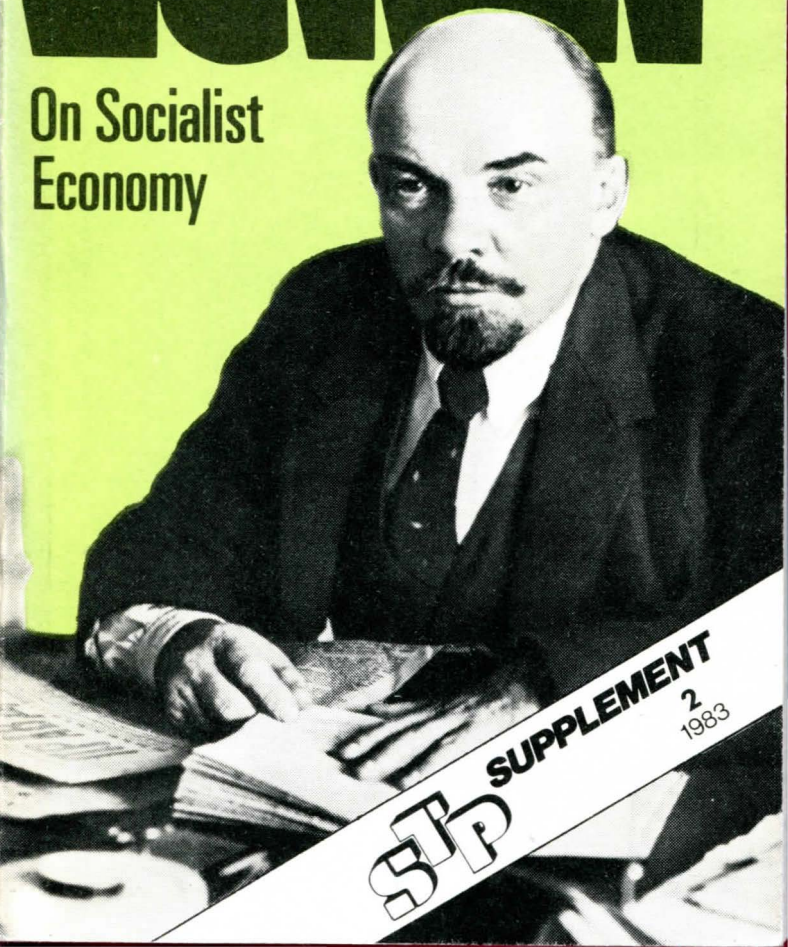


# Lenin

On Socialist  
Economy



**STP** SUPPLEMENT  
2  
1983

**STP**

**SUPPLEMENT**

SOCIALISM: THEORY  
AND PRACTICE

**2**  
**1983**

Published  
bimonthly  
in English, French,  
German and  
Spanish

# THE GREAT HERITAGE

# Lenin

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Novosti Press Agency Publishing House  
Moscow 1983

THE GREAT HERITAGE

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**On Socialist  
Economy**

This book is a collection of excerpts from Vladimir Lenin's books, articles and speeches on the fundamental principles of the organisation, construction and functioning of a socialist economy. The book consists of six chapters on different subjects, which include excerpts quoted in chronological sequence from Vladimir Lenin's *Collected Works*.

The book also includes a general introduction, forewords to the separate chapters and short notes.

The book was compiled by journalist *BORIS PUTRIN* who also wrote the introduction and forewords.

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# VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN

## His Life and Work: a Brief History

*April 22, 1870.* Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (Ulyanov) was born in the city of Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk) on the River Volga in central European Russia.

His parents were intellectuals with progressive democratic views. Vladimir's father, Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov, taught physics and mathematics, was an inspector and then director of public schools in Simbirsk Gubernia. His mother, Maria Alexandrovna Ulyanova, was a teacher. All the Ulyanov children were brought up industrious, honest and intolerant of injustice.

*September 1879.* Vladimir Ulyanov began to attend the Simbirsk Gymnasium. An eager and able pupil, he went from one form to the next with flying colours. He had studied the French and German languages from childhood, was fond of ancient Greek and Latin from his first years at the gymnasium and later mastered English, Italian and Polish on his own.

*Spring 1887.* When 17-year-old Vladimir Ulyanov was taking his school-leaving exams, his family learned of the arrest and then execution of his elder brother Alexander, a student at St. Petersburg\*

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\* St. Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire, was re-named Petrograd in 1914 and Leningrad in 1924.



University, for his part in an attempt on the tsar's life.

Alexander Ulyanov had been a member of the secret revolutionary society *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) whose members denied the leading role of the working class in the revolutionary struggle and regarded the peasantry as the main revolutionary force; their principal method of revolutionary struggle was terrorism against individuals—the assassination of the tsar and his ministers.

“No, we won't take that path,” Vladimir Ulyanov told his mother when they learned of his elder brother Alexander's execution.

His brother's execution shocked Vladimir Ulyanov; it also strengthened his conviction that the people had to seek liberation from exploitation and oppression in ways other than those adopted by the *Narodniks* (Populists).

*August 1887.* The Ulyanov family moved to the city of Kazan where Vladimir was accepted as a student in the law department of Kazan University.

*December 1887.* Vladimir Ulyanov was imprisoned for his involvement in student disturbances, then expelled from the university and banished to the village of Kokushkino (now Lenino) 40 kilometres from Kazan. There he was placed for the first time under secret police surveillance. While in exile Vladimir studied the university course and socio-political literature.

*Autumn 1888.* Vladimir Ulyanov returned to Kazan but was not allowed to resume his studies at the university. Soon he joined a Marxist circle where he studied the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. He was particularly impressed by K. Marx's

“No, we won't take that path”

Painting by P. Belousov

fundamental work, *Capital*, which irrefutably proves the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism and the triumph of socialism.

*September 1889.* The Ulyanovs moved to the city of Samara (now Kuibyshev) where Vladimir continued his study of the university course at home.

*Spring, autumn 1891.* Vladimir Ulyanov brilliantly passed the graduation examinations in law at St. Petersburg University (as an external student). He was then called to the bar and began to practise at the Samara District Court. He continued his Marxist studies and was actively involved in Marxist propaganda work.

*1892.* Vladimir Ulyanov organised the first Marxist circle in Samara, where he read reports on and abstracts of Marxist theory. He translated into Russian the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, which contains the basic principles of their revolutionary doctrine.

*August 1893.* Vladimir Ulyanov went to St. Petersburg where he officially practised law.

There, in the country's capital, Vladimir joined a Marxist circle made up mostly of students from the Technological Institute who worked within a narrow circle of more advanced workers, teaching them Marxist theory. Vladimir Ulyanov's very first addresses to the circle showed that in him Russia had acquired a Marxist theoretician of broad knowledge and vision. He soon became the recognized leader of the revolutionary Marxists in St. Petersburg.

*February 1894.* At a meeting of St. Petersburg Marxists Vladimir Lenin met Nadezhda Krupskaya, a teacher at a workers' Sunday school, who later became his wife and companion in the revolutionary struggle.

Within a short time there appeared many Marxist circles in St. Petersburg. The liberal *Narodniks*, how-

ever, impeded the development of the revolutionary movement; they continued to adhere to obsolete views on the future of revolutionary activity which were wholly unsuited to the new conditions of Russia's capitalist development.

*Spring, summer 1894.* Vladimir Ulyanov wrote the book *What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* which criticised the philosophical and economic views and the programme and tactics of the liberal *Narodniks*. The book set the tasks of overthrowing the tsarist autocracy, of ending capitalist exploitation and establishing a socialist society. It advanced the important idea of the revolutionary alliance of the working class with the peasantry and other non-proletarian sections of the working people. The book proved that democracy and socialism could only win through if the proletariat played the leading role in that alliance. It also stated for the first time the specific objective of setting up a revolutionary proletarian party.

Vladimir Ulyanov took a resolute stand against the "legal Marxists"—bourgeois intellectuals who styled themselves adherents of Marxism since they recognized, in legally published works, the Marxist thesis of capitalism's progressive character compared to preceding social formations. They supported the capitalist order and rejected the very essence of Marxism, the doctrine of capitalism's exploitative nature, of class struggle, socialist revolution and the taking of power by the working class. In his theoretical studies Vladimir Ulyanov convincingly showed that the "legal Marxists" in fact sought to make the working-class movement serve the interests of the bourgeoisie.

*April 1895.* Vladimir Ulyanov went to Switzerland where the Russian emigre group "The Emancipation of Labour" was active under the guidance of the



**A group of leaders in the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. Vladimir Ulyanov is in the centre. 1897**

prominent Marxist Georgi Plekhanov. Ulyanov came to an agreement with Plekhanov on publishing popular literature for Russian workers. From Switzerland Vladimir Ulyanov went on to France and Germany where he contacted local revolutionaries and studied foreign Marxist literature.

*Autumn 1895.* Vladimir Ulyanov returned to Russia where he rallied all the Marxist circles in St. Petersburg into one League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, the embryo of the revolutionary proletarian party in Russia. The League of Struggle began to link the workers' economic demands with their political struggle against tsarism and capitalist exploitation. Soon similar or-

ganisations came into being in other Russian cities.

It was decided to publish an illegal newspaper in order to establish reliable contacts between the country's revolutionary organisations and to lay the groundwork for a Marxist party. But the first issue, ready to go to print, was never published because of the leaders' arrest.

*December 9, 1895.* Vladimir Ulyanov and many of his associates in the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class were arrested on charges of criminal activity against the state. Ulyanov spent more than 14 months in solitary confinement. In his letters to his comrades from prison he insisted that a party congress be convened; he wrote and sent out to his comrades-in-arms illegal booklets and leaflets. There he also wrote a draft party programme and an explanation to it.

*February 13, 1897.* The prison authorities announced Vladimir Ulyanov's sentence—exile to the distant Siberian village of Shushenskoye in the foothills of the Sayan Mountains, 600 kilometres from the railway line. In exile he corresponded extensively with Social-Democrats banished by the tsarist government to Russia's northern parts and to Siberia and maintained contact with St. Petersburg and Moscow, the centres of the workers' movement. In Shushenskoye Ulyanov subscribed to many newspapers and magazines, read the new Marxist publications and wrote numerous articles and booklets.

*May 1898.* Nadezhda Krupskaya arrived in Shushenskoye; she had also been sentenced to three years in exile for her part in the same case of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class. A month later they were married.

From Nadezhda Krupskaya Vladimir Ulyanov

learned of the 1st Congress of the Russian Social-Democrats which was held in Minsk in March 1898 and which proclaimed the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP). In point of fact the Party was not founded then, as it had neither programme nor rules and lacked ideological and organisational unity. The Party Central Committee elected by the congress was soon arrested.

1897-1900. During his Siberian exile, Vladimir Ulyanov wrote over 30 works, including the outstanding book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. That work developed in a critical manner K. Marx's economic theory as applied to Russia's specific conditions, described the new disposition of the class forces in the country, demonstrated the proletariat's leading role in the revolutionary movement, examined the peasantry's position under capitalism, and outlined the scientific ideas behind the working-class' alliance with the peasantry.

These were years when certain Social-Democrats increasingly attempted to play down the Party's role in the workers' movement, to limit that movement to a strictly economic struggle. In his articles Vladimir Ulyanov levelled well-argued criticism at the policy of those "economists", which was nothing more than a Russian variety of revisionism. In several of his articles written at that time Vladimir Ulyanov argued the necessity of creating an independent workers' party in Russia and wrote about how a Marxist workers' party could be organised. The plan gave top priority to printing an all-Russia political newspaper, one that would be not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organiser of the Party's forces.

January 29, 1900. Vladimir Ulyanov's exile came to an end and he left Shushenskoye. Since he was not permitted to reside either in St. Petersburg, the uni-



versity cities or industrial centres, he went to central Russia so as to be closer to the country's capital.

*Late February 1900.* Vladimir Ulyanov arrived in Pskov where he began work at the statistics department in order to earn a living and as a cover for his revolutionary activity. From Pskov he contacted Social-Democratic groups in various cities and discussed with them their contribution to the future newspaper which it had been decided to publish abroad.

*July 1900.* Having secured the support of the Social-Democrats, Vladimir Ulyanov went abroad, where he organised the publication of the first all-Russia political newspaper, *Iskra* (Spark). Its first issue was printed in December 1900. *Iskra* carried articles on topical economic and political issues. It was secretly brought to Russia for distribution among the workers.

Having made *Iskra* the focal point for Russia's Party organisations, Vladimir Ulyanov announced that a second congress of the Party would have to be convened. He drafted the agenda and regulations as well as the Party rules, wrote a report on *Iskra's* activity for the congress, prepared several draft resolutions and outlined the agrarian section of the Party programme.

*December 1901.* The first four chapters of Vladimir Ulyanov's article *The Agrarian Question and the "Critics of Marx"* were published for the first time under the pen-name of Lenin in the magazine *Zarya*. It was then that his comrades-in-arms began to call him Lenin, the name under which he has gone down in history as the founder of the Russian Communist Party, leader of the Great October Socialist Revolution and of the world proletariat and the founder of the Soviet state.

*July 30—August 23, 1903.* The 2nd Congress of the

RSDLP was held first in Brussels and then in London. Whereas the first congress was attended by only nine delegates, the second had 43 delegates from Russia's 26 party organisations. Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) chaired many of the congress' sittings and made several reports.

The congress delegates concentrated on discussing the Party programme and rules. Lenin and his associates won a pitched ideological struggle for the Party programme prepared by *Iskra*. It set both the Party's immediate objective, the overthrow of tsarism, and its ultimate goal, a socialist revolution, the establishment of working people's power and the building of socialism. The opportunists were opposed to the establishment of workers' power, they did not recognize the peasantry as the ally of the working class and thought it unnecessary for a Party member to work in a local Party organisation.

During the election of the Party central organs Lenin's adherents secured a majority of the votes while the opportunists remained in the minority. After this Lenin and his supporters, consistent Marxist revolutionaries, came to be known as Bolsheviks (from the Russian word "bolshinstvo"—majority) and the opportunists, Mensheviks (from "menschinstvo"—minority).

*May 1904.* Lenin's book *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* was published in Geneva where he had arrived soon after the 2nd RSDLP Congress. It analysed the nature of the ideological conflict between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, exposed the Mensheviks' opportunism when it came to Party structure and also mapped out the main lines along which the Party was to be organised.

*January 10, 1905.* Lenin wrote his article *Revolution in Russia*, about the bloody events of the First Russian Revolution which began on January 9

with the shooting by tsarist troops of a peaceful workers' demonstration in St. Petersburg. The demonstrators had carried a petition requesting an improvement in their unbearable living conditions.

*April 25, 1905.* Lenin was elected chairman of the 3rd Party Congress which opened on that day. He spoke on the main items on the agenda: the armed uprising, the Social-Democrats' participation in the provisional revolutionary government and the attitude to the peasants' movement. The congress elected a Central Committee headed by Lenin.

*November 8, 1905.* Lenin returned to St. Petersburg where he directed the Central Committee, spoke at workers' meetings and helped publish Party newspapers. The December 1905 armed uprising in Moscow, the apex of the revolution, was not supported in time in other workers' centres. It failed to win over the army. Nor was there sufficient use of methods of guerrilla warfare. The uprising which had used defensive tactics ended in defeat. The revolution began to subside. Lenin later called the 1905-1907 revolution the dress rehearsal for the Great October Socialist Revolution.

*Late February 1906.* Lenin travelled to Finland in order to avoid imminent arrest.

*April 23—May 8, 1906.* Lenin attended the 4th Party Congress in Stockholm, where he chaired many of the sittings. The congress proceeded amidst a bitter struggle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks.

*May 13, 1907.* The 5th RSDLP Congress opened in London, where Lenin was elected to the presidium, was chairman at seven sittings and made several reports and speeches, especially on the attitude to the bourgeois parties. The congress elected Lenin to the RSDLP Central Committee. At the congress' conclusion the Bolsheviks held meetings at which they set up a Bolshevik centre headed by Lenin.

*January 1908.* Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaya arrived in Geneva. Although many revolutionaries were at this stage disheartened, Lenin always remained optimistic. Once again forced to emigrate, he continued to gather strength for the future victory which he never doubted.

*December 1908.* Lenin and Krupskaya moved to Paris.

*May 1909.* Lenin published his book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism. Critical Comments on a Reactionary Philosophy*, an example of consistent struggle against the opponents of Marxist philosophy, and of the defence and creative development of Marxism.

*Spring 1911.* Lenin organised a Party school at Longjumeau near Paris for the functionaries of Party organisations in Russia's major proletarian centres. In the lectures he delivered at the school Lenin firmly opposed those Social-Democrats who had lost faith in the triumph of a new revolution in Russia and wanted to close down the Party's illegal organisations, which would have been tantamount to doing away with the revolutionary workers' party.

*January 18, 1912.* The 6th (Prague) All-Russia RSDLP Conference took place under Lenin's leadership; it took note of the new revolutionary upsurge in Russia and accordingly outlined the new tasks facing the Party.

*May 5, 1912.* The first issue of the legal Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*, started on Lenin's initiative, was printed. Through this newspaper the Bolsheviks propagated Marxism, explained the Party's policy and worked to rally its ranks.

*June 23, 1912.* Lenin and Nadezhda Krupskaya went to Cracow in Poland so as to be closer to Russia and to be able more actively to direct *Pravda* and the Bolshevik group in the State Duma, a legislative

body of limited authority which the tsarist government was forced to set up after the 1905 revolution. The tsar had formally recognized the State Duma's legislative functions, but subsequently deprived it of all power by a series of decrees. The Bolsheviks, because of the decline in the revolutionary movement and the rise of reaction, had decided to use the rostrum of the State Duma, which they could do legally, to expose the autocratic system.

1912-1914. Lenin led the Bolsheviks to turn the working-class Party into the strongest revolutionary force in Russia.

August 8, 1914. Lenin was arrested on false charges of espionage and imprisoned by the Polish authorities for ten days. On his release from prison he and his family moved to Switzerland and settled in Berne. There he raised a strong voice of protest against the rapacious First World War unleashed by the imperialists. The war lasted until 1918 and was waged between the major imperialist groupings—the Quadruple Alliance led by Germany on the one side and the Entente countries led by Great Britain and France on the other, Russia being an Entente member.

1915-1916. Lenin wrote a number of important works (*Socialism and War*, *On the Slogan of the United States of Europe*, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, etc.) which exposed the nature of imperialism, described its basic characteristics and formulated the law of capitalism's uneven development in the epoch of imperialism. Lenin developed the teaching of Marx and Engels in a creative manner to show that imperialism means the dawn of socialist revolution and proved that it could be victorious in a single country. He also showed that socialism as a social system inherently strives to abolish wars and to attain a durable peace in the world.

The world war, which involved 38 countries, aggravated to the utmost all the contradictions within imperialism. A revolutionary situation was brewing in many countries and, as Lenin had predicted, Russia proved the weakest link in the chain of global imperialism.

*January 22, 1917.* Lenin read a report at a meeting of young workers at the People's House in Zurich, concluding it with the statement that Europe was on the verge of revolution. Revolution did indeed break out in a few weeks' time, and the tsarist autocracy was toppled in Russia in February 1917. The popular masses created bodies of revolutionary-democratic dictatorship, the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Representatives of the petty-bourgeois parties, who at first held a majority in the Soviets as many Bolsheviks were at the time in prison, exile or emigration, betrayed the workers' and peasants' interests and handed over state power to a bourgeois provisional government made up of representatives of big capitalists and landlords. Although the Provisional Government used revolutionary slogans to describe its actions, it did not nor did it wish to solve any of the country's major problems. It continued the bloody imperialist war, gave no land to the peasants, did not observe just labour legislation and did not intend to guarantee civil rights. Lenin then raised the question of preparing for and carrying out a socialist revolution and of the taking of power by the workers who represented and fought for the vital interests of all of society's toiling classes and sections.

*April 4, 1917.* Lenin returned to Petrograd from emigration. He concluded his address to the thousands of workers and soldiers who had come to welcome him at the railway station with the words: "Long live the socialist revolution!" A detailed plan

of the revolution, was outlined and substantiated by Lenin in his famous *April Theses* and in several of his other articles and brochures.

*April 24, 1917.* Lenin gave the opening address at the 7th All-Russia Conference of Bolsheviks. He also read a report on topical issues. The conference actually fulfilled the role of a Party congress in that it showed that the goals it set could only be accomplished by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies taking power all over Russia. The conference elected a Central Committee headed by Lenin.

The mounting revolutionary actions of the working people led the bourgeois Provisional Government to launch a decisive offensive in June 1917 when it ordered the shooting of a peaceful workers' demonstration in Petrograd, outlawed the Bolshevik Party and persecuted its leaders.

*July 6, 1917.* The Party Central Committee instructed Lenin to go into hiding. He lived in a kind of tent built of branches and thatched with hay near the railway station of Razliv not far from Petrograd, disguised as a Finnish peasant. Through the comrades who came to see him there Lenin kept track of events in the capital. When the autumn cold came he moved to Finland from where he maintained constant contact with the Party Central Committee.

*Mid-September 1917.* Lenin set the practical task of making urgent preparations for an armed uprising. By that time the multi-million masses of the rural poor had risen alongside the proletariat to fight capitalist rule. The revolutionary soldiers and sailors were also a powerful force.

*October 8, 1917.* Lenin, who had just returned to Petrograd, wrote the article *Advice of an Onlooker*, where he outlined the basic principles of an armed uprising. Lenin's plan envisaged that the armed de-



Lenin speaking at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which proclaimed the transfer of power to the workers and peasants

Painting by V. Serov

tachments of revolutionary workers, soldiers and sailors would act jointly to occupy the strategic points in the capital.

*October 24 (November 6, New Style), 1917.* Lenin moved from his hiding place in the city to the former Smolny Institute, the revolutionary headquarters. The Party leader took direct control of the armed uprising into his hands. Workers, soldiers from the





Petrograd garrison and sailors from the Baltic Fleet commanded the situation in the capital's working-class districts. They captured the bridges across the River Neva, the railway stations, the wireless station, the power station, the state bank and other important places. The Provisional Government sought refuge in the Winter Palace, the tsar's former residence, under the protection of counter-revolutionary military units.

*October 25 (November 7, New Style), 1917. At 9:40 p.m. cannon fired from the battleship *Aurora* gave the signal for an attack on the Winter Palace.*

By 2 o'clock in the morning the palace had been taken by storm and the Provisional Government ministers arrested.

*October 26 (November 8), 1917.* The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the appeal *To the Workers, Soldiers and Peasants*, written by Lenin, which proclaimed the transfer of all state power in the centre and in the provinces to the Soviets.

On the same day the congress heard Lenin's report on peace and adopted the *Decree on Peace* he had drafted, which proposed to the peoples and governments of all the countries involved in the First World War that they end the war and conclude a just and democratic peace. The congress also adopted the *Decree on Land* written by Lenin, which abolished landownership and gave the land to the peasants.

The congress formed a people's government, the Council of People's Commissars, headed by Lenin, and elected the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the highest body of state authority. After the Petrograd victory, the revolution triumphed all over Russia. A new era of world history was ushered in, an era of mankind's revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

During the first months of Soviet government Lenin lived and worked at the Smolny. He directed state and Party affairs, the economic and cultural activity and spoke at mass rallies. He personally supervised the formation of the Red Army of workers and peasants to defend the revolutionary gains of the people.

The overthrown exploiter classes of landlords and capitalists, the reactionary section of the army and the Mensheviks, instigated by international imperialism, sought to prevent peace negotiations between the belligerent countries and to provoke the German troops to launch an offensive against the still vul-

nerable Soviet Republic. When, the imperialist powers failed in their attempts to strangle the Russian revolution with the help of the German army, they embarked on direct military intervention in Soviet Russia.

The British, German, American, French, Japanese and other imperialists intervened by force of arms against the Russian workers and peasants who had decided to run their own country. Internal counter-revolution in its turn started the Civil War. With world imperialist support conspiracies were hatched against the Soviet government and plans were made to assassinate Lenin and his associates.

*March 11, 1918.* The Government and the Party Central Committee moved to Moscow which became the capital of the Soviet state.

*August 30, 1918.* Lenin was severely wounded in an assassination attempt by the terrorist Fanny Kaplan after a mass rally at a Moscow factory. Lenin overcame the injury and in two weeks' time resumed work.

*November 1918.* Lenin headed the newly-formed Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defence, which co-ordinated the activities of military and civilian organisations in order to achieve unity of the front and the rear. In the first three months of its work the council held over one hundred sittings all but two of which were chaired by Lenin.

*March 18, 1919.* Lenin delivered the Central Committee report at the 8th Congress of the RCP(B)—the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). He also made reports on the Party programme and on work in the countryside and also a speech on the Civil War. The congress adopted a new, second Party programme, drafted by a commission headed by Lenin. He himself wrote all the main sections of the



Lenin making a speech in Moscow's Red Square. 1919

programme laying down the Party's tasks during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

*March 29—April 5, 1920.* Lenin read the Central Committee report at the 9th RCP(B) Congress as well as speeches on economic development and co-operation in the countryside.

*October 1920.* Lenin made a speech at the 3rd All-Russia Congress of the Young Communist League where he urged the younger generation to study, to master the entire knowledge accumulated by humankind, in order to become active builders of a new society.

By the end of 1920 the foreign interventionists had been defeated and the armed actions of internal counter-revolutionaries had in the main been sup-

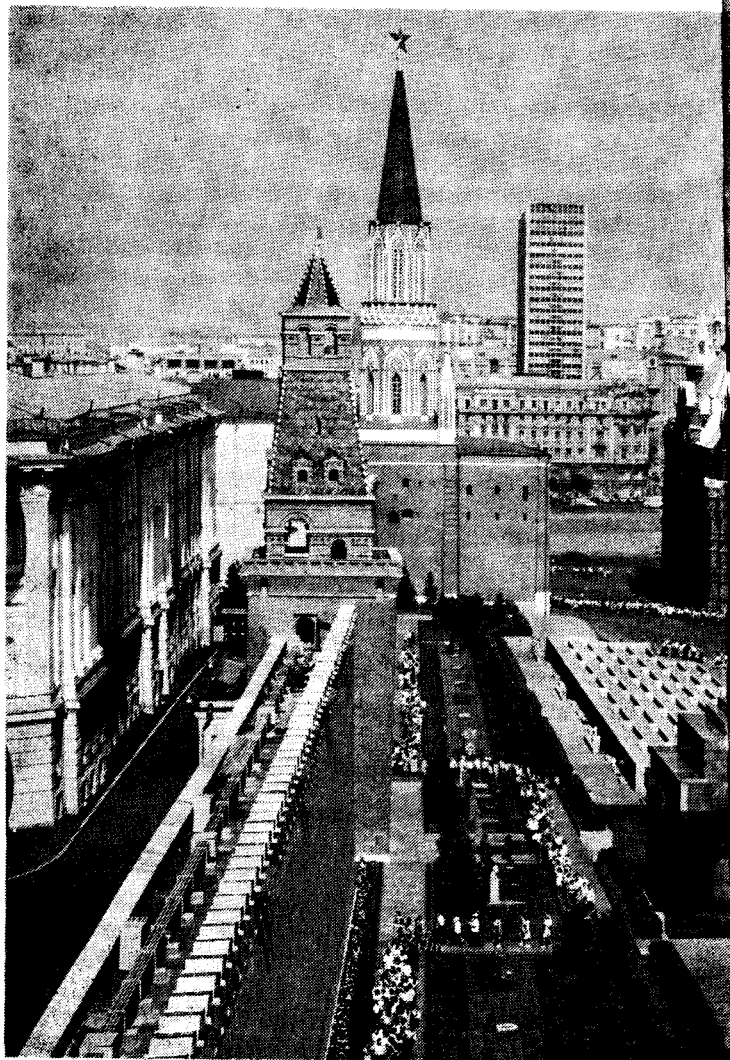
pressed. Next came matters of economic development. Lenin advanced the idea of transforming the country's economy inherited from tsarism and ravaged by the war into an advanced socialist economy with a highly developed science and culture. He mapped out the ways of accomplishing that grandiose programme which included the electrification of the whole country, the establishment of heavy industry, co-operation of agriculture and the introduction of the achievements of world science.

*March 8—16, 1921.* At the 10th RCP(B) Congress, Lenin made a report on the Central Committee's political activity, reports on a New Economic Policy and on the Party's unity and also speeches on trade unions and on the fuel question. He also drafted the most important resolutions of the congress.

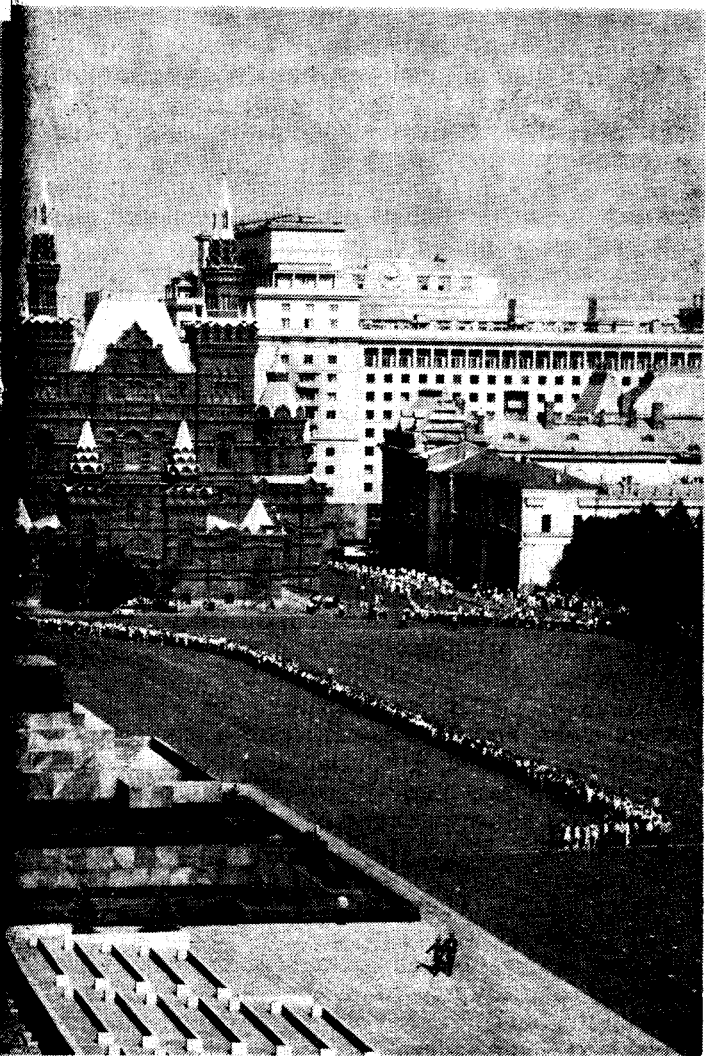
The New Economic Policy elaborated by Lenin was a continuation of the plan for laying the foundations of a socialist economy, which he had outlined back in 1918 in his booklet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*. Free enterprise and free trade were permitted in order rapidly to reestablish the country's economy during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, the commanding heights in the economy remaining in the hands of the socialist state. The aim of the New Economic Policy was to strengthen the alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

*December 6, 1921.* On doctor's orders, Lenin was granted leave and went to the village of Gorki near Moscow where he recuperated under medical supervision from the effects of the hard years of underground work and emigration, acute fatigue and the severe wounds he had received in 1918.

*March 27, 1922.* Lenin opened the 11th RCP(B) Congress where he delivered the Central Committee report. There he pointed to the recovery of all sectors



Near Lenin's mausoleum



of the economy and the stronger alliance between the working class and the peasantry. Lenin set the Party a new task, that of preparing for a decisive onslaught on the remaining capitalist elements in the country's economy, of consolidating and advancing the socialist economy.

*April 23, 1922.* Lenin underwent an operation to extract one of the bullets which had remained after the 1918 assassination attempt.

*September 26, 1922.* Lenin wrote a letter to the Political Bureau members of the RCP(B) Central Committee outlining his plan for the formation of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics through the voluntary alliance of the Soviet republics.

*December 30, 1922.* The 1st All-Union Congress of Soviets adopted, in pursuance of Lenin's ideas and instructions, the Declaration on the Formation of the USSR and a Treaty of Union.

Lenin continued to work tirelessly in spite of his illness. In his last articles and letters Lenin wrote on the introduction of scientific industrial management methods, economic planning, industrialisation, the co-operation of agriculture and the fight against bureaucracy.

*March 10, 1923.* Lenin's illness entered a new severe stage, and he was unable to attend the 12th RCP(B) Congress in April. But both the preparations and the congress itself followed the proposals he made in his last articles and letters.

*January 21, 1924.* Vladimir Ilyich Lenin died at 6:50 p.m.

More than 900,000 people filed past Lenin's coffin in the Hall of Columns of the House of Trade Unions. Millions of people attended memorial rallies all over the country to assure the Party Central Committee and the Soviet Government of their loyalty to Lenin's ideas.



*January 27, 1924.* Lenin's coffin was placed in a mausoleum near the Kremlin wall in Red Square. Since then there has been an endless flow of people to his resting place. On arriving in Moscow people go to Red Square to pay homage to the memory of the founder and leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, the leader and teacher of working people throughout the world.

Lenin's teaching is the guiding star for the champions of peace and social progress on all the continents. To whatever heights mankind may rise along this path it will always remember that the thinker and revolutionary of genius, the great theoretician and organiser at the source of the new communist society was Vladimir Ilyich L E N I N.

## INTRODUCTION

Vladimir Lenin, the founder of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the world's first state of workers and peasants, did a great deal of work on developing the fundamental principles of the organisation of a socialist economy. In numerous articles and speeches he expounded a plan for building socialism which included socialist industrialisation, collectivisation of agriculture and cultural revolution.

Lenin considered *the public ownership* of mills and mines, land and irrigation canals, oilfields and other means of production to be the economic foundation of socialism—the first stage of the future communist society. Since public ownership excludes exploitation of man by man, it cannot originate under capitalism, an indispensable prerequisite for it being a socialist revolution and *the establishment of working people's power*.

Lenin has shown in his works that *the vanguard of the working people*—the Communist Party equipped with progressive Marxist theory—can and must lead the working people in a just struggle against the exploiters and in the carrying out of radical social and economic reforms to develop social production on democratic principles. The Communist Party pro-

vides the working people with scientifically-based guidance in their activities in all spheres of the country's political, economic and cultural life.

When Lenin outlined the tasks of economic construction after the working people had gained power, he proceeded from the Marxist concept that there is a *transitional period* obligatory for every country building socialism between the waning capitalist society and the communist society which is to replace it. In this transitional period, private ownership of the means of production, which originated as a result of the exploitation of other people's labour, is abolished. Mines and pits, factories with their machinery, equipment and products, railways, sea transport, and so on are nationalised to become the property of the working people, i. e. of the actual producers of these material items. Private ownership is thus replaced by public ownership of the means of production which means that nobody can appropriate the results of another person's labour.

Lenin repeatedly stressed that it takes more than the proclamation of the political power of the working people to wipe out the capitalist system in a country. For that the workers and peasants, all the working people of town and countryside, must become the fully-fledged masters and skilful managers of industrial and agricultural production.

*Workers' control* over enterprises still in capitalist hands and the limited development of state capitalism with state power belonging to the working people, played a great role in developing the new organisational form of production. As they supervise capitalist enterprises the workers learn from bourgeois specialists how to organise production and make it function. This experience is invaluable for managing nationalised enterprises. The working people, freed from capitalist exploitation, now the

collective masters and co-owners of the means of production, gradually develop a new attitude to labour, labour for their own benefit, for the benefit of the whole of society.

Lenin placed a high value on the initiative of the working people in organising *communist subbotniks* (from the Russian for Saturday—*subbota*) when people work voluntarily on a day-off without remuneration, for in this he saw the real beginning of communist labour. This collection of excerpts will acquaint the reader with Lenin's view on *socialist emulation*—comradely competition for the best work performance. He considered it a very important means of drawing the mass of the people into building a new society and raising labour productivity.

Lenin considered *socialist industrialisation* to be the most important way of improving the country's defence capability, eliminating the country's economic backwardness, achieving economic independence and turning the country into a developed industrialised state. The electrification of the country and the planned development of heavy industry serve as the material base for mechanical engineering, transport, the light and manufacturing industries, and for merging small individual peasant farms into large-scale collective socialist farms. Besides, industrial plants are the places where the working class, the vanguard social force of the time and the bearer of progressive collectivist ideology, is concentrated.

While socialist industry, which is based on public ownership of the most important means of production, eliminates exploitation of man by man, small-commodity production in towns and especially in the countryside always gives rise to capitalist elements with their private ownership interests, which means that the country cannot be rid of the threat of capitalism being restored. For this reason Lenin

attached great significance to the co-operation on a mass scale of small commodity producers. In the process of the *socialist transformation of agriculture* small individual farms voluntarily unite to form big collective farms engaged in agricultural production on the land which belongs to the state and is turned over to them for free use in perpetuity.

In the transitional period, socialist changes inevitably entail a fierce struggle of the working people against the exploiter classes which do not want to give up their positions. In *the class struggle* and in defending the gains of the revolution from internal and external enemies the working class relies for support on the working peasants and other sections of the working population in town and the countryside.

Lenin believed that socialist changes were possible only if scientific and technological achievements were put to use in all spheres. He spelled out the main principles of the socialist *cultural revolution* which was to wipe out illiteracy and provide the working people with an education to make scientific knowledge and mankind's cultural heritage accessible to the mass of the people.

We would like to draw the attention of the readers interested in theoretical aspects and the actual creation and development of a socialist economy in the Soviet Union to Lenin's pronouncement that "all nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life."\*

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\* V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 69-70.

Lenin believed that "... it is the absolute duty of Communist Parties and of elements prepared to form Communist Parties..."\* to apply the fundamental principles of socialist change in a society "...which will *correctly modify* these principles in certain *particulars*, correctly adapt and apply them to national and national-state distinctions."\*\*

The reader is advised to take more than passive note of the theoretical heritage of the classics of Marxism-Leninism, to do more than blindly copy the Soviet experience of economic construction; he should be able to single out in it general laws and patterns and use them creatively in the specific conditions of his country.

Lenin felt confident that in the countries where pre-capitalist relations still prevail and there is therefore practically *no* organised working class, the mass of the people could be awakened to independent political activity. The peoples of such countries may use the experience and support of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries to rise to the struggle against exploitation and oppression, and build a free society, bypassing the capitalist stage of development.\*\*\*

The following pages contain only a small part of all that Lenin wrote on the fundamental principles of the organisation, creation and functioning of a socialist economy.

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\* V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 243.

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 92.

\*\*\* See V. Lenin, *Coll. Works*, Vol. 41, p. 244.

## THE VANGUARD OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

The turn of the 20th century saw the emergence of the working class. Although it was a powerful revolutionary force it was in need of ideological, political and organisational leadership. In Russia this leadership was provided by the revolutionary party of the working class created by Vladimir Lenin.

An important step towards founding such a party was the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class established by Lenin in St. Petersburg. Under Lenin's leadership the League began revolutionary work among the mass of the proletariat, linking the economic struggle of the workers with political struggle against the autocracy and capitalist exploitation.

In 1898 the League convened the first party congress. The congress announced the founding of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), but failed to work out its programme and rules. This was done at the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903, in whose preparation and holding Vladimir Lenin played a major part.

Lenin's Bolshevik Party led the working people of Russia to socialist revolution, which in October 1917 dispossessed the capitalists and big landowners and handed the running of the state over to the working people. The Party's new task was then to rehabilitate the Russian economy which had been dislocated by the imperialist war of 1914-1918 and to establish economic management on a socialist basis.

Now that a *developed socialist society* has been built in the Soviet Union, and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which had fulfilled its historic role, has grown into a state of the whole people, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union continues to perform the role of the political leader of all the working people in their effort to create a material and technical basis for communism in the country.

*From:*

## **“THE TASKS OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL- DEMOCRATS”**

...Russian Social-Democrats<sup>1</sup> have much to do to meet the requirements of the awakening proletariat, to organise the working-class movement, to strengthen the revolutionary groups and their mutual ties, to supply the workers with propaganda and agitational literature, and to unite the workers' circles and Social-Democratic groups scattered all over Russia into a single *Social-Democratic Labour Party!*

*End of 1897*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 2, p. 347.*

*From:*

## **“OUR PROGRAMME”**

We take our stand entirely on the Marxist theoretical position: Marxism was the first to transform socialism from a utopia into a science, to lay a firm foundation for this science, and to indicate the path that must be followed in further developing and elaborating it in all its parts. It disclosed the nature of modern capitalist economy by explaining how the hire of the labourer, the purchase of labour-power, conceals the enslavement of millions of propertyless people by a handful of capitalists, the owners of the land, factories, mines, and so forth. It showed that all modern capitalist development displays the tendency of large-scale production to eliminate petty production and creates conditions that make a socialist system of society possible and necessary. It taught us



how to discern, beneath the pall of rooted customs, political intrigues, abstruse laws, and intricate doctrines—the *class struggle*, the struggle between the propertied classes in all their variety and the propertyless mass, the *proletariat*, which is at the head of all the propertyless. It made clear the real task of a revolutionary socialist party: not to draw up plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers, not to hatch conspiracies, *but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle, the ultimate aim of which is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organisation of a socialist society...*

We do not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists *must* develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life. We think that an *independent* elaboration of Marx's theory is especially essential for Russian socialists; for this theory provides only general *guiding* principles, which, *in particular*, are applied in England differently than in France, in France differently than in Germany, and in Germany differently than in Russia.

*Before October 1899*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 4, pp. 210-211, 211-212.*

*From:*

### **“WHAT IS TO BE DONE?”**

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement... Yet, for Russian Social-

Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path...

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism,<sup>2</sup> but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently...

Thirdly,... *the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*

March 1902

*Coll. Works. Vol. 5, pp. 369-370.*

*From:*

## **“THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT”**

The development of the Bolshevik Party, which today is the governing party in Russia, very strikingly indicates the nature of the turning-point in history we have now reached, which is the peculiar feature of the present political situation, and which calls for a new

orientation of Soviet power, i.e., for a new presentation of new tasks.

The first task of every party of the future is to convince the majority of the people that its programme and tactics are correct...

The second task that confronted our Party was to capture political power and to suppress the resistance of the exploiters...

A third task is now coming to the fore as the immediate task and one which constitutes the peculiar feature of the present situation, namely, the task of organising *administration* of Russia. Of course, we advanced and tackled this task on the very day following October 25, 1917. Up to now, however, since the resistance of the exploiters still took the form of open civil war, up to now the task of administration *could not* become the *main*, the *central* task.

Now it has become the main and central task. We, the Bolshevik Party, have *convinced* Russia. We have *won* Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the working people. Now we must *administer* Russia. And the whole peculiarity of the present situation, the whole difficulty, lies in understanding *the specific features of the transition* from the principal task of convincing the people and of suppressing the exploiters by armed force to the principal task of *administration*.

For the first time in human history a socialist party has managed to complete in the main the conquest of power and the suppression of the exploiters, and has managed to *approach directly* the task of *administration*. We must prove worthy executors of this most difficult (and most gratifying) task of the socialist revolution. We must *fully realise* that in order to administer successfully, *besides* being able to convince people, *besides* being able to win a civil war, we

must be able to do *practical organisational work*. This is the most difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most gratifying task, because only *after* it has been fulfilled (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible to say that Russia *has become* not only a Soviet, but also a socialist, republic.

April 1918

*Coll. Works, Vol. 27, pp. 241-243.*

*From:*

**“ADDRESS TO THE SECOND ALL-RUSSIA  
CONGRESS OF COMMUNIST  
ORGANISATIONS OF THE PEOPLES OF THE  
EAST”**

**November 22, 1919**

...We must realise that the transition to communism cannot be accomplished by the vanguard alone... The task is to arouse the working masses to revolutionary activity, to independent action and to organisation, regardless of the level they have reached; to translate the true communist doctrine which was intended for the Communists of the more advanced countries, into the language of every people; to carry out those practical tasks which must be carried out immediately, and to join the proletarians of other countries in a common struggle.

Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia. You will have to tackle that problem and solve it through your own

independent experience. In that you will be assisted, on the one hand, by close alliance with the vanguard of the working people of other countries, and, on the other, by ability to find the right approach to the peoples of the East whom you here represent....

*Coll. Works, Vol. 30, p. 162.*

*From:*

### **“LEFT-WING’ COMMUNISM—AN INFANTILE DISORDER”**

As a current of political thought and as a political party, Bolshevism has existed since 1903. Only the history of Bolshevism during the *entire* period of its existence can satisfactorily explain why it has been able to build up and maintain, under most difficult conditions, the iron discipline needed for the victory of the proletariat.

The first questions to arise are: how is the discipline of the proletariat’s revolutionary party maintained? How is it tested? How is it reinforced? First, by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution, by its tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. Second, by its ability to link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, *but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people*. Third, by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard, by the correctness of its political strategy and tactics, provided the broad masses have seen, *from their own experience*, that they are correct. Without these conditions, discipline in a revolutionary party really

capable of being the party of the advanced class, whose mission it is to overthrow the bourgeoisie and transform the whole of society, cannot be achieved. Without these conditions, all attempts to establish discipline inevitably fall flat and end up in phrasemongering and clowning. On the other hand, these conditions cannot emerge at once. They are created only by prolonged effort and hard-won experience. Their creation is facilitated by a correct revolutionary theory, which, in its turn, is not a dogma, but assumes final shape only in close connection with the practical activity of a truly mass and truly revolutionary movement...

...Without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions facilitating the growth of this mood, revolutionary tactics will never develop into action. In Russia, however, lengthy, painful and sanguinary experience has taught us the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on a revolutionary mood alone. Tactics must be based on a sober and strictly objective appraisal of *all* the class forces in a particular state (and of the states that surround it, and of all states the world over) as well as of the experience of revolutionary movements...

June 1920

*Coll. Works, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25, 63.*

*From:*

## **“ON THE STRUGGLE WITHIN THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY”**

Victory in the proletarian revolution *cannot* be achieved, and that revolution *cannot* be safeguarded, while there are reformists and Mensheviks in one's

ranks. That is obvious in principle... This is a decisive consideration...

...On the eve of revolution or at the height of the struggle for its victory, the slightest wavering in the ranks of the Party may *wreck everything*, frustrate the revolution, and wrest power from the hands of the proletariat, for that power has not yet been consolidated, and the onslaught against it is still very strong. If wavering leaders resign at *such* a time, that does not weaken the party, the working-class movement and the revolution, but strengthens them.

*November 1920*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 31, pp. 383-384, 385.*

## II

# THE PERIOD OF TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

In their works Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), the founders of scientific communism, have shown that there is necessarily a certain historically predetermined *transitional period* between capitalism and socialism. During that period state power in the country can be exercised only by a form of *dictatorship of the proletariat* capable of breaking the resistance of the bourgeoisie and managing the economy. After October 1917 Russia embarked upon such a period.

Those were difficult and troubled times for the young Soviet Republic. The workers and peasants inherited from their former exploiters an economy in total decline. Mills and factories stood idle because of severe shortages of raw materials and fuel. The railways had been destroyed. Unemployment, famine and epidemics were rampant in the country. Armed gangs and military bands of members of the overthrown classes were operating in many towns and villages. The imperialist powers launched a military intervention, introduced an economic blockade, enforced diplomatic isolation and gave all possible assistance to internal counter-revolutionaries.

After defeating the internal counter-revolutionaries and imperialist interventionists, the Soviet government embarked on the road of deep-going socio-economic changes. An end was put to the exploitation of man by man, to hunger and poverty, unemployment and a sad plight of peasants, class antagonism and national strife. Genuine democracy for the working people became the foundation of Soviet society. For the first time ever in human history a socialist economy was being built on a planned basis.

By the mid-thirties socialism had been largely built. All the social strata had adopted the ideological and political positions of the working class and this had laid the groundwork for developing



the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a *state of the whole people*.

Articles 1 and 2 of the 1977 Constitution of the USSR, say: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of the whole people, expressing the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, the working people of all the nations and nationalities of the country.

"All power in the USSR belongs to the people.

"The people exercise state power through Soviets of People's Deputies, which constitute the political foundation of the USSR."

Lenin's ideas on the government by the working people have thus been translated into life in the Soviet Union. The experience of the transitional period in the USSR is widely used by all the peoples who embarked on the path of socialist construction, with due account taken of their special historical and national features.

*From:*

## **"A CARICATURE OF MARXISM AND IMPERIALIST ECONOMISM"**

...The entire trend of development is towards abolition of coercive domination of one part of society over another. Dictatorship is domination of one part of society over the rest of society, and domination, moreover, that rests directly on coercion. Dictatorship of the proletariat, the only consistently revolutionary class, is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and repel its attempts at counter-revolution. The question of proletarian dictatorship is of such overriding importance that he who denies the need for such dictatorship, or recognises it only in words, cannot be a member of the Social-Democratic Party. However, it cannot be denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, for instance, in some small country after the social revolution has been accomplished in a neighbouring big country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is *possible*, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless

and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the *only* programme of international Social-Democracy must be recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals. ...Even the trusts and banks of modern imperialism, though inevitable everywhere as part of developed capitalism, differ in their concrete aspects from country to country. There is a still greater difference, despite homogeneity in essentials, between political forms in the advanced imperialist countries—America, England, France, Germany. The same variety will manifest itself also in the path mankind will follow from the imperialism of today to the socialist revolution of tomorrow. All nations will arrive at socialism—this is inevitable, but all will do so in not exactly the same way, each will contribute something of its own to some form of democracy, to some variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the varying rate of socialist transformations in the different aspects of social life...

August-October 1916

Coll. Works, Vol. 23, pp. 69-70.

From:

### **“THE STATE AND REVOLUTION”**

...The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from “classless society”, from commu-

nism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

\* \* \*

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann<sup>3</sup>:

"If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it (Marx's italics)...

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite<sup>4</sup>, "interpretation" of Marxism!...

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people". These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, *to break it up*, is truly in the interest of the "people", of their majority, of the workers and most of the

peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible...

\* \* \*

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society is impossible without a "political transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

*August-September 1917*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 25, pp. 413,  
414-415, 416-417, 459-460.*

*From:*

## **"GREETINGS TO THE HUNGARIAN WORKERS"**

...But the essence of proletarian dictatorship is not in force alone, or even mainly in force. Its chief feature is the organisation and discipline of the advanced contingent of the working people, of their vanguard; of their sole leader, the proletariat, whose object is to build socialism, abolish the division of society into classes, make all members of society working people, and remove the basis for all exploitation of man by man. This object cannot be achieved at one stroke. It requires a fairly long period of transition from cap-

italism to socialism, because the reorganisation of production is a difficult matter, because radical changes in all spheres of life need time, and because the enormous force of habit of running things in a petty-bourgeois and bourgeois way can only be overcome by a long and stubborn struggle. That is why Marx spoke of an entire period of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Throughout the whole of this transition period, resistance to the revolution will be offered both by the capitalists and by their numerous myrmidons among the bourgeois intellectuals, who will resist consciously, and by the vast mass of the working people, including the peasants, who are shackled very much by petty-bourgeois habits and traditions, and who all too often will resist unconsciously. Vacillations among these groups are inevitable. As a working man the peasant gravitates towards socialism, and prefers the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As a seller of grain, the peasant gravitates towards the bourgeoisie, towards freedom of trade, i.e., back to the "habitual", old, "time-hallowed" capitalism.

What is needed to enable the proletariat *to lead* the peasants and the petty-bourgeois groups in general is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the rule of one class, its strength of organisation and discipline, its centralised power based on all the achievements of the culture, science and technology of capitalism, its proletarian affinity to the mentality of every working man, its prestige with the disunited, less developed working people in the countryside or in petty industry, who are less firm in politics.

*From:*

## **“A GREAT BEGINNING”**

### **Heroism of the Workers in the Rear. “Communist Subbotniks”**

If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term “dictatorship of the proletariat” into simpler language, it means just the following:

Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system and in the entire struggle for the complete abolition of classes. (Let us observe in parenthesis that the only scientific distinction between socialism and communism is that the first term implies the first stage of the new society arising out of capitalism, while the second implies the next and higher stage.)

...Not with the assistance of the intellectuals will the proletariat achieve victory, but in spite of their opposition (at least in the majority of cases), removing those of them who are incorrigibly bourgeois, reforming, re-educating and subordinating the waverers, and gradually winning ever larger sections of them to its side. Gloating over the difficulties and setbacks of the revolution, sowing panic, preaching a return to the past—these are all weapons and methods of class struggle of the bourgeois intellectuals. The proletariat will not allow itself to be deceived by them.

If we get down to brass tacks, however, has it ever happened in history that a new mode of production has taken root immediately, without a long succes-

sion of setbacks, blunders and relapses? Half a century after the abolition of serfdom there were still quite a number of survivals of serfdom in the Russian countryside. Half a century after the abolition of slavery in America the position of the Negroes was still very often one of semi-slavery. The bourgeois intellectuals, including the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries<sup>5</sup>, are true to themselves in serving capital and in continuing to use absolutely false arguments—before the proletarian revolution they accused us of being utopian; after the revolution they demand that we wipe out all traces of the past with fantastic rapidity!

We are not utopians, however, and we know the real value of bourgeois “arguments”; we also know that for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains stronger than it for some time; this is always the case in nature and in social life. Jeering at the feebleness of the young shoots of the new order, cheap scepticism of the intellectuals and the like—these are, essentially, methods of bourgeois class struggle against the proletariat, a defence of capitalism against socialism. We must carefully study the feeble new shoots, we must devote the greatest attention to them, do everything to promote their growth and “nurse” them...

June 1919

*Coll. Works, Vol. 29, pp. 420, 425.*