reform of 1861, to see the correctness of this statement. One may argue whether this "step" was a great or a small one, whether it was quick or slow, but the direction in which this step was taken is so clear, it has been made so clear by all the subsequent events, that there can hardly be two opinions about it. It is, however, all the more necessary to stress this direction because of the more frequent half-baked opinions we hear nowadays to the effect that "steps" in the transformation into a bourgeois monarchy in Russia have been taken only in very recent years.

Of the two Narodnik tendencies, referred to, the democratic tendency, the tendency not based on the intelligence and initiative of landowning, bureaucratic and bourgeois circles, was extremely weak in 1861. That is why matters went no further than a very small "step" in the transformation into a bourgeois monarchy. Still, this weak tendency existed even

then. It showed itself subsequently too, sometimes more strongly and sometimes more feebly, both in the sphere of social ideas and in the sphere of the social movement characteristic of the entire post-Reform period. This tendency grew with each decade of the period, nurtured by each step in the economic evolution of the country and, consequently, also by the combination of social, juridical and cultural conditions.

These two tendencies, which were only just beginning to emerge in 1861, found a fairly full and open expression forty-four years after the Peasant Reform, in the most varied spheres of social life, in the various twists and turns of the social movement, in the activity of large masses of the population and of important political parties. The Cadets and the Trudoviks—taking each of these terms in its broadest meaning—are the direct descendants and successors, the actual vehicles of the two tendencies which were already taking shape half a century ago. The connection between 1861 and the events that took place forty-four years later is in disputable and obvious. And the fact that both tendencies have survived during half a century, that they have grown stronger, developed and expanded, unquestionably testifies to their strength; it shows that they are deeply rooted in the entire economic structure of Russia.

Menshikov, the *Novoye Vremya* writer, expressed this connection between the Peasant Reform and the events of the recent past in the following singular tirade: “The year 1861 failed to prevent 1905—hence, why shout about the greatness

of a reform which has failed so miserably?" (Novoye Vremya No. 12512, of January 11, "An Unnecessary Jubilee".)

With these words Menshikov inadvertently touched upon extremely interesting scientific problems of history; first, the interrelation between reform and revolution in general, and, secondly, the connection, interdependence, and affinity between the socio-historical trends, strivings and tendencies of 1861 and the 1905–07 period.

The concept "reform" is undoubtedly the opposite of the concept "revolution". Failure to remember this contrast, failure to remember the line that divides these two concepts, constantly leads to very serious mistakes in all historical discussions. But this contrast is not something absolute, this line is not something dead, but alive and changing, and one must be able to define it in each particular case. The Reform of 1861 remained but a reform owing to the extreme feebleness, ignorance and lack of cohesion between the social elements for whom change was essential.

That is the reason for such marked feudal features in this reform, that is why it was so full of bureaucratic monstrosities and brought the peasants such untold misfortunes. Our peasantry has suffered much more from the inadequate development of capitalism than it has from capitalism itself.

Although this reform remained nothing but a reform because of the weakness of certain social elements, it created, despite all obstacles and hindrances, conditions for the further development of those elements; these conditions expanded the

area in which the old contradictions came into play and extended the number of groups, strata and classes of the population that took a conscious part in “the play” of contradictions. That is why the followers of the democratic tendency that was hostile to liberalism at the time of the 1861 Reform, those who then (and for a long time after) appeared to be mere individuals with no ground under their feet—that is why those people proved actually to be on incomparably more solid ground when the conditions that had been little more than embryonic in 1861 grew to maturity. Those participants in the Reform of 1861 who regarded it as nothing more than a reform proved to be on more solid ground than the liberal reformists. The former will forever be remembered in history as the advanced representatives of their epoch; whereas the latter will be remembered as people who were irresolute, weak-willed and impotent in face of the forces of the old and obsolete.

In their theories, the Narodniks, beginning with 1861 (and their forerunners even prior to 1861), have, through out more than half a century, always advocated a different, i. e., non-capitalist, path for Russia. History has fully refuted their error. History has fully proved and the events of 1905-07, the action of the various classes of Russian society at that time, have graphically confirmed that Russia is developing along capitalist lines, and that there can be no other path for her development. But he would be a poor Marxist indeed who to this day failed to learn from the history of this half-century the real meaning of aspirations expressed in the course of half a

century and embodied in an erroneous ideology, in an endeavour to plot a “different” path for the fatherland to travel.

A comparison between 1861 and 1905–07 makes it perfectly clear that the real historical meaning of the Narodnik ideology consisted in contrasting two paths of capitalist development: one path involving the adaptation of the new, capitalist Russia to the old, the subordination of the former to the latter, thus impeding the course of development; the other—the path of supplanting the old by the new, of entirely removing the obsolete that is obstructing the new; of accelerating the course of development. The programmes of the Cadets and the Trudoviks—the former liberal, and the latter democratic—while inconsistent and at times confused and betraying a lack of understanding, represent a vivid expression of the actual paths of this development—both within the framework of capitalism—which have been steadfastly pursued for more than half a century.

The present period imperatively demands of us that we have a clear understanding of the conditions of these two paths, that we have a clear idea of the two tendencies of 1861 and of their subsequent evolution. We are witnessing a further change in the entire system of the Russian state, one more step in its transformation into a bourgeois monarchy. This new step, which is just as hesitant, just as vacillating, just as ill-chosen and just as unsound as the previous one, confronts us with the old problems. History has not yet decided which of the two paths of Russia’s capitalist development will finally determine

her bourgeois system: the objective forces on which the decision depends are not yet exhausted. We cannot tell beforehand what the decision will be, before we have the experience of all the friction, clashes and conflicts that make up the life of society. We cannot tell beforehand what will be the resultant of the two tendencies that have been making themselves felt ever since 1861. But we can, and must, insist on a clear understanding of both tendencies, insist that Marxists (and this is one of their duties, in their capacity of “leaders”, in the period of disintegration, confusion, skepticism and worship of momentary success) should contribute their activity to this resultant—not in a negative form (like liquidationism or, in general, helpless drifting after one decadent mood or another), but in a positive form, in the form of upholding the interests of evolution in its entirety, its fundamental and most essential interests.

The representatives of the democratic tendency, while marching toward their goal, continually waver and are subject to the influence of liberalism. To prevent these waverings and to end this subjection is one of the most important historical tasks of Marxism in Russia.

#### Notes

[1] Insofar as this replacement was going on in actual facts we shall see further that it was a more complicated process than would appear on the surface. —Lenin

## **“The Peasant Reform” and the Proletarian-Peasant Revolution**

Lenin

Sotsial-Demokrat, No. 21–22. March 19 (April 1), 1911.

Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 119-128.

The celebration of the jubilee, so much feared by the Romanov monarchy, and over which the Russian liberals have gushed so sentimentally, is over. The tsar’s government celebrated it by assiduously circulating “among the people” the Black-Hundred jubilee pamphlets issued by the “National Club”, by wholesale arrests of all “suspects”, by banning meetings at which speeches of even the slightest democratic tinge might be expected, by fining and suppressing newspapers, and by persecuting “subversive” cinemas.

The liberals celebrated the jubilee by weeping buckets of tears about the necessity of “a second February 19” (Vestnik Yevropy[1]), by expressing their allegiance (the tsar’s picture appearing prominently in Rech), and by indulging in talk about their civic despondency, the fragility of the native “Constitution”, the devastating “break-up” of the “time honoured principles of land tenure” by Stolypin’s agrarian policy, and so on, and so forth.

In an edict addressed to Stolypin, Nicholas II declared that Stolypin’s agrarian policy was the final stage of “the great Reform” of February 19, 1861, i. e., the surrender of peasant

land to be plundered by a handful of bloodsuckers, kulaks, and well-to-do peasants, and the surrender of the countryside to the rule of the feudal landowners.

It must be admitted that Nicholas the Bloody, Russia's premier landowner, is nearer to the historical truth than our amiable liberals. The biggest landowner and the chief feudal lord is aware of, or rather has learned from the exhortation of the Council of the United Nobility, the maxim of the class struggle according to which "reforms" that are carried out by feudal lords must of necessity be feudal in every aspect, must of necessity be accompanied by a regime of out and out violence. Our Cadets, and our liberals in general, fear the revolutionary movement of the masses, which alone is capable of wiping the feudal land owners and their unlimited power in the Russian state from the face of the earth; and this fear prevents them from appreciating the truth that so long as the feudal landowners have not been overthrown, every reform—and, particularly, every agrarian reform—is bound to be feudal in its aspect and nature, and in its mode of application. To fear revolution, to dream of reform, and to snivel because in practice "reforms" are applied by the feudal lords in a feudal way, is the height of baseness and stupidity. Nicholas II is much more straightforward and does more to teach the Russian people sense when he clearly "offers" them the plain choice: either feudal "reforms" or the overthrow of the feudal landowners by a people's revolution.

The Reform of February 19, 1861, was a feudal reform which our liberals are able to dress up and represent as a "peaceful"



reform only because at that time the revolutionary movement in Russia was so weak as to amount to nothing, and, as for a revolutionary class, there existed none among the oppressed masses of those days. The decree of November 9, 1906, and the law of June 14, 1910, are feudal reforms with as much bourgeois content as the Reform of 1861; but the liberals cannot represent these as "peaceful" reforms, they cannot dress them up so easily (although they are already beginning to do so, as for instance, in *Russkaya Mysl*), for the few isolated revolutionaries of 1861 may be forgotten, but the Revolution of 1905 cannot be forgotten. The year 1905 saw the birth of a revolutionary class in Russia, the proletariat, which succeeded in rousing the peasant masses to the revolutionary struggle. And once a revolutionary class has been born in any country it cannot be suppressed by any amount of persecution; it can only perish if the whole country perishes, it can only die, after it has attained victory.

Let us call to mind the basic features of the Peasant Reform of 1861. The notorious "emancipation" meant the unscrupulous robbery of the peasants and their subjection to an endless succession of tyrannies and insults. "Emancipation" was seized upon as a pretext to cut off part of the peasants' land. In the black-earth gubernias these cut-off lands amounted to more than one-fifth of the total held by peasants; in some gubernias the land that was cut off, taken away from the peasants, amounted to one-third or even two-fifths of all the peasants' land. As a result of "emancipation" the peasants' land was so divided from the landed estates as to compel the

peasants to settle on "bad land", and the landed estates were wedged into the peasants' land to make it easier for the noble lords to enslave the peasants and to lease land to them on usurious terms. As a result of "emancipation", the peasants were forced to "redeem" their own land, moreover, they were forced to pay double or treble its real price. The overall result of the whole "epoch of reforms" which marked the 1860s was that the peasants remained poverty-stricken, downtrodden, ignorant, and subject to the feudal landowners in the courts, in the organs of administration, in the schools, and in the Zemstvos.

The "great Reform" was a feudal reform; nor could it be anything else, for it was carried out by the feudal landowners. But what was the force that compelled them to resort to reform? It was the force of economic development which was drawing Russia on to the path of capitalism. The feudal landowners could not prevent the growth of trade between Russia and Europe; they could not bolster up the old, tottering forms of economic life. The Crimean war demonstrated the rottenness and impotence of feudal Russia. The peasant "riots", which had been growing in number and intensity in the decades prior to emancipation, compelled Alexander II, the country's biggest landowner, to admit that it would be better to emancipate from above than to wait until he was overthrown from below.

"The Peasant Reform" was a bourgeois reform carried out by feudal landowners. It was a step in the transformation of Russia into a bourgeois monarchy. In substance the Peasant

Reform was a bourgeois measure. The less the amount of land cut off from the peasants' holdings, the more fully peasant lands were separated from the landed estates, the lower the tribute paid to the feudal landowners by the peasants (i. e., the lower the "redemption" payments) and the greater the extent the peasants in any locality were able to escape the influence and pressure of the feudal landowners—the more obvious was the bourgeois essence of the Reform. To the extent that the peasant extricated himself from the clutches of the feudal landowner, he became a slave to the power of money, found himself living in the conditions of commodity production and dependent on rising capitalism. After 1861 capitalism developed in Russia at such a rapid rate that in a few decades it wrought a transformation that had taken centuries in some of the old countries of Europe.

The celebrated struggle between the feudal landowners and the liberals, which our liberal and liberal-Narodnik historians have praised and made so much of, was a struggle waged within the ruling classes, a struggle waged for the most part within the ranks of the landowner class, a struggle waged exclusively over the extent and the forms of the proposed concessions. The liberals, like the feudal landowners, upheld the property rights and rule of the landowners, and indignantly denounced all revolutionary ideas about abolishing those property rights, about completely overthrowing that rule,

Such revolutionary ideas could not but ferment in the minds of the serf peasants. The peasant masses, however, were so

crushed and stupefied by centuries of slavery that at the time of the Reform they were incapable of anything more than scattered, isolated rebellions, or rather "riots", devoid of any political purpose. Nevertheless, even then there were revolutionaries in Russia who took the side of the peasantry, who saw how limited, how poverty-stricken was the over-advertised "Peasant Reform", and who recognised its true feudal nature. These revolutionaries of whom there were extremely few at that time were headed by N.G. Chernyshevsky.

February 19, 1861, heralded the birth of the new, bourgeois, Russia which had been growing out of the era of serfdom. The liberals of the 1860s, on the one hand, and Chernyshevsky, on the other, were the representatives of two historical tendencies, of two historical forces which to this day have been determining the issue of the struggle for the new Russia. That is why on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of February 19, it is necessary for the class-conscious proletariat to form as clear an idea as possible of the substance and interrelation of these two tendencies.

The liberals wanted to "emancipate" Russia "from, above", taking care not to destroy either the monarchy of the tsars, or the property rights and the rule of the landowners, prevailing upon them only to make "concessions" to the spirit of the times. The liberals were, and still are, the ideologists of the bourgeoisie, which cannot reconcile itself to serfdom, but is afraid of revolution, is afraid of the mass movement which would be capable of overthrowing the monarchy and

abolishing the rule of the landowners. That is why the liberals confine themselves to a “struggle for reforms”, a “struggle for rights”, that is to say, a struggle for a division of power between the feudal landowners and the bourgeoisie. As long as that is the relation of forces, there can be no “reforms” save those carried out by the feudal landowners, and no “rights” save those limited by the tyranny of the feudal landowners.

Chernyshevsky was a utopian socialist, who dreamed of a transition to socialism through the old, semi-feudal peasant village commune.[2] He did not see, nor could he see in the sixties of the past century, that only the development of capitalism and of the proletariat could create the material conditions and the social force for the achievement of socialism. But Chernyshevsky was not only a utopian socialist; he was also a revolutionary democrat, he approached all the political events of his times in a revolutionary spirit and was able to exercise a revolutionary influence by advocating, in spite of all the barriers and obstacles placed in his way by the censorship, the idea of a peasant revolution, the idea of the struggle of the masses for the overthrow of all the old authorities. In speaking of the “Peasant Reform” of 1861, which the liberals at first tried to whitewash and subsequently even glorified, he described it as vile, for he clearly saw its feudal nature, he clearly saw that the liberal emancipators were robbing the peasants of their last shirt. Chernyshevsky spoke of the liberals of the sixties as “windbags, braggarts and fools”,[3] for he clearly saw their dread of revolution, their spinelessness and their servility before the powers that be.

These two historical tendencies have continued developing in the course of the half-century that has elapsed since February 19, 1861, diverging ever more clearly, definitely and decisively. The forces of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, who preached that “educational” activity was all that was needed, and who fought shy of the revolutionary underground, grew stronger. On the other hand, the forces of democracy and socialism also became stronger, at first merging into one in utopian ideology and in the intellectualist struggles of the Narodnaya Volya and the revolutionary Narodniks. However, since the early nineties, with the transition from the revolutionary struggle of terrorists and individual propagandists to the struggle of the revolutionary classes themselves, these forces diverged.

The decade preceding the Revolution—from 1895 to 1904—was marked by open action of the proletarian masses and by their steady growth, by the growth of the strike struggle, of Social-Democratic working-class propaganda and organisation, and of the Social-Democratic Labour Party. Following the lead of the socialist vanguard of the proletariat, the revolutionary-democratic peasantry has also embarked upon mass struggle, particularly since 1902.

The two tendencies, which in 1861 had just emerged and had begun to appear in literature in bare outline, developed and grew in the Revolution of 1905, and found reflection in the movement of the masses and the struggle carried on by political parties in the most varied fields of activity, in the press, at mass meetings, in unions, in strikes, in uprisings, and in the State Dumas.

The liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie established the Cadet and Octobrist parties that at first (until the summer of 1905) worked together in one liberal Zemstvo movement, and subsequently split into two separate parties fiercely competing with each other (and still doing so), the one putting forward primarily its liberal, the other primarily its monarchist, “face” —but always agreeing on the most essential issues; they both denounce the revolutionaries, disparage the December uprising, and honour as their flag the “constitutional” fig-leaf of absolutism. Both parties have professed and still profess “strictly constitutional” principles, that is to say, they confine themselves to the limited field of activity which the Black-Hundred tsar and the feudal landowners could concede without giving up power, without relinquishing their autocratic rule, without sacrificing a single kopek of revenues, “sanctified” by ages of slave-holding, or parting with the least of their “justly acquired” privileges.

The democratic and the socialist trends separated from the liberal trend and drew a line of demarcation between themselves. The proletariat organised and acted independently of the peasantry, rallying around its own, working-class, Social-Democratic, party. The organisation of the peasantry in the revolution was incomparably weaker, its actions were infinitely more scattered and feeble, the level of its class-consciousness was much lower, and monarchist illusions (as well as constitutional illusions, which are closely connected with them) often paralyzed its energy, made it dependent upon the liberals, and sometimes upon the Black Hundreds and gave rise to empty day-dreams about “God-

given land" which prevented it from launching an assault upon the landowning nobility with the object of completely abolishing that class. By and large, the peasantry taken as a mass, nevertheless fought the landowners, acted in a revolutionary spirit, and in all the Dumas—even in the Third Duma which was elected on the basis of representation specifically favouring the feudal landowners—they created Trudovik groups that represented a genuinely democratic movement despite their frequent vacillations. In the mass movement of 1905–07, the Cadets and Trudoviks represented and politically formulated the position and trends of the liberal-monarchist and the revolutionary-democratic bourgeoisie respectively.

The year 1861 begot the year 1905. The feudal character of the first "great" bourgeois reform impeded the course of development, condemned the peasants to a thousand still worse and more bitter torments, but it did not change the course of development, did not avert the bourgeois revolution of 1905. The Reform of 1861 delayed the issue by opening a valve, as it were, by permitting some growth of capitalism; but it did not prevent the inevitable issue, which in 1905 was fought out in an incomparably wider field, in the onslaught of the masses upon the tsar's autocracy and the feudal landowners. The Reform, which the feudal landowners granted at a time when the oppressed masses were completely undeveloped, begot the revolution by the time the revolutionary elements among those masses had reached maturity.



The Third State Duma and Stolypin's agrarian policy represent the second bourgeois reform carried out by the feudal landowners. February 19, 1861 was the first step taken in the transformation of the purely feudal autocracy into a bourgeois monarchy; the period of 1908–10 represents the second step, an even more serious one, along the same road. Nearly four and a half years have elapsed since the promulgation of the decree of November 9, 1900; more than three and a half years have elapsed since June 3, 1907[4]; yet today the Cadet bourgeoisie, and to a large extent the Octobrist bourgeoisie, are becoming convinced that the "Constitution" of June 3 and the agrarian policy of June 3 have proved "unsuccessful". "The most Right among the Cadets", as Mr. Maklakov, that semi-Octobrist, has been justly dubbed, was fully justified in declaring in the State Duma on February 25, on behalf both of the Cadets and of the Octobrists, that "today it is the pivotal elements of the country who are dissatisfied, those who are most anxious for durable peace, who dread a new rise of the tide of revolution". There is one common slogan: "It is the general opinion," Mr. Maklakov went on to say, "that if we continue on the road along which they are taking us they will lead us to a second revolution

The common slogan of the Cadet and the Octobrist bourgeoisie in the spring of 1911 confirms that the appraisal of the state of affairs given by our Party in the resolution adopted at its conference in December 1908 was correct. "The principal factors of economic and political life," that resolution stated, "which gave rise to the Revolution of 1905 continue to operate,

and, the economic and political situation being what it is, a new revolutionary crisis is inevitably maturing.”

Menshikov, the paid hack of the tsarist Black-Hundred government, recently declared in *Novoye Vremya* that the Reform of February 19 “was a miserable failure”, because “the year 1861 failed to prevent 1905”. Now the hired lawyers and parliamentarians of the liberal bourgeoisie declare that the “reforms” of November 9, 1906, and of June 3, 1907, are a failure because these “reforms” lead to a second revolution.

The two statements, as well as the entire history of the liberal and revolutionary movements in the period 1861–1905, provide extremely interesting material for an elucidation of the very important question of the relation between reform and revolution and the role of reformists and revolutionaries in the social struggle.

The opponents of revolution, some of them with hatred and a gnashing of teeth, others in a spirit of dejection and despondency, admit that the “reforms” of 1861 and of 1907–10 have failed in their purpose, because they do not prevent revolution. Social-Democrats, the representatives of the only consistently revolutionary class of our times, reply: revolutionaries have played an immense historical role in the social struggle and in all social crises even when the immediate result of those crises has been half-hearted reforms. Revolutionaries are the leaders of those forces of society that effect all change; reforms are the by-product of the revolutionary struggle.

The revolutionaries of 1861 remained isolated and, on the face of it, suffered complete defeat. Actually, they were the great figures of the day, and the further that day recedes, the more clearly do we see their greatness and the more obvious is the insignificance and paltriness of the liberal reformists of those days.

The revolutionary class of 1905–07, the socialist proletariat, on the face of it, also suffered complete defeat. Both the liberal monarchists and the liquidators among the pseudo-Marxists have been shouting from the house-tops that the proletariat went “too far” and resorted to “excesses”, that it succumbed to the attraction of “the spontaneous class struggle”, that it let itself be seduced by the pernicious idea of the “hegemony of the proletariat”, and so on, and so forth. Actually, the “sin” of the proletariat was that it did not go far enough, but that “sin” is accounted for by the state of its forces at that time and is being atoned for by unremitting activity, even in times of blackest reaction, on the part of revolutionary Social-Democrats, by their steadfast struggle against all manifestations of reformism and opportunism. Actually, everything that has been won from the enemies, and everything that is enduring in these gains, has been won and is maintained only to the extent that the revolutionary struggle is strong and alive in all spheres of proletarian activity. Actually, the proletariat alone has championed consistent democracy to the end, exposing all the instability of the liberals, freeing the peasantry from their influence, and rising with heroic courage in insurrection.

No one is in a position to foretell to what extent really democratic changes will be effected in Russia in the era of her bourgeois revolutions, but there can be no shadow of doubt that only the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat will determine the extent and the success of the changes. Between feudal “reforms” in the bourgeois spirit and the democratic revolution led by the proletariat there can only be the vacillations of liberalism and opportunist reformism—impotent, spineless, and devoid of ideals.

When we look at the history of the last half-century in Russia, when we cast a glance at 1861 and 1905, we can only repeat the words of our Party resolution with even greater conviction: “As before, the aim of our struggle is to overthrow tsarism and bring about the conquest of power by the proletariat relying on the revolutionary sections of the peasantry and accomplishing the bourgeois-democratic revolution by means of the convening of a popular constituent assembly and the establishment of a democratic republic”.

## Notes

[1] Vestnik Yevropy (European Messenger)—a monthly historico-political and literary magazine, of bourgeois-liberal trend, published in St. Petersburg from 1866 to 1918. The magazine printed articles directed against the revolutionary Marxists. Until 1908 its editor and publisher was M. M. Stasyulevich.

[2] The village (land) commune (Russ. *obshchina* or *mir*)—the communal form of peasant use of the land characterised by compulsory crop rotation and undivided woods and pastures. Its principal features were collective liability (the compulsory collective responsibility of the peasants for timely and full payments, and the fulfilment of all kinds of services to the state and the landlords) and the periodical redistribution of the land, with no right to refuse the allotment given. The sale of the allotment was also forbidden.

The landlords and the tsarist government used the village commune to intensify feudal oppression and to squeeze land redemption payments and taxes out of the people.

[3] These are the words of Volgin, the hero of N.G. Chernyshevsky's novel *Prologue*.

[4] This refers to the government coup of June 3 (16), 1907, reactionary coup, whereby the Second Duma was dissolved and the law on Duma elections changed. The new law greatly increased land lord and commercial-industrial bourgeois representation, and greatly reduced the already small representation of peasants and workers. A large proportion of the population of Asiatic Russia was denied electoral rights, and the representation from Poland and the Caucasus was reduced by half. The composition of the 1907 Third Duma was, therefore, representative of the Black Hundreds and Cadets.

## **Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement**

September 14(1), 1911.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 17, pages 229-241.

The tremendous progress made by capitalism in recent decades and the rapid growth of the working-class movement in all the civilised countries have brought about a big change in the attitude of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Instead of waging an open, principled and direct struggle against all the fundamental tenets of socialism in defence of the absolute inviolability of private property and freedom of competition, the bourgeoisie of Europe and America, as represented by their ideologists and political leaders, are coming out increasingly in defence of so-called social reforms as opposed to the idea of social revolution. Not liberalism versus socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution—is the formula of the modern, “advanced”, educated bourgeoisie. And the higher the development of capitalism in a given country, the more unadulterated the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the political liberty, the more extensive is the application of the “most up-to-date” bourgeois slogan: reform versus revolution, the partial patching up of the doomed regime with the object of dividing and weakening the working class, and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie, versus the revolutionary overthrow of that rule.

From the viewpoint of the universal development of socialism this change must be regarded as a big step forward. At first socialism fought for its existence and was confronted by a

bourgeoisie confident of its strength and boldly and consistently defending liberalism as an integral system of economic and political views. Socialism has grown into a force and, throughout the civilised world, has already upheld its right to existence. It is now fighting for power and the bourgeoisie, disintegrating and realising the inevitability of its doom, is exerting every effort to defer that day and to maintain its rule under the new conditions as well, at the cost of partial and spurious concessions.

The intensification of the struggle of reformism against revolutionary Social-Democracy within the working-class movement is an absolutely inevitable result of the changes in the entire economic and political situation throughout the civilised world. The growth of the working-class movement necessarily attracts to its ranks a certain number of petty-bourgeois elements, people who are under the spell of bourgeois ideology, who find it difficult to rid themselves of that ideology and continually lapse back into it. We can not conceive of the social revolution being accomplished by the proletariat without this struggle, without clear demarcation on questions of principle between the socialist Mountain and the socialist Gironde[2] prior to this revolution, and without a complete break between the opportunist, petty-bourgeois elements and the proletarian, revolutionary elements of the new historic force during this revolution.

In Russia the position is fundamentally the same; only here matters are more complicated, obscured, and modified, because we are lagging behind Europe (and even behind the

advanced part of Asia), and we are still passing through the era of bourgeois revolutions. Owing to this, Russian reformism is distinguished by its particular stubbornness; it represents, as it were, a more pernicious malady, and it is much more harmful to the cause of the proletariat and of the revolution. In our country reformism emanates from two sources simultaneously. In the first place, Russia is much more a petty-bourgeois country than the countries of Western Europe. Our country, therefore, more frequently produces individuals, groups and trends distinguished by their contradictory, unstable, vacillating attitude to socialism (an attitude veering between "ardent love" and base treachery) characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie in general. Secondly, the petty-bourgeois masses in our country are more prone to lose heart and to succumb to renegade moods at the failure of any one phase of our bourgeois revolution; they are more ready to renounce the aim of a complete democratic revolution which would entirely rid Russia of all survivals of medievalism and serfdom.

We shall not dwell at length on the first source. We need only mention that there is hardly a country in the world in which there has been such a rapid "swing" from sympathy for socialism to sympathy for counter-revolutionary liberalism as that performed by our Struves, Izgoyevs, Karaulovs, etc., etc. Yet these gentlemen are not exceptions, not isolated individuals, but representatives of widespread trends! Sentimentalists, of whom there are many outside the ranks of the Social-Democratic movement, but also a goodly number within it, and who love to preach sermons against "excessive"



polemics, against “the passion for drawing lines of demarcation”, etc., betray a complete lack of understanding of the historical conditions which, in Russia, give rise to the “excessive” “passion” for swinging over from socialism to liberalism,

Let us turn to the second source of reformism in Russia.

Our bourgeois revolution has not been completed. The autocracy is trying to find new ways of solving the problems bequeathed by that, revolution and imposed by the entire objective course of economic development; but it is unable to do so. Neither the latest step in the transformation of old tsarism into a renovated bourgeois monarchy, nor the organisation of the nobility and the upper crust of the bourgeoisie on a national scale (the Third Duma), nor yet the bourgeois agrarian policy being enforced by the rural superintendents[3]—none of these “extreme” measures, none of these “latest” efforts of tsarism in the last sphere remaining to it, the sphere of adaptation to bourgeois development, prove adequate, It just does not work! Not only is a Russia “renovated” by such means unable to catch up with Japan, it is perhaps, even beginning to fall behind China, Because the bourgeois-democratic tasks have been left unfulfilled, a revolutionary crisis is still inevitable. It is ripening again, and we are heading toward it once more, in a new way, not the same way as before, not at the same pace, and not only in the old forms—but that we are heading toward it, of that there is no doubt.

The tasks of the proletariat that arise from this situation are fully and unmistakably definite. As the only consistently revolutionary class of contemporary society, it must be the leader in the Struggle of the whole people for a fully democratic revolution, in the Struggle of all the working and exploited people against the oppressors and exploiters. The proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to this idea of the hegemony of the proletariat. The proletarian who is conscious of this task is a slave who has revolted against slavery. The proletarian who is not conscious of the idea that his class must be the leader, or who renounces this idea, is a slave who does not realise his position as a slave; at best he is a slave who fights to improve his condition as a slave, but not one who fights to overthrow slavery.

It is, therefore, obvious that the famous formula of one of the young leaders of our reformists, Mr. Levitsky of *Nasha Zarya*, who declared that the Russian Social-Democratic Party must represent “not hegemony, but a class party”, is a formula of the most consistent reformism. More than that, it is a formula of sheer renegacy. To say, “not hegemony, but a class party”, means to take the side of the bourgeoisie, the side of the liberal who says to the slave of our age, the wage-earner: “Fight to improve your condition as a slave, but regard the thought of overthrowing slavery as a harmful utopia”! Compare Bernstein’s famous formula— “The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing”—with Levitsky’s formula, and you will see that they are variations of the same idea. They both recognise only reforms, and renounce revolution. Bernstein’s

formula is broader in scope, for it envisages a socialist revolution (=the final goal of Social-Democracy, as a party of bourgeois society). Levitsky's formula is narrower; for while it renounces revolution in general, it is particularly meant to renounce what the liberals hated most in 1905-07—namely, the fact that the proletariat wrested from them the leadership of the masses of the people (particularly of the peasantry) in the struggle for a fully democratic revolution.

To preach to the workers that what they need is “not hegemony, but a class party” means to betray the cause of the proletariat to the liberals; it means preaching that Social-Democratic labour policy should be replaced by a liberal labour policy.

Renunciation of the idea of hegemony, however, is the crudest form of reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, and that is why not all liquidators make bold to express their ideas in such definite terms. Some of them (Mr. Martov for instance) even try, mocking at the truth, to deny that there is a connection between the renunciation of hegemony and liquidationism.

A more “subtle” attempt to “substantiate” reformist views is the following argument: The bourgeois revolution in Russia is at an end; after 1905 there can be no second bourgeois revolution, no second nation-wide struggle for a democratic revolution; Russia therefore is faced not with a revolutionary but with a “constitutional” crisis, and all that remains for the working class is to take care to defend its rights and interests

on the basis of that “constitutional crisis”. That is how the liquidator Y. Larin argues in *Dyelo Zhizni* (and previously in *Vozrozhdeniye*).

“October 1905 is not on the order of the day,” wrote Mr. Larin. “If the Duma were abolished, it would be restored more rapidly than in post-revolutionary Austria, which abolished the Constitution in 1851 only to recognise it again in 1860, nine years later, without any revolution (note this!), simply because it was in the interests of the most influential section of the ruling classes, the section which had reconstructed its economy on capitalist lines.” “At the stage we are now in, a nation-wide revolutionary movement like that of 1905 is impossible.”

All Mr. Larin’s arguments are nothing more than an expanded rehash of what Mr. Dan said at the Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. in December 1908. Arguing against the resolution which stated that the “fundamental factors of economic and political life which gave rise to the Revolution of 1905, continue to operate”, that a new—revolutionary, and not “constitutional”—crisis was developing, the editor of the liquidators’ *Golos* exclaimed: “They [i.e., the R.S.D.L.P.] want to shove in where they have once been defeated”.

To shove again toward revolution, to work tirelessly, in the changed situation, to propagate the idea of revolution and to prepare the forces of the working class for it—that, from the standpoint of the reformists, is the chief crime of the R.S.D.L.P., that is what constitutes the guilt of the revolutionary

proletariat. Why “shove in where they have once been defeated”—that is the wisdom of renegades and of persons who lose heart after any defeat.

But in countries older and more “experienced” than Russia the revolutionary proletariat showed its ability to “shove in where it has once been defeated” two, three, and four times; in France it accomplished four revolutions between 1789 and 1871, rising again and again after the most severe defeats and achieving a republic in which it now faces its last enemy—the advanced bourgeoisie; it has achieved a republic, which is the only form of state corresponding to the conditions necessary for the final struggle for the victory of socialism.

Such is the distinction between socialists and liberals, or champions of the bourgeoisie. The socialists teach that revolution is inevitable, and that the proletariat must take advantage of all the contradictions in society, of every weakness of its enemies or of the intermediate classes, to prepare for a new revolutionary struggle, to repeat the revolution in a broader arena, with a more developed population. The bourgeoisie and the liberals teach that revolutions are unnecessary and even harmful to the workers, that they must not “shove” toward revolution, but, like good little boys, work modestly for reforms.

That is why, in order to divert the Russian workers from socialism, the reformists, who are the captives of bourgeois ideas, constantly refer to the example of Austria (as well as Prussia) in the 1860s. Why are they so fond of these examples?

Y. Larin let the cat out of the bag; because in these countries, after the “unsuccessful” revolution of 1848, the bourgeois transformation was completed “without any revolution”.

That is the whole secret! That is what gladdens their hearts, for it seems to indicate that bourgeois change is possible without revolution!! And if that is the case, why should we Russians bother our heads about a revolution? Why not leave it to the landlords and factory owners to effect the bourgeois transformation of Russia “without any revolution”!

It was because the proletariat in Austria and Prussia was weak that it was unable to prevent the landed proprietors and the bourgeoisie from effecting the, transformation regardless of the interests of the workers, in a form most prejudicial to the workers, retaining the monarchy, the privileges of the nobility, arbitrary rule in the countryside, and a host of other survivals of medievalism.

In 1905 our proletariat displayed strength unparalleled in any bourgeois revolution in the West, yet today the Russian reformists use examples of the weakness of the working class in other countries, forty or fifty years ago, in order to justify their own apostasy, to “substantiate” their own renegade propaganda!

The reference to Austria and Prussia of the 1860s, so beloved of our reformists, is the best proof of the theoretical fallacy of their arguments and of their desertion to the bourgeoisie in practical politics.

Indeed, if Austria restored the Constitution which was abolished after the defeat of the Revolution of 1848, and an “era of crisis” was ushered in in Prussia in the 1860s, what does this prove? It proves, primarily, that the bourgeois transformation of these countries had not been completed. To maintain that the system of government in Russia has already become bourgeois (as Larin says), and that government power in our country is no longer of a feudal nature (see Larin again), and at the same time to refer to Austria and Prussia as an example, is to refute oneself! Generally speaking it would be ridiculous to deny that the bourgeois transformation of Russia has not been completed: the very policy of the bourgeois parties, the Constitutional-Democrats and the Octobrists, proves this beyond all doubt, and Larin himself (as we shall see further on) surrenders his position. It cannot be denied that the monarchy is taking one more step towards adapting itself to bourgeois development—as we have said before, and as was pointed out in a resolution adopted by the Party (December 1908). But it is still more undeniable that even this adaptation, even bourgeois reaction, and the Third Duma, and the agrarian law of November 9, 1906 (and June 14, 1910) do not solve the problems of Russia’s bourgeois transformation.

Let us look a little further. Why were “crises” in Austria and in Prussia in the 1860s constitutional, and not revolutionary? Because there were a number of special circumstances which eased the position of the monarchy (the “revolution from above” in Germany, her unification by “blood and iron”); because the proletariat was at that time extremely weak and

undeveloped in those countries, and the liberal bourgeoisie was distinguished by base cowardice and treachery, just as the Russian Cadets are in our day.

To show how the German Social-Democrats who themselves took part in the events of those years assess the situation, we quote some opinions expressed by Bebel in his memoirs (Pages from My Life), the first part of which was published last year. Bebel states that Bismarck, as has since become known, related that the king at the time of the "constitutional" crisis in Prussia in 1862 had given way to utter despair, lamented his fate, and blubbered in his, Bismarck's, presence that they were both going to die on the scaffold. Bismarck put the coward to shame and persuaded him not to shrink from giving battle.

"These events show," says Bebel, "what the liberals might have achieved had they taken advantage of the situation. But they were already afraid of the workers who backed them. Bismarck's words that if he were driven to extremes, he would set Acheron in motion [i.e., stir up a popular movement of the lower classes, the masses], struck fear into their heart."

Half a century after the "constitutional" crisis which "without any revolution" completed the transformation of his country into a bourgeois-Junker monarchy, the leader of the German Social-Democrats refers to the revolutionary possibilities of the situation at that time, which the liberals did not take advantage of owing to their fear of the workers. The leaders of the Russian reformists say to the Russian workers: since the German bourgeoisie was so base as to cower before a cowering king,



why shouldn't we too try to copy those splendid tactics of the German bourgeoisie? Bebel accuses the bourgeoisie of not having "taken advantage of the "constitutional" crisis to effect a revolution because of their fear, as exploiters, of the popular movement. Larin and Co. accuse the Russian workers of having striven to secure hegemony (i.e., to draw the masses into the revolution in spite of the liberals), and advise them to organise "not for revolution", but "for the defence of their interests in the forthcoming constitutional reform of Russia". The liquidators offer the Russian workers the rotten views of rotten German liberalism as "Social-Democratic" views! After this, how can one help calling such Social-Democrats "Stolypin Social-Democrats"?

In estimating the "constitutional" crisis of the 1860s in Prussia, Bebel does not confine himself to saying that the bourgeoisie were afraid to fight the monarchy because they were afraid of the workers. He also tells us what was going on among the workers at that time. "The appalling state of political affairs," he says, "of which the workers were becoming ever more keenly aware, naturally affected their mood. Everybody clamoured for change. But since there was no fully class-conscious leadership with a clear vision of the goal and enjoying the confidence of the workers, and since there existed no strong organisation that could rally the forces, the mood petered out [verpuffte]. Never did a movement, so splendid in its essence [in Kern vortreffliche], turn out to be so futile in the end. All the meetings were packed, and the most vehement speakers were hailed as the heroes of the day. This was the

prevailing mood, particularly, in the Workers' Educational Society at Leipzig." A mass meeting in Leipzig on May 8, 1866, attended by 5,000 people, unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel, which demanded, on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage, with secret ballot, the convening of a Parliament supported by the armed people. The resolution also expressed the "hope that the German people will elect as deputies only persons who repudiate every hereditary central government power". The resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel was thus unmistakably revolutionary and republican in character.

Thus, we see that at the time of the "constitutional" crisis the leader of the German Social-Democrats advocated resolutions of a republican and revolutionary nature at mass meetings. Half a century later, recalling his youth and telling the new generation of the events of days long gone by, he stresses most of all his regret that at that time there was no leadership sufficiently class-conscious and capable of understanding the revolutionary tasks (i.e., there was no revolutionary Social-Democratic Party understanding the task implied by the hegemony of the proletariat); that there was no strong organisation; that the revolutionary mood "petered out". Yet the leaders of the Russian reformists, with the profundity of Simple Simons, refer to the example of Austria and Prussia in the 1860s as proving that we can manage "without any revolution"! And these paltry philistines who have succumbed to the intoxication of counter revolution, and are the

ideological slaves of liberalism, still dare to dishonour the name of the R.S.D.L.P.!

To be sure, among the reformists who are abandoning socialism there are people who substitute for Larin's straight forward opportunism the diplomatic tactics of beating about the bush in respect of the most important and fundamental questions of the working-class movement. They try to confuse the issue, to muddle the ideological controversies, to defile them, as did Mr. Martov, for instance, when he asserted in the legally published press (that is to say, where he is protected by Stolypin from a direct retort by members of the R.S.D.L.P.) that Larin and "the orthodox Bolsheviks in the resolutions of 1908" propose an identical "scheme". This is a downright distortion of the facts worthy of this author of scurrilous effusions. The same Martov pretending to argue against Larin, declared in print that he, "of course" did "not suspect Larin of reformist tendencies". Martov did not suspect Larin, who expounded purely reformist views, of being a reformist! This is an example of the tricks to which the diplomats of reformism resort.[1] The same Martov, whom some simpletons regard as being more "Left", and a more reliable revolutionary than Larin, summed up his "difference" with the latter in the following words:

"To sum up: the fact that the present regime is an inherently contradictory combination of absolutism and constitutionalism, and that the Russian working class has sufficiently matured to follow the example of the workers of the progressive countries of the West in striking at this regime through the Achilles heel of its contradictions, is ample

material for the theoretical substantiation and political justification of what the Mensheviks who remain true to Marxism are now doing.”

No matter how hard Martov tried to evade the issue, the result of his very first attempt at a summary was that all his evasions collapsed of themselves. The words quoted above represent a complete renunciation of socialism and its replacement by liberalism. What Martov proclaims as “ample” is ample only for the liberals, only for the bourgeoisie. A proletarian who considers it “ample” to recognise the contradictory nature of the combination of absolutism and constitutionalism accepts the standpoint of a liberal labour policy. He is no socialist, he has not understood the tasks of his class, which demand that the masses of the people, the masses of working and exploited people, be roused against absolutism in all its forms, that they be roused to intervene independently in the historic destinies of the country, the vacillations or resistance of the bourgeoisie notwithstanding. But the independent historical action of the masses who are throwing off the hegemony of the bourgeoisie turns a “constitutional” crisis into a revolution. The bourgeoisie (particularly since 1905) fears revolution and loathes it; the proletariat, on the other hand educates the masses of the people in the spirit of devotion to the idea of revolution, explains its tasks, and prepares the masses for new revolutionary battles. Whether, when, and under what circumstances the revolution materialises, does not depend on the will of a particular class; but revolutionary work carried on among the masses is never wasted. This is the only kind of

activity which prepares the masses for the victory of socialism. The Larins and Martovs forget these elementary ABC truths of socialism.

Larin, who expresses the views of the group of Russian liquidators who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P., does not hesitate to go the whole hog in expounding his reformism. Here is what he writes in *Dyelo Zhizni* (1911, No. 2)—and these words should be remembered by everyone who holds dear the principles of Social-Democracy:

“A state of perplexity and uncertainty, when people simply do not know what to expect of the coming day, what tasks to set themselves—that is what results from indeterminate, temporising moods, from vague hopes of either a repetition of the revolution or of ‘we shall wait and see’. The immediate task is, not to wait fruitlessly for something to turn up, but to imbue broad circles with the guiding idea that, in the ensuing historical period of Russian life, the working class must organise itself not ‘for revolution’, not ‘in expectation of a revolution’, but simply [note the but simply] for the determined and systematic defence of its particular interests in all spheres of life; for the gathering and training of its forces for this many-sided and complex activity; for the training and building-up in this way of socialist consciousness in general; for acquiring the ability to orientate itself [to find its bearings]—and to assert itself—particularly in the complicated relations of the social classes of Russia during the coming constitutional reform of the country after the economically inevitable selfexhaustion of feudal reaction.”

This is consummate, frank, smug reformism of the purest water. War against the idea of revolution, against the “hopes” for revolution (in the eyes of the reformist such “hopes” seem vague, because he does not understand the depth of the contemporary economic and political contradictions); war against every activity designed to organise the forces and prepare the minds for revolution; war waged in the legal press that Stolypin protects from a direct retort by revolutionary Social-Democrats; war waged on behalf of a group of legalists who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P.—this is the programme and tactics of the Stolypin labour party which Potresov, Levitsky, Larin, and their friends are out to create. The real programme and the real tactics of these people are expressed in exact terms in the above quotation—as distinct from their hypocritical official assurances that they are “also Social-Democrats”, that they “also” belong to the “irreconcilable International”. These assurances are only window-dressing. Their deeds, their real social substance, are expressed in this programme, which substitutes a liberal labour policy for socialism.

Just note the ridiculous contradictions in which the reformists become entangled. If, as Larin says, the bourgeois revolution in Russia has been consummated, then the socialist revolution is the next stage of historical development. This is self-evident; it is clear to anyone who does not profess to be a socialist merely for the sake of deceiving the workers by the use of a popular name. This is all the more reason why we must organise “for revolution” (for socialist revolution), “in

expectation" of revolution, for the sake of the "hopes" (not vague "hopes", but the certainty based on exact and growing scientific data) of a socialist revolution.

But that's the whole point—to the reformist the twaddle about the consummated bourgeois revolution (like Martov's twaddle about the Achilles heel, etc.) is simply a verbal screen to cover up his renunciation of all revolution. He renounces the bourgeois-democratic revolution on the pretext that it is complete, or that it is "ample" to recognise the contradiction between absolutism and constitutionalism; and he renounces the socialist revolution on the pretext that "for the time being" we must "simply" organise to take part in the "coming constitutional reform" of Russia!

But if you, esteemed Cadet parading in socialist feathers, recognise the inevitability of Russia's "coming constitutional reform", then you speak against yourself, for thereby you admit that the bourgeois-democratic revolution has not been completed in our country. You are betraying your bourgeois nature again and again when you talk about an inevitable "self-exhaustion of feudal reaction", and when you sneer at the proletarian idea of destroying, not only feudal reaction, but all survivals of feudalism, by means of a popular revolutionary movement.

Despite the liberal sermons of our heroes of the Stolypin labour party, the Russian proletariat will always and invariably put the spirit of devotion to the democratic revolution and to the socialist revolution into all that difficult, arduous, everyday,

routine and inconspicuous work, to which the era of counter-revolution has condemned it; it will organise and gather its forces for revolution; it will ruthlessly repulse the traitors and renegades; and it will be guided, not by “vague hopes”, but by the scientifically grounded conviction that the revolution will come again.

## Notes

[1] Compare the just remarks made by the pro-Party Menshevik Dnevniksky in No. 3 of *Diskussionny Listok* (supplement to the Central Organ of our Party) on Larin’s reformism and Martov’s evasions. — Lenin

[2] Mountain and Gironde—the two political groups of the bourgeoisie during the French bourgeois revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. Montagnards (representatives of the Mountain), or Jacobins, was the name given to the more resolute representatives of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary class of the time; they stood for the abolition of the autocracy and the feudal system. The Girondists, as distinct from Jacobins, vacillated between revolution and counter-revolution, and their policy was one of compromise with the monarchy.

Lenin called the opportunist trend in Social-Democracy the “socialist Gironde” and the revolutionary Social-Democrats “proletarian Jacobins”. After the R.S.D.L.P. split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Lenin frequently stressed that the Mensheviks represented the Girondist trend in the working-class movement.



[3] Rural superintendent—the administrative post introduced in 1889 by the tsarist government in order to increase the power of the landlords over the peasants. The rural superintendents were selected from among the local landed nobility and were given enormous administrative and judicial powers over the peasantry including the right to have the peasants arrested and flogged.

## QUESTIONS OF PRINCIPLE IN POLITICS

### THE LIBERAL BOURGEOISIE AND REFORMISM

Severnaya Pravda No. 28, September 4, 1913;

V. I. Lenin, Collected Works Vol. 19, pp. 350-53.

In the name of the merchants of all Russia, the millionaire Salazkin made an appeal for extensive political reforms in a speech at Nizhni-Novgorod Fair. At a meeting of three thousand metalworkers in St. Petersburg, the reformists suffered a decisive defeat, receiving only 150 votes for their candidates for membership of the executive body.[108]

These two facts, which simply cry out for comparison, make even quite unprincipled people ask questions of principle concerning present-day Russian politics. There are masses of people in all classes in Russia that are interested in politics, but few of them realise the significance of the theoretical principles involved in the presentation of questions of politics. Few people realise the significance of political parties that always give well-considered, precise and properly formulated answers to these questions. When the parties are connected with definite classes, such answers are given on the basis of work among the masses and are verified by years of such work.

The answers given by the Marxists were precisely of this type when four and a half years ago they appraised the June Third system and their tasks in relation to it.\* Workers who for years and years have been acting conscientiously in the spirit of

those answers in every possible sphere are divided by a deep gulf from those confused intellectuals who fear any sort of definite answer and who, at every step, slide into reformism and liquidationism.

One can only pity those people who, watching the struggle of the Marxists against the liquidators, avoid the issue with miserable words about the harmfulness of disputes, squabbles, internecine struggles, factionalism. . . . Many self-styled Marxists and all "Left" Narodniks belong to this category!

Those who, in principle, are champions of the bourgeoisie and enemies of Marxism, the liberals from the newspaper Rech, have been unable to ignore the above facts. They repeat all their tired, pitiful phrases in an editorial article (in issue No. 234), but now they go further.

The liberals are forced to admit that "the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the liquidators is going on every where", and that "it has percolated all the pores of the working-class organism".

So what of it? Could it be accidental?

No. . . .

"Important disagreements on matters of principle have long been apparent; in the final analysis they may be reduced to the question of the course to be taken in the further development of the country."

At last they have thought it out! The Marxists explained this in December 1908, the liberals have begun to realise it in August 1913. Better late than never.

"Is the path of reforms conceivable," continues the liberal newspaper, "or are 'reforms possible only as a by-product of a movement that is completely free of all the narrowness of reformism' [quoted from Severnaya Pravda ]. That is how the question is presented."

Precisely! The question of liquidationism is merely part of the question of the non-party reformists who have broken away from Marxism.

It will be interesting to see how the liberals, the champions of reformism in principle, defend it.

"There is, of course, a great deal of metaphysics and fatalism in the opinion that reforms are possible only as a 'by-product'. There can be no reforms without reformers and reformism, even if only as a 'by-product'". . . .

There again you have a sample of angry words and an attempt to evade an answer! What have metaphysics got to do with it, when historical experience, the experience of England, France, Germany and Russia, the experience of all modern history in Europe and Asia, shows that serious reforms have always been merely the by-product of a movement completely free of the narrowness of reformism?

And what has fatalism to do with it, when that same experience says clearly that it is the very classes hostile to reformism that have produced the greatest effect?

Or perhaps there is more "fatalism" to be observed in the conduct of the Russian working class in the early years of the twentieth century than there was in the conduct of the liberal Zemstvo people and bourgeoisie in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? You liberal gentlemen make yourselves ridiculous!

Can you possibly be such ignoramuses that you do not see the connection between the interests of the bourgeoisie as a class and their desire to confine themselves to reformism, between the condition of the working class and its contrary desire?

Indeed, gentlemen, you are poor advocates of reformism in general! But perhaps your defence of reformism in present-day Russia is better?

"It must be admitted," continues Rech, "that the situation now obtaining, one that has time and again demonstrated to the most modest reformers the futility of their efforts, turns people's thoughts, and especially their feelings, towards the negation of reformism."

So there you have it! It seems that even you, who make a principle of advocating reformism, cannot find support either in historical experience or in "the situation now obtaining" in Russia. Even you have to admit that the situation is against you!

What metaphysicians and fatalists you are, gentlemen -- or what blind slaves to the narrow, selfish, cowardly money bag -- if you continue to uphold the unprincipled position of reformism in contradiction to the experience of history, in contradiction to the experience of "the situation now obtaining"! Are not you, who do not believe in reforms yourselves, actually defending that bourgeoisie that strives to gain profit at other people's expense?

It is understandable that an advanced contingent of the working class of Russia, the metalworkers of St. Petersburg, have dealt a crushing defeat to the reformists and liquidators among their number. According to the figures of the liberal and reformist Rech, the reformist liquidators obtained 150 out of 2,000 votes, that is, seven and a half per cent of the total. Does this not show again and again -- after the elections of workers to the Fourth Duma, after the history of the emergence of the working-class press in St. Petersburg and Moscow -- that the liquidators represent only confused and half-liberal intellectuals, and that the mass of the politically conscious workers have firmly and resolutely condemned and rejected them?

## Once Again About the Duma Cabinet

Ekho, No. 6, June 28, 1906.

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 11, pages 69-73.

“We must choose”—this is the argument the opportunists have always used to justify themselves, and they are using it now. Big things cannot be achieved at one stroke. We must fight for small but achievable things. How do we know whether they are achievable? They are achievable if the majority of the political parties, or of the most “influential” politicians, agree with them. The larger the number of politicians who agree with some tiny improvement, the easier it is to achieve it. We must not be utopians and strive after big things. We must be practical politicians; we must join in the demand for small things, and these small things will facilitate the fight for the big ones. We regard the small things as the surest stage in the struggle for big things.

That is how all the opportunists, all the reformists, argue; unlike the revolutionaries. That is how the Right-wing Social-Democrats argue about a Duma Cabinet. The demand for a constituent assembly is a big demand. It cannot be achieved immediately. By no means everyone is consciously in favour of this demand.[1] But the whole State Duma, that is to say, the vast majority of politicians—that is to say “the whole people”—is in favour of a Duma Cabinet. We must choose—between the existing evil and a very small rectification of it, because the largest number of those who are in general

dissatisfied with the existing evil are in favour of this “very small” rectification. And by achieving the small thing, we shall facilitate our struggle for the big one.

We repeat: this is the fundamental, the typical argument of all opportunists all over the world. To what conclusion does this argument inevitably lead? To the conclusion that we need no revolutionary programme, no revolutionary party, and no revolutionary tactics. What we need are reforms, nothing more. We do not need a revolutionary Social-Democratic Party. What we need is a party of democratic and socialist reforms. Indeed, is it not clear that there will always be people who admit that the existing state of affairs is unsatisfactory? Of course, always. Is it not also clear that the largest number of discontented people will always be in favour of the smallest rectification of this unsatisfactory situation? Of course, always. Consequently, it is our duty, the duty of advanced and “class-conscious” people, always to support the smallest demands for the rectification of an evil. This is the surest and most practical policy to pursue; and all talk about “fundamental” demands, and so forth, is merely the talk of “utopians”, merely “revolutionary phrase-mongering”. We must choose—and we must always choose between the existing evil and the most moderate of the schemes in vogue for its rectification.

That is exactly how the German opportunist Social-Democrats argued. They said, in effect! There is a social-liberal trend which demands the repeal of the anti-socialist laws, a reduction of the working day, insurance against illness, and so on. A fairly large section of the bourgeoisie supports these



demands. Do not repel it by tactless conduct, offer it a friendly hand, support it, and then you will be practical politicians, you will achieve small, but real benefits for the working class, and the only thing that will suffer from your tactics will be the empty words about "revolution". You cannot make a revolution now, in any case. One must choose between reaction and reform, between the Bismarck policy and the "social empire" policy.

The French ministerial socialists argued exactly like the Bernsteinians.[2] They said in effect: We must choose between reaction and the bourgeois radicals, who promise a number of practical reforms. We must support these radicals, support their Cabinets; phrases about social revolution are merely the chatter of "Blanquists", "anarchists", "utopians", and so forth.

What is the main flaw in all these opportunist arguments? It is that in fact they substitute the bourgeois theory of "united", "social" progress for the socialist theory of the class struggle as the only real driving force of history. According to the theory of socialism, i.e., of Marxism (non Marxist socialism is not worth serious discussion nowadays), the real driving force of history is the revolutionary class struggle; reforms are a subsidiary product of this struggle, subsidiary because they express unsuccessful attempts to weaken, to blunt this struggle, etc. According to the theory of bourgeois philosophers, the driving force of progress is the unity of all elements in society who realise the "imperfections" of certain of its institutions. The first theory is materialist; the second is idealist. The first is revolutionary; the second is reformist. The

first serves as the basis for the tactics of the proletariat in modern capitalist countries. The second serves as the basis of the tactics of the bourgeoisie.

A logical deduction from the second theory is the tactics of ordinary bourgeois progressives: always and everywhere support "what is better"; choose between reaction and the extreme Right of the forces that are opposed to reaction. A logical deduction from the first theory is that the advanced class must pursue independent revolutionary tactics. We shall never reduce our tasks to that of supporting the slogans of the reformist bourgeoisie that are most in vogue. We pursue an independent policy and put forward only such reforms as are undoubtedly favourable to the interests of the revolutionary struggle, that undoubtedly enhance the independence, class-consciousness and fighting efficiency of the proletariat. Only by such tactics can reforms from above, which are always half-hearted, always hypocritical, and always conceal some bourgeois or police snare, be made innocuous.

More than that. Only by such tactics can real progress be achieved in the matter of important reforms. This may sound paradoxical, but its truth is confirmed by the whole history of the international Social-Democratic movement. Reformist tactics are the least likely to secure real reforms. The most effective way to secure real reforms is to pursue the tactics of the revolutionary class struggle. Actually, reforms are won as a result of the revolutionary class struggle, as a result of its independence, mass force and steadfastness. Reforms are always false, ambiguous and permeated with the spirit of

Zubatovism;<sup>[3]</sup> they are real only in proportion to the intensity of the class struggle. By merging our slogans with those of the reformist bourgeoisie we weaken the cause of revolution and, consequently, the cause of reform as well, because we thereby diminish the independence, fortitude and strength of the revolutionary classes.

Some readers may ask: Why repeat these elementary principles of international revolutionary Social-Democracy? Our answer is: Because Golos Truda and many Menshevik comrades tend to forget them.

A Duma, or Cadet, Cabinet is just such a false, ambiguous and Zubatov reform. To forget the real significance of such a reform, as an attempt on the part of the Cadets to strike a bargain with the autocracy, means substituting the liberal-bourgeois philosophy of progress for Marxism. By supporting such a reform, by including it among our slogans, we dim the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat and weaken its independence and fighting capacity. By upholding our old revolutionary slogans in their entirety, we strengthen the actual struggle, and thereby increase the probability of reforms and the possibility of turning them to the advantage of the revolution, and not of reaction. All that is false and hypocritical in these reforms we leave to the Cadets; all that is of positive value in them we utilise ourselves. Only by such tactics shall we be able to take advantage of the attempts of the Trepovs and Nabokovs to trip each other up so as to throw both these worthy acrobats into the pit. Only if we pursue such tactics will history say about us what Bismarck said about the German

Social-Democrats: "If there were no Social-Democrats there would have been no social reform." Had there not been a revolutionary proletariat there would have been no October 17. Had there been no December,[4] attempts to prevent the convocation of the Duma would not have been defeated. We shall have another December, which will determine the future progress of the revolution....

Postscript. This article had already been written when we read the leading article in *Golos Truda*, No. 6. Our comrades are mending their ways. They now propose that before accepting their portfolios, the Duma Cabinet should demand and secure the abolition of martial law in all parts of the country, the abolition of secret police, a general amnesty, and the restoration of all liberties. Very good, comrades. Ask the Central Committee to insert these terms in its resolution on the Duma Cabinet. In fact, do it yourselves, and then it will read: before supporting a Duma, or Cadet, Cabinet, we must demand and secure that the Duma, or Cadets, take the path of revolution. Before supporting the Cadets we must demand and secure that the Cadets cease to be Cadets.

## Notes

[1] Only the minority in the Duma supports this demand.—  
Lenin

[2] Bernsteinians— representatives of an anti-Marxist, opportunist trend in international Social-Democracy. The

trend arose at the close of the nineteenth century in Germany and was named after Eduard Bernstein, the most open exponent of revisionism.

[3] Zubatovism— the policy of “police socialism” named after Zubatov, colonel of gendarmerie and chief of the Moscow Secret Police. In 1901-03 on his initiative legal workers’ organisations were set up intended to divert the workers from the political struggle against the autocracy. Zubatov’s activity had the support of B. K. Plehve, Minister of the Interior. The Zubatovists attempted to direct the working-class movement towards the achievement of purely economic aims and make the workers believe that the government was ready to satisfy their demands. The first Zubatov organisation was set up in Moscow in May 1901 under the title “Society for Mutual Aid of Workers in the Engineering Industry”. Others were established in Minsk, Odessa, Wilno, Kiev and other towns.

The reactionary character of Zubatovism was unmasked by the revolutionary Social-Democrats, who made use of legal workers’ organisations to draw wide sections of the working class into the struggle against the autocracy. Owing to the rise of the revolutionary movement in 1903 the tsarist government was compelled to put an end to the Zubatov organisations.

## Remarks on an Article About Maximalism

December 7 (20), 1910

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 41, pages 384.2-387.1.

Page 6 (Paragraph 2). Here there should be an insertion saying that Potresov has now in fact disavowed these propositions (of Kautsky + Hilferding, etc.) containing a repudiation of reformism in principle. Potresov has become a reformist.

(It is not right to confine oneself to the statement: "we have never had the intention of proving"; this should be put forward as *p r o v e d*, and Potresov should be challenged: you and especially Maslov & Co. of Dyelo have in fact, but tacitly, like cowards, altogether gone over from this position to reformism.)

Page 7 (end of § I) "mass action"?? It would be better to put this otherwise, without using this word which has the fault that, being largely caused by the *G e r m a n* censorship (a pseudonym for revolution), it tends to obscure the concept of revolution. (There will have to be a reckoning on this later with Pannekoek + Radek & Co.!! Here is an example: there is no German censorship in Switzerland and here the term "mass action" has a *l r e a d y* brought about confusion which the reformists find useful.)

But that is not the main thing. The main point is in your idea, which is basically incorrect, that "those of its (minimum programme) demands ... add up to a transition to a basically different social system" (page 7, § II, *e t a l.*) (idem, p. 9).

That is quite wrong!! N e v e r is a “transition to a basically different social system” achieved e i t h e r by the definite demands of the minimum programme (“those of its demands”) or the sum total of the minimum-programme demands. To think so is to move over to the reformist position in principle and to abandon the stand point of the socialist revolution.

The minimum programme is one which is in principle compatible with capitalism and does not go beyond its framework.

You may have wanted to say that where society is objectively mature for socialism, the implementation of the sum total of the minimum-programme demands would p r o d u c e socialism. But oven that is not so. The only thing that can be said is that it is most probable in practice that out of any serious struggle for the major minimum-programme demands there will flare up a struggle for socialism and that we, at any rate, are working in that direction.

Another thing should not be forgotten, and this is some thing Pannekoek + Radek do forget, namely, that imperialism is the exploitation of hundreds of millions in the dependent nations by a handful of very rich nations. Hence, the possibility of full democracy inside the richest nation with its continued domination over dependent nations. That was the state of things in ancient Greece on the basis of slavery. That is how things now stand with New Zealand and Britain.

(By the way: page 8 is not good. That's not the way to put it. For instance, in the epoch of imperialism and the high cost of living "bread" is precisely the thing you will not get through reform alone.

Page 8—defence against Potresov's charge. The thing to do is not to defend yourself, but to attack: you c o n f i n e y o u r s e l f to reforms, as the liberals did in Russia in 1904.)

Page 10—in 1905; the liberals confined themselves to reforms; we demanded, preached, prepared, etc., the revolution. Here it is not a question of "concreteness", but of the basic principle (essence) of any revolution: displacement of the old class and winning of "all power" (d e r Macht) by the new class.

(Page 10 bottom—you deal with the proletarian "reform" in a terribly clumsy and imprudent way, although you do want to say: "revolution"!! What you should say is perhaps: "As in Russia in 1904 it is not reforms but a r e f o r m )

Page 11 is all quite wrong. Imperialism will produce both the 8-hour working day and the "arming of the people" against the socialist revolution. That is precisely the point over which the struggle will not unfold. And, in general, it will not be over the minimum programme.

Imperialism will produce "Bulygin Dumas" and reforms against the revolution. We shall be for the revolution.



“The most important questions of the present day” will not be and are n o t those you name, but the high cost of living (1) + (2) imperialist wars.

Reforms are powerless against the high cost of living (in the presence of the trusts, etc.), as they were against the autocracy in Russia in 1904–05.

You have incorrectly put the question of reform, and of the minimum programme, and of democracy.

# [[ I very strongly recommend rewriting it, confining yourself, for the time being (for a small article in Voprosy Strakhovaniya), to the antithesis: You, Mr. Potresov, are a full-fledged reformist, you confine yourself to “reforms”, you have forgotten the significance and meaning of the “formula”: “not reforms, but a reform”, the significance and meaning of the quoted statements by Kautsky + Hilferding + + Bauer, etc. Dyelo=ideologically quite mature organ of reformism, of the bourgeois labour party.

The “three pillars” before the revolution were an extension of the struggle for reform. And that is exactly how the question is formulated in the Manifesto of the Zimmerwald Left: all struggle for reform must be channeled and transformed into struggle for revolution.

I do not think self-determination of nations should be set out as the “most important” in general: in so doing you go miles beyond what we have been saying until now. By coming out

in this way you would force me to join up against you with—  
oh, horrible thought!—Bukharin!!!

Isn't it better to leave this question aside for the time being, rewriting the article à la # —and to work out something in the form of theses, let us say, on the attitude to the minimum programme, etc., for dispatch to the Bureau, etc.?

# Phrases about “maximalism” are nothing but attacks by a reformist on the revolutionaries (“opponents of reformism in principle” for the censorship). In general, it is an exceptionally difficult thing and heikle sehr heikle Sache!! to treat of s u c h a question in the censored press.

## **An Era of Reforms**

Iskra, No. 46, August 15, 1903

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 6, pages 510-517.

### Extract

Yes, we are undoubtedly passing through an era of reforms, strange as these words may sound when applied to present-day Russia. There is stagnation in all spheres of home policy, except where these are linked up with the fight against the internal enemy, and despite this—or, to be more exact, precisely because of this—constant and unceasing efforts are being made to institute reforms, attempts at reforms in the sphere of the most critical and most salient social and political relations. The proletariat, which is awakening to class-conscious life, came forward fairly long ago as the real, the main, as the only irreconcilable foe of our autocratic police regime. However, an enemy such as the foremost social class cannot be fought with force alone, even with the most ruthless, best organised, and most thorough-going force. Such an enemy makes itself reckoned with and compels concessions, which, though they are always insincere, always half-hearted, often spurious and illusory, and usually hedged round with more or less subtly hidden traps, are nevertheless concessions, reforms that mark a whole era. Of course, these are not the reforms that denote a down-grade in political development, when a crisis has passed, the storm has abated, and those who have been left masters of the situation proceed to give effect to their own programme, or (as also happens) the programme

taken over from their opponents. No, these are the reforms of an up-grade, when ever greater masses are being drawn into struggle, when the crisis is still in the offing, when every clash, in which hundreds of victims are carried off the field of battle, produces thousands of new fighters who are even grimmer, bolder, and better trained.

Such reforms are always foretokens and precursors of revolution. The recent measures partly effected and partly only projected by the tsarist government are indubitably of this nature, viz., the Bill on workers' mutual aid societies (this Bill has not been made public by the government and is known only from reports in the liberal bourgeois *Osvobozhdeniye*), the laws on compensation for injured workers and on factory stewards. It is on this latter law that we now propose to dwell in greater detail.

The gist of the new law is that, under certain circumstances, the workers may have the right to representation in their relations with the employers, the right to certain rudiments of organisation. These rights are circumscribed by an incredible number of police regulations, restrictions, and qualifications. And indeed, it is first of all necessary to take into consideration that, according to the new law, the right of the workers to representation depends on the consent and initiative of the factory management and on the permission of the Boards for Factory and Mining Affairs. The right to representation may be accorded the workers by the factory owners, but they are in no way bound to do so under this law, besides which the Factory Board may refuse to permit representation, even if requested

by the employer, on any grounds or even on no grounds whatever. Hence, from the very outset, the right of the workers to representation has been completely, unconditionally, and conclusively left to the discretion of the employers and the police. If it appears advantageous and desirable to the employers and the police, they may set up workers' representative bodies (on a very restricted basis)—that is the substance of the reform. I would add parenthetically that the law makes no mention whatever of workers' representation at government factories: at privately owned factories the workers' representatives may turn out to be new agents, new factory watchmen controlled by the police; at government factories there is always a sufficient number of agents and watchmen! The police do not ask for a reform in this field—hence, reform is not necessary here.

## Political Agitation and "The Class Point of View"

Iskra, No. 16, February 1, 1902

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 5

Let us begin with an illustration.

The reader will remember the sensation that was created by the speech delivered by M. A. Stakhovich, Marshal of the Nobility of Orel Gubernia, at a missionary congress, in the course of which he urged that freedom of conscience be recognised by law. The conservative press, led by *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, is conducting a furious campaign against Mr. Stakhovich. It cannot find names vile enough with which to call him and almost goes so far as to accuse the entire Orel nobility of high treason for having re-elected Mr. Stakhovich as Marshal. Now, this re-election is indeed very significant and to a certain degree it bears the character of a demonstration of the nobility against police tyranny and outrage.

Stakhovich, says *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*, "is not so much Marshal of the Nobility, as the oh, so gay Misha Stakhovich, the life and soul of the party, the clever conversationalist..." (No. 348, 1901). So much the worse for you, gentlemen, defenders of the bludgeon. If even our jovial landlords begin to talk about freedom of conscience, then the infamies of the priests and the police must verily be without number....

"What does our 'intellectual', frivolous crowd that instigates and applauds the Stakhoviches care for the affairs of our sacred

orthodox faith and our time-honoured attitude towards it?"... Once again, so much the worse for you, gentlemen, champions of the autocracy, the orthodox faith, and the national essence. A fine system indeed our police ridden autocracy must be, if it has permeated even religion with the spirit of the prison-cell, so that the "Stakhoviches" (who have no firm convictions in matters of religion, but who are interested, as we shall see, in preserving a stable religion) become utterly indifferent (if not actually hostile) to this notorious "national" faith. "... They call our faith a delusion!! They mock at us because, thanks to this 'delusion', we fear and try to avoid sin and we carry out our obligations uncomplainingly, no matter how severe they may be; because we find the strength and courage to bear sorrow and privations and forbear pride in times of success and good fortune..." So! The orthodox faith is dear to them because it teaches people to bear misery "uncomplainingly". What a profitable faith it is indeed for the governing classes! In a society so organised that an insignificant minority enjoys wealth and power, while the masses constantly suffer "privations" and bear "severe obligations", it is quite natural for the exploiters to sympathise with a religion that teaches people to bear "uncomplainingly" the hell on earth for the sake of an alleged celestial paradise. But in its zeal Moskovskiye Vedomosti became too garrulous. So garrulous, in fact, that unwittingly it spoke the truth. We read on: "... They do not suspect that if they, the Stakhoviches, eat well, sleep peacefully, and live merrily, it is thanks to this 'delusion'."

The sacred truth! This is precisely the case. It is because religious “delusions” are so widespread among the masses that the Stakhoviches and the Oblomovs,”[1] and all our capitalists who live by the labour of the masses, and even Moskovskiye Vedomosti itself, “sleep peacefully”. And the more education spreads among the people, the more will religious prejudices give way to socialist consciousness, the nearer will be the day of victory for the proletariat —the victory that will emancipate all oppressed classes from the slavery they endure in modern society.

But having blurted out the truth on one point, Moskovskiye Vedomosti disposed, far too easily, of another interesting point. It is obviously mistaken in believing that the Stakhoviches “do not realise” the significance of religion, and that they demand liberal forms out of sheer “thoughtlessness”. Such an interpretation of a hostile political trend is too childishly naïve. The fact that in this instance Mr. Stakhovich came forward as advocate of the entire liberal trend was proved best of all by Moskovskiye Vedomosti itself; otherwise, what need was there for waging such a campaign against a single speech? What need was there for speaking, not about Stakhovich, but about the Stakhoviches, about the “intellectual crowd”?

Moskovskiye Vedomosti’s error was, of course, deliberate. That paper is more unwilling than it is unable to analyse the liberalism it bates from the class point of view. That it does not desire to do so goes without saying; but its inability to do so interests us very much more, because this is a complaint that



even very many revolutionaries and socialists suffer from. Thus, the authors of the letter published in No. 12 of Iskra, who accuse us of departing from the “class point of view” for striving in our newspaper to follow all manifestations of liberal discontent and protest, suffer from this complaint, as do also the authors of Proletarskaya Borba [2] and of several pamphlets in “The Social-Democratic Library”, [3] who imagine that our autocracy represents the absolutist rule of the bourgeoisie; likewise the Martynovs, who seek to persuade us to abandon the many-sided campaign of exposure (i.e., the widest possible political agitation) against the autocracy and to concentrate our efforts mainly upon the struggle for economic reforms (to give something “positive” to the working class, to put forward in its name “concrete demands” for legislative and administrative measures “which promise certain palpable results”); likewise, too, the Nadezhdins, who, on reading the correspondence in our paper on the statistical conflicts, ask in astonishment: “Good Lord, what is this—a Zemstvo paper?”

All these socialists forget that the interests of the autocracy coincide only with certain interests of the proper tied classes, and only under certain circumstances; frequently it happens that its interests do not coincide with the interests of these classes, as a whole, but only with those of certain of their strata. The interests of other bourgeois strata and the more widely understood interests of the entire bourgeoisie, of the development of capitalism as a whole, necessarily give rise to a liberal opposition to the autocracy. For instance, the autocracy guarantees the bourgeoisie opportunities to employ

the crudest forms of exploitation, but, on the other hand, places a thousand obstacles in the way of the extensive development of the productive forces and the spread of education; in this way it arouses against itself, not only the petty bourgeoisie, but at times even the big bourgeoisie. The autocracy guarantees (?) the bourgeoisie protection against socialism, but since the people are deprived of rights, this protection is necessarily transformed into a system of police outrages that rouse the indignation of the entire people. What the result of these antagonistic tendencies is, what relative strength of conservative and liberal views, or trends, among the bourgeoisie obtains at the present moment, cannot be learned from a couple of general theses, for this depends on all the special features of the social and political situation at a given moment. To determine this, one must study the situation in detail and carefully watch all the conflicts with the government, no matter by what social stratum they are initiated. It is precisely the "class point of view" that makes it impermissible for a Social-Democrat to remain indifferent to the discontent and the protests of the "Stakhoviches".

The reasoning and activity of the above-mentioned socialists show that they are indifferent to liberalism and thus reveal their incomprehension of the basic theses of the Communist Manifesto, the "Gospel" of international Social-Democracy. Let us recall, for instance, the words that the bourgeoisie itself provides material for the political education of the proletariat by its struggle for power, by the conflicts of various strata and groups within it, etc.[4] Only in politically free countries has

the proletariat easy access to this material (and then only to part of it). In enslaved Russia, however, we Social-Democrats must work hard to obtain this "material" for the working class, i.e., we must ourselves undertake the task of conducting general political agitation, of carrying on a public exposure campaign against the autocracy. This task is particularly imperative in periods of political ferment. We must bear in mind that in one year of intensified political life the proletariat can obtain more revolutionary training than in several years of political calm. For this reason the tendency of the above-mentioned socialists consciously or unconsciously to restrict the scope and content of political' agitation is particularly harmful.

Let us recall also the words that the Communists support every revolutionary movement against the existing system. Those words are often interpreted too narrowly and are not taken to imply support for the liberal opposition. It must not be forgotten, however, that there are periods when every conflict with the government arising out of progressive social interests, however small, may under certain conditions (of which our support is one) flare up into a general conflagration. Suffice it to recall the great social movement which developed in Russia out of the struggle between the students and the government over academic demands,[5] or the conflict that arose in France between all the progressive elements and the militarists over a trial in which the verdict had been rendered on the basis of forged evidence.[6] Hence, it is our bounden duty to explain to the proletariat every liberal and democratic protest, to widen

and support it, with the active participation of the workers, be it a conflict between the Zemstvo and the Ministry of the Interior, between the nobility and the police régime of the Orthodox Church, between statisticians and the bureaucrats, between peasants and the "Zemstvo" officials, between religious sects and the rural police, etc., etc. Those who contemptuously turn up their noses at the slight importance of some of these conflicts, or at the "hopelessness" of the attempts to fan them into a general conflagration, do not realise that all-sided political agitation is a focus in which the vital interests of political education of the proletariat coincide with the vital interests of social development as a whole, of the entire people, that is, of all its democratic elements. It is our direct duty to concern ourselves with every liberal question, to determine our Social-Democratic attitude towards it, to help the proletariat to take an active part in its solution and to accomplish the solution in its own, proletarian way. Those who refrain from concerning themselves in this way (whatever their intentions) in actuality leave the liberals in command, place in their hands the political education of the workers, and concede the hegemony in the political struggle to elements which, in the final analysis, are leaders of bourgeois democracy.

The class character of the Social-Democratic movement must not be expressed in the restriction of our tasks to the direct and immediate needs of the "labour movement pure and simple". It must be expressed in our leadership of every aspect and every manifestation of the great struggle for liberation that is

being waged by the proletariat, the only truly revolutionary class in modern society. Social-Democracy must constantly and unswervingly spread the influence of the labour movement to all spheres of the social and political life of contemporary society. It must lead, not only the economic, but also the political, struggle of the proletariat. It must never for a moment lose sight of our ultimate goal, but always carry on propaganda for the proletarian ideology —the theory of scientific socialism, viz., Marxism—guard it against distortion, and develop it further. We must untiringly combat any and every bourgeois ideology, regardless of the fashionable and striking garb in which it may drape itself. The socialists we have mentioned above depart from the “class” point of view also because, and to the extent that, they remain indifferent to the task of combating the “criticism of Marxism”. Only the blind fail to see that this “criticism” has taken root more rapidly in Russia than in any other country, and has been more enthusiastically taken up by Russian liberal propaganda than by any other, precisely for the reason that it is one of the elements of the bourgeois (now consciously bourgeois) democracy now information in Russia.

It is particularly in regard to the political struggle that the “class point of view” demands that the proletariat give an impetus to every democratic movement. The political demands of working-class democracy do not differ in principle from those of bourgeois democracy, they differ only in degree. In the struggle for economic emancipation, for the socialist revolution, the proletariat stands on a basis different in

principle and it stands alone (the small producer will come to its aid only to the extent that he enters, or is preparing to enter, its ranks). In the struggle for political liberation, however, we have many allies, towards whom we must not remain indifferent. But while our allies in the bourgeois-democratic camp, in struggling for liberal reforms, will always glance back and seek to adjust matters so that they will be able, as before, “to eat well, sleep peace fully, and live merrily” at other people’s expense, the proletariat will march forward to the end, without looking back. While the confreres of R. N. S. (author of the preface to Witte’s Memorandum) haggle with the government over the rights of the authoritative Zemstvo, or over a constitution, we will struggle for the democratic republic. We will not forget, however, that if we want to push someone forward, we must continuously keep our hands on that someone’s shoulders. The party of the proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch and make him move forward a yard. If he is obdurate, we will go forward without him and over him.

#### Notes

[1] Oblomov—the central character in the novel of that name by I. Goncharov. Oblomov was the personification of routine, stagnation, and inertia.

[2] The collection *Proletarskaya Borba* (Proletarian Struggle), No. 1, was published by the Ural Social-Democratic Group in 1899. The authors, who espoused “Economist” views, denied

the necessity of establishing an independent working-class political party and believed that a political revolution could be accomplished by means of a general strike, without the preliminary organisation and preparation of the masses and without an armed uprising.

[3] "The Social-Democratic Workers' Library"—a series of pamphlets published illegally in Vilno and St. Petersburg in 1900-01.

[4] See *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, pp. 21-65.

[5] The reference is to the general strike of students organised in the winter of 1901-02. Some 30,000 students took part in the strike.

[6] Lenin refers to the case of Dreyfus, a French General Staff officer, a Jew, who, in 1894, was court-martialled and sentenced to life imprisonment on an obviously trumped-up charge of espionage and high treason. That provocative trial was organised by French reactionary circles. The general movement for the defence of Dreyfus that developed in France exposed the corruption of the court and sharpened the struggle between republicans and royalists. In 1899 Dreyfus was pardoned and released. It was not until 1906, after a fresh examination of the case, that Dreyfus was rehabilitated.

## **Social-Democracy and the Provisional Revolutionary Government**

V. I. Lenin

### II

Engels points to the danger of failure on the part of the leaders of the proletariat to understand the non-proletarian character of the revolution, but our sage Martynov infers from this the danger that the leaders of the proletariat, who, by their programme, their tactics (i.e., their entire propaganda and agitation), and their organisation, have separated themselves from the revolutionary democrats, will play a leading part in establishing the democratic republic. Engels sees the danger in the leader's confounding of the pseudo-socialist with the really democratic character of the revolution, while our sage Martynov infers from this the danger that the proletariat, together with the peasantry, may consciously assume the dictatorship in the establishment of the democratic republic, the last form of bourgeois domination and the best form for the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Engels sees the danger in the false, deceptive position of saying one thing and doing another, of promising the domination of one class and actually ensuring that of another. Engels sees the irrevocable political doom consequent upon such a false position, while our sage Martynov deduces the danger that the bourgeois adherents of democracy will not permit the proletariat and the peasantry to secure a really democratic republic. Our sage Martynov cannot for the life of him



understand that such a doom, the doom of the leader of the proletariat, the doom of thousands of proletarians in the struggle for a truly democratic republic, would well be a physical doom, but not, how ever, a political doom; on the contrary, it would be a momentous political victory of the proletariat, a momentous achievement of its hegemony in the struggle for liberty. Engels speaks of the political doom of one who unconsciously strays from the path of his own class to that of an alien class, while our sage Martynov, reverently quoting Engels, speaks of the doom of one who goes further and further along the sure road of his own class.

The difference between the point of view of revolutionary Social-Democracy and that of tail-ism is glaringly obvious. Martynov and the new Iskra shrink from the task which the proletariat, together with the peasantry, is called upon to shoulder—the task of the most radical democratic revolution; they shrink from the Social-Democratic leadership of this revolution and thus surrender, albeit unwittingly, the interests of the proletariat into the hands of the bourgeois democrats. From Marx's correct idea that we must prepare, not a government party, but an opposition party of the future, Martynov draws the conclusion that we must form a tail-ist opposition to the present revolution. This is what his political wisdom adds up to. His line of reasoning, which we strongly advise the reader to ponder, is as follows:

“The proletariat cannot win political power in the state, either wholly or in part, until it has made the socialist revolution. This

is the indisputable proposition which separates us from opportunist Jaurèsism..." (Martynov, op. cit., p. 58)

—and which, we would add, conclusively proves that the worthy Martynov is incapable of grasping what the whole thing is about. To confound the participation of the proletariat in a government that is resisting the socialist revolution with its participation in the democratic revolution is to miss the point hopelessly. It is Like confounding Millerand's participation in the Cabinet of the murderer Galliffet with Varlin's[3] participation in the Commune, which defended and safeguarded the republic.

But listen further, and see what a tangle our author gets himself into:

"But that being the case, it is evident that the coming revolution cannot realise any political forms against the will of the whole bourgeoisie, for the latter will be the master tomorrow..." (Martynov's italics).

In the first place, why are only political forms mentioned here, when the previous sentence referred to the power of the proletariat in general, even to the extent of the socialist revolution? Why does not the author speak of realising economic forms? Because, without noticing it, he has already leaped from the socialist to the democratic revolution. Secondly, that being the case, the author is absolutely wrong in speaking tout court (bluntly) of "the will of the whole bourgeoisie", because the very thing that distinguishes the epoch of democratic revolution is the diversity of wills of the

various strata of the bourgeoisie which is just emancipating itself from absolutism. To speak of the democratic revolution and confine oneself to a bald contrast of "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie" is sheer nonsense, for that revolution marks the period in the development of society in which the mass of society virtually stands between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and constitutes an immense petty-bourgeois, peasant stratum. For the very reason that the democratic revolution has not yet been consummated, this immense stratum has far more interests in common with the "proletariat" in the matter of realising political forms than has the "bourgeoisie" in the real and strict sense of the word. Failure to understand this simple thing is one of the main sources of Martynov's muddle.

Further:

"That being the case, the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, by simply frightening the majority of the bourgeois elements, can have but one result—the restoration of absolutism in its original form ... and, of course, the proletariat will not halt before this possible result; at the worst, if things tend decidedly towards a revival and strengthening of the decaying autocratic regime by means of a pseudo-constitutional concession, it will not hold back from frightening the bourgeoisie. In entering the struggle, however, the proletariat obviously does not have this 'worst' in view."

Can you make anything of this, dear reader? The proletariat will not hold back from frightening the bourgeoisie, which

course will lead to the restoration of absolutism, if there should be a threat of a pseudo-constitutional concession! This is as much as to say: I am threatened with an Egyptian plague in the form of a one-day conversation with Martynov alone; therefore, if the worst comes to the worst, I shall fall back on the method of intimidation, which can lead only to a two-day conversation with Martynov and Martov. This is the sheerest gibberish, sir!

The idea that haunted Martynov when he wrote the nonsense here quoted was the following: if in the period of the democratic revolution the proletariat uses the threat of the socialist revolution to frighten the bourgeoisie, this can lead only to reaction, which will also weaken the democratic gains already won. That and nothing more. There can be no question, of course, either of restoring absolutism in its original form or of the proletariat's readiness, if the worst comes to the worst, to resort to the worst kind of stupidity. The whole thing takes us back to the difference between the democratic and the socialist revolution, overlooked by Martynov, to the existence of that immense peasant and petty-bourgeois population which is capable of supporting the democratic revolution, but is at present incapable of supporting the socialist revolution.

Let us listen further to our sage Martynov:

“Evidently, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie on the eve of the bourgeois revolution must differ in some respects from the same struggle at its concluding stage, on the eve of the socialist revolution....”

Yes, this is evident; and if Martynov had paused to think what this difference actually is, he would hardly have written the above-given drivel, or, indeed, his whole pamphlet.

“The struggle to influence the course and outcome of the bourgeois revolution can find expression only in the exertion of revolutionary pressure by the proletariat on the will of the liberal and radical bourgeoisie, and in the compulsion on the part of the more democratic ‘lower strata’ of society to bring the ‘upper strata’ into agreement to carry through the bourgeois revolution to its logical conclusion. The struggle will find expression in the fact that the proletariat will at every opportunity confront the bourgeoisie with the dilemma—either backward, into the strangling grip of absolutism, or forward, with the people.”

This tirade is the central point of Martynov’s pamphlet. We have here its sum and substance, all its fundamental “ideas”. And what do all these clever ideas turn out to be? Who are these “lower strata” of society, the “people” of whom our sage has at last bethought himself? They are precisely that multitudinous petty-bourgeois stratum of town and village which is quite capable of functioning in a revolutionary democratic capacity. And what is this pressure that the proletariat and the peasantry can exert on the upper social strata, what is meant by the proletariat advancing together with the people in despite of the upper social strata? It is that same revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry against which our tail-ender is declaiming! Only he is afraid to think to the end, to call a spade a spade.

And so he utters words whose meaning he does not understand. in ludicrous, florid language,[1] he timidly repeats slogans, the true significance of which escapes him.

None but a tail-ender could deliver himself of such a curio in the most "interesting" part of his summary as: revolutionary pressure of the proletariat and the "people" on the upper strata of society, but without a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Only a Martynov could show himself so adept! Martynov wants the proletariat to threaten the upper strata of society that it will go forward with the people, while at the same time firmly deciding with its new-Iskra leaders not to go forward along the democratic path, because that is the path of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship. Martynov wants the proletariat to exert pressure on the will of the upper strata by displaying its own lack of will. Martynov wants the proletariat to bring the upper strata "into agreement" to carry the bourgeois revolution through to its logical, democratic-republican conclusion, but to do so by expressing its own fear of assuming, jointly with the people, the task of carrying the revolution through, its fear of taking power and forming the democratic dictatorship. Martynov wants the proletariat to be the vanguard in the democratic revolution and therefore our sage Martynov frightens the proletariat with the perspective of participation in the provisional revolutionary government in the event of the success of the insurrection!

Reactionary tail-ism could go no further. We should all prostrate ourselves before Martynov, as we would before a

saint, for having developed the tail-ist tendencies of the new Iskra to their logical conclusion and for having given them emphatic and systematic expression with regard to the most pressing and basic political questions.[2]

### III

What is Martynov's muddle-headedness due to? To the fact that he confounds democratic revolution with socialist revolution; that he overlooks the role of the intermediate stratum of the people lying between the "bourgeoisie" and the "proletariat" (the petty-bourgeois masses of the urban and rural poor, the "semi-proletarians", the semi-proprietors); and that he fails to understand the true meaning of our minimum programme. Martynov has heard that it is wrong for a socialist to participate in a bourgeois Cabinet (when the proletariat is struggling for the socialist revolution), and he hastens to "understand" this as meaning that we should not participate with the revolutionary bourgeois democrats in the democratic revolution and in the dictatorship that is essential for the full accomplishment of such a revolution. Martynov read our minimum programme, but he missed the fact that the strict distinction it draws between transformations that can be carried out in a bourgeois society and socialist transformations is not merely booklore but is of the most vital, practical significance; he missed the fact that in a revolutionary period this programme must be immediately tested and applied in practice. It did not occur to him that rejecting the idea of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship in the period of the autocracy's downfall is tantamount to renouncing the

fulfilment of our minimum programme. Indeed, let us but consider all the economic and political transformations formulated in that programme—the demand for the republic, for arming the people, for the separation of the Church from the State, for full democratic liberties, and for decisive economic reforms. Is it not clear that these transformations cannot possibly be brought about in a bourgeois society without the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the lower classes? Is it not clear that it is not the proletariat alone, as distinct from the “bourgeoisie”, that is referred to here, but the “lower classes”, which are the active motive force of every democratic revolution? These classes are the proletariat plus the scores of millions of urban and rural poor whose conditions of existence are petty-bourgeois. Without a doubt, very many representatives of these masses belong to the bourgeoisie. But there is still less doubt that the complete establishment of democracy is in the interests of these masses, and that the more enlightened these masses are, the more inevitable will be their struggle for the complete establishment of democracy. Of course, a Social-Democrat will never forget the dual political and economic nature of the petty-bourgeois urban and rural masses; he will never forget the need for a separate and independent class organisation of the proletariat, which struggles for socialism. But neither will he forget that these masses have “a future as well as a past, judgement as well as prejudices”, a judgement that urges them onward towards the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship; he will not forget that enlightenment is not obtained from books alone, and not so



much from books even as from the very progress of the revolution, which opens the eyes of the people and gives them a political schooling. Under such circumstances, a theory that rejects the idea of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship cannot be otherwise designated than as a philosophical justification of political backwardness.

The revolutionary Social-Democrat will reject such a theory with contempt. He will not confine himself on the eve of the revolution to pointing out what will happen “if the worst comes to the worst”. Rather, he will also show the possibility of a better outcome. He will dream—he is obliged to dream if he is not a hopeless philistine—that, after the vast experience of Europe, after the unparalleled upsurge of energy among the working class in Russia, we shall succeed in lighting a revolutionary beacon that will illumine more brightly than ever before the path of the unenlightened and downtrodden masses; that we shall succeed, standing as we do on the shoulders of a number of revolutionary generations of Europe, in realising all the democratic transformations, the whole of our minimum programme, with a thoroughness never equalled before. We shall succeed in ensuring that the Russian revolution is not a movement of a few months, but a movement of many years; that it leads, not merely to a few paltry concessions from the powers that be, but to the complete overthrow of those powers. And if we succeed in achieving this, then ... the revolutionary conflagration will spread to Europe; the European worker, languishing under bourgeois reaction, will rise in his turn and show us “how it is done”;

then the revolutionary upsurge in Europe will have a repercussive effect upon Russia and will convert an epoch of a few revolutionary years into an era of several revolutionary decades; then—but we shall have ample time to say what we shall do “then”, not from the cursed remoteness of Geneva, but at meetings of thousands of workers in the streets of Moscow and St. Petersburg, at the free village meetings of the Russian “muzhiks”.

## **Trade-Unionist Politics And Social-Democratic Politics**

Lenin

What Is To Be Done?

BURNING QUESTIONS of our MOVEMENT

Extract

What concrete, real meaning attaches to Martynov's words when he sets before Social-Democracy the task of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character"? The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms in the sale of their labour-power, for better living and working conditions. This struggle is necessarily a trade union struggle, because working conditions differ greatly in different trades, and, consequently, the struggle to improve them can only be conducted on the basis of trade organisations (in the Western countries, through trade unions; in Russia, through temporary trade associations and through leaflets, etc.). Lending "the economic struggle itself a political character" means, therefore, striving to secure satisfaction of these trade demands, the improvement of working conditions in each separate trade by means of "legislative and administrative measures" (as Martynov puts it on the ensuing page of his article, p. 43). This is precisely what all workers' trade unions do and always have done. Read the works of the soundly scientific (and "soundly" opportunist) Mr. and Mrs. Webb and you will see that the British trade unions long ago recognised, and have long been

carrying out, the task of “lending the economic struggle itself a political character”; they have long been fighting for the right to strike, for the removal of all legal hindrances to the co-operative and trade union movements, for laws to protect women and children, for the improvement of labour conditions by means of health and factory legislation, etc.

Thus, the pompous phrase about “lending the economic struggle itself a political character”, which sounds so “terrifically” profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving to degrade Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade union politics. Under the guise of rectifying the onesidedness of Iskra, which, it is alleged, places “the revolutionising of dogma higher than the revolutionising of life”, we are presented with the struggle for economic reforms as if it were something entirely new. In point of fact, the phrase “lending the economic struggle itself a political character” means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. Martynov himself might have come to this simple conclusion, had he pondered over the significance of his own words. “Our Party,” he says, training his heaviest guns on Iskra, “could and should have presented concrete demands to the government for legislative and administrative measures against economic exploitation, unemployment, famine, etc.” (Rabocheye Dyelo, No. 10, pp. 42-43). Concrete demands for measures — does not this mean demands for social reforms? Again we ask the impartial reader: Are we slandering the Rabocheye Dyelo-ites (may I be forgiven for this awkward, currently used designation!) by calling them

concealed Bernsteinians when, as their point of disagreement with Iskra, they advance their thesis on the necessity of struggling for economic reforms?

Revolutionary Social-Democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities. But it utilises “economic” agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle alone, but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism. Martynov, however, resuscitates the theory of stages in a new form and strives to prescribe, as it were, an exclusively economic path of development for the political struggle. By advancing at this moment, when the revolutionary movement is on the upgrade, an alleged special “task” of struggling for reforms, he is dragging the Party backwards and is playing into the hands of both “Economist” and liberal opportunism.

To proceed. Shamefacedly hiding the struggle for reforms behind the pompous thesis of “lending the economic struggle itself a political character”, Martynov advanced, as if it were a special point, exclusively economic (indeed, exclusively factory) reforms. As to the reason for his doing that, we do not know it. Carelessness, perhaps? Yet if he had in mind something else besides “factory” reforms, then the whole of his

thesis, which we have cited, loses all sense. Perhaps he did it because he considers it possible and probable that the government will make "concessions" only in the economic sphere? If so, then it is a strange delusion. Concessions are also possible and are made in the sphere of legislation concerning flogging, passports, land redemption payments, religious sects, the censorship, etc., etc. "Economic" concessions (or pseudo-concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous from the government's point of view, because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the working masses. For this very reason, we Social-Democrats must not under any circumstances or in any way whatever create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms, or that we regard them as being particularly important, etc. "Such demands," writes Martynov, speaking of the concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures referred to above, "would not be merely a hollow sound, because, promising certain palpable results, they might be actively supported by the working masses...." We are not Economists, oh no! We only cringe as slavishly before the "palpableness" of concrete results as do the Bernsteins, the Prokopoviches, the Struves, the R.M.s, and tutti quanti! We only wish to make it understood (together with Nartsis Tuporylov) that all which "does not promise palpable results" is merely a "hollow sound"! We are only trying to argue as if the working masses were incapable (and had not already proved their capabilities, notwithstanding those who ascribe their own philistinism to them) of actively

supporting every protest against the autocracy, even if it promises absolutely no palpable results whatever!

## **Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism**

Lenin

Lenin Miscellany II. Signed: N. Lenin.

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 175-194.

ARTICLE (OR CHAPTER) I

THE TURN IN WORLD POLITICS

There are symptoms that such a turn has taken place, or is about to take place, namely, a turn from imperialist war to imperialist peace.

The following are the outstanding symptoms: both imperialist coalitions are undoubtedly severely exhausted; continuing the war has become difficult; the capitalists generally, and finance capital in particular, find it difficult to skin the people substantially more than they have done already in the form of outrageous "war" profits; finance capital in the neutral countries, the United States, Holland, Switzerland, etc., which has made enormous profits out of the war, is satiated; the shortage of raw materials and food supplies makes it difficult for it to continue this "profitable" business; Germany is making strenuous efforts to induce one or another ally of England, her principal imperialist rival, to desert her; the German Government has made pacifist pronouncements, followed by similar pronouncements by a number of neutral governments.

Are there any chances for a speedy end to the war?



It is very hard to give a positive reply to this question. In our opinion, two possibilities present themselves rather definitely.

First, conclusion of a separate peace between Germany and Russia, though perhaps not in the usual form of a formal written treaty. Second, no such peace will be concluded; England and her allies are still in a position to hold out for another year or two, etc. If the first assumption is correct the war will come to an end, if not immediately, then in the very near future, and no important changes in its course can be expected. If the second assumption is correct, then the war may continue indefinitely.

Let us examine the first possibility.

That negotiations for a separate peace between Germany and Russia were conducted quite recently, that Nicholas II himself, or the top Court clique, favour such a peace, that a turn has taken place in world politics from a Russo-British imperialist alliance against Germany to a no less imperialist Russo-German alliance against England—all that is beyond doubt.

The replacement of Stürmer by Trepov, the tsarist government's public declaration that Russia's "right" to Constantinople has been recognised by all the Allies, and the setting up by Germany of a separate Polish state—these seem to indicate that the separate peace negotiations have ended in failure. Perhaps tsarism entered into them solely to blackmail England, obtain formal and unambiguous recognition of Nicholas the Bloody's "right" to Constantinople and certain "weighty" guarantees of that right?

There is nothing improbable in that assumption, considering that the main, fundamental purpose of the present imperialist war is the division of the spoils among the three principal imperialist rivals, the three robbers, Russia, Germany and England.

On the other hand, the clearer it becomes to tsarism that there is no practical, military possibility of regaining Poland, winning Constantinople, breaking Germany's iron front, which she is magnificently straightening out, shortening and strengthening by her recent victories in Rumania, the more tsarism is finding itself compelled to conclude a separate peace with Germany, that is, to abandon Its imperialist alliance with England against Germany for an imperialist alliance with Germany against England. And why not? Was not Russia on the verge of war with England as a result of their imperialist rivalry over the division of the spoils in Central Asia? And did not England and Germany negotiate in 1898 for an alliance against Russia? They secretly agreed then to divide up the Portuguese colonies "in the event" of Portugal failing to meet her financial obligations!

The growing trend among leading imperialist circles in Germany towards an alliance with Russia against England was already clearly defined several months ago. The basis of this alliance, apparently, is to be the partition of Galicia (it is very important for tsarism to strangle the centre of Ukrainian agitation and Ukrainian liberty), Armenia and perhaps Rumania! In fact there was a "hint" in a German newspaper that Rumania might be divided among Austria, Bulgaria and

Russia! Germany could agree to other minor concessions to tsarism if only she could achieve an alliance with Russia, and perhaps also with Japan, against England.

A separate peace between Nicholas II and Wilhelm II could have been concluded secretly. There have been in stances in diplomatic history of treaties known only to two or three persons and kept secret from everyone else, even Cabinet Ministers. Diplomatic history knows instances of the "Great Powers" gathering at "European" congresses after the principal rivals had secretly decided the main questions among themselves (for example, the secret agreement between Russia and England to plunder Turkey, prior to the Berlin Congress of 1878). It would not be at all surprising if tsarism rejected a formal separate peace between the governments for the reason, among others, that the present situation in Russia might result in Milyukov and Guchkov, or Milyukov and Kerensky, taking over the government, while at the same time, it may have concluded a secret, informal, but none the less "durable" treaty with Germany to the effect that the two "high contracting parties" undertake jointly to pursue such-and-such a policy at the forthcoming peace congress!

It is impossible to say whether or not this assumption is correct. At any rate, it is a thousand times nearer the truth, is a far better description of things as they actually are than are the pious phrases about peace between the present governments, or between any bourgeois governments for that matter, on the basis of no annexations, etc. These phrases either express innocent desires or are hypocrisy and lies meant to conceal the

truth. And the truth of the present time, of the present war, of the present attempts to conclude peace, is the division of the imperialist spoils. That is at the bottom of it all; and to understand this truth, to express it, "to show things as they actually are", is the fundamental task of socialist policy as distinct from bourgeois policy, the principal aim of which is to conceal, to gloss over this truth.

Both imperialist coalitions have grabbed a certain amount of loot, and the two principal and most powerful of the robbers, Germany and England, have grabbed most. England has not lost an inch of her territory or of her colonies; but she has "acquired" the German colonies and part of Turkey (Mesopotamia). Germany has lost nearly all her colonies, but has acquired immeasurably more valuable territory in Europe, having seized Belgium, Serbia, Rumania, part of France, part of Russia, etc. The fight now is over the division of the loot, and the "chieftain" of each of the robber gangs, i.e., England and Germany, must to some degree reward his allies, who, with the exception of Bulgaria and to a lesser extent Italy, have lost a great deal. The weakest of the allies have lost most: in the English coalition, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania have been crushed; in the German coalition, Turkey has lost Armenia and part of Mesopotamia.

So far Germany has secured undoubtedly far more loot than England. So far Germany has won; she has proved to be far stronger than anyone anticipated before the war. Naturally, therefore, it would be to Germany's advantage to conclude peace as speedily as possible, for her rival might still be able,

given the most favourable opportunity conceivable (although not very probably), to mobilise a larger reserve of recruits, etc.

Such is the objective situation. Such is the present position in the struggle for the division of the imperialist loot. It is quite natural that this situation should give rise to pacifist strivings, declarations and pronouncements, mainly on the part of the bourgeoisie and governments of the German coalition and of the neutral countries. It is equally natural that the bourgeoisie and its governments are compelled to exert every effort to hoodwink the people, to cover up the hideous nakedness of an imperialist peace—the division of the loot—by phrases, utterly false phrases about a democratic peace, the liberty of small nations, armaments reduction, etc.

But while it is natural for the bourgeoisie to try to hoodwink the people, how are the socialists fulfilling their duty? This we shall deal with in the next article (or chapter).

## ARTICLE (OR CHAPTER) II

### THE PACIFISM OF KAUTSKY AND TURATI

Kautsky is the most authoritative theoretician of the Second International, the most prominent leader of the so-called “Marxist centre” in Germany, the representative of the opposition which organised a separate group in the Reichstag, the Social-Democratic Labour Group (Haase, Ledebour and others). A number of Social-Democratic newspapers in Germany are now publishing articles by Kautsky on the terms of peace, which paraphrase the official Social-Democratic

Labour Group declaration on the German Government's well-known note proposing peace negotiations. The declaration, which calls on the German Government to propose definite terms of peace, contains the following characteristic statement:

"...In order that this [German Government] note may lead to peace, all countries must unequivocally renounce all thought of annexing foreign territory, of the political, economic or military subjection of any people whatsoever..."

In paraphrasing and concretising this, Kautsky set out to "prove" in his lengthy articles that Constantinople must not go to Russia and that Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone.

Let us take a closer look at these political slogans and arguments of Kautsky and his associates.

In a matter that affects Russia, i. e., Germany's imperialist rival, Kautsky advances, not abstract or "general" demands, but a very concrete, precise and definite demand: Constantinople must not go to Russia. He thereby exposes the real imperialist designs ... of Russia. In a matter that affects Germany, however, i.e., the country where the majority of the party, which regards Kautsky as its member (and appointed him editor of its principal, leading theoretical organ, *Die Neue Zeit*), is helping the bourgeoisie and the government to conduct an imperialist war, Kautsky does not expose the concrete imperialist designs of his own government, but confines himself to a "general" desideratum or proposition: Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone!!

How, in substance, does Kautsky's policy differ from that of the militant, so to speak, social—chauvinists (i.e., socialists in words but chauvinists in deeds) of France and England? While frankly exposing the concrete imperialist actions of Germany, they make shift with "general" desiderata or propositions when it is a matter of countries or nations conquered by England and Russia. They shout about the seizure of Belgium and Serbia, but are silent about the seizure of Galicia, Armenia, the African colonies.

Actually, both the policy of Kautsky and that of Sembat and Henderson help their respective imperialist governments by focusing attention on the wickedness of their rival and enemy, while throwing a veil of vague, general phrases and sentimental wishes around the equally imperialist conduct of "their own" bourgeoisie. We would cease to be Marxists, we would cease to be socialists in general, if we confined ourselves to the Christian, so to speak, contemplation of the benignity of benign general phrases and refrained from exposing their real political significance. Do we not constantly see the diplomacy of all the imperialist powers flaunting magnanimous "general" phrases and "democratic" declarations in order to conceal their robbery, violation and strangulation of small nations?

"Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone If I say no more than that, the impression is that I favour Turkey's complete freedom. As a matter of fact, I am merely repeating a phrase usually uttered by German diplomats who are deliberately lying and deceiving, and employ that phrase to conceal the fact that Germany has already converted Turkey

into her financial and military vassal! And if I am a German socialist, my “general” phrases can only be to the advantage of German diplomacy, for their real significance is that they put German imperialism in a good light.

“All countries must renounce all thought of annexations... of the economic subjection of any people whatsoever....” What magnanimity! A thousand times the imperialists have “renounced all thought” of annexations and of the financial strangulation of weak nations. But should we not compare these renunciations with the facts, which show that any one of the big banks of Germany, England, France and the United States does hold small nations “in subjection”? Can the present bourgeois government of a wealthy country really renounce annexations and the economic subjugation of alien peoples when millions and millions have been invested in the railways and other enterprises of weak nations?

Who is really fighting annexations, etc.? Those who bandy magnanimous phrases, which, objectively, have the same significance as the Christian holy water sprinkled on the crowned and capitalist robbers? Or those who explain to the workers the impossibility of eliminating annexations and financial strangulation without overthrowing the imperialist bourgeoisie and its governments?

Here is an Italian illustration of the kind of pacifism Kautsky preaches.

Avanti!, the Central Organ of the Socialist Party of Italy, of December 25, 1916, contains an article by the well-known



reformist, Filippo Turati, entitled "Abracadabra". On November 22, 1916, he writes, the socialist group tabled a peace resolution in the Italian Parliament. It declared that "the principles proclaimed by the representatives of England and Germany were identical, and these principles should be made the basis of a possible peace"; and it invited "the government to start peace negotiations through the mediation of the United States and other neutral countries". This is Turati's own account of the socialist proposal.

On December 6, 1916, the Chamber "buries" the socialist resolution by "adjourning" the debate on it. On December 12, the German Chancellor proposes in the Reichstag the very thing the Italian socialists proposed. On December 22, Wilson issues his Note which, in the words of Turati, "paraphrases and repeats the ideas and arguments of the socialist proposal". On December 23, other neutral countries come on the scene and paraphrase Wilson's Note.

We are accused of having sold ourselves to the Germans, exclaims Turati. Have Wilson and the neutral countries also sold themselves to Germany?

On December 17, Turati delivered a speech in Parliament, one passage of which caused an unusual and deserved sensation. This is the passage, quoted from the report in *Avanti!*:

"Let us assume that a discussion similar to the one proposed by Germany is able, in the main, to settle such questions as the evacuation of Belgium and France, the restoration of Rumania, Serbia and, if you will, Montenegro; I will add the rectification

of the Italian frontiers in regard to what is indisputably Italian and corresponds to guarantees of a strategical character".... At this point the bourgeois and chauvinist Chamber interrupts Turati, and from all sides the shout goes up: "Excellent! So you too want all this! Long live Turati! Long live Turati!" ...

Apparently, Turati realised that there was something wrong about this bourgeois enthusiasm and tried to "correct" himself and "explain".

"Gentlemen," he said, "there is no occasion for irrelevant jesting. It is one thing to admit the relevance and right of national unity, which we have always recognised, but it is quite another thing to provoke, or justify, war for this aim."

But neither Turati's "explanation", nor the articles in *Avanti!* in his defence, nor Turati's letter of December 21, nor the article by a certain "B.B." in the *Zurich Volksrecht* can "correct" or explain away the fact that Turati gave himself away!... Or, more correct, not Turati, but the whole of socialist pacifism represented by Kautsky, and, as we shall see below, the French "Kautskyites", gave itself away. The Italian bourgeois press was right in seizing upon and exulting over this passage in Turati's speech.

The above-mentioned "B.B." tried to defend Turati by arguing that the latter referred only to "the right of nations to self-determination".

Poor defence! What has this to do with "the right of nations to self-determination", which, as everyone knows, the Marxist

programme regards—and the programme of international democracy has always regarded—as referring to the defence of oppressed nations? What has it to do with the imperialist war, i.e., a war for the division of colonies, a war for the oppression of foreign countries, a war among predatory and oppressing powers to decide which of them shall oppress more foreign nations?

How does this argument about self-determination of nations, used to justify an imperialist, not national, war, differ from the speeches of Alexinsky, Hervé and Hyndman? They argue that republican France is opposed to monarchist Germany, though everyone knows that this war is not due to the conflict between republican and monarchist principles, but is a war between two imperialist coalitions for the division of colonies, etc.

Turati explained and pleaded that he does not “justify” the war.

We will take the reformist, Kautskyite Turati’s word for it that he did not intend to justify the war. But who does not know that in politics it is not intentions that count, but deeds, not good intentions, but facts, not the imaginary, but the real?

Let us assume that Turati did not want to justify the war and that Kautsky did not want to justify Germany’s placing Turkey in the position of a vassal to German imperialism. But the fact remains that these two benign pacifists did justify the war! That is the point. Had Kautsky declared that “Constantinople must not go to Russia, Turkey must not be made a vassal state to anyone” not in a magazine which is so dull that nobody

reads it, but in parliament, before a lively, impressionable bourgeois audience, full of southern temperament, it would not have been surprising if the witty bourgeois had exclaimed: "Excellent! Hear, hear! Long live Kautsky!"

Whether he intended to or not, deliberately or not, the fact is that Turati expressed the point of view of a bourgeois broker proposing a friendly deal between imperialist robbers. The "liberation" of Italian areas belonging to Austria would, in fact, be a concealed reward to the Italian bourgeoisie for participating in the imperialist war of a gigantic imperialist coalition. It would be a small sop thrown in, in addition to the share of the African colonies and spheres of influence in Dalmatia and Albania. It is natural, perhaps, for the reformist Turati to adopt the bourgeois standpoint; but Kautsky really differs in no way from Turati.

In order not to embellish the imperialist war and help the bourgeoisie falsely represent it as a national war, as a war for the liberation of nations, in order to avoid sliding into the position of bourgeois reformism, one must speak not in the language of Kautsky and Turati, but in the language of Karl Liebknecht: tell one's own bourgeoisie that they are hypocrites when they talk about national liberation, that this war cannot result in a democratic peace unless the proletariat "turns its gulls" against its own governments.

That is the only possible position of a genuine Marxist, of a genuine socialist and not a bourgeois reformist. Those who repeat the general, meaningless, non-committal, goody-goody

desires of pacifism are not really working for a democratic peace. Only he is working for such a peace who exposes the imperialist nature of the present war and of the imperialist peace that is being prepared and calls upon the peoples to rise in revolt against the criminal governments.

At times some try to defend Kautsky and Turati by arguing that, legally, they could no more than "hint" at their opposition to the government, and that the pacifists of this stripe do make such "hints". The answer to that is, first, that the impossibility of legally speaking the truth is an argument not in favour of concealing the truth, but in favour of setting up an illegal organisation and press that would be free of police surveillance and censorship. Second, that moments occur in history when a socialist is called upon to break with all legality. Third, that even in the days of serfdom in Russia, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky man aged to speak the truth, for example, by their silence on the Manifesto of February 19, 1861, and their ridicule and castigation of the liberals, who made exactly the same kind of speeches as Turati and Kautsky.

In the next article we shall deal with French pacifism, which found expression in the resolutions passed by the two recently held congresses of French labour and socialist organisations.

### ARTICLE (OR CHAPTER) III

### THE PACIFISM OF THE FRENCH SOCIALISTS AND SYNDICALISTS

The congresses of the French General Confederation of Labour (Confédération générale du Travail) and of the French Socialist Party have just been held. The true significance and true role of socialist pacifism at the present moment were quite definitely revealed at these congresses.

This is the resolution passed unanimously at the trade union congress. The majority of the ardent chauvinists headed by the notorious Jouhaux, the anarchist Broutchoux and... the "Zimmerwaldist" Merrheim all voted for it:

"This Conference of National Corporative Federations, trade unions and labour exchanges, having taken cognisance of the Note of the President of the United States which 'invites all nations now at war with each other to publicly expound their views as to the terms upon which the war might be brought to an end' —

"requests the French Government to agree to this proposal;

"invites the government to take the initiative in making a similar proposal to its allies in order to speed the hour of peace;

"declares that the federation of nations, which is one of the guarantees of a final peace, can be secured only given the independence, territorial inviolability and political and economic liberty of all nations, big and small.

"The organisations represented at this conference pledge themselves to support and spread this idea among the masses of the workers in order to put an end to the present indefinite and ambiguous situation, which can only benefit secret

diplomacy, against which the working class has always protested.”

There you have a sample of “pure” pacifism, entirely in the spirit of Kautsky, a pacifism approved by an official labour organisation which has nothing in common with Marxism and is composed chiefly of chauvinists. We have before us an outstanding document, deserving the most serious attention, of the political unity of the chauvinists and the “Kautskyites” on a platform of hollow pacifist phrases. In the preceding article we tried to explain the theoretical basis of the unity of ideas of the chauvinists and the pacifists, of the bourgeois and the socialist reformists. Now we see this unity achieved in practice in another imperialist country.

At the Zimmerwald Conference, September 5–8, 1915, Merrheim declared: “Le parti, les Jouhaux, le gouvernement, ce ne sont que trois têtes sous un bonnet” (“The party, the Jouhaux and the government are three heads under one bonnet”, i.e., they are all one). At the C.G.T. Conference, on December 26, 1916, Merrheim voted together with Jouhaux for a pacifist resolution. On December 23, 1916, one of the frankest and most extreme organs of the German social-imperialists, the Chemnitz Volksstimme, published a leading article entitled “The Disintegration of the Bourgeois Parties and the Restoration of Social-Democratic Unity”. Needless to say, it praises peace-loving Südekum, Legien, Scheidemann and Co., the whole German Social-Democratic Party majority and, also, the peace-loving German Government. It proclaims: “The first party congress convened after the war must restore party

unity, with the exception of the few fanatics who refuse to pay party dues [i.e., the adherents of Karl Liebknecht!]; ...Party unity based on the policy of the Party Executive, the Social-Democratic Reichstag group and the trade unions.”

This is a supremely clear expression of the idea, and a supremely clear proclamation of the policy of “unity” between the avowed German social-chauvinists on the one hand and Kautsky and Co. and the Social-Democratic Labour Group on the other—unity on the basis of pacifist phrases—“unity” as achieved in France on December 26, 1916, between Jouhaux and Merrheim!

The Central Organ of the Socialist Party of Italy, *Avanti!*, writes in a leading article in its issue of December 28, 1916:

“Although Bissolati and Südekum, Bonomi and Scheidemann, Sembat and David, Jouhaux and Legien have deserted to the camp of bourgeois nationalism and have betrayed [hanno tradito] internationalist ideological unity, which they promised to serve faithfully and loyally, we shall stay together with our German comrades, men like Liebknecht, Ledebour, Hoffmann, Meyer, and with our French comrades, men like Merrheim, Blanc, Brizon, Raffin-Dugens, who have not changed and have not vacillated.”

Note the confusion expressed in that statement:

Bissolati and Bonomi were expelled from the Socialist Party of Italy as reformists and chauvinists before the war. *Avanti!* puts them on the same level as Südekum, and Legien, and quite



rightly, of course. But Südekum, David and Legien are at the head of the alleged Social-Democratic Party of Germany, which, in fact, is a social-chauvinist party, and yet this very Avanti! is opposed to their expulsion, opposed to a rupture with them, and opposed to the formation of a Third International. Avanti! quite correctly describes Legien and Jouhaux as deserters to the camp of bourgeois nationalism and contrasts their conduct with that of Liebknecht, Ledebour, Merrheim and Brizon. But we have seen that Merrheim votes on the same side as Jouhaux, while Legien, in the Chemnitz Volksstimme, declares his confidence that party unity will be restored, with the single exception, however, of Liebknecht supporters, i.e., "unity" with the Social-Democratic Labour Group (including Kautsky) to which Ledebour belongs!!

This confusion arises from the fact that Avanti! confuses bourgeois pacifism with revolutionary Social-Democratic internationalism, while experienced politicians like Legien and Jouhaux understand perfectly well that socialist and bourgeois pacifism are identical.

Why, indeed, should not M. Jouhaux and his organ, the chauvinist La Bataille, rejoice at the "unanimity" between Jouhaux and Merrheim when, in fact, the unanimously adopted resolution, which we have quoted in full above, contains nothing but bourgeois pacifist phrases; not a shadow of revolutionary consciousness, not a single socialist idea!

Is it not ridiculous to talk of the "economic liberty of all nations, big and small", and yet not say a word about the fact

that, until the bourgeois governments are overthrown and the bourgeoisie expropriated, this talk of “economic liberty” is just as much a deception of the people as talk of the “economic liberty” of the individual in general, of the small peasants and rich, workers and capitalists, in modern society?

The resolution Jouhaux and Merrheim unanimously voted for is thoroughly imbued with the very ideas of “bourgeois nationalism” that Jouhaux expresses, as Avanti! quite rightly points out, while, strangely enough, failing to observe that Merrheim expresses the same ideas.

Bourgeois nationalists always and everywhere flaunt “general” phrases about a “federation of nations” in general and about “economic liberty of all nations, big and small”. But socialists, unlike bourgeois nationalists, always said and now say: rhetoric about “economic liberty of all nations, big and small”, is disgusting hypocrisy as long as certain nations (for example, England and France) invest abroad, that is to say, lend at usurious interest to small and backward nations, billions of francs, and as long as the small and weak nations are in bondage to them.

Socialists could not have allowed a single sentence of the resolution, for which Jouhaux and Merrheim unanimously voted, to pass without strong protest. In direct contrast to that resolution, socialists would have declared that Wilson’s pronouncement is a downright lie and sheer hypocrisy, because Wilson represents a bourgeoisie which has made billions out of the war, because he is the head of a government

that has frantically armed the United States obviously in preparation for a second great imperialist war. Socialists would have declared that the French bourgeois government is tied hand and foot by finance capital, whose slave it is, and by the secret, imperialist, thoroughly predatory and reactionary treaties with England, Russia, etc., and therefore cannot do or say anything except utter the same lies about a democratic and a "just" peace. Socialists would have declared that the struggle for such a peace cannot be waged by repeating general, vapid, benign, sentimental, meaning less and non-committal pacifist phrases, which merely serve to embellish the foulness of imperialism. It can be waged only by telling the people the truth, by telling the people that in order to obtain a democratic and just peace the bourgeois governments of all the belligerent countries must be overthrown, and that for this purpose advantage must be taken of the fact that millions of workers are armed and that the high cost of living and the horrors of the imperialist war have roused the anger of the masses.

This is what socialists should have said instead of what is said in the Jouhaux-Merrheim resolution.

The Congress of the French Socialist Party, which took place in Paris simultaneously with that of the C.G.T., not only refrained from saying this, but passed a resolution that is even worse than the one mentioned above. It was adopted by 2,838 votes against 109, with 20 abstentions, that is to say, by a bloc of the social-chauvinists (Renaudel and Co., the so-called "majoritaires") and the Longuet-ists (supporters of Longuet, the French Kautskyites)!! Moreover, the Zimmerwaldist

Bourderon and the Kienthalian Raffin-Dugens voted for this resolution!!

We shall not quote the resolution—it is inordinately long and totally uninteresting: it contains benign, sentimental phrases about peace, immediately followed by declarations of readiness to continue to support the so-called “national defence” of France, i.e., the imperialist war France is waging in alliance with bigger and more powerful robbers like England and Russia.

In France, unity of the social-chauvinists with pacifists (or Kautskyites) and a section of the Zimmerwaldists has become a fact, not only in the C.G.T., but also in the Socialist Party.

#### ARTICLE (OR CHAPTER) IV

#### ZIMMERWALD AT THE CROSSROADS

The French newspapers containing the report of the C.G.T. Congress were received in Berne on December 28, and on December 30, Berne and Zurich socialist newspapers published another manifesto by the Berne I.S.K. (Internationale Sozialistische Kommission), the International Socialist Committee, the executive body of Zimmerwald. Dated the end of December 1916, the manifesto refers to the peace proposals advanced by Germany and by Wilson and the other neutral countries, and all these governmental pronouncements are described, and quite rightly described, of course, as a “farcical game of peace”, “a game to deceive their

own peoples”, “hypocritical pacifist diplomatic gesticulations”.

As against this farce and falsehood the manifesto declares that the “only force” capable of bringing about peace, etc., is the “firm determination” of the international proletariat to “turn their weapons, not against their brothers, but against the enemy in their own country”.

The passages we have quoted clearly reveal the two fundamentally distinct policies which have lived side by side, as it were, up to now in the Zimmerwald group, but which have now finally parted company.

On the one hand, Turati quite definitely and correctly states that the proposals made by Germany, Wilson, etc., were merely a “paraphrase” of Italian “socialist” pacifism; the declaration of the German social-chauvinists and the voting of the French have shown that both fully appreciate the value for their policy of the pacifist screen.

On the other hand, the International Socialist Committee manifesto describes the pacifism of all belligerent and neutral governments as a farce and hypocrisy.

On the one hand, Jouhaux joins with Merrheim; Bourderon, Longuet and Raffin-Dugens join with Renaudel, Sembat and Thomas, while the German social-chauvinists, Südekum, David and Scheidemann, announce the forthcoming “restoration of Social-Democratic unity” with Kautsky and the Social-Democratic Labour Group.

On the other hand, the International Socialist Committee calls upon the “socialist minorities” vigorously to fight “their own governments” and “their social-patriot hirelings” (Söldlinge).

Either one thing, or the other.

Either expose the vapidness, stupidity and hypocrisy of bourgeois pacifism, or “paraphrase” it into “socialist” pacifism. Fight the Jouhaux, Renaudels, Legiens and Davids as the “hirelings” of the governments, or join with them in empty pacifist declamations on the French or German models.

That is now the dividing line between the Zimmerwald Right, which has always strenuously opposed a break with the social-chauvinists, and the Left, which at the Zimmerwald Conference had the foresight publicly to dissociate itself from the Right and to put forward, at the Conference and after it in the press, its own platform. It is no accident that the approach of peace, or even the intense discussion by certain bourgeois elements of the peace issue, has led to a very marked divergence between the two policies. To bourgeois pacifists and their “socialist” imitators, or echoers, peace has always been a fundamentally distinct concept, for neither has ever understood that “war is the continuation of the policies of peace and peace the continuation of the policies of war”. Neither the bourgeois nor the social—chauvinist wants to see that the imperialist war of 1914–17 is the continuation of the imperialist policies of 1898–1914, if not of an even earlier period. Neither the bourgeois pacifists nor the socialist pacifists realise that without the revolutionary overthrow of

the bourgeois governments, peace now can only be an imperialist peace, a continuation of the imperialist war.

In appraising the present war, they use meaningless, vulgar, philistine phrases about aggression or defence in general, and use the same philistine commonplaces in appraising the peace, disregarding the concrete historical situation, the actual concrete struggle between the imperialist powers. And it was quite natural for the social-chauvinists, these agents of the governments and the bourgeoisie in the workers' parties, to seize upon the approach of peace in particular, or even upon mere peace talk, in order to gloss over the depth of their reformism and opportunism, exposed by the war, and restore their undermined influence over the masses. Hence, the social-chauvinists in Germany and in France, as we have seen, are making strenuous efforts to "unite" with the flabby, unprincipled pacifist section of the "opposition".

Efforts to gloss over the divergence between the two irreconcilable lines of policy will certainly be made also in the Zimmerwald group. One can foresee that they will follow two lines. A "practical business" conciliation by mechanically combining loud revolutionary phrases (like those in the International Socialist Committee manifesto) with opportunist and pacifist practice. That is what happened in the Second International. The arch-revolutionary phrases in the manifestos of Huysmans and Vandervelde and in certain congress resolutions merely served as a screen for the arch-opportunist practice of the majority of the European parties, but they did not change, disrupt or combat this practice. It is

doubtful whether these tactics will again be successful in the Zimmerwald group.

The “conciliators in principle” will try to falsify Marxism by arguing, for example, that reform does not exclude revolution, that an imperialist peace with certain “improvements” in nationality frontiers, or in international law, or in armaments expenditure, etc., is possible side by side with the revolutionary movement, as “one of the aspects of the development” of that movement, and so on and so forth.

This would be a falsification of Marxism. Reforms do not, of course, exclude revolution. But that is not the point at issue. The point is that revolutionaries must not exclude themselves, not give way to reformism, i.e., that socialists should not substitute reformist work for their revolutionary work. Europe is experiencing a revolutionary situation. The war and the high cost of living are aggravating the situation. The transition from war to peace will not necessarily eliminate the revolutionary situation, for there are no grounds whatever for believing that the millions of workers who now have excellent weapons in their hands will necessarily permit themselves to be “peacefully disarmed” by the bourgeoisie instead of following the advice of Karl Liebknecht, i.e., turning their weapons against their own bourgeoisie.

The question is not, as the pacifist Kautskyites maintain: either a reformist political campaign, or else the renunciation of reforms. That is a bourgeois presentation of the question. The question is: either revolutionary struggle, the by-product of



which, in the event of its not being fully successful, is reforms (the whole history of revolutions throughout the world has proved this), or nothing but talk about reforms and the promise of reforms.

The reformism of Kautsky, Turati and Bourderon, which now comes out in the form of pacifism, not only leaves aside the question of revolution (this in itself is a betrayal of socialism), not only abandons in practice all systematic and persistent revolutionary work, but even goes to the length of declaring that street demonstrations are adventurism (Kautsky in *Die Neue Zeit*, November 26, 1915). It goes to the length of advocating and implementing unity with the outspoken and determined opponents of revolutionary struggle, the Südekum, Legiens, Renaudels, Thomases, etc., etc.

This reformism is absolutely irreconcilable with revolutionary Marxism, the duty of which is to take the utmost possible advantage of the present revolutionary situation in Europe in order openly to urge revolution, the overthrow of the bourgeois governments, the conquest of power by the armed proletariat, while at the same time not renouncing, and not refusing to utilise, reforms in developing the revolutionary struggle and in the course of that struggle.

The immediate future will show what course events in Europe will follow, particularly the struggle between reformist pacifism and revolutionary Marxism, including the struggle between the two Zimmerwald sections.

Zurich, January 1, 1917

## NON-PARTY INTELLECTUALS AGAINST MARXISM

Notes of a Publicist (September 13, 1913)

Pravda Truda No. 3, September 13, 1913

The editors of Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta have come out in defence of the non-Party agitation to divide collections equally between the liquidators, the Narodniks and the Marxists.

When it was pointed out to them that such a division is an absolutely unprincipled method that undermines the foundations of the Marxist attitude to petty-bourgeois trends, the editors did not know what to say in reply and tried to pass it off with a joke. We, they said, don't know anything about a "Marxist system of collections".

The renegades want to "make amiable jokes" about our old decisions.

The workers, however, will allow no joking on such a question.

That same twenty-third issue of Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta informs us that the liquidators' agitation has attracted two working-class groups in Russia—a group of printing workers in the town of Dvinsk and a group at the Nemirov-Kolodkin factory in Moscow. These groups contributed their collections equally to the liquidators', Narodniks' and Marxist newspapers.

Let the renegade intellectuals laugh off the question; the workers, however, must and will decide it.

To preach the equal division of collections means preaching non-partisanship and confusing (or equating) newspapers that hold the proletarian class point of view with those of the petty bourgeoisie, the Narodnik newspapers. The “amiable jokers”, those who write for the liquidators’ newspaper, cannot raise any objection to this elementary truth, although their jokes and sniggers probably arouse the admiration of the bourgeois public. A person who has suffered a complete fiasco among the workers often recompenses himself with the admiration expressed by the bourgeoisie when he ridicules the very idea of a consistently Marxist solution to questions of current practice.

The liquidators have taken comfort—at a meeting of metalworkers they suffered a complete defeat. At any meeting of the bourgeois gentry the liquidators are awarded an amiable smile for amiable jokes directed against the position held by a workers’ newspaper.

Let everyone have what he wants. Let the liquidators console themselves with their successes among the bourgeoisie. The workers, however, will explain to the masses the indubitable truth that to preach the equal division of workers’ collections is preaching non-partisanship, is preaching the confusion or the equation of the proletariat’s Marxist newspaper with an intellectual and petty-bourgeois newspaper, like that of the Narodniks.

## II. LIBERAL BLINDNESS

The usual method adopted by West-European opportunists, from the time of Eduard Bernstein, whose views were vigorously rejected by German Social-Democracy, is the following:

“Take a look at things as they are,” said Bernstein and the other opportunists, “have the courage to say outright what is—in Germany we are all engaged in a struggle for reforms, we are all reformists in essence, we are a party of reforms. And the abolition of wage-slavery in a series of crises is all words, an empty utopia.”

Since then the opportunists have repeated this trick of theirs a hundred times and the entire bourgeois press (our Cadet *Rech* above all) is constantly making use of this argument of the opportunists against Marxism. Anyone seriously interested in the fate of the working-class movement should have a proper knowledge of this worn-out manoeuvre of the downright enemies and false friends of the proletariat.

In St. Petersburg quite recently (September 4) the not unknown liquidator D. repeated in the liquidators' newspaper the all-Europe bourgeois manoeuvre with a crudeness or arrogance that is worthy of attention.

Let the reader judge for himself.

“We open, any workers' newspaper, say even *Severnaya Pravda*,” wrote D., “and what do we see? We read of the activities of workers' organisations, trade unions, clubs and co-

operatives; of the meetings of the members of those organisations and of their leading committees, of insurance agents, etc.; of lectures and reports organised by workers; of strikes, and strike committees; of the organisation of various collections; of attempts at political action on the part of groups of workers in defence of the workers' press, to honour the memory of Bebel or for some other immediate purpose."

That is what D. and others like him have "seen" and still "see" in *Severnaya Pravda*. And just like Bernstein, of course, he exclaims: "It will do no harm to look first at what is" (D.'s italics). Whereupon he comes to the conclusion that all this is the struggle for freedom of association. "The slogan of struggle for freedom of association as the most important current demand", "epitomises what is" (D.'s italics).

Bernstein maintained that he was "generalising what is" when he asserted that the working-class struggle was a struggle for reforms.

D. maintains that he is "generalising what is" when he asserts that the working-class movement in Russia is reformist.

Bernstein tried to give a liberal content to the workers' struggle for reforms, a struggle filled with a far from reformist content. D. is acting in literally the same fashion. He sees nothing but liberal reformism and tries to pass off his blindness as reality.

*Severnaya Pravda*, of course, did fight for even the slightest improvement in the workers' life and in the conditions of the workers' struggle, but did not do it in the liberal way, as

gentlemen like D. do! There was a lot in Severnaya Pravda that they missed—there was the struggle against reformism, there was defence of the “old”, defence of full-blooded slogans, etc. Gentlemen like D. are of the opinion that such things are not) important. They “fail to see” them, they do not want to see them, just because they are liberals. Like all liberals, they cannot understand the connection, the close, inseverable connection the Marxists make between defence of the slightest improvement and defence of the slogans of their organisation, etc. It is not clear to them that this connection determines the radical difference between the world outlook of the liberal (he is also in favour of freedom of association) and that of the working-class democrat.

Divorce the struggle for reforms from the struggle for the final goal—that is what Bernstein’s preaching actually amounts to. Divorce the struggle for improvements, for freedom of association, etc., from the struggle against reformism, from the defence of Marxism, from its spirit and its political trend—that is what the preaching of D. and the other liquidators actually amounts to.

They want to impose their liberal blindness (not seeing the connection with the past, not seeing its trend, not seeing the struggle against reformism) on the working class. As the meeting of metalworkers on August 25 showed again and again, advanced workers have already seen through the liberal nature of D. and his petty group.

### III. A NECESSARY EXPLANATION

In issue No. 24 of Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta we came across an amusing sally against our description of the Dublin events. It would probably not have been worth while responding to an amusing item had the liquidators' newspaper not gone so far as to offer an explanation that is extremely important and instructive for the workers. Judge for yourselves. We made a distinction between Britain, where the workers' demand for the reform of trade union legislation (laws on freedom of association) is of very serious and real importance because the general basis of political liberty exists in that country, and Russia, where such a demand is not serious, is an empty liberal phrase, but where such reforms as insurance are seriously practicable under the existing political system.

The liquidators do not understand the difference. Let us try to explain it by asking two questions: 1. Why is a bourgeois-democratic revolution, a revolution for political liberties, impossible in England? 2. Why was it that in Russia, towards the end of the last century, in 1897, for example, partial reforms of the factory laws were quite possible, and nobody disputed the partial demands of the workers in this sphere, whereas all Marxists in those days considered that the demand for partial political reforms was a liberal deception?

When the liquidators have given these questions some thought they may be able to guess the reasons for taking a different attitude to various reforms in Russia and in Britain.

And now for the important explanation given in the liquidators' newspaper.

“But,” it says (No. 24, page 2, column 1) “if this basis [i.e., the general basis of political liberties] is not necessary for partial changes in insurance legislation, why is it necessary for a partial change in the law of March 4, 1906 and certain articles of the decree on strikes of December 2, 1906?”

We congratulate you on your frankness and thank you for it! You have hit the mark—“a partial change in the laws of March 4, 1906 and December 2, 1905” is quite possible without anything general! Superb.

Only—do you know what?—that “partial change in the laws of March 4, 1906 and December 2, 1905” is not called “freedom of association” but Octobrist deception of the people.

The Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta writers have admitted exactly what was to be proved.

By the “freedom of association” that the liberals and liquidators treat you to, must be understood:

“A partial change in the laws of March 4, 1906 and December 2, 1905.”

Once again we thank you for your frankness. And so we shall put it on record that the main, central, chief, primary, etc., etc., slogan of the liquidators is, by their own admission, the demand for a partial change in the laws of March 4, 1906 and December 2, 1906.



Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta has brilliantly refuted its association with the liberals, has it not?

It is not for nothing that the liquidators have been called Social-Democratic Octobrists!

## **Letter to the Secretary of the Socialist Propaganda League**

Lenin Collected Works, Volume 21, pages 423-428.

Extract

Dear Comrades!

We are extremely glad to get your leaflet. Your appeal to the members of the Socialist Party to struggle for a new International, for clear-cut revolutionary socialism as taught by Marx and Engels, and against the opportunism, especially against those who are in favor of working class participation in a war of defence, corresponds fully with the position our party (Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia, Central Committee) has taken from the beginning of this war and has always taken during more than ten years.

We send you our sincerest greetings & best wishes of success in our fight for true internationalism.

In our press & in our propaganda we differ from your programme in several points & we think it is quite necessary that we expose you briefly these points in order to make immediate & serious steps for the coordination of the international strife of the uncompromisingly revolutionary Socialists especially Marxists in all countries.

We criticise in the most severe manner the old, Second (1889-1914) International, we declare it dead & not worth to be restored on old basis. But we never say in our press that too great emphasis has been heretofore placed upon so-called

“Immediate Demands”, and that thereby the socialism can be diluted we say & we prove that all bourgeois parties, all parties except the working-class revolutionary Party, are liars & hypocrites when they speak about reforms. We try to help the working class to get the smallest possible but real improvement (economic & political) in their situation & we add always that no reform can be durable, sincere, serious if not seconded by revolutionary methods of struggle of the masses. We preach always that a socialist party not uniting this struggle for reforms with the revolutionary methods of working-class movement can become a sect, can be severed from the masses, & that that is the most pernicious menace to the success of the clear-cut revolutionary socialism.

## **The “Disarmament”**

Lenin

Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata No. 2, December 1916.

Collected Works, Volume 23, pages 94-104.

Extract

To proceed. We are by no means opposed to the fight for reforms. And we do not wish to ignore the sad possibility—if the worst comes to the worst—of mankind going through a second imperialist war, if revolution does not come out of the present war, in spite of the numerous outbursts of mass unrest and mass discontent and in spite of our efforts. We favour a programme of reforms directed also against the opportunists. They would be only too glad if we left the struggle for reforms entirely to them and sought escape from sad reality in a nebulous “disarmament” fantasy. “Disarmament” means simply running away from unpleasant reality, not fighting it.

## THE AGRARIAN AND NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

### THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 24, pp. 55-91.

#### Extract

To counteract the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic sermons preached by many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who advise the peasants not to seize the landed estates and not to start the agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to carry out the agrarian reform at once on their own, and to confiscate the landed estates immediately, upon the decisions of the peasants' deputies in the localities.

...

The distinction between the reformists and the revolutionaries, among the Social-Democrats, and socialists generally, was objectively bound to undergo a change under the conditions of the imperialist war. Those who confine themselves to "demanding" that the bourgeois governments should conclude peace or "ascertain the will of the peoples for peace", etc., are actually slipping into reforms. For, objectively, the problem of the war can be solved only in a revolutionary way.

There is no possibility of this war ending in a democratic, non-coercive peace or of the people being relieved of the burden of billions paid in interest to the capitalists, who have made

fortunes out of the war, except through a revolution of the proletariat.

The most varied reforms can and must be demanded of the bourgeois governments, but one cannot, without sinking to Manilovism and reformism, demand that people and classes entangled by the thousands of threads of imperialist capital should tear those threads. And unless they are torn, all talk of a war against war is idle and deceitful prattle.

The "Kautskyites", the "Centre", are revolutionaries in word and reformists in deed, they are internationalists in word and accomplices of the social-chauvinists in deed.

## **A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism**

Lenin

The Other Political Issues Raised and Distorted By P. Kievsky

Extract

But Marxists know that democracy does not abolish class oppression. It only makes the class struggle more direct, wider, more open and pronounced, and that is what we need. The fuller the freedom of divorce, the clearer will women see that the source of their “domestic slavery” is capitalism, not lack of rights. The more democratic the system of government, the clearer will the workers see that the root evil is capitalism, not lack of rights. The fuller national equality (and it is not complete without freedom of secession), the clearer will the workers of the oppressed nations see that the cause of their oppression is capitalism, not lack of rights, etc.

## OUTLINE FOR AN ARTICLE ON THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE “MARSH”

Lenin

NOTEBOOK “ $\alpha$ ”

(“ALPHA”)

(NOTES ON KAUTSKYISM)

Our Struggle Against the “Marsh”

The Marsh = K. Kautsky, Huysmans, etc.

Significance of the distinction between Plekhanov, Hyndman, Heine and K. Kautsky, Vandervelde, etc. 2 distinctions of “shades”. Eclectics instead of dialectics. The “middle way”:

- “reconciliation” of extremes, absence of clear, definite, firm conclusions; vacillation.
- Conciliation and blunting of class contradictions *in words* and their accentuation *in reality*.
- Conciliation with opportunism.
- Glossing over the theoretical and practical-political differences with opportunism.
- Repudiation (apostasy) of the *Road to Power* position and of the *revolutionary* essence (and revolutionary tactics) of the Basle Manifesto<sup>[2]</sup>....

The difference between the conceptions “Marxist centre” (= *independent* policy, independent ideas, independent theory)



and “Marsh” (= wavering, lack of principle, “turn table” (“Drehscheibe”), weathercock).

Illegal organisation.		<i>Official optimism:</i>
Work in the army.		the objective course of events ...
Support for and development of mass action.	N.B.	everything is <i>bound</i> to be for the best.
		The “proletariat” and the “class struggle” “in general”.
		“Process”.
		cf. Martov on the “hopeless-
	N.B.	ness” of socialism <i>if</i> ...
		opportunism is hopeless!!!

**Recognition of revolutionary activity along the lines indicated above, not denial of legal activity and of the struggle for reforms, should be the essence of the “struggle against the Marsh”.**

The possibility of a fusion of socialism and syndicalism, should there be a new and deeper division.

Parliamentarism and a different conception of it. “Illegal parliamentarism”.

## MARXISM VERSUS LIBERALISM

J. V. Stalin

AN INTERVIEW WITH H.G. WELLS

23 July 1934

Works, Vol. 14

(Extract)

Wells : There was a case in the history of England, however, of a class voluntarily handing over power to another class. In the period between 1830 and 1870, the aristocracy, whose influence was still very considerable at the end of the eighteenth century, voluntarily, without a severe struggle, surrendered power to the bourgeoisie, which serves as a sentimental support of the monarchy. Subsequently, this transference of power led to the establishment of the rule of the financial oligarchy.

Stalin : But you have imperceptibly passed from questions of revolution to questions of reform. This is not the same thing. Don't you think that the Chartist movement played a great role in the Reforms in England in the nineteenth century?

Wells : The Chartists did little and disappeared without leaving a trace.

Stalin : I do not agree with you. The Chartists, and the strike movement which they organised, played a great role; they compelled the ruling class to make a number of concessions in

regard to the franchise, in regard to abolishing the so-called "rotten boroughs," and in regard to some of the points of the "Charter."

Chartism played a not unimportant historical role and compelled a section of the ruling classes to make certain concessions, reforms, in order to avert great shocks. Generally speaking, it must be said that of all the ruling classes, the ruling classes of England, both the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, proved to be the cleverest, most flexible from the point of view of their class interests, from the point of view of maintaining their power. Take as an example, say, from modern history, the general strike in England in 1926. The first thing any other bourgeoisie would have done in the face of such an event, when the General Council of Trade Unions called for a strike, would have been to arrest the trade union leaders.

The British bourgeoisie did not do that, and it acted cleverly from the point of view of its own interests.

I cannot conceive of such a flexible strategy being employed by the bourgeoisie in the United States, Germany or France. In order to maintain their rule, the ruling classes of Great Britain have never foresworn small concessions, reforms. But it would be a mistake to think that these reforms were revolutionary.

Wells : You have a higher opinion of the ruling classes of my country than I have. But is there a great difference between a small revolution and a great reform? Is not a reform a small revolution?

Stalin : Owing to pressure from below, the pressure of the masses, the bourgeoisie may sometimes concede certain partial reforms while remaining on the basis of the existing social-economic system.

Acting in this way, it calculates that these concessions are necessary in order to preserve its class rule. This is the essence of reform. Revolution, however, means the transference of power from one class to another. That is why it is impossible to describe any reform as revolution. That is why we cannot count on the change of social systems taking place as an imperceptible transition from one system to another by means of reforms, by the ruling class making concessions.

Wells : I am very grateful to you for this talk which has meant a great deal to me. In explaining things to me you probably called to mind how you had to explain the fundamentals of socialism in the illegal circles before the revolution. At the present time there are only two persons to whose opinion, to whose every word, millions are listening : you, and Roosevelt. Others may preach as much as they like; what they say will never be printed or heeded.

I cannot yet appreciate what has been done in your country; I only arrived yesterday. But I have already seen the happy faces of healthy men and women and I know that something very considerable is being done here. The contrast with 1920 is astounding.

Stalin : Much more could have been done had we Bolsheviki been cleverer.

Wells : No, if human beings were cleverer. It would be a good thing to invent a five-year plan for the reconstruction of the human brain which obviously lacks many things needed for a perfect social order.

(Laughter.)

“ The stronger the reformist influence among workers, the weaker the workers, the more they depend on the bourgeoisie. ”

Divorce the struggle for reforms from the struggle for the final goal—that is what Bernstein’s preaching actually amounts to. Divorce the struggle for improvements, for freedom of association, etc., from the struggle against reformism, from the defense of Marxism, from its spirit and its political trend—that is what the preaching of D. and the other liquidators actually amounts to.”

