

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

MARXISM
and
BOLSHEVISM



by
Karl Kautsky

Forgotten Books

Karl Kautsky

**Marxism and
Bolshevism:
Democracy and Dictatorship
(1934)**

Source: Joseph Shaplen and David Shub (eds.), **Socialism, Fascism, Communism.**

Published: American League for Democratic Socialism, 1934.

Transcribed: Sally Ryan for marxists.org, 2000.

I. The Beginnings Of Marxism

II. Marx and Revolution

III. Marxism since the War

IV. Democracy and Dictatorship

I. The Beginnings Of Marxism

On March 14, 1933, we marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Karl Marx. Simultaneously with this anniversary we might also have commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Marxism, if it were practicable to assign an exact date to the founding of a school of thinkers and fighters.

In 1881 Eduard Bernstein took over the editorship of the *Sozialdemokrat* in Zurich in order to fashion it into a Marxist fighting organ. Together we had struggled our way through to Marxism.

In 1883 there appeared in Stuttgart the first issue of the *Neue Zeit*, founded by me, the first scientific organ of Marxism, excepting those, of course, published by Marx himself.

Both the *Sozialdemokrat* and the *Neue Zeit* were German periodicals. But the growth of Marxist thought was not limited to the German-speaking circles of international Socialism. The shift from Bakuninism and revolutionary Popularism to Marxism in Russia began at the same time. Plekhanov, Axelrod and Vera Zaslitch were then the first to attain to the Marxist conception. At about the same time, in France, Jules Guesde, an erstwhile Bakuninist, became the leader of Marxist thought, along with Paul Lafargue, who even before Guesde had found his way to Marxism from Proudhonism. At the Congress of St. Etienne (September 1882) Lafargue and Guesde broke away from the other Socialists, and at the Congress of Roanne (September 27) formed a party of their own, *Le Parti Ouvrier*.

In England Marxism, too, dates from the early eighties. There the first to take up the Marxist ideas and present them before the public were H.M. Hyndman and E. Belfort Bax. This was done through the Democratic Federation, founded in 1881, which under the influence of the Marxists, among them Marx's youngest daughter Eleanor, assumed in 1883 the name of *The Social-Democratic Federation*.

Thus the year in which Marx succumbed to great physical sufferings saw everywhere the victorious advance of the ideas which he had sown. It was a tragic fate that he who throughout his life had to combat not only his bourgeois opponents, but also misunderstanding in the ranks of his own comrades and friends, closed his weary eyes precisely at the time when his first sympathetic disciples and continuators appeared on the scene.

Since then these, too, have left us one by one. Only last year we accompanied, personally or in spirit, our unforgettable comrade and friend, Eduard Bernstein, to his place of eternal rest. At the time of his death he had completed sixty years of indefatigable, devoted activity in the Social-Democratic Party and a half-century of labor as a Marxist thinker and fighter.

The others mentioned above had departed long before him. I alone remain as the last of the Mohicans of the family – alas, so small in number – of “original” Marxists, if one may designate by the name those Marxists who were privileged to receive instruction and enlightenment from the lips of the teacher himself.

In our efforts to expound and apply the Marxist ideas we I often encounter the reproach that we are fanatics of a

dogma, incapable of anything but swearing by the words of their teacher.

The reproach is invalidated by the fact that the Marxists are not a uniform school, but are divided into different groups and varieties with individual and national distinctions. Not only are there German Marxists with a separate Austrian Marxism, but there is also a French Marxism, a British Marxism and a Russian Marxism, in its turn divided into a Menshevik and a Bolshevik Marxism.

Every form of doctrinaire fanaticism, every attempt to turn Marxism into an unalterable dogma is contrary to Marxist thought, which recognizes no absolute truth but only relative truth. This is not scepticism, which denies the very possibility of absolute perception of the world, but only a recognition of the limitations of our perception. All the truths which we recognize are not truths in themselves, independent of time and place, but truths only as far as we are concerned, valid only for us, for our time, for the space in which we live. Every such truth must govern our actions until more advanced perception has exposed and removed the bit of error residing in the previously accepted truth.

There was nothing that Marx feared so much as the degeneration of his school into a rigid sect. The same fear was entertained by Engels, whose scientific work is indissolubly linked with that of his friend Marx, so that we always keep in mind both Marx and Engels whenever we speak of the Marxist theory.

The worst reproach that Engels could make against the first English Marxists was that they were applying Marxism in a sectarian spirit. What would he have said, had he lived to see

it, about a school of Marxists who after succeeding in capturing the state power proceeded to make a state religion of Marxism, a religion whose articles of faith and their interpretation are watched over by the government, a religion, the criticism of which, nay, the slightest deviation from which, is sternly punished by the State; a Marxism ruling by the methods of the Spanish Inquisition, propagated with fire and sword, practicing a theatrical ritual, as illustrated by the embalmed body of Lenin: a Marxism reduced to the status not only of a state religion but of a medieval or oriental faith? Such a Marxism may indeed be called a doctrinaire fanaticism.

To Marx there was no ultimate knowledge, only an infinite process of learning. Therefore, his own theory is not to be conceived as a collection of tenets which we must accept on faith. Marxism itself is nothing but a definite process of learning, founded upon a definite method, a process introduced by Marx and Engels which we, Marxists must continue and which is to be called Marxist so long as the method of inquiry and reasoning which our teachers discovered has not been either superceded or improved upon by another method. This method itself, which Marx and Engels called the materialist conception of history, is not unalterable. It is being constantly improved, like a machine, through continued gain in experience accumulated in its application. The principles underlying a given method of intellectual activity often do not change as rapidly as do the results of that activity. The views of people under the influence of constantly changing experiences tend to change more easily than do *the methods and forms of thought by which they are attained*. Both, however, are regarded as in constant process of development. Even the materialist

conception of history did not like Minerva spring fully armed from the head of its procreator; as a matter of fact it had two such procreators. These two were constantly developing it through their lives and to the Marxists bequeathed the task of continuing the process.

To know and understand the line of this development is of the highest importance to every Marxist as well as to any one who wishes to make a critical study of Marx, prompted by a sincere desire for knowledge, and not by the motives of the trickster lawyer who seeks to obtain a conviction of his opponent's client at any cost.

Remarkable as it may seem, there are a number of Marxists who see the highest point of the development of Marxism at its very inception, from which point it is supposed to be constantly declining.

It is clear that as a philosopher and economist as well as a Socialist and revolutionary Marx was able to advance beyond the ideas of his time only after he had assimilated them in their highest forms. The new Marxist method had been attained already in 1844, but it still bore the traces of its Hegelian, Feuerbachian, Ricardian origin as well as those of utopian Socialism and Jacobin-Blanquist conceptions. To some of our present-day Socialists these traces seem to be the most important and beautiful thing about Marxism.

Yet not every one of these traces is of equal attractiveness to each of these Socialists.

We may distinguish two large groups among these pre-Raphaelite Marxists. One of them seeks to establish Socialism in a backward community immediately. To these people it is the Jacobin-Blanquist elements that are especially attractive as expressions of the Marxist spirit. The

other group, on the contrary, is favorably impressed with the fact that Marx at the beginning had no economic views of his own, that he accepted the economics of Ricardo just as he found it and that once in a while he still justified his Socialist bias on ethical grounds.

The existence of a strong social ethos is no doubt the prerequisite for any kind of Socialism. But that is something quite self-evident about which Marx later did not think it even necessary to speak. But with ethos alone, without a deeper economic and historical perception, one can not get very far.

Without this perception one may, by starting from the same moral considerations, arrive at Christian charity or at liberal philanthropy. And even where it does lead to the idea of Socialism, we still do not know what kind of Socialism it is to be, whether that of Owen, or of St. Simon, of Proudhon or of Marx. No one is more ambiguous, more unreliable than the purely ethical Socialist, even when he remains true to his ethical ideal. Yet this kind of Socialism possesses one great advantage. By affecting a proud contempt for the "low" and "vulgar" economic theories of Marxist Socialism one is spared the need of studying the difficult theory of Marxist economics. This study is, indeed, a hard task, but it is also a mental exploit without equal. Great gain in social knowledge beckons to the one who masters it. Today, as it was true fifty years ago, Marx's "Capital" is studied much too little. I regard its study as one of the most urgent tasks of Socialist education. It is more important than the study of the beginnings of Marxism. Of course, this too is of great significance to anyone who wishes to understand the development of Marxist thought. But it does not facilitate but rather makes more difficult the understanding of Marxism when it is undertaken for its own sake and not in conjunction with the study of Marx's later works.

These later works constitute his more perfect achievements. Marx and Engels always regarded them as such. This is proved by the fact that most of their writings belonging to the early period Marx and Engels left lying in their desks in manuscript form, without ever making any attempt to publish them.

Naturally, the lion's claw was evident even in those beginnings. They already surpassed the most mature works of the other Socialists of that time. But these beginnings, in part, were quite imperfect as compared with the later works which Marx and Engels brought to light with so much broader practical experience, so much more extensive knowledge and so much greater precision of method.

The last four decades of his life during which Marx developed his ideas constituted an epoch of the greatest advance in all natural sciences as well as in the humanities. Thus for example, up to the forties of the last century, there had been practically no systematic study of economic history and of prehistoric epochs. How tremendous has been their subsequent development! And no less tremendous has been the development of the forms and the extension of capitalist production. Marxism has stood the test as a doctrine of development in that it proved able not only to adapt itself to all the changes, but also to assume a more perfect form as the changes occurred.

The evolution not only of its philosophy of history and its theory of capitalist production but also of the political principles of the proletarian class struggle was furthered thereby. This came about principally through the progress of democracy. We shall now examine this more closely.

II. Marx and Revolution

Quite early in his career Marx realized, and in this he proved superior to the other Socialists of his day, that the liberation of the working class could be achieved only by the working class itself, that no paternalistic friend from the bourgeoisie, nor a select proletarian vanguard could accomplish this task for the masses. But like other Socialists he had to admit that the masses were not yet ripe for the struggle. How was this ripeness to be achieved? Through well meaning tutors from above? Grown-up people will not submit to the guardianship of tutors. Where this attempt is made either by Christians or by atheists it usually degenerates into a loathsome, priestly presumptuousness on the part of the tutor and a hypocritical submission of the tutored.

Grown-ups can be taught by life alone. Marx expected the education of the proletariat to come from life, that is to say, he expected it to come from capitalist development and its effect upon the proletariat. Marx pointed this out already in the *Communist Manifesto*. Industry draws the workers together in large numbers and thereby increases their class consciousness. At the same time conflicts with the employers grow, trade unions develop. The extension of the conflicts to all industry transforms the occasional local clashes into a class struggle. This class struggle becomes political, finding expression in political changes. But the proletariat was not strong enough to overcome the forces tending toward the pauperization of the masses, which was the predominant feature of capitalism everywhere. The *Communist Manifesto* had yet to prove the absolute impoverishment of the industrial proletariat. "The modern worker, instead of improving his condition with the progress

of industry, sinks deeper and deeper under the circumstances affecting his own class. The worker becomes a pauper and pauperism develops even faster than population and wealth.”

Under such conditions, whence could come that moral and intellectual advancement which alone could make possible the self-liberation of the proletariat?

Marx expected it to come as a result of revolution, the advent of which he correctly foresaw. He had studied the French Revolution. It bore at the beginning a purely bourgeois character but grew more and more radical, and finally led to the rule, only for a short time, to be sure, of the working classes. The revolution developed enormously not only the political courage but also the political understanding of the masses of the people, until then inert and ignorant. Opposed as Marx already was at the time of the *Communist Manifesto* to the policy of plots and *coups des mains* preached by the Blanquists, he was still strongly influenced by their Jacobin traditions. In the first months of 1850, in his articles on *The Class Struggles in France*, published in 1895 by Engels in pamphlet form, he regarded the Blanquists as properly the workers' party of France. They, above all others, held his sympathies.

In 1847 Marx assumed that the forthcoming revolution would run the same course as did the Great Revolution but with a proletariat “much further advanced” by the growth of large industries. The revolution was to last long enough to lift the proletariat quickly to the necessary mental level. Hence “the German bourgeois revolution could serve only as a direct prelude to a proletarian revolution.”

This expectation was not realized. The force of the German revolution of 1848 spent itself within a few months and the proletariat as an independent factor played no part in it. What happened then was the same thing that was to happen to Marx often enough later, and still more often to us Marxists. He correctly foresaw the direction in which events were moving but he misjudged the rate at which they were moving.

Yet none learned so readily from experience as did Marx, even when the experience ran counter to his innermost wishes. It was precisely his materialist method that facilitated this learning from experience, for it stressed the study of the surrounding world and not that of personal wishes and emotions.

Already in September 1850 he came out against the view that “we must strive to gain power immediately” and declared that the workers might have to go through “15, 20, 30 years of civil strife and foreign wars in order to change not only conditions but to change yourselves, to qualify yourselves for rulership.”

This sounded quite different from the expectation that the coming bourgeois revolution would be the “direct prelude to a proletarian revolution.” Yet even this new, more prudent hope proved too sanguine. Since it was first uttered, not only 15, 20, 30 years but 80 years have passed. To be sure, these have not been years of stagnation. The strides made by the proletariat toward the achievement of political independence and skill during the intervening period has been enormous.

Though Marx in 1850 rose superior to the majority of his Communist comrades who at that time were still dreaming of the immediate seizure of political power by the proletariat, he had not yet fully rid himself of his old Jacobin-Blanquist traditions. In armed struggle, in “civil strife and foreign wars” he still saw the means of lifting the proletariat to a higher level. He had not yet realized that every bloody struggle, including a popular war, inspiring and uplifting as it may appear at the beginning, in the long run demoralizes its participants and, far from increasing, actually reduces their capacity for constructive effort in the field of production as well as in political life.

During the decade following 1850, Marx had opportunity to study the laws underlying commodity production in England, namely its capitalist form, and expounded them more clearly than had been done by any student before him. But he also perceived the opportunity for effective action by the English working class under the democratic political institutions prevailing in England. He saw that under such freedom it was possible for the proletariat to overcome the tendency under capitalism to absolute impoverishment of the workers. In his inaugural address (1864) as well as in *Capital* (1867) he welcomed the salutary results of the ten hour work day, as an improvement over the longer hours then prevailing in English factories and plants. Of course, this did not blind him to the fact that the possessing classes in England were able amazing gain in wealth and power, while at the same time the absolute pauperization of those proletarian groups which were not protected either by state laws or by strong trade unions advanced still further, and that among those protected by the law the improvement in conditions lagged behind the increase in the wealth of

capital, so that their position became relatively if not absolutely worse.

Nevertheless, the proof was furnished that under conditions of adequate freedom the workers could by their own efforts lift themselves to a high enough level to be able finally to achieve political power not through “civil strife and foreign wars” but through the class struggle waged by their political and economic mass organizations. The condition prerequisite for such a struggle is an adequate measure of political freedom. Where this is lacking, where it has yet to be won, “civil strife and foreign wars” may be necessary to achieve democracy as essential to the rise of the working class. Where democracy exists, it is not necessary for the working class to resort to armed force as a means of attaining power.

Here is what Marx said in 1872 at a public meeting in Amsterdam following the Congress of the International at The Hague (as reported by the *Leipziger Volkstaat* of October 2, 1872):

The worker must some day achieve political power, in order to found the new organization of labor; he must overthrow the old political machine upon which the old institutions are based, if, like the old Christians, who neglected and despised such matters, he does not wish to renounce ‘the kingdom of this world.’

But we do not maintain that the means of attaining this objective are everywhere the same.

We know that we must take into consideration the institutions, the habits and the customs of different regions, and we do not deny that there are countries like America, England and – if I knew your institutions better I would perhaps add Holland – where the workers can attain their objective by peaceful means. But such is not the case in all other countries.

By “other countries” Marx evidently meant, first of all, the great centralized police and military states of continental Europe as they existed at that time.

On April 12, 1871, in a letter to Kugelmann at the time of the Paris Commune, Marx pointed out that the next attempt of revolution in France would be “no longer as heretofore to effect a change of hands of the bureaucratic military apparatus, but to demolish it, and that is the prerequisite for every true popular revolution on the continent.” It was not granted to Marx to witness a third phase of the labor movement, besides the two indicated by him, which was already shaping itself about the time of his death. The “civil strife and foreign wars” of 1789-1871 were not sufficient to destroy the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the continental powers, but their effects were yet strong enough to wrest from these powers a certain measure of freedom for the toiling masses, which enabled them to acquire not only great political skill but also to build strong trade unions and proletarian parties. Unfortunately, this new phase was characterized by great obstacles at the beginning. In France the revolution of September 4, 1870, was followed by the bloody suppression of the Commune in May, 1871, and thereafter by a period of dark reaction and oppression of the proletariat which lasted almost until Marx’s death. In Austria after 1866 came an era of liberalism which, however, did not last long. Nor did the liberal era that set in Germany after 1866 prove of long duration. It ended with the anti-Socialist law of Bismarck.

Marx thus had little opportunity to observe the effects of democracy on the development of the proletariat in the military-bureaucratic countries of continental Europe.

Engels survived his great friend. He lived to witness the abolition of the exception laws in Austria, the rescinding of the Anti-Socialist law in Germany, the beginning of the rapid growth of the labor movement all over Europe. He was thus in a position to sum up the results of this particular phase of development for Marxism. He did this in his famous introduction to Marx's *Class Struggles in France*.

A peculiar situation developed in the military-bureaucratic countries at that time. From 1890 the labor movement grew by leaps and bounds, marching from victory to victory. Side by side with this continued the domination of the military, the police and the centralized government administration, with the monarch as its head. But now with this domination was associated a rapidly growing class of capitalists headed by great monopolists representing banks and heavy industry. These capitalists allied themselves more and more readily with the large landowners against whom previously they had fought. The magnates in the cities and country together dominated the government.

The conflict between the two camps – the proletarians and the profit makers – became ever sharper. It was bound to culminate in a violent clash. But Social-Democracy had no reason to hasten a violent collision. Under the conditions prevailing it was growing in power from year to year. The number of proletarians grew faster than that of any other part of the population. And the influence of Social-Democracy on the proletariat was increasing in the same measure. The number of proletarians and Social-Democrats in the army also increased. And this army was less and less to be relied upon by the government in case of internal war.

It was vitally important for Social-Democracy not to disturb this state of affairs by a premature, violent collision with the government. It had to strive to postpone this collision as long as possible. Our opponents thought quite differently. The unscrupulous element among them endeavored to hasten the clash by provoking the masses into premature action.

Thus the revolutionary tactics of the Socialists as pursued hitherto were reversed. Engels pointed out: "We the 'revolutionaries', the 'overthrowers' thrive better by the use of legitimate methods than by using illegitimate ones and revolution."

Marx had never believed in the possibility of bringing about a revolution at will. Therein he differed already in his early works from the Blanquists. But as long as there was no political freedom for the proletariat, he was impelled to wish ardently for the speediest possible coming of the revolution, first as a democratic-bourgeois revolution, which would bring the necessary political freedom. During the fifties and sixties he eagerly looked for signs of the coming revolution arising either from war or civil conflicts.

But now the situation was quite different. Engels, too, saw the coming of the revolution, but he hoped it might be postponed. And he feared new wars. They might bring on the revolution but they threatened to ruin the proletariat, the only revolutionary class that still existed. They might destroy the revolution and impair the ability of the proletariat to utilize it, for what was expected from the revolution was that it would bring not merely political freedom, but power itself.

This was true of the situation in all military states of continental Europe, with one important exception: Russia. That country had not yet come out of the stage of absolutism. Its people were denied every vestige of freedom. The country needed first of all a democratic revolution, and it needed it immediately. The sooner the revolution came the better. Nothing could be gained by further delay. In Russia, too, however, it was impossible to kindle the revolution by artificial means. But its coming, its immediate coming, was ardently desired not only by all Socialists of whatever faction throughout the world, but also by wide circles outside the proletariat.

Marx in 1872 divided the countries of Europe into two groups. In one – essentially Anglo Saxon – it seemed possible that the proletariat would attain power without violence. In the other group Marx included most of the countries of the continent where the gaining of power without a revolution appeared impossible.

After the rescinding of the anti-Socialist law in Germany there came into view a third sub-division. As heretofore it still appeared impossible for the proletariat in the military countries of the continent to come into power without a revolution. But in most of these countries it was now highly desirable to postpone the decisive clash with the state as long as possible. In Russia, on the other hand, it was most imperative that the uprising of the people against the absolutist regime should take place as soon as possible.

We find, therefore, in the Second International, whose period covered this new phase of development, three well-defined currents. They are geographically distinct and spring

from the different types of government prevailing. Each of them represents an adaptation to conditions, and from a Marxist point of view is fully justified. Each of them could and did exist alongside the others, but not without friction.

The human mind craves absolute solutions. It is against its nature to contend with relativities. And so, in each of the three above-mentioned divisions, there were many Socialists who regarded the particular stand on the question of revolution which was suited to their own countries as something that had an absolute validity, independent of space and time. This was enhanced by the brisk international intercourse which made it possible for ideas to circulate even faster than commodities. Born of the three views representing the different sub-divisions, all of which were reconcilable with Marxism, came three factions which opposed one another not only within the International but in some of the separate countries as well.

To this was added the influence of the new conditions on Marxism itself. Its literature and, to a still larger extent, the conception of Marxism prevalent among the workers of the different countries, still bore the traces of the traditions of the revolutionary movement which culminated in the insurrections of 1848, even traces of the century-old traditions of the Great French Revolution. For that reason there was an inconsistency between the ideology and phraseology of the movement as it existed at the end of the nineteenth century on the one hand, and its practice on the other. Marx's *Capital* was now a generation old. It said nothing about the new economic phenomena such as the preponderance of the heavy industries over the textile industries, or the trusts, for example. The crises themselves

had assumed a different form. Instead of ten-year cycles of crises there were now periods of crises as well as of prosperity of such long duration that some regarded the crisis of the eighties, for example, or the prosperity that followed, as the enduring state of capitalism.

At any rate all this provided the occasion for new critical studies and discussions which became mingled with those arising out of the geographical differences of the International.

The new current which arose as a consequence of these studies and discussions was called "Revisionism" and was referred to also as the "Crisis of Marxism." Our opponents were jubilant. Marxism was breathing its last, it was being given up by its own advocates. In reality Marxism emerged from the struggles of the time unscathed, even strengthened. The theoretical criticism directed against it soon exhausted itself, without causing any reverberations. It merely strengthened the striving of the younger Marxists toward further theoretical development of the doctrine of their teacher.

However, what did not come to an end as quickly as did was imminent and therefore to be reckoned with, or whether the discussion about the economic theory of Marxism were the tactical differences as to whether or not the revolution it was possible to avoid it. It was these tactical differences and not the theoretical ones that now and then, as in France, appreciably hurt the unity of the Socialist movement at the turn of the century. Eventually, however, these difficulties too were overcome.

From year to year the Socialist parties grew in size, in unity, in intellectual power. The party of the proletariat, Social-Democracy, became the equal of the other parties; nay, proved superior to them. This is proved by some of its deserters who, thanks to the schooling they received from us, subsequently became prominent politicians in the bourgeois camp, as, for example, Millerand, Briand, Mussolini, MacDonald.

In the bourgeois parties one naturally finds more men with an academic training, but Social-Democracy has become the only party that still possesses high ideals and opens wider horizons to the intellect of its adherents. The bourgeois parties champion only temporary and limited group interests; hence the growing superiority of Social-Democracy, which constantly increases its capacity to exercise political power more purposefully than can the other parties. Our opponents had imagined that with the death of Marx, or at least with the death of Engels, the movement whose intellectual foundations were laid by the two, would collapse. But even with the sowers gone the seed continued to grow. Harvest time seemed approaching. Then came the inclement weather of the World War, with its inundations and hailstorms. Nevertheless it proved possible to bring new life out of the ruins.

III. Marxism since the War

The last days of the World War brought great progress, above all the overthrow of the military monarchy in the three great powers of Eastern Europe – a revolution whose consummation had until then been the frightfully difficult but yet indispensable task of Social-Democracy. At the same time the World War immensely increased the army of the dispossessed, while the economic collapse during the war brought despondency and perplexity into the ranks of the possessing classes. It appeared as though the time had arrived for the political rule of the proletariat, for Socialism. Unfortunately, however, this proved only a fleeting illusion.

A great protracted war which strains the energies of a nation to the utmost always carries frightful damage in its trail; not only huge losses in property and human life, which are quite obvious, but also profound economic and psychologic disturbances whose effects are not immediately discernible.

Already before the World War economic thought among the possessing classes was being supplanted by militaristic thought. People dominated by economic thought find themselves compelled to study economic law, and upon the basis of the knowledge thus gained they seek to give it practical application. Militaristic thought on the other hand despises such knowledge. It considers brutal force all powerful. In autocratic monarchies and among their army officers and bureaucrats militaristic thought had always been predominant. This is also true of the feudal nobility. But in the field of capitalist production this thought was being increasingly superceded by the growing influence of

capitalists who sought to build their actions and those of the state upon the foundation of economic knowledge.

During the generation preceding the war, however, there occurred a change of attitude in the capitalist class, arising from the new importance which heavy industry, the banks, trusts and colonial policies had assumed for it. The capitalists, too, became more inclined to make brutal force instead of economic knowledge their servant. They united for that purpose with the great landowners, the higher bureaucracy, the generals, the monarchy. Like the latter, the capitalist magnates sought to utilize their growing influence in the state to the end that they might plunder it and exploit the short-sighted conflicting interests of the smaller groups, and sometimes even of large individual concerns or family fortunes, to their own advantage.

The World War greatly increased and accelerated these tendencies. Every war means the disregard of the laws of production in the respective fields. A war of the extent and duration of the last one makes this disregard general throughout the world. And equally universal did the World War make the belief in the omnipotence of brutal force. This was demonstrated not only during the war but even more fatally at its termination and after.

The economic terms of the peace treaty, especially those dealing with reparations, were sheer madness which can be explained only by the fact that the militaristic way of thinking in the previously existing military monarchies as well as in the government circles of the great western democracies had crushed out all economic thought. Naturally, in the course of time it was proven that the force

of economic law is still stronger than that of violence. The reparations had to be constantly reduced until they practically vanished altogether. But that happened too late, only after the economically impossible claims had brought with them new economic disturbances, to remove which brutal force for the most part was again resorted to, making the economic chaos still worse.

To unscrupulous people relying upon compulsion no other condition is more favorable than this for forcing themselves into the economic affairs of the nation and satisfying their uncontrollable greed at the expense of the community, for securing by most shameful methods exemptions, subventions and other favors for their personal advantage.

The result of that is the desperate condition of the world today. It is said that it denotes the final collapse of capitalism. This is not true if what is meant is that this collapse is the natural result of the development of capitalist production according to the laws inherent in that production. No, it proceeds from the disregard of these laws by men in authority who are as ignorant as they are unscrupulous, men who have set up the cult of brutal force in place of a striving for economic insight. Today it is the great capitalist magnates themselves who are bringing on the collapse of capitalism.

Unfortunately this suicidal policy of the leaders of capitalist economy has found its socialist counterpart. In Russia it was a Marxist sect that dedicated itself resolutely to the cult of brutal force, which the World War unleashed also in circles other than those of the ruling class. The Bolsheviki, too, agreed among themselves to establish the rule of brutal force instead of economic insight. They thereby succeeded in

setting up throughout the immense Russian state in place of the overthrown Czarist autocracy, an autocracy of their own. They succeeded perfectly, if the purpose of a socialist party is to be regarded as making its own leaders the rulers of the State. They failed dismally if the purpose of a socialist party is to be the use of its power for the realization of the party's program. This program demands the freedom and welfare of the entire people. The Bolsheviki erased freedom from their program the minute they seized power. The welfare of the masses they could strive to attain, considering their disregard of economic law, only by bringing about the robbing of one portion of the population by another. First the interests of the proletarians and the peasants were to be satisfied by robbing the capitalists and the big landowners. This did not accomplish much. Then it was sought to improve the condition of the industrial manual workers at the expense of the peasants and the intellectuals. Soon Soviet economy declined to such an extent that the despoilment of the cities, too, became necessary in order to maintain the instruments of power of the ruling Communist party. Ultimately this party itself may make robbery one of its articles of official belief.

In the capitalist states it is the leaders of capitalist economy and their agents in the army and among the bureaucracy that are ruining capitalist economy. In Soviet Russia it is not capitalistically trained leaders but economic leaders who came from the ranks of Social-Democracy that are similarly ruining the economic administration of their state, which they call Socialist merely because instead of private ownership of the means of production they have established government ownership of these means. But they have at the same time transformed the State into the property of the ruling dictators and instead of democratically socializing production they have autocratically militarized it. As a result

we have the same dreadful conditions existing in both cases: the same degradation and slavery, although for different reasons and in different form.

But let us assume that capitalism is about to break down. Will it not mean the same thing as the victory of Socialism? Unfortunately, not. When the capitalistically managed factories are stopped it will mean, first of all, only the stoppage of production; it will not mean the carrying on of production under Socialist forms.

We must, therefore, guard against interpreting the materialist conception of history in an automatically-mechanistic way, as if social development went on by itself, being impelled by necessity. Human beings make history, and the course of history is propelled by necessity only to the extent that human beings living under the same conditions and prompted by the same impulses will of necessity react in the same manner.

Marx expected the victory of Socialism to come not from the collapse of capitalism; this I pointed out as early as 1899 in my polemical discourse against Bernstein. Marx expected it to come as a result of the growing power and maturity of the proletariat, in consequence of circumstances already discussed. It is true that the paralysis of production greatly arouses the discontent of the masses against the existing economic conditions or, rather, against the mismanagement of economic affairs. But such discontent predisposes the proletariat to destruction and plunder, and not to Socialist construction. Like war, mass unemployment arouses the impulse to strike down and despoil the opponent, the passion for immediate success, whatever the consequences. The cult of violence, the contempt for all economic law is intensified by economic crisis no less than by war. The one as well as the other has a tendency to demoralize not alone the profit-making classes but the working classes as well.

This demoralization is primarily responsible for the ascendancy of Hitlerism in Germany.

Up to the World War the German Socialists were rapidly achieving a majority and approaching the final struggle with the monarchy. After the collapse of the monarchy it seemed as if we had attained our goal. But it soon became evident that under the material and psychological conditions resulting from the war a large portion of the proletariat became a rather insecure foundation for our power. The terrible aggravation of the crisis within the last few years drove millions of proletarians into the arms of the champions of shortsighted brutal force, into the arms of the Communists and National Socialists.

As long as this condition continues the proletariat can attain neither the power nor the ability to control the State and use it for Socialist purposes. We must have no illusions on this point. We must and will do our utmost only to assert ourselves but also to attract new followers to the idea of gaining political power for Socialist construction. But our work will be very difficult as long as the political and economic conditions described here continue to exist. The immediate moment is one of great trial for the Socialist movement in the defeated countries, which have suffered most from the perturbations of the war and of the present economic depression. Fascism alone has profited by these conditions, but it has gathered about itself only loose quicksand which the wind has swiftly heaped to a huge mountain only to scatter it tomorrow in all directions.

IV. Democracy and Dictatorship

The recrudescence of militarist thought brought about by the war and its social and economic perturbations pushed to the fore the question of dictatorship and democracy. This was the central feature of the discussions at the last congress of the Austrian Social-Democracy in Vienna in 1932. The outstanding event of the proceedings was Otto Bauer's address. In the discussion that followed one speaker said:

Democracy may be a means (toward an end) but we must not forget that democracy can never be an end in itself. The goal must be Socialism, to which we may come by following the road of democracy.

This point of view is widely held and therefore merits attention. If it were correct it might become very dangerous, seriously weakening our zeal in fighting for democracy. Fortunately this point of view is utterly false.

Democracy is not merely a pathway to the Socialist goal. It is an integral part of that goal, which is not only economic welfare but also freedom and equality for all. At any rate, this integral part can be achieved much earlier than can the economic aspect of Socialist construction, i.e. its social economy.

In sharp contradiction to the belief that democracy is only a way to Socialism is another viewpoint which is also quite popular in Socialist ranks, namely, that true democracy is possible only in a Socialist society and that what we have now as democracy is an illusion and has only a formal character.

I maintain quite to the contrary that not only is Socialism impossible without democracy but that there is no other way to Socialism except through democracy, which must be attained, in some degree at least, before Socialism can be attempted. He who thinks that there are various ways of achieving Socialism and that democracy is merely one of them, and the most ineffective at that, regards democracy exclusively from the viewpoint of the conquest of state power. No one contends that different methods of achieving this conquest are conceivable and possible. State power may be captured through an insurrection. It may fall into our hands by itself, as it were, as a result of the collapse of the government apparatus due, for example, to a military defeat. But that is only one side of the question. In this particular form it arises before us only when we begin the decisive struggle with the dominant classes and parties.

But long before that time and quite indispensable under all conditions, even in an imperfect form, democracy becomes of great importance as a means of educating the proletariat to that state of political and social maturity which shall enable it to keep the power after it has been won and use that power efficiently for its own and the common good.

The class struggle is the primary school of the working class. I mean the struggle itself and the resultant changes in organization and legislation.

The results of class conflicts will be all the greater the more democracy there is in the state, the greater the benefits derived from it by the working class, and the more numerous the gains in democratic rights which ordinarily the working class achieves by allying itself with other

laboring elements, the lower middle class, the farmers and intellectuals. Sometimes the working class is aided in this even by capitalists.

The masses of the workers cannot be organized in secret, conspiratory organizations. They can be organized only in free and open associations. To explain their situation to them it is not enough to have circulars printed illegally. For this is needed a daily press of wide circulation and literature easily accessible to the masses. Freedom of association, the right to vote on the basis of universal, secret and direct balloting are the necessary means of educating and developing the proletariat and hastening its maturity. Every extension of freedom for the laboring classes in the state has not only a formal but a real value of the highest degree. It is of tremendous educational importance to the working class. Without the preliminary attainment of democracy the working class cannot acquire those qualities which it needs for its own liberation and the building of a new and higher social order.

Democracy is indissolubly bound up with Socialism both a means to an end and as integral part of the final goal. The Socialist who underestimates democracy, however provisionally, cuts the very branch on which he sits and whence he aims to climb higher.

The ruling classes know very well what democracy means to the laboring classes and above all to the wage-earning proletariat. They oppose democracy as long as they can. Where its establishment has been compelled they readily avail themselves of every opportunity to limit it by arbitrary acts or abolish it altogether.

We must always reckon with this possibility. It has become stronger in our own time. Is there anything we can oppose to force? Only force, of course, and not indignant protests. But we must also realize that “force of arms” is not the only form of force that is at the disposal of the working class. Moreover, of all possible means of coercion that the working class may use, arms are not the most effective. On the contrary they are most ineffective where the opponent has a well disciplined and well organized army and police. In the last few decades the general strike has been considered by many our most effective weapon.

Where democracy is being destroyed by violence we have the moral right, despite our democratic principles, to fight violence with violence. But we are not bound to do so by immediately resorting to arms. The reactionaries who are backed by the power of organized armies always try, whenever they are seized by fear of democracy, to arouse the anger of the laboring masses by some acts of violence, in order to provoke them to come out openly against the armed forces of the State and thus create an opportunity for bloody suppression. We must not yield to such provocations.

Hence we do not in any way regard ourselves as driven to the necessity of answering the destruction of democracy by an armed insurrection. One might object that we should not openly expound this view because it might encourage the reaction. But we are not at all refusing to oppose force with force. We reserve to ourselves the right to do so at such time and in such form as will insure our success. We reserve to ourselves the fullest freedom of tactics.

The expectation that we shall be compelled to meet every act of violence by an immediate call to arms may encourage the lovers of violence, thirsting for Marxist blood, to attempt to destroy the constitution, if they should think the moment favorable to themselves and unfavorable to us. And this very same expectation, should it be shared by many of our comrades, may be responsible for the profound disappointment of the masses in the event that our leaders, realizing the unfavorable situation, will refuse to embark upon a policy of opposing force with violence, as in Austria.

There is yet another circumstance that must be taken into consideration while appealing to force. The only weapon that gives the laboring masses an advantage over their exploiters is their numerical superiority. When it comes to decisive social clashes we have a chance to win only where that numerical superiority is on our side. This is true not only in cases where the fight is conducted by methods of democracy but also in a larger measure in conflicts where violence is employed. We should not think that the use of force will exempt us from the difficult duty of attracting to our side the majority of the population. On the contrary, we shall perish if we are going to be opposed not only by the machine guns and cannons of the army and the police but also by the majority of the people. In that case even a general strike will not help us. In the general strikes which resulted in victory for the revolutionists the majority of the population was invariably with the latter. It was so in 1905 in Russia, and it was so in 1920 at the time of the Kapp putsch in Germany.

We must not forget that it is not only the working class that is interested in the existence of democracy. Where it is organized and maintains its unity and where there are other

groups vigorously opposed to dictatorship we have every chance to overcome eventually the forces of dictatorship.

Our tactics in opposing violence must be adapted to conditions in each individual case. It would be a mistake to arouse expectations which in case of serious developments might force us to use wrong methods or bring keen disappointment to our followers among the various classes of the population.

Whatever be the methods which we choose in defending ourselves against force, our aim must be always the same: the restoration of democracy, and not the substitution of a new regime of force for the one demolished by us. We shall attract the broad masses more easily for the purpose of reestablishing democracy than for the purpose of replacing one form of dictatorship with another. Besides, dictatorship can never be our road to Socialism. Such a road can only be democracy. I think that on the question of democracy I concur on all points with Otto Bauer and the Vienna Congress. But in my discussion of democracy I finally touched upon the subject of dictatorship, and here unfortunately our ways must part, at least for the moment, as regards the question of Soviet Russia.

There is one thing at any rate in which I agree with Otto Bauer and that is in wishing that the Soviet dictatorship may succeed in its "Socialist construction" work. This wish of his I fully share, but I lack faith in its fulfillment.

We have all heard of the Utopians who in the first half of the last century tried to make Socialism an immediate reality through the establishment of Communist colonies. With a backward proletariat, it was inevitable that these efforts

should assume the character of a ready-made community plan, brought from above and carried out under the guidance of a dictatorship. Every Socialist was bound to wish ardently for the success of those efforts. Every failure was a heavy blow to us, and weakened, at least temporarily, the force of Socialist propaganda. But since the time of Marx and Engels we have learned that these efforts were doomed to failure because of an undeveloped proletariat. Since this became clear to us we have never helped in the organization of Socialist colonies and always opposed the very idea of such colonies, however desirable their success might have been. We knew that this was impossible and that all such efforts could not help being unsuccessful. Must we now give our approval merely because the same attempt is being made not on a small but on a tremendous scale? In other words, approve it because its failure must carry with it not an insignificant debacle but a terrible calamity?

From the time when the Socialist movement was placed upon a Marxist foundation and until the World War this movement grew steadily and developed without any serious setbacks, for Marxism taught us that the success of every cause depended not only upon our will and our wish but also upon the circumstances under which it was being advanced. Thanks to Marxism we have never undertaken tasks unrealizable under given conditions. Therein lay the great significance of Russian Marxism founded by Plekhanov and Axelrod and accepted, at that time, by Lenin. It grew out of the incessant struggle with the early Socialist-Revolutionists, who thought that it was possible to build immediately a Socialist economy in Russia on the basis of village communism. To this the Marxists opposed the view that Socialism could be realized only by a working class that had

reached a higher level of development. Such a working class can arise only under a system of highly developed industrial capitalism and after a prolonged exercise by the masses of the people of democratic liberties making possible the formation of large class organizations and the development of the proletarian class-struggle.

Unfortunately, the Russian Social-Democrats split into two approximately equal factions. One consisted of Mensheviks, who were organizing the party by democratic methods, as was always insisted upon by Marx. Against them appeared the Bolsheviks led by Lenin, who strove to establish in the party the dictatorial power of the leaders.

Then came the World War; the collapse of the Russian armies, of the power of the land barons and capitalists. The Socialists found themselves riding the tide in Russia. But at the same time the Bolsheviks began a fierce struggle against the other Socialists – the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionists. The latter were supported by the majority of the population. The Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership, however, succeeded in capturing control of the armed forces in Petrograd and later in Moscow and thus laid the foundation for a new dictatorship in place of the old Czarist dictatorship.

Having seized control, Lenin at once conceived himself powerful enough to undertake from above and by utopian methods the carrying out of a task which until then he himself as a disciplined Marxist had regarded as unrealizable, namely, the immediate establishment of the Socialist order of production with the aid of an immature proletariat. It should be noted that it was a question not of

village communism, for the private economy of the individual peasant was preserved, but of state economy in industry and commerce.

This was the task undertaken by Lenin, in opposition to the Mensheviki and the Socialist-Revolutionists, who declared the undertaking utopian and unrealizable. They likewise denounced the dictatorship and the destruction of democracy.

The grandiose experiment undertaken by the Bolsheviki could not help influencing the Socialist parties of the Western countries. These parties, until then united, now split. A part of them enthusiastically joined the Bolsheviki and began to apply their methods in Western Europe and America. This led to the rise of the Communist parties. The majority remained faithful to the old principles of our party and rejected the Communist methods under all circumstances as non-Marxist. As between these two currents there soon appeared a third one. This rejects the Bolshevik methods for its own country but believes that these methods are justified in Russia.

Wherein do the Russian people differ from other peoples of our capitalist civilization? First of all, of course, in their economic and political backwardness. As a result of this backwardness any Socialist party in present-day Russia would be unavoidably driven to the methods of utopianism and dictatorship if it were placed in power by the force of extraordinary circumstances, without support of the majority of the population, and if its own illusions impelled it to undertake the immediate task of building Socialism. Therein lies the explanation of the Bolshevik methods in

Russia. The experiments of the utopian Socialists in Western Europe one hundred years ago were likewise impelled by the insufficient development of the proletariat in their countries. The methods of both the old utopians and the Bolsheviki are not mere accidents, but derive their logic from existing conditions. But this explanation offers just as little proof now as it did in the time of the utopians that these methods can lead to the desired aim. To prove the wisdom of the Bolshevik methods one would have to prove first that the Russian proletariat possesses some peculiar inherent socialist powers which the proletarians of Western Europe lack. So far the existence of such powers has not been established. Therefore, there is not the slightest reason for thinking that in Russia the road to Socialism will be different from that elsewhere.

This in fact was the view held by Lenin himself as late as 1918. He believed that the revolution in Russia would be the signal for the social revolution in Western capitalist countries, and that only the establishment of the Socialist order in these countries could furnish the direction and the means for Socialist construction in Russia. Lenin undertook this construction in the hope of a world revolution which, according to his belief, was to break out immediately.

In this he was deceived. Instead of the world revolution came civil war in Russia. This war helped to some extent in the establishment of a militarized state economy. This, indeed, is the result of every war, even in capitalist countries, if the war is of long duration and demands great sacrifices. But this compulsory economy can by no means be regarded as a higher, Socialist economy. It is only a temporary measure necessitated by an extreme emergency.

When the civil war in Russia subsided and all the hopes for a world revolution vanished, doubts began to arise in the minds of the Bolshevik rulers as to whether “military communism” would last long. Lacking a basis in the initiative and discipline of the working class, this new regime could be maintained only with the aid of a bureaucratic apparatus, as unwieldy as it was inefficient, and by means of military discipline in the factories and brutal terrorism practiced by an all-powerful political police throughout the state. “Military communism” resulted in a constant fall of production and brought the country to an ever growing economic decline.

This was soon recognized by the majority of the Bolsheviks themselves. Lenin created a breach in this Communism by making some concessions to private economy (Nep, 1921), and that gave the country a short breathing spell. Lenin himself called it a respite. And, in fact, Russia under “military Communism” was gasping for breath.

We do not know whether Lenin would have continued the Nep. He died in 1924. After his death differences arose among the Bolsheviks on the question of the Nep. And indeed the development of the Nep demanded the adoption of a definite policy. It was necessary either to extend the system, which promised an economic upturn but threatened the existence of the dictatorship, or to abolish the Nep and return to integral communism. It was the latter that was decided upon by Stalin, who had gained unlimited authority among Lenin’s followers.

State industry, however, was in a precarious condition and facing imminent ruin. Its production apparatus had to be

overhauled. And so once more the Bolsheviki recalled Marx's doctrine, upon which after all Bolshevism at the beginning was founded, namely, that modern Socialism could develop only on the basis of a highly advanced heavy industry. It was decided therefore to create this industry at express train speed with the aid of a Five-Year Plan. Within five years, beginning with 1928, it was planned to build an industrial organization that was to eclipse that of the United States.

The plan was immediately put into execution with all the zeal and energy available. During the "Piatiletka" there were accomplished indeed colossal things that aroused the admiration and amazement of the capitalist world and of many Socialists who previously had maintained a sceptical attitude toward the Bolshevik experiment. Now some of them take the view which they themselves had previously rejected. They say, "Well, it is true that the Bolshevik methods are not suitable for us, nevertheless they seem to lead to Socialist construction in Russia."

An indirect criticism of this view was once offered by Lenin himself in the days of Czarism, when he was ridiculing the Czarist government. In January 1905 he published in the newspaper *Vperiod* an article about the Russian reverses in the war with Japan, where he clearly proved that those reverses were the result of Russia's lack of freedom, which hindered the efforts of energetic and self-reliant people without whom it was impossible to win a war.

"Events have proved," wrote Lenin, "how right those foreigners were who laughed at the way tens and hundreds of millions of rubles were wasted on the purchase and construction of magnificent dreadnoughts, and who pointed out that all these expenditures were useless in the absence of people capable of

handling modern military machinery and navigating modern vessels.”

This applies to both machines intended for destruction and those built for production. Machines are useless if there are no competent people to tend them.

Indeed, what characterizes modern production is not only a highly developed technique but also highly qualified workers who know how to operate the latest machinery and who are to be found in sufficient numbers only in a democracy. These workers even to a larger extent than the machines are the prerequisites for a true Socialist society that guarantees welfare and freedom to all.

In Russia, however, under the Czar as well as under the Bolsheviki, all efforts have always been directed toward importing the modern technique of capitalist countries, but not the freedom which creates modern men.

In the sixties of the past century, under the influence of the defeats suffered in the Crimean war, a liberal movement sprang up among a section of the Russian nobility. This faction, after abolishing serfdom, wanted to emulate the English aristocracy in conducting a modern economy. The abolition of serfdom brought to some of the landowners large indemnities which they used in the purchase of agricultural machinery in England. But they could not import English workers along with the machinery, or if they could it was only in small numbers. The peasants, who by law had just been freed from serfdom but who in reality continued to be the slaves of the landowners and of absolutism, showed little capacity for handling modern

machinery. The machines soon fell into disrepair and became junk.

The promoters of the “Piatiletka” disregarded these early experiences. They too believed that all that was necessary was to import from the industrial countries as many new machines as possible. They forgot that it was necessary also to create the political and social conditions that further the development of modern men. Still less did they think of the fact that such men cannot be developed as fast as new machines are created, and that for this purpose a Five-Year plan is not enough.

But to create new machines in the face of a lack of qualified workmen means not to increase the productive forces of the country but to waste its resources.

Furthermore, Stalin and his men during the “Piatiletka” were wasting national wealth in a manner quite different from the method employed in the sixties by the liberal landowners. These last spent for the purchase of machinery only such funds as would have been wasted anyway in gambling, in trips to Paris, etc. The condition of their peasants did not grow worse on account of it. Quite different is the case with Stalin. All the wealth of Russia which her exploiters had been able to garner before the World War by accumulating the surplus value that flowed into their pockets had been spent or destroyed first in the war, then in the civil war and finally in consequence of the establishment of a bureaucratic state economy by the Bolsheviki. The large sums of money needed for the creation of the new industrial apparatus could be raised only by extracting as much as possible of the newly-created surplus value from the

laboring masses. But the productiveness of these masses is quite low. Under Czarism the wages and standard of living of the workers were pitifully low. They declined further during the World War and civil war. During the Nep period they rose somewhat. Now they have been greatly reduced again in order to obtain money for the purchase of numerous machines.

Foreign tourists in Russia stand in silent amazement before the gigantic enterprises created there, just as they stand before the pyramids, for example. Only seldom does the thought occur to them what enslavement, what lowering of human self-esteem was connected with the construction of those gigantic establishments.

The Russian landowners imported machinery without improving the condition of the peasants or adding to their freedom. This was the cause of the failure of their technical reform plan. The Bolsheviki, on the other hand, import machinery by rendering the condition of the workers immeasurably worse and curtailing their freedom. They extract the means for the creation of material productive forces by destroying the most essential productive force of all the laboring man. In the terrible conditions created by the "Piatiletka" people rapidly perish. Soviet films, of course, do not show this. But to convince oneself one only has to inquire of Western European and American workers who went to work in Russia, wishing to escape the capitalist hell and find happiness in the Soviet paradise. After a short stay these workers hurry back to their former hell where conditions now, of course, are bad enough but yet more bearable than is the condition of the workers or even of privileged persons on the other side of the Soviet border.

The results of the “Piatiletka” have turned out to be terrible largely because the Bolsheviki, not content with setting up a large number of gigantic industrial establishments, undertook to transform the individual peasant economy forthwith into a gigantic collective economy, doing precisely that which Lenin had prudently abstained from. For Lenin was able to win because he energetically supported the demands of the peasants who were bent on taking possession of the land of the landowners. It must be remarked, however, that this support was quite unnecessary to the peasants, inasmuch as the Socialist-Revolutionists and the Mensheviki sided with the peasants in this question and had promulgated the division of the land among the peasants before the Bolsheviki had seized power.

But Stalin needed money for a program of rapid industrialization on a gigantic scale. Those enterprises which already existed were working on a deficit, therefore the expedient of extracting more from the peasants seemed all the more necessary. This method of procedure encountered many difficulties when applied to the individual, free peasant who had enough resistance power. Hence the idea of combining the individual peasant holdings into gigantic collectives, the so-called kolkhozy, ruled by the state. From such enterprises the State thought to collect a much larger share of their production than from individual peasants. But the peasants would not join the kolkhozy. Therefore they must be compelled to enter them by force. Thus the diligent and willing toil of free peasants is replaced with the compulsory labor of unwilling serfs. And the yield of such labor is always poor in quality and quantity. It can be managed only with the aid of the most primitive and simple tools of production. A man working under compulsion will

quickly damage any kind of complicated tool. And yet the kolkhozy were supposed to be the last word of modernity and efficiency in agricultural economy. They are supplied with the best American implements. With the change to the new methods of production cattle were to a large extent slaughtered. The member of the kolkhoz is compelled to work with the new implements of production which are not suited to him, for they demand free, highly skilled workers. The old implements to which he has become accustomed are gone. It is easy to imagine the results accomplished by a man working against his will and interests. And in fact the productivity of Russian agriculture since the introduction of "Socialist construction" has been falling appreciably. At present there is real famine in that agricultural country. In the days of the Czar we were perfectly justified in denouncing famine in Russia as evidence of the rottenness of the political order. But the famine in Russia this year exceeds anything known before. It rages practically all over the Ukraine, in Northern Caucasus and the Lower Volga region – the most fertile sections of the country – the very ones in which the collectivization of agriculture has been most extensive. Must we therefore welcome famine as the inevitable attendant of Socialist construction?

Gigantic enterprises have been created in agriculture and industry. But they owe their existence to the use of methods which compel the broad masses of the people to starve, to live in rags and filth. This is not the road that will lead us to Socialism, but one that will lead farther away from it, for it increasingly deprives the workers of their capacity to work successfully. It also degrades them in a spiritual sense. For along with want grows dissatisfaction, and to combat this dissatisfaction all sorts of deceptions are employed, and

oppression, enhancing the fear that holds the people in subjection, is increased. Resort to capital punishment increases.

According to the laws of social development established by Marx, a backward agricultural country cannot show the way to Socialism to other countries. Its failure in this respect is foreordained. It is merely a question of when and how this failure will finally manifest itself. Until now the Bolsheviki have been skillful in disguising their failure under the mask of promises of a glorious future. The last such promise was the Five-Year plan. But the Bolshevik state economy has been in existence now more than fifteen years. For more than ten years the USSR has been enjoying complete peace. And yet, contrary to all promises, things under the Bolshevik state economy have been getting worse every year, (excepting the short period of the Nep), and the day is not far distant when even the most credulous will become convinced that the Bolshevik way leads not upward, toward Socialism, but downward, to open ruin or slow disintegration.

He, who, like myself, has come to this conviction cannot consider it his duty to help in the dissemination of false views regarding the Russian experiment. On the contrary, he must regard it as his duty to point out to the world that what is going on in Russia is not the bankruptcy of the Socialist methods of Marxism, but evidence of the failure of the methods of utopianism. It is also evidence of the bankruptcy of dictatorship, which we reject under all circumstances in times of peace as a means of political ascendancy and Socialist construction. Only in a democracy is Socialism possible.

Otto Bauer himself does not claim that the existing order in Russia constitutes Socialism. He merely speaks of the possibility of the success of Socialism under Soviet dictatorship, and he admits that for this it is necessary to “wrest from the dictatorship that freedom of thought without which no true Socialism can exist.” Of course, capitalism has been destroyed in Russia, but that does not mean that Socialism has been achieved. It would be nonsensical if out of hatred for capitalism we were to welcome every non-capitalistic form of production, even though it might mean more want and enslavement for the workers than was the case under the domination of Capital.

I expect that soon the failure of the attempts to transform Russia into a Socialist community by methods of dictatorship will become apparent to all. The failure of the Communist experiment in Russia, however, does not mean the downfall of the Bolshevik regime. The two things are not necessarily linked together. Nay, they are mutually exclusive. The same backwardness that makes Socialism in Russia at the present time impossible favors the strengthening of despotism once it has taken root.

The Soviet dictatorship may continue long after the world has recognized the fact that Socialism is no longer the essential purpose of that dictatorship but is only a delusion by means of which it strives to prolong its life and which is used to deceive itself and others. The Bolsheviks may continue in power for a more or less extended period of time but their power will become increasingly incapable of withstanding serious trials. One such trial may overthrow it over night. We should always be prepared for the unexpected in Russia.

Otto Bauer fears the unexpected that may lead to the crash of the dictatorship. He thinks that the "dictatorship of the Reds can be replaced only by a dictatorship of the Whites."

This view is widely held at the moment. But I cannot share it.

Bauer also admits that democracy in Russia is necessary. But he hopes that it may come as soon as the dictatorship has succeeded in creating a more or less prosperous regime. I, too, wish with all my heart that democracy may come in this peaceful way. But here, too, I must side with those who lack the faith, that this will happen. I think my friend Otto Bauer is putting the cart before the horse. He hopes that prosperity will lead to freedom. I, on the other hand am convinced that as long as there is no freedom no ascent toward prosperity is possible, but only a descent to increasing want.

Like every absolutism in history, Bolshevist absolutism will be compelled to grant freedom to the Russian masses only under the pressure of an irresistible movement of the people.

To avoid all misunderstanding, I want first of all to remark that I am not at all advocating the organization of open rebellion against the rulers residing in the Kremlin, and that I am still less in favor of any kind of foreign intervention. The latter if attempted would bring incalculable harm, and the organization of an insurrection against such a powerful government apparatus as the Bolshevist is bound to fail. If this apparatus is not wrecked as a result of dissension within the ruling group itself then there is no other way of shortening its tenure except through an elemental upsurge of the people whose pressure will prove irresistible.

So that the question before us is not whether we should encourage the Russian Socialists to organize an insurrection. The question is altogether different, namely, how are we to act when, without our help but solely under pressure of the desperate condition of the state and its economic life, there will break out a mass movement of such power as to threaten the domination of the Communist party? Will such an insurrection lead inevitably to the establishment of the dictatorship of the Whites, so that in order to fight it the Socialist International will have to mobilize all the forces at its command?

That, of course, will be of little help to the dictators in the Kremlin. Popular movements that pass into revolutions have such a sweep that the efforts of foreign parties and emigrés living just across the border are insignificant by comparison. This, however, will not absolve us from the duty which we owe to the proletariat of the entire world to take a definite stand for or against the movement.

First of all, however, we must ask ourselves the question as to just what is meant by "White Dictatorship." "White Guards" is the name given to those who favor the return of the Czar and the landowners. They played a part in the Russian civil war of 1918-1920. Now there remain only small remnants of that element. They may seize upon this or that occasion to parade in Europe or in China, but on the Russian people, the Russian workers and peasants, they have no influence whatever. In this respect the revolution has brought about a radical change.

Just what form the workers' and peasants' movement may take in present-day Russia is hard to say. We are dealing

with an utterly abnormal state organism. The Communist Party may split, units of the Red Army may refuse to obey their officers, hunger may lead to an explosion of despair, the bureaucratic apparatus may stop working, the dictatorship itself may become more moderate and make some concessions, breaches may appear in the dike of terror and cause the whole structure eventually to be swept away. Many other things may happen. But what ground have we for thinking that in that case the representatives of Czarism, large industry and capital will gain such mastery as to be able to put the laboring masses under the harness of a new dictatorship? Against whom will the peasants and workers rise up if Bolshevism should collapse? Against the state economy? The workers will prefer private enterprise only in cases where they are assured better living and working conditions than they can get from the government-owned economy. But even the peasants will not oppose state industry if it can supply them with commodities of good quality and at low prices. True, the majority of peasants will abandon the kolkhozy as soon as government coercion is removed, but this they will do only if they receive the necessary means of production. At first the kolkhozy will simply stop delivering their supplies to the government for next to nothing. Perhaps many of them, under a freer regime, will organize a new form of production preparatory to Socialism.

What the peasants and workers will destroy first of all, for it oppresses them both economically and politically more than anything else, is the whole machinery of government dictatorship. Owing to the fact that the state finances are unsound, industrial undertakings and the kolkhozy are operating on a deficit and the government treasury no longer

receives any surplus funds. When the OGPU, the huge bureaucratic apparatus and the Red Army are no longer well paid their discipline will be destroyed. They will become less dependable, less capable and ready to offer resistance to the growing insubordination of the masses. If in addition there is discord and indecision among the dictators themselves, then that will mean the end of the dictatorship.

The disbanding of the political police, the bureaucracy and the army will be the first result of the overthrow of the Red dictatorship. Where, then, are the elements that will make a White dictatorship not only possible but inevitable ?

This does not at all mean that the overcoming of Bolshevism will and must assume the form of a democratic idyl. Sixteen years of steady and growing misery and oppression can not help but kindle the fire of hate in the hearts of the people, and we are able to judge of the intensity of this hatred from the unceasing killings of Bolshevik agents in the villages. To this must be added the utter lack of experience and traditions associated with free organization and self-rule among the people. If under these circumstances there should be an outbreak of rebellion among the peasants and workers they are likely at first to lead to a condition that is the very opposite of dictatorship, namely to anarchy and chaos. But ultimately there will be formed new political and social combinations the nature and character of which we can not as yet discern. For in the present condition of Russia everything is abnormal, therefore the overcoming of it may assume abnormal forms. But where the peasants and the workers are given an opportunity for free self-determination, they always tend toward democratic forms of organization. What ground have we for supposing then that

the Russian peasants and workers will act differently after they will have overthrown their only overlord – the Bolshevik dictatorship? Or where is that power that is capable of imposing a new dictatorship upon them against their will? Such fears proceed not from a study of the present social structure in Russia, but from historical analogy with events that have taken place under an entirely different set of circumstances.

In my opinion the Socialist International has not the slightest reason or right to brand in advance as a reactionary movement every rebellion of the Russian people against the prevailing dictatorship. The democratic movement among the peasants and workers must count upon our fullest sympathy. Every attempt on the part of the White Guard elements to gain ascendancy in Russia will meet the unanimous resistance of all Socialists without distinction. But it would be extremely erroneous to suspect and denounce as White Guardist every popular movement without investigation, merely because it arouses fear in the hearts of the dictators in the Kremlin.

Our first duty is to watch carefully events in Russia. Then we shall not be deceived by partisans either on the right or on the left. At the present moment there is no more important research work than that of studying conditions in Russia. It is of decisive importance to the labor movement of the entire world.

I agree with Otto Bauer as far as the appraisal of the importance of the study of conditions in Russia is concerned. But I thoroughly disagree with him as to the essence of this appraisal. Otto Bauer thinks that every

method of overthrowing the Soviet government would be a reactionary step for the whole of Europe. I expect the very opposite result from such an overthrow.

The old idealists among the dictators in the Kremlin have either died out or been removed from office. The men who are at the helm now have derived from the class struggle of the proletariat, in which they formerly participated as part of the Social-Democratic movement, only the desire to utilize the working class for their own ends, which in practice are no longer the liberation of the laboring masses but the strengthening of their own absolutism. The working classes not alone of Russia but of the entire world have become their cannon fodder. In the eyes of the Kremlin rulers the proletarians of all countries must play the part of wooden soldiers marching to their command. This is really the task of the Comintern. This is what all the illusions about a world revolution have come to. The leaders of the Comintern themselves probably no longer do not believe in this world revolution. But the greater the misery in their own country, the more interested are they in having the workers of other countries drawn into all sorts of senseless adventures. The more wretched the end of these adventures, the more harm they cause the proletariat, the more insignificant by comparison will the troubles in Russia appear.

In this effort to establish their dictatorship over the proletariat of the world and to drag it into adventures regardless of consequences, the Moscow dictators encounter the determined resistance of Social-Democracy. Therefore they regard the Social Democracy as their most dangerous enemy. The rage of the Communists is directed principally not against foreign capitalists but against the workers

organized into Social-Democratic parties and free trade unions.

The rulers of Russia seem to be able to get along with the capitalists and capitalist governments and to do business with them. For the capitalists are not in the least embarrassed by dictatorship methods, nor by the omnipotence of a political police, nor by the exploitation of the masses for purposes of "primitive accumulation." They would greatly appreciate having a similar regime in their own countries. Bismarck, for example, knew that the best way to control a proletariat attempting to lift its head is by encouraging it to open mutiny against the government and thus to create an opportunity for the bloody suppression of the workers. The fact that from time to time and by the most stupid methods the Communists create such opportunities for blood-letting from which the workers suffer makes them a valuable ally of all the reactionary forces of capitalism.

The fundamental aim of the Communists of every country is not the destruction of capitalism but the destruction of democracy and of the political and economic organizations of the workers.

By their policies they always pave the way for reaction. The capitalists no longer fear Soviet Russia, they help her. The entire Five-Year plan was conceived in the expectation that the capitalists of the entire world would vie with one another in supplying Soviet Russia with improved means of production, and in this the Communists were not deceived. And the capitalists fear Soviet Russia just as little politically as they do economically. Mussolini owes his success in no small measure to the Communists. They made possible the

triumph of Hitler in Germany. In France and other countries the reactionaries owe a number of their seats in Parliament to the Communists. Everywhere from the moment the war ended the Communists have been doing the greatest harm to the cause of the working class by bringing discord into its ranks.

Right now one hears louder than ever the demand for a united front which before the war existed in almost every country of the world, with the exception of Russia, and which gave the laboring masses a chance to assert themselves victoriously. The split in the ranks of the proletariat was responsible for the fact that the revolutions of 1918 and 1919 did not accomplish the maximum results possible at that time. Now all our revolutionary gains are threatened, if we do not form a united front. The building of such a front is the most urgent need in the class struggle of the proletariat. In this we all agree. But I am not as optimistic as Otto Bauer and others that the united front could be re-established by negotiations between the Socialist International and the Comintern.

I am far from opposing an honest rapprochement. I should never wish to play the part of an opponent of unity. But I can foresee that nothing worth-while will come of these attempts.

Some say: we are absolutely opposed to the Communist parties outside of but not to the dictatorship in Russia. In reality the reverse is true: cooperation with those Communist parties who are freeing themselves from their dependence on the present rulers of Russia for the purpose of attaining some common goal is possible. This has been proved by experience more than once. On the other hand,

those Communists who are ruled by Moscow are implacably hostile to our party not because of their Communist objectives, which are shared also by the Communist opposition, but because what the Moscow rulers want is not independently thinking allies but obedient tools.

The enemy that makes impossible any united front resides in Moscow. The conflict between Moscow and the Socialist International is not based upon a misunderstanding but is deeply rooted in their respective natures and is just as insoluble as is the contradiction between dictatorship and democracy.

The re-establishment of a united proletarian front is impossible as long as the Socialist parties adhere firmly to democratic ideals, while Russia is ruled by a dictatorship seeking to subordinate to itself the proletariat of the whole world.

A united front will come of itself as soon as this dictatorship has vanished, for without it the Communist parties will be deprived of their life-force. They will speedily disintegrate as soon as slogans and money cease to come from Russia and the iron and golden ring that is holding them has been removed.

With the disappearance of the Bolshevik dictatorship there will begin a period of speedy unification and coordination of all the independent organizations of the proletarian democracy, who will resume their march to victory.

Not the collapse of the dictatorship in Russia but its further continuance in power constitutes the gravest menace and causes the greatest damage to the liberation struggle of the modern working class.