LENIN AS A MARXIST

By

N. BUKHARIN

Price - One Shilling

LONDON:
COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
16 King Street - Covent Garden - W.C. 2

CONTENTS

The Lenin Library

1. LENIN AND BRITAIN
2. LENIN AS A MARXIST
3. LENIN'S STATE AND REVOLUTION
4. LENIN'S IMPERIALISM

The following publications are uniform with this Library:

RUSSIA'S PATH TO COMMUNISM *by* Zinoviev
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS *by* Stalin

LENIN AS A MARXIST

BY

N. BUKHARIN

It is generally considered incontestable within the wide circles of our own Party and outside its ranks that Vladimir Ilyitch as a man of practice of the Labour movement was incomparable and a genius; appreciations of his theoretical work, however, are generally on a lower plane. In my opinion, the time has come when we should carry out a slight or perhaps even a very considerable revision of this point. I think that this inadequate appreciation of comrade Lenin as a theoretician is due to a certain psychological aberration which we all develop. What comrade Lenin has accomplished in theory has not been condensed, compiled and presented in a few handy volumes. Comrade Lenin's theoretical theses, formulæ and generalisations were made to a considerable extent, in nine cases out of ten, when occasion required. They are scattered throughout all the vast number of his works, and needless to say, just because of the fact that they are scattered and not presented to our reading public in a compact, finished and handy form—just for this reason, there are many people who consider that Lenin as a theoretician is far behind Lenin as a practician. But I think that in the near future this idea will be shattered and in the more distant future, comrade Lenin will appear before us in his real height not only as a genius practitioner of the Labour movement, but also as a genius theoretician.

I will just quote, if I may, one little example from my own work, from my own theoretical practice, if one may use such an expression. I once had occasion in one of my articles to deal in a fairly detailed manner with the question of differences in principle which exist between the growth of the Socialist structure within the capitalist system and the growth of the capitalist system within the feudal society. Afterwards, the corresponding theses, which I published in the periodical "Under the Banner of Marxism," appeared more or less theoretically sharpened in a number of juridical, general-political and other works. But after having written this article and having sincerely believed that here in this modest theoretical scope, within definite limits a new word was said, I recognised that all I had said was actually contained in four lines of a speech by Vladimir Ilyitch at our Seventh Party Congress during the discussion on the Brest-Litovsk Peace. I believe that those of us who are engaged and who in the future will be engaged on theoretical work, and who will now read Lenin's works from a rather different aspect, will undoubtedly discover a whole number of new things in these works, things that we hitherto passed over, that we did not notice, and great theoretical extent of which we had not previously understood. Lenin as a theoretician still awaits his systemiser and in future when this work will be accomplished and when everything new that Lenin gave us, scattered in endless quantities throughout his works, will be put in a systematic form—then Lenin will also appear to us in his full gigantic height as a genius theoretician of the workers' Communist movement. The aim of my lectures is to indicate some of the lines which

might serve as a guide for subsequent work in studying Vladimir Ilyitch as a Marxist-theoretician.

Marxism of the Epoch of Marx and Engels.

Marxism, just as any other doctrine, any other theoretical conception—both in the purely theoretical and in the applied-theoretical domain—is a certain live quantity which develops and changes. It may change in such a way that the quantitative aspect of these changes becomes qualitative, and like other doctrines it may degenerate under definite conditions—social conditions, but it never remains the same. I think that now in this period in which we are living it has become clear that Marxism has passed through three main phases of historical development. These three phases of the historical development of Marxist ideology or Marxism correspond with the three great divisions in the history of the Labour movement, which in turn are connected with the three great epochs in the development of human society in general and primarily of European society. The first phase of Marxist development is Marxism as expressed and as formulated by the founders of scientific Communism themselves—Marx and Engels. This is the Marxism of Marx—in the true sense of the word. The social basis for this Marxism was by no means in the organic or the peaceful epoch of European development. It was the epoch when Europe was experiencing a number of upheavals, an epoch which found its highest form of expression in the revolution of 1848.

The chief material for theoretical generalisation

which from the social standpoint gave an impetus to the revolutionary formulations was rooted in the catastrophic nature of European development. The epoch in which Marxism had its origin gave this great proletarian knowledge peculiar features of its own which also left their trace on the logical construction of Marxism of that epoch. We can follow quite easily those fundamental lines which as I expressed here, gave a revolutionary impetus to the Marxism of Marx and Engels. In the first place the combination of the enormous forces of abstraction, of theoretical generalisation with revolutionary practice. You know that at the highest stage of theoretical abstraction, Marx brought forward in his theses on Feurbach the statement with which we are all acquainted, that the philosophers up to now had explained the world, whereas it is really a question of changing the world. It is understood that this practical and real tendency in the Marxism of Marx and Engels had its social basis. Furthermore, the whole theory of Marx was of a sharply expressed subversive character. It was thoroughly revolutionary in its very substance, starting from the upper stages of its ideological structure down to its practical-political conclusions. The whole content of this Marxism was thoroughly revolutionary both in the domain of pure theory and of applied theory. You all know what Marx replied to the question, what composes the spirit of Marxian teachings, that this teaching does not consist of the theory of class struggle since this was already known before his time, but that his teaching is that social development inevitably leads to the **dictatorship of the proletariat.** Marx asserted this in contradic-

tion to many others—and when I say many others, I even have in mind those who now think themselves Marxists. One might say that the formula generally applied to Marxism—that Marxism is the algebra of the revolution—was perfectly correct as a formula for the Marxism of the epoch of Marx and Engels. This was a wonderful machine which served as a most excellent weapon for the overthrow of the capitalist regime in all its, I repeat, theoretical branches and in all its branches of practical and political conclusions.

Marxism of the Epigones.

Such was the first phase of development of Marxism, if one may say so, its first historical outlook But you know perfectly well that later another epoch and another Marxism commence. This other Marxism might be termed the Marxism of the epigones, or the Marxism of the Second International. It stands to reason that the transition from that phase of Marxism, to the Marxism of the epigones did not occur catastrophically. This was an evolutionary process and this evolution in the ideology of the Labour movement was based on that very evolution which firstly European capitalism and then world capitalism were passing through. I repeat, first and foremost, European capitalism. After the revolution of 1848 a relative stability in the capitalist regime was established and a period of capitalist development commenced which its most catastrophic peculiarities together with its most striking contradictions transferred to the colonial question. In the basic links of the ever-growing large industries, there was a process of organic growth of the productive forces with a

relative enlightenment of the working class. There was also a corresponding political superstructure on this social economic soil—the consolidated national states—"the Fatherland." The bourgeoisie sat quite firmly in the saddle. Imperialist policy commenced to make itself particularly apparent, for example, in the '80's of the last century. On the basis of the rise of the standard of living of the working class, the growth and rapid progress of the Labour aristocracy, the working class organisations were internally and ideologically re-born in the system of general capitalist mechanism. This process thus served as a background, as soil for the re-birth of the dominating ideology of the Labour movement. Ideology, as it is known lags behind practice. There is, therefore, a certain disharmony between the development of ideological Marxism and the development of Marxism in its purely practical sense.

Marxism in both of its basic forms began to be re-born. The revisionist tendency within the German Social-Democracy gave the most striking expression of this revival tendency. In so far as it it a question of exact theoretical formulæ, we have no more classical examples in other countries, despite even more decisive regenerations. Owing to a series of historical conditions, which I cannot analyse here, this practice did not acquire in those countries sufficiently clear and exact formulation such as it received in the most—if I may so term it—thinking country. In Germany the revisionist currents already signalised perfectly clearly, and what is more, completely expressed the digression from the Marxism peculiar to Marx and Engels and the entire previous epoch. The digression

from Marxism on the part of other groupings calling themselves radical or orthodox Marxists, headed by Kautsky, was much less clearly defined. I already had occasion to refer to this elsewhere, and personally I consider the view that the decline of German Social-Democracy and Kautsky started in and dates from 1914, to be an incorrect one. It seems to me (and now we may confirm this) that a long way back we could quite clearly perceive the digression from real orthodox and real revolutionary Marxism, as formulated by Marx and Engels in the previous phase of development of Labour ideology, on the part of those groupings amidst the German Social-Democrats, who, for a long time, gave the lead to the whole International, although this was not so rapid as with the revisionists.

I repeat, at the commencement of this period, there was a certain disagreement between theory and practice. The most thorough-going ideologists of the revisionist type laid down the practice of the German Social-Democrats, after having developed the **appropriate** theory. Another section of the Social-Democrats still relied on their theoretical formulæ, not being strong enough and as a matter of fact not making much effort to overcome these harmful tendencies in practice. This was the position that Kautsky's group took up. But at the end of this period, when history brought to the fore a number of questions of the greatest importance both in principle and in their essentials—I am speaking of the commencement of the world war—it then became apparent that both practically and theoretically there is no difference between those two wings. In principle both these two wings—revisionism and

Kautskyism—expressed exactly the same tendency of the **degeneration of Marxism,** the tendency of adaptation, in the worst sense of the word, to new social conditions which sprung up in Europe and which were peculiar to this period of European development. They expressed exactly the same theoretical current that was leading away from Marxism in its true and really revolutionary sense. Generally speaking we might characterise this difference as follows: revisionist "Marxism" in its pure form—and this has become clearer and clearer during recent years—has acquired a sharply expressed fatalistic character with regard to State power, to the capitalist regime, etc., whereas in Kautsky and his group we are faced with a Marxism that we might call democratic-pacifist.

This line of differentiation was conditional, and during recent years became more and more effaced as these two tendencies began to merge into one channel, deviating more and more decisively from Marxism. The substance of this process is the freeing of the revolutionary content of Marxism—instead of the revolutionary theory of Marxism, revolutionary dialectics, revolutionary teaching concerning the collapse of capitalism, revolutionary teaching concerning the development of capitalism, revolutionary teaching on the dictatorship, etc.—instead of all these, we have the ordinary bourgeois **democratic evolutionary teaching**. One could have demonstrated in detail as to how this digression becomes very apparent in a number of theoretical problems. I have partly made this analysis in a speech devoted to the programme of the Communist International, at one of the International Congresses. We meet with this

revisionist digression when Kautsky absolutely falsifies the theory of the State and State power; the same with Plekhanov, who was one of the "most orthodox." The existence of this revision in the theory of the State makes it quite clear why the Kautskian wing also took up a bourgeois-pacifist position during the world imperialist war.

We are all acquainted with the real Marxist formula with respect to the theory of State power. We might express this teaching, for example, in this manner. During the Socialist revolution, the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie is destroyed and a new dictatorship is created—"anti-democratic"—and at the same time a proletarian-democratic State, having absolutely peculiar and specific forms of State power which afterwards commence to become extinct. With Kautsky, however, you will not find anything of the sort on this point; both with Kautsky and with all the Social-Democratic "Marxists," this point is expounded so as to imply that State power is just something that is transferred from the hands of one class to the hands of another, just as a machine that has first been held by one class and then handed over to the other, without the new class taking all the nuts and bolts to pieces and then putting them together again. From this formula, theoretically pure, from this teaching, arises the national defence attitude during war time. When the war started, this kind of argument could be heard scores of times, at specially organised patriotic meetings, and this exceedingly primitive argument has a certain amount of logic in its standpoint. It stands to reason that should the given bourgeois state be in our hands to-morrow, there is no use in destroying it;

on the contrary, we must protect it, because tomorrow it will be ours. This problem was approached in a manner quite different from the way Marx dealt with it. If we must not destroy the State, because it will be in our hands tomorrow, then we must also not disorganise the army, because it is a component part of the State apparatus, we must not destroy any State discipline and so forth. All this was very nicely laid down and, needless to say, when these complexes were tested on the anvil of mutual struggle, then Kautskyism and German Social-Democracy, in complete solidarity with their theoretical premises, drew the appropriate practical conclusions.

I repeat that it is incorrect to think that we have here some kind of instantaneous catastrophical transgression. Theoretically, it was all well founded. We simply did not notice this internal degeneration also within the so-called "orthodox" wing, which had very little in common with real orthodoxy. We might say the same thing of the theory of the collapse of capitalist society, of the theory of impoverishment, of the colonial and national questions, with regard to the teachings on democracy and dictatorship, with regard to tactical teachings such as the study of mass struggle, etc. From this point of view I would recommend all comrades to read the well-known classical pamphlet by Kautsky on the "Social Revolution"—which we have already read once, but which we will now read from quite another aspect, because it is now quite easy for us to discover in this pamphlet a Mont Blanc of all possible distortions of Marxism and opportunistic formulæ which are now perfectly clear to us. If these Marxist "epigones"

took into account certain new changes in the domain of the capitalist order, of the inter-relation between economics and politics, if they examine under their theoretical magnifying class some new phenomena or other in the realm of current life—then they would on principle always take into consideration these new phenomena from one aspect, from the aspect of **the incorporation of the working class organisations into the general system of capitalist mechanism in an evolutionary manner.**

For instance, there came into being a new phenomenon, the limited company, and they immediately use this to explain that capitalism is becoming democratised. On the Continent improvements in the conditions of the working class occurred, whereupon conclusions were at once made that perhaps the revolution is also needless and that everything can be achieved in a peaceful way. In so far as they referred to Marx, they at once seized on a number of quotations, separate theses and words, torn from their contexts. It was well known that Marx said in reference to Great Britain: "In Great Britain things may happen even without bloodshed." This was quickly generalised by everyone. It is well known that Engels once made some not particularly favourable statements about fighting on the barricade. Thus every possible conclusion was at once drawn with the necessary quotations; every phenomenon was considered from the aspect whereby the Labour organisations were being absorbed by the general capitalist system, the aspect which we might agree to call the standpoint of class truce. Ultimately, the whole revolutionary substance of revolutionary Marxism began to melt away. Something had happened which very often

occurs in history when we have exactly the same words, the same nomenclatures, the same phrases, the same labels and the same symbolism, and, I repeat, when we have quite a different social-political content. In German Social-Democracy, which in this was a model, Marxist phraseology was still preserved and also Marxist symbolism, the Marxist verbal husk, but there was absolutely no Marxist **substance**; there remained only the verbal cover from the teachings that had been developed in the epoch of the social upheavals in the middle of the last century. The revolutionary spirit had taken flight and in fact we had already to deal with a teaching that corresponded with **the opportunist practice** of German Social-Democracy, of the opportunist Labour parties, objectively reviving the respective national bourgeoisie and being bought over by them. One might have even designed a kind of special social-political map of the degrees of roguery of these "Marxists." The more the country became involved in the world market, the more powerful became her position, the stronger and the more imperialist was the policy of the given country and national bourgeoisie, the larger and stronger the Labour aristocracy and the stronger the chains that bound the working class of a given country to its own bourgeoisie, to its State organisations—the more opportunist and the baser were the theoretical formulæ, although they may have been covered by Marxist labels. I repeat, we might draw such a map as would illustrate exceedingly well the connection between social-political development on the one hand and the sphere of ideological development (in this case the ideology of the Labour movement) on the other.

Such, comrades, was the **second** phase in the development of Marxism. The physiognomy of that Marxism was something quite different from the Marxism of Marx and Engels. As you perceive we are dealing with quite a different social-political ideology, because we have to a large degree a different foundation for this ideology. This foundation is the working class of the most predatory imperialist States, particularly the Labour aristocracy of these powerful imperialist States. When this process acquired its most classical expression, in the social realm, we then began to get the most classical formulæ, **digressing from orthodox Marxism all along the line.**

The Marxism of Lenin.

I will now come to the question of Leninism. I have been told that on one of the flags of the Institute of Red Professors the following words were inscribed: "Marxism in Science, Leninism in Tactics—such is our banner." It seems to me that such a distinction is highly inappropriate and quite unworthy of the "vanguard on the ideological front" (as our Red Professors style themselves), since it is absolutely impossible to separate the theory and practice of the class struggle. If Leninism in practice is not the same as Marxism, then we get just that separation of theory from practice which is specially harmful for such an institution as the Institute of Red Professors. It is clear that Leninist Marxism represents quite a peculiar form of ideological education for the simple reason that it is itself a child of a somewhat different epoch. **It cannot be simply a repetition of the Marxism of Marx,** because the epoch in which we

are living is not a simple repetition of the epoch in which Marx lived. There is just something in common between these two epochs; that epoch was not an organic epoch, while this epoch is in a lesser degree an organic epoch. The Marxism of Marx was a product of the revolutionary epoch. And Leninist Marxism, if we may thus put it, is a product of an unusually stormy and unusually revolutionary epoch. But it is a matter of course that there is so much **new** in the very process of social development, in the very empiric **material** which can be used as material for theoretical generalisations in those **tasks** which face the revolutionary proletariat and, consequently, demand a corresponding response and corresponding reaction—so much is new that our present day Marxism is not merely a repetition of the sum total of the ideas that Marx brought forward.

I will deal with this question at length so that there will be no misunderstanding with regard to **comparison,** for I by no means desire to confront one teaching with the other. **One is the logical and historical completion and development of the other.** But I would first like to touch on those new facts of social-economic politics which are the basis for Leninist Marxism. Indeed, how many new factors are we faced with in this domain —new in the sense that these phenomena were inaccessible to Marx because they simply did not exist at the time when Marx was alive? First of all we have a rather new phase in the development of capitalist relations. Marx understood the epoch of merchant capitalism which was behind him. Marx likewise knew industrial capitalism. It might be said that the epoch of industrial capital-

ism was considered as a classic type of capitalism in general. You know very well that it was only at the time of Engels that such things as syndicates and trusts began to be formed. But of the entire new stage of capitalist development with its great re-organisation of productive relations in capitalism —what Lenin designated as monopolist capitalism —it is obvious that Marx could not know about all these phenomena since they were non-existent during his time, and it is just for that simple reason that he was unable to express and generalise them.

These new phenomena must be theoretically grasped, and once theoretically grasped they represent a further link in the old chain of theoretical discussions and theses. All these are phenomena arising from **finance capital**, from the imperialist policy of this finance capital. The problem of forming and consolidating world economic organisations of capital and State organisations and a number of other analogous problems arising from the specific structure of capitalism as expressed in the last years of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th—these were all problems which were unknown to Marx and which could not be subjected to theoretical analysis. The **second** group of problems consists in those connected with the world war, with **the decline** of capitalist relations. But no matter how much I were to estimate the degree and profundity of the decline of capitalist relations, no matter what prognosis I state in this respect, no matter how much I estimate the present economic situation in Western Europe in particular, no matter what I might say as to the serious crisis or collapse, no matter what

radical formula I might bring forward on the one hand or on the other—it nevertheless remains perfectly clear to you that conditions now exist such as did not exist before. During the days of the founders of scientific Communism, there was no State capitalism in its special form or the phenomena connected with same, neither the phenomena of the decline and disorganisation of the capitalist mechanism with the quite specifically social phenomena in the process of decline, starting from the productive basis to the phenomena connected with currency. These questions bring before us a number of most interesting and new theoretical problems, and naturally—together with these theoretical problems—the corresponding practical, political conclusions based on them and connected with them are also necessary. This other kind of phenomena is very extensive since it constitutes a whole epoch—in a certain sense—and these were phenomena unknown both to Marx and to Engels. Finally **a third series of factors** directly connected with **workers' risings** during the time of the collapse of capitalist relations, in the period resulting from the tremendous crash of these purely capitalistic bodies during the wars, which are nothing more or less than a peculiar form of their capitalist competition—these special formulæ were unknown to the period and epoch in which Marx and his closest adherents lived and studied. At the present moment these questions are directly connected with the process of the Socialist revolution. They represent an immense social phenomenon of quite an objective character which we must study theoretically, and which has its peculiar laws and which confronts us with a whole number of theoretical and practical-political problems. It

is self-evident that in Marx's time, the most general formulæ could be given, whereas the present empiric material gives a huge quantity of all possible theses and phenomena which must be worked out theoretically. This is the third kind of phenomena, the problems connected with them and the practical-political conclusions connected with the solution of these problems. Such is the third class of problems—both theoretical and practical—which was unknown to Marx since they were generally unknown during that epoch. Finally there is still a **fourth series**—an entire block of absolutely new problems. This is the series connected with the epoch or with the **commencement of the epoch of working class rule.** How did Marx approach this question? Let me remind you of the Marxist formula which I already quoted: "My teaching and its substance do not amount to being a question of the class struggle, but to the fact that it inevitably leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat." That was the boundary line. When this dictatorship of the proletariat is already a fact then it becomes perfectly natural that in proceeding further we must cross this boundary. The substance of Marx's teachings is that there is an inevitable dictatorship of the proletariat, and it is only here that there can be a pause.* In that historical epoch it could not be otherwise, since the proletarian dictatorship was not presented as a real fact and the phenomena accompanying it were not given as material of purely experimental factors and observations which might have been theo-

* The Paris Commune was simply a hint which, for Marx, served as a basis for a number of brilliant prophecies. But Marx was certainly not in a position to work out the problem.

retically generalised and could serve as the object of theoretical analysis of practical reaction. There was nothing of that kind. It, therefore, stands to reason that the whole cycle of these immense phenomena is represented as something perfectly new, since we have already arrived at what Marx himself called the boundary line. Now we have a number of phenomena on the other side of the boundary line. The newer these phenomena are in principle, the more should they also be theoretically new in principle; consequently the conception embracing the general examination of these phenomena—new in principle as regards all previous epochs—should be also more original. Such is the fourth group of social-economic, political and any other kind of phenomena, which must also serve as an object of theoretical examination and theoretically systematised basis of conduct on the part of the working class. I have presented you with four distinct groups of events. Needless to say, they all represent not only a colossal epoch in the development of European capitalism, but also of human society in general. This epoch with all its complications and concreteness represents a colossal wealth of every kind of problem both theoretical and practical, such a tremendous enormity of these problems that it is perfectly natural that the learned dialectician and practician, who combines the working out of theoretical problems with practice on this empiric material, already outsteps the confines of Marxism in its old form.

There is one point I must touch here so as to avoid misunderstandings. What might we understand by Marxism? By Marxism we might mean two things: it may be either methodics—the system

of methods of investigating social phenomena—or else it is a definite sum of ideas, let us say, including the theory of historical materialism, the study of the development of capitalist relations, and so forth. We might also include in addition a number of concrete factors, i.e., we will take Marxism not merely as a method or as theoretically formulated methodics, but we will take a number of concrete applications of this method, the entirety of the ideas resulting from this application. From the latter point of view it is quite clear that Leninist Marxism is a much wider field than the Marxism of Marx. This is obvious. Because an immense quantity of new ideas connected with the analysis and the practice based on this analysis, of entirely new phenomena and of quite new historical phases have been added to all the ideas that existed then. Thus it is in this **restricted** sense of the word that the frontiers of Marxism have been crossed. But if we regard Marxism not as the entirety of ideas such as existed in the time of Marx, but as constituting an instrument and methodology of Marxism, then it becomes quite clear that Leninism is not something that modifies or revises the methodics of Marxist teaching. On the contrary from this point of view Leninism is a complete **return** to the Marxism formulated by Marx and Engels themselves.

I think that we may thus solve the contradictions, which to a great extent are based on a confusion of terms and on the fact that many terms are used for different meanings. If we now ask ourselves how we can characterise the history of this Leninist Marxism, as a whole, then it seems to me that we may consider it as a combination,

as a synthesis of a threefold nature. Firstly, it is a return to the Marxist epoch; only not an ordinary **return, but a return enriched with all that is new,** i.e., a synthesis of the Marxism of Marx, with all the additions based on the application of Marxism; we may consider this as the Marxist analysis of the colossal amount of new phenomena given us by the new epoch. **Secondly,** it is the combination and **synthesis of the theory and practice of the struggling and conquering working class. Thirdly,** it is the synthesis of the **destructive and constructive** work of the working class, and, in my opinion, this latter circumstance is the most important of all.

Allow me to say a few words to explain this third conception. Orthodox Marxism, i.e., revolutionary Marxism, or in other words, our Marxism, is naturally confronted by various practical tasks in different historical epochs and accordingly there ensues a logical selection, because ultimately the practical tasks also determine our theoretical judgment and our ability to connect up the separate theoretical theses and links in this system into a theoretical chain.

When the working class and the revolutionary Party take up their positions for the struggle for power we must inevitably sharpen our activities and stress all definitely ideological work, specially analysing all contradicting factors. We must take note of all the basic disharmonies within capitalist society, we must thoroughly mark, select and reform into theoretical order everything that disjoins the various elements of this society. And this is for the simple reason that what is of practical

importance for us, in my opinion, is to drive into these clefts the sharpest and most pointed wedge. We are confronted with a destructive task, we have to overthrow the capitalist regime and, therefore, it is obvious that in the first instance the selection of all theoretical theses and connecting links will be just on this line. It is theoretically important for us to make note of all contradictions which are of practical importance and to intensify them so that, from mere general theoretical ideas they would pass through periodical links and through our agitators, and then on further—for here we are faced with the basic destructive task of overthrow. The whole character of the theoretical works was constructed on this line. When the working class is faced with power it is confronted with the task of binding together various sections of a common whole under the definite hegemony of the working class. Practical interest presents quite a number of questions now which formerly were of no interest at all, and, therefore, much more thought must now be given to them. Now we must not destroy but construct. This is a totally different aspect, and I think that any one of us who now reads a series of things, or even makes a number of observations on current life, will say that he sees under quite a different aspect the very same phenomena on which he formerly looked with different eyes, for the simple reason that formerly, he had to destroy practically some definite complex or other, whereas now he must construct or make it cohere somehow or other. That is why I think that this current finds its corresponding theoretical reflection and theoretical expression in a number of questions related to these kind of problems. Formerly, they did not bring forward, during

the epoch of the initial formulation of Marxist teaching, the formulæ that Marx himself made. In the epoch of the Second International these formulæ were regarded from the aspect of the **absorption in the bourgeois state.** And since they were regarded from this aspect of absorption in the bourgeois State, i.e., since the Social-Democratic opportunist parties made their task that of peaceful cultural construction, not that of the overthrow of the capitalist regime but of adaptation and for a molecular evolutionary re-making of this capitalist regime—it becomes clear that these beginings of the theory of "construction" met with a hostile reception from us Marxist-revolutionists. For all this would be generalised under the aspect of absorption in the capitalist State, absorption of the organisation in the mechanism of the capitalist apparatus, which we aim at destroying. But the dialectics of history are such that, when we came into power, it became quite clear that we had need of a new aspect—both practically and theoretically. The point at issue is that on the one hand, we must—destroy, and on the other hand—**construct.** We had to face a number of problems such as would give us a synthesis of this destruction of the old and construction of the new and a synthesis of these aspects in some united whole. In so far as it is a question of theoretical generalisations, Vladimir Ilyitch gave us this synthesis. It is exceedingly difficult for us to formulate here general basic conceptions in this direction, because we are here again faced with a large number of separate remarks scattered throughout all Lenin's works and especially in his speeches, etc., but it is quite clear that this is absolutely the newest and the most important of what Leninism has given us

as a theoretical system in the subsequent development of Marxism. Of course, I daresay a great deal has been done in the realm of theoretical selection as far as the destructive sphere is concerned. but in the constructive field the former formulæ of Marx gave very few premises. Here also, things have to be constructed anew and, therefore, it seems to me that the biggest and the greatest things that Lenin brought into the treasury of Marxism may be formulated thus: Marx provided in the main the **algebra** of capitalist development and revolutionary practice, while with Lenin there remains this same algebra, but in addition there is also the algebra of new phenomena both of a destructive and positive character—there is also their **arithmetic,** i.e., the deciphering of the algebraic formulæ under a more concrete and more practical aspect.

Lenin's Theory and Practice.

After these general remarks, I would like to draw your attention to quite a number of features and sketches, both of a theoretical and practical nature, which will illustrate the conceptions expounded above. It seems to me that the fact that Lenin had formulated theoretical conceptions in a scattered fashion, certainly arises from the most evident domination of practice in all the activities of Vladimir Ilyitch, which in turn is related to our epoch, essentially an epoch of action. We can act efficaciously when theory becomes a kind of instrument or weapon in our hands, which we can wield to perfection, and not something that weighs us down or dominates us. In a speech of mine—I don't remember which—I expressed this by saying

that Vladimir Ilyitch wields Marxism, but Marxism does not wield Vladimir Ilyitch. By this I meant to say that one of the most characteristic features of Vladimir Ilyitch, one of the most curious, was his **realisation of the practical sense of every theoretical construction and of any kind of theoretical conception.** I know it often happened that we even used to joke sometimes amongst ourselves at Vladimir Ilyitch's over-practical attitude towards quite a number of theoretical problems, but, comrades, now when we have already become tempered on the revolutionary anvil after many years, and when we have been able to see and experience a great deal, it seems to me that our merriment should be turned against ourselves, because here again it was nothing more or less than an example of that very same habit of ours, the habit of intellectuals, of definitely narrow specialists, journalists, writers, or people more or less engaged on theory as their special profession. In exactly the same way as Vladimir Ilyitch disliked any kind of verbal acrobatics and specific erudition—which sometimes also were not to our taste, and he jeered at us—in exactly the same way, he could not bear anything superfluous and approached theoretical conceptions and doctrines in a purely practical manner. Have they any other meaning besides the practical one? From the point of view of Marxism, it is clear that they have no other meaning whatsoever. But in so far as we had up to a certain degree been specialists, this damped our ardour and in this respect Lenin saw into the future to a much greater degree than any of us sinners, since what for him was organically disgusting, had for us a certain attractive force. And I think that this well-thought-out realisation, this realisation of the

serviceable role of any theoretical construction, no matter how high it might be, constitutes an extraordinarily valuable and positive feature of Leninist Marxism.

There is another curious feature connected with this, which could never be understood without the first. This feature might be termed "de-fetishisation," or, in other words, the expulsion of any fetish-like cliché or dogma from any position, etc. At first, we were very often astonished at the unusual audacity with which Vladimir Ilyitch tackled certain theoretical or practical problems. Remember such incidents as the Brest-Litovsk peace, when Vladimir Ilyitch raised the question as to whether one might take arms from one foreign power for use against the other; this troubled our international conscience to its very depths. Meanwhile, our "internationalism" was lulled by the theoretical ignorance as to the fact that when we took over power the whole landscape changed. Remember the slogan "Learn to trade," which offended the eye of many a good revolutionary and also had a theoretical substratum and which connected with quite a number of theoretical conceptions. The only person capable of such theoretical audacity, together with this practice is a person, an ideologist, a theoretician and practician who himself wields the exceedingly sharp weapon of Marxism, but who, at the same time, never understood Marxism as some sort of lukewarm dogma, but as an instrument for orientation in definite surroundings, a man who thoroughly understood that every new external correlation should inevitably be followed by some other reaction of conduct on the part of the workers' Party and the working class. In-

deed, just see how Vladimir Ilyitch formulated this conception in general. I do not wish to burden you with quotations and have not brought any extracts with me, nor have I even worked on any; but I will remind you of a series of points and formulæ which Vladimir Ilyitch presented. One of his most common tactical formulæ concerning experience, reads: **"A very great many errors occur through slogans and measures, which were quite correct in a definite historical phase and in a definite state of affairs, being mechanically transferred to another historical setting, other correlation of forces and to other situations."** That is one of the general tactical formulæ. Let us examine the ideology of our opponents, let us take such a problem as democracy for instance. We also were all democrats during a definite period, we all demanded the democratic republic and the Constituent Assembly, only a few months before we overthrew it. That is quite natural. But, nevertheless, only those who understood the relative social role of these slogans, who understood that under the capitalist regime we cannot present demands to the capitalists, could adopt any other orientation. And, for this reason, freedom for our workers' organisations had inevitably to receive the formula: "Freedom for all." When we pass into another historical phase and situation, we must abandon this formula. Those who adhered to and made a fetish of it, did not keep up with the march of events and were to be found on the other side of the barricade. This is but a minor example, but there is an endless quantity of such instances. Vladimir Ilyitch stood out as having astonishing audacity in this respect.

Let us now take another question in its general

formulation. I spoke here about the evolutionary aspect **after** we had carried through the revolution. Take for instance such slogans of Lenin's as "Learn to trade," or "One specialist is better than such and such a number of Communists." The practical sense of these slogans is now clear to us. They were quite correct but, in order to be able to say these things, it is quite evident that some theoretical thinking was necessary. In so far as the situation has changed, one must act in quite another manner. At the present time the correlation between the ideology of our Communists, and on the other hand the necessity to attract non-Communists, is of such a nature that it was necessary here to carry out quite a new and peculiar policy of a **constructive** nature. If in former times such words as "tradesmen," "trade," "bank," and so forth sounded like words of insult for any revolutionary, now, in order to pass on to the slogan "learn to trade," the most profound thinking was essential on a number of theoretical basic questions of great importance in principle. What for us is **only now** just a self-evident thing, was thought out theoretically by Lenin down to the most minor detail. After all it is only the vulgar superficial consciousness of our opponents that represents Vladimir Ilyitch as a man hewn out with an axe, something after the fashion of a statuette from the time of the Stone Age. As a matter of fact, this is absolutely untrue. If comrade Lenin launched some simple slogans such as "Rob the robbers," this sounded unusually terrible and barbaric for all our civilised opponents; whereas, as a matter of fact, this was but a result of profound theoretical thinking as to what slogan must now be issued, as to what is the mass psychology at the present moment,

and as to what the masses will understand and will not understand.

Lenin always approached the question in such a way as to obtain alliance with the greatest possible number of the people who could play the role of known quantities of energy to hurl against the old regime. This demanded very elaborate theoretical thinking. But when Lenin said "It is necessary to learn to trade," this sounded very paradoxical, although now that appears to us quite evident. Every serious step that Vladimir Ilyitch took, both in the theoretical and in the practical field, was in its own way a placing in position of Columbus' egg. When Columbus' egg was put in position it appeared to everyone that it could only be made to stand up in that manner. And here you have this slogan "Learn to trade," which is dependent upon a number of theoretical calculations and solutions of theoretical problems, the problem of correlation between town and village, the problem of the role of the currency process—in general the problem as to the role of the trading apparatus in this currency process. This was not merely a slogan taken down from the shelf, it was simply a practical watchword formulation of quite a number of theoretical conceptions which had been thought out step by step. Only when you begin to read the thoughts of Vladimir Ilyitch volume by volume, and combine the definite sectors of his thinking, will you be presented with a clear picture of the ideological path which Vladimir Ilyitch trod when working out these problems. Lenin was only able to carry out all these big moves so successfully as a strategist, because he was a very strong theorist who was

able quite clearly to analyse the given combination of class forces, take proper stock of them, make theoretical generalisations and from these theoretical generalisations draw the corresponding practical-political conclusions. What lay at the bottom of all this was the fact that Lenin wielded the Marxist weapon in a masterly way. Lenin never allowed it to get cool or to remain motionless. It was always a really powerful instrument which, in Lenin's hands, was turned round to one side or to the other according to the demands of **practical actuality.** It was the Marxism which, vulgarly speaking, has nothing sacred except the interests of the social revolution. It is an ideological instrument of such a time that knows no fetishes whatsoever, and which understands to a nicety the significance of any theoretical doctrine, of any move, of any separate theoretical conception, that is foreign to anything lukewarm.

How did Vladimir Ilyitch approach a number of problems? When within the Party or outside its ranks there arose among us some kind of theoretical digression from Marxism, he at once approached this with a definite practical gauge, because he bound up theory with practice so excellently and excellently deciphered any verbal superficiality. I said above that if Marx possessed the algebra of capitalist development and the algebra of revolution, Lenin had both the algebra of a new period, and, I repeat, the arithmetic. But I will cite you one example which I will also have to touch on later in another logical branch of thought. The analysis of Marx's "Capital" is done in such a manner that the peasantry is to a considerable extent eliminated since it is not a specific class in

capitalist society. That is the most advanced algebra of all. It is obvious that for arithmetical action we need quite other things. So now you see what it is that distinguished Lenin. It is the combination of algebra, at a much higher degree of generalisation (which in mathematics corresponds with the general theory of numbers or the theory of many variants), with arithmetic, i.e., the arithmetical solution of algebraic formulæ, the combination of the large with the small. It means troubling about something or other in the practical field—troubling about electrification or about savsome little nail or other, and on the other hand it means also taking care of the theoretical field—being engaged on the most serious of theoretical problems, commencing with philosophical problems and at the same time tracking down and fishing out every incorrect theoretically formulated detail which might be dangerous in its further development.

This **capability of surveying an epoch and observing even the smallest detail in it,** this capability of analysing and examining such questions as that of "the thing in itself" and at the same time of understanding the theoretical significance of any formula whatever in any given resolution—you all remember that Lenin wrote a number of pages as to how one should not write a resolution, in his pamphlet on the two tactics—this immense capability of seeing everything in such proportions that both the very great things and the most minor details are all centred on a little chess-board of political strategy and theory, in just those places where they should be centred from the point of view of the interests of the working class and from the

point of view of practical political action—this capability, I repeat, found its expression in the remarkable synthesis combining theory with practice.

Problem of Imperialism.

Now comrades, I will proceed to touch on a few points in a more concrete manner, points which are significant mainly from the point of view of **what is new** in all that Vladimir Ilyitch brought in here. The most fundamental of all problems is the problem of **imperialism.** The question of imperialism has been formulated by Vladimir Ilyitch in his well-known work and it is quite unnecessary for me to give either a sketch of this or to give an abridged survey of its contents here. But, comrades, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that you will not be able to name me any one theoretical work concerning imperialism which is so realistic as the work of Vladimir Ilyitch, because, in his work, any theoretical conceptions you may choose and any statistical illustrations of these theoretical conceptions are connected with those practical political conclusions which Vladimir Ilyitch deducts therefrom.

It is not just a simple analysis, the theoretical analysis of a definite epoch. But it is this analysis taken under such an aspect whereby the path immediately becomes clear upon which the working class must proceed in connection with the development of the ruling class, in connection with the analysis of imperialism. There is also one more problem which is most important for our epoch that has not yet been solved in any theoretical work whatsoever. **This is the national problem**

and the problem of the colonies—the colonial problem. It seems to me we might remark here that Vladimir Ilyitch produced work that was theoretically enormous. I repeat that there is no such book where everything is collected together and systematised. But in quite a number of his works there is an absolutely correct diagnosis of both the national and colonial questions, a diagnosis that has been fully proved by our own practice. Here, indeed, Vladimir Ilyitch created an entire school. The substance of the matter is that Marx's degree of abstraction in many problems was so great that it was necessary to establish a whole series of intermittent logical links in order to arrive at direct practical conclusions. I already indicated that in "Capital" there is an analysis of three classes. Here we do not meet our peasants, here capitalist society is taken in the abstract, its problems are not connected with such things as world economy, as the clash of various capitalist bodies, the problem of the State in so far as it remains in the hands of our enemy, the question of the role of the State in the economic life of the country, i.e., a number of problems of a more concrete character are not analysed in "Capital." In order to turn this theoretical system into practical action, and particularly so in our epoch, we had to form a number of intermittent logical links which **in themselves represent very big theoretical problems.**

Those who dealt with the problems of colonial policy in the epoch of opportunism, with but a few exceptions, belonged to the most out-and-out revisionists and were mainly engaged in apologising for the civilised rule of capitalism in the colonies. Marx made quite a number of references to Ireland

and a number of generalisations; but at that time Marx was unable to deal with the question to its full extent, because in those days the problem had not acquired such a degree of acuteness as it received afterwards and the epigones could not do this because of the very substance of the matter. It was the holy of holies of bourgeois policy of that period and one dare not lay a desecrating finger on this problem. Gentlemen such as Hildebrandt entered the arena and developed all kinds of "Marxist" theories concerning the colonies in order to justify the policy of the capitalist State. In this respect Lenin's school, which was actually being formed. made a complete revolution. The practical significance of this is now perfectly clear. It may be that this Leninist teaching on the national and colonial problems, in the initial stages of its development, was not always realised by everyone, but now his ideas have become clear. We are concretely faced with a world war and States which have entered a period of decline, and which, according to the Nietzschean law, must be thrust further downwards. In order to thrust them forward, all the elements of decline of these bodies must be supported, including the separatism of the colonial and national movement, i.e., all those destructive forces which objectively weaken the might of the great iron State—this State which is the most powerful potentialised force of the bourgeoisie. Therein lies the source of those things which many of us did not understand, both in the field of pure theory and that of the practical slogan: the right of self-determination of all nations.

In the field of pure theory, the prognosis that in the coming epoch there will be a number of period-

ical revolutions, colonial risings and nationalist wars, the struggle for freedom on the part of some nation or other against a great power and similar theoretical prognoses which correspond with a number of periodical degrees in the process of the general decline of capitalist relations—all these are prognoses which are based on very well thought-out theoretical conceptions. Vladimir Ilyitch presented these. I advise all those who are interested in this side of the question to read Vladimir Ilyitch's polemical article against Rosa Luxemburg, which was written at the time of the war. You will be amazed how the most subtle points of transition, which the overwhelming majority of us (if not all of us) only recognised later when they became facts, had already been theoretically foreseen by Vladimir Ilyitch. Why was this? It was because he was a deft tactician and strategist, and the reason for this was because he relied on a tremendous theoretical foresight which in turn resulted from an unusually well thought-out analysis of existing capitalist relations in all their intricacies and concreteness. This is quite clear to us now.

It is exactly the same way with the other period of development, when the working class already takes over power and carries on the struggle with the Great Powers. Everything possible had to be done for the proper understanding of all those heritages which were expressed as the products of the decline of the old imperialist relations of the Great Powers, of the historical forces of their inertia, and also for the understanding of all that which should have been theoretically taken into account, so as to be destroyed after a time in the future—the sub-

stance of all these questions had been entirely undeveloped. The solution of these problems is scattered throughout a number of Vladimir Ilyitch's articles, so that we are now able to understand his ideas and to form out of these ideas a battering-ram against bourgeois capitalist society on the one hand and on the other, using the lever of the proletarian State, to construct new political institutions on new principles, the greatest of which is our Soviet Union. Thus we here have a combination of theory with practice on the basis of new phenomena, which on the one hand are a product of decline and on the other are a product of new construction.

All of this is summed up into a definite theoretical system. This is no small work and in the future will serve us through many decades as one of the most important theoretical and practical weapons. If we remember what role colonial risings and national wars have still to play in the general process of decline of present capitalist relations, if we continue to review the process of revolution in other continents in a well-reasoned manner, starting from Western Europe, we will then realise what a mighty weapon the theoretical system of Vladimir Ilyitch represents in this problem. We will also realise what enormous force and method of organising the masses and leading them in the struggle is represented by the teaching which Vladimir Ilyitch developed in the field of national and colonial problems.

Lenin on the State.

I think that the next theoretical problem to which we should devote our attention is the question

of **the State in the period of Socialist revolution.** Here it is quite self-evident that there was nothing new in principle in comrade Lenin's conceptions, but the services he rendered were immense; on the one hand he rehabilitated the genuine teaching of Marx with respect to the State and its role in the period of the social revolution—I have in mind here the theory of destruction of the State power and the objectively historical necessity of the collapse of the State ties—and on the other hand he gave a concretisation, or one might say an arithmetical deciphering of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship, i.e., the teaching as to the Soviet power as a **form** of workers' dictatorship.

Nowadays, this side of the matter seems so clear to us that one might think there was no need to utter another word about it. It appears to us in threefold clarity, since we ourselves built up a State on a new class basis and according to new constructional principle—with our own hands. But we must remember the past and take all that is self-evident, all that appears so clear to us now in a certain historical context and certain historical developments. If we take the old "Marxist" literature on these problems we will perceive here an entirely unenlightening distortion of Marxist teachings. We would not only fail to find here a single thought which could be called a development of the Marxist theory of State power, or of the Marxist theory of law, or of the problem concerning the changes in these categories during the transition period, but we would also not find even a single word about the process of the Socialist revolution itself or about the state of affairs after the revolution. The main task of working class ideo-

logy was to restore genuine Marxist teaching, to concretise this very same teaching, i.e., to give it a definite form in the teaching on working class dictatorship; and this, it stands to reason, was because the problem of the relations towards the State power was and is now the central problem—the problem of all problems.

The relation to the class that is hostile to us—the revolutionary relation to this hostile class—is in the first place the relation to the most centralised and to the most rationally constructed organisation of this ruling class, which consists in its State power. On the other hand it should be quite clear to anyone that the most important lever for constructing a society on some new principles of dynamic force, re-arranging the existing productive relations, is the new State power promoted and organised by the victorious working class. We have here a number of both theoretical and practical problems of an auxiliary nature. These are given in their entirety in Vladimir Ilyitch's well-known book "State and Revolution." But this teaching developed by Vladimir Ilyitch is not simply a return to the point of view which Marx developed himself. It is a synthesis of the old Marxist orthodox viewpoint with the theoretical generalisation of quite a number of new facts, together with the foreshadowing of that which Marx could not yet foresee at the time when he lived and wrote his works. This problem, as I have already stated, is the key problem of the revolutionary workers' movement, is the central question of modern days, and one must not at any price underestimate this theoretical work of Vladimir Ilyitch.

It stands to reason that the problem of demo-

cracy was also solved—this problem which the epigones of Marxism, the Marxists of the Social-Democratic style and the Second International made quite into a fetish and transformed into a blind dogma quite cut away from its historical base, and which therefore led to absolutely incorrect and historically reactionary practical and political conclusions.

The Soviet power is something that is being recognised de jure by our biggest and most bitter enemies in the bourgeois camp. The theoretical and practical significance of this idea, of this teaching of the Soviet power, is really tremendous. If we take the slogans, the countless number of slogans which are now in circulation in all parts of the globe, there is not the slightest doubt that the most popular of these slogans—of those which seize hold of, attract to themselves and organise the largest number of peoples, of the working class—**is the slogan for the Soviet power.** You remember the time when Vladimir Ilyitch first returned to us in Russia after many years of absence in exile, you remember how we welcomed the famous April thesis of Vladimir Ilyitch, when a part of our own Party—and as a matter of fact no small part of the Party—practically saw in this a betrayal of the usual Marxist ideology. But it is as clear as daylight that no contradiction of Marxism existed here at all. On the contrary, it is quite clear to us now that this was a development of the Marxist teachings, of the orthodox Marxist teachings, on the proletarian dictatorship.

It is now quite clear that the Soviet Power is the most vital form of existence of the workers' dic-

tatorship, which has a whole number of enormous practical advantages for the victorious working class. But at the same time, if we compare this general acknowledgment with the welcome that Lenin's initial formulæ met with even in the ranks of our own Party, not to speak of the ranks of our opponents, then we can realise what an immense practical and theoretical dictum was pronounced by Lenin on this occasion. It often happens in the hectic scurry of life that a great deal of what is new to us soon becomes self-evident. But when we begin to carry out an historical survey of these new factors, we have to forget that we merely became used to them; we have to remember what existed before the present day, we have to remember how this theoretical conception was welcomed and also how we welcomed the practical conclusions arising therefrom. I repeat they were not only not received with a general recognition, but on the contrary, they were the cause of bitter attacks. Now they do enjoy full recognition and this is a proof that, both from the viewpoint of theoretical contemplation of problems of the proletarian dictatorship, of the theory of the State power, and from the practical point of view, something really colossal had been achieved here. Bear in mind that this is not only a practical problem, although I did say that the only thing that is decisive for us in the long run, is practice. It is a tremendous theoretical problem because the study of the forms of class rule is both a theoretical and practical problem for the bourgeoisie also. The question of the forms of its rule is of outstanding interest in exactly the same way as it is for the working class, the only difference is that for the working class it is of much more interest and in-

volves much more difficulty since the different variations of State power of the bourgeoisie have a certain historical succession, whereas the proletariat has never yet enjoyed this power.

Bourgeois states were founded a very long time ago. Various changes in their structure and the re-organisation of State apparatus are based on immense and long traditions. The various forms of the State regime were established, enormous experience was acquired, etc., etc. The working class has to do everything anew without any preliminary trials. It has not had its uninterrupted State existence and consequently has not the uninterrupted forms of this State existence. Here it has to build up every everything anew. And the fact that a concrete form of the proletarian dictatorship has been discovered, a form that was both vital and excellent in its stability and which disclosed the ability of resistance to all hostile influences and sallies—all this goes to show the immensity of the theoretical services and of those practical conclusions from these theoretical conjectures which we should ascribe to Lenin in so far as he is the theoretician of the Workers' State.

Lenin and the Peasantry.

Finally, in proceeding further, it is important that we should approach the question of **the working class and the peasantry**. I need not enlarge upon the role which this problem plays in our practical politics. But the further we proceed with the development of the revolution in other countries, the more we see that this problem has not only a

Russian significance but that this problem has also an enormous significance for quite a number of other countries, and one might say that these countries, in which this problem has not a great significance, are exceptions to the rule. One could count on one's fingers those countries where the peasant problem, combined with the problem of the revolution, does not play the most outstanding role. Of course, the basis for the solution of this problem was laid in the general Marxist theory and it goes without saying that the methodics of the solution of this question are also contained in the general Marxist conception. We all know Marx's formulæ with regard to Germany in which he talks about the desired happy combination of forces from the point of view of the victorious workers' revolution, when the proletarian revolution should coincide with a peasant war. Marx foresaw the most favourable events from the point of view of the development of a victorious workers' revolution. But the special working out of this problem, which from the viewpoint of the strategy and tactics of the class struggle is a primary problem, is the work of Lenin alone. Of course, much may be explained here by the fact that Vladimir Ilyitch was born, grew up and acted above all in a country where in view of its social-economic structure the peasant problem could not but attract great attention. But bear in mind that here it was not just a question of asserting this fact, but of an actual exceedingly extensive working out of this problem, starting from the most fundamental, deep theoretical problems and ending with practical-political conclusions.

It seems to me that Vladimir Ilyitch was the

most outstanding **agrarian theoretician** existing among Marxists. In his works the agrarian problem is the question to which the best pages were devoted. From the very beginning of his conscious activities as an economist and statistician, Vladimir Ilyitch began to take up the agrarian problem and a number of problems of a more abstract nature, such as that of "diminishing fertility of the soil." that of absolute rent, etc., ending with questions of a practical nature, all bearing on the relations between the working class and the peasantry. All these problems were worked out and developed by Vladimir Ilyitch in the most detailed fashion. I do not believe anyone did so much, so much that was essentially important in the field of the agrarian problem, as Vladimir Ilyitch did. Furthermore, if we had been faced with another degree of abstraction, we might then restrict ourselves to analyses of abstract capitalist society where such remnants of feudal relations, such as the peasantry, play no essential role and may be discarded from the analysis. But no sooner is it a question of commencing to decipher algebraic formulæ and transforming them into arithmetical formulæ or into formulæ of a certain category that one might reasonably represent as occupying a certain intermediate position between algebra and arithmetic, then you at once begin to get down to this question.

The recognition of the fact that the working class must have on its side during the period of the Socialist revolution some ally as representative of the great mass of the people, led to the analysis of the agrarian question. And Lenin's teachings of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and the relations between these two classes is one

of the corner-stones of all that is specific in Vladimir Ilyitch's additions to the general Marxist teaching.

At this point it is interesting to remark that this teaching was developed in the struggle on two fronts: on the one hand it developed in the struggle against the Narodniki, and on the other hand it developed in the struggle against specifically liberal Marxism, if one may say so. Vladimir Ilyitch fought on these two fronts both theoretically and practically, and, from the political point of view and from the viewpoint of revolutionary practice, this struggle is quite adequately and clearly explained in the fact that it was the problem of an ally of the working class that was being solved; for the working class, aiming at the victorious development of the Socialist revolution, this problem was connected with yet another deep-rooted problem which had to be acknowledged both theoretically and practically—this was the problem of the **hegemony of the proletariat.** It was necessary to explore theoretically such a position as would make it possible to liberate the peasantry from the influence of the liberals, and of any other bourgeois influence, and unite them with the working class: the most serious practical problem which distinguished us from the Mensheviks and S.R.'s was whether the working class should ally itself with the liberal bourgeoisie or should the working class go with the peasantry or should the peasantry stand above all other groupings. The radical Narodniki group always placed the peasantry first. The liberal Narodniki stood for an alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie, which was to have the hegemony over the peasantry. The Menshevik for-

mula was for the support of the liberal bourgeoisie by the working class.

It is natural that from all these combinations the only correct one was a combination of the working class with the peasantry, in such a form as would allow the working class to lead the peasantry. This was the practical background for a number of theoretical problems. From this aspect, Lenin examined all problems under the common heading "The Agrarian Question," in its entirety, in its extensive historical scale, and in all its details and subsidiary problems arising therefrom. In this respect we must also remark that in the future this problem is still bound to play a colossal role. This is because, whereas, on one side it is bound up with the problem of the hegemony of the proletariat, on the other side it is connected with the national and colonial questions.

If we raise ourselves above our present planet and survey the whole extent of the game from an international scale, if we survey the whole of Europe as an entity, if we review the industrial parts of America, if we compare the whole of Western Europe with all the colonies, with China, with India and with the other colonial dependencies, we will then quite clearly perceive that the national revolutionary movement and the colonial movement, or rather the combination of these two, represent but another form of the problem of the relations of the working class and the peasantry. For if Western Europe, taken in the general setting of world economy, represents a great collective town, the colonial dependencies of the capitalist countries represent a huge village. And in so far as

the industrial proletariat of the industrial countries enters the arena uniting its forces for an attack on the capitalist regime, in so far as this proletariat leads into the fight millions and yet more millions of colonial slaves, for these reasons these slaves are nothing more or less than the great peasant reserve of the international revolution. Therefore, the problem as to the relations of the working class with the peasantry thus leads to still another problem to which I have already made allusion—that of nationals, national wars and colonial risings.

This problem, comrades, has thus still to play an important role. Here, also, the first fundamental words were spoken by the Lenin school. The development of this problem, the corner-stones of the theoretical conception and the basic line observable here have been undoubtedly given by Vladimir Ilyitch. I think it would be superfluous to speak here about the hegemony of the proletariat and the role of the working class as leader, because this is a theoretical point about which we are already acquainted and which does not need any commentary. Such in the main are the theoretical problems, together with their practical conclusions, which were stated and worked out by Vladimir Ilyitch and from which general practical conclusions were drawn. The general edifice has already been constructed; we must now finish it off, we must now work it out in detail, taking into consideration, of course, those new factors which the development of the coming years will bring us.

The Theoretical Problems Awaiting Us.

In making a merely general review of the problem we find about five fundamental theoretical problems that Vladimir Ilyitch outlined and which it is necessary for us to work out. Firstly, there is the study, or rather the course of study that we have in view, of the **transition to Socialism after the victorious workers' revolution.** Generally speaking this term "transition to Socialism" is a very hateful term for us. It was detestable since it was a term signifying revisionist teachings, the teachings of the epigones of Marxism, or if you like the betrayers of Marxism, who created a complete theoretical construction according to which the revolution was unnecessary. According to them it in no way arose from the objective process of historical development; the working class, they said, can get on excellently without revolution since capitalism will adopt such forms, organically, without catastrophes and by force of inherent conditions of capitalist development itself—as will ultimately correspond with Socialistic forms. The proletariat is continuously putting out "feelers" in various directions both in the field of economic life and in the realm of State administration, and in this way the working class will occupy its strategical positions, both within the State apparatus and in the field of economic management, without any revolution and without any dictatorship of the proletariat.

You are all well-acquainted with this teaching, this is what the label "transition to Socialism" meant. But, comrades, it is just **after** the dictatorship of the proletariat that the organic period of

development **commences.** If you already have the dictatorship achieved by the workers, it then becomes quite clear that the very basis of this problem changes radically, changes in principle, just as many other problems. So, when we want to ask ourselves the question as to what should happen after the conquest of power by the working class (naturally, in so far as we are alluding to one isolated country), it is then a question of further development towards Socialism within this country proceeding along an evolutionary path and it cannot be otherwise; in other words, after the conquest of power by the working class the real transition to Socialism commences.

Vladimir Ilyitch did not formulate this in an exact manner. But one can cite an endless number of instances from Lenin's works in order to illustrate this idea. In particular he says quite definitely in his later articles, for instance in the article on co-operation, that whereas during the former period of historical development the hub of our endeavours was a revolutionary policy, a policy of catastrophes, now during the present period of our construction the hub of our policy is peaceful organisational work. He states in his formulæ exactly what I have just been saying, but it is understood that this must be worked out, reasoned out, under various aspects for here is an endless number of problems.

It is a question of the evolutionary struggle of economic forms; it is a question of a definite process at first of the ascent of State power, descending again later by an evolutionary path. We must first reinforce and strengthen the organisation of

the ruling proletariat; we must make the proletarian dictatorship firm; then this State organisation would begin to wither away in this very same evolutionary way. There can be no question here of any third revolution, and conversely any catastrophic attack against this system of proletarian dictatorship amounts objectively to nothing more nor less than counter-revolution. It is for this reason that a Workers' State is a State of quite a peculiar type just the same as our army, which contains the germ of its own evolutionary destruction —it is just for this reason that the whole order of development is arranged in its original evolutionary sequence. In fact, after the period of conquest, after the commencement of the proletarian dictatorship, this transition to Socialism only commences. Needless to say, special laws should be applied here, and the elimination of the contradictions of this period should be radically distinguished from the eliminations of the contradictions of the capitalist period.

This is for a simple reason. If capitalist development is nothing more nor less than an extended reproduction of capitalist contradictions, which disappear at one period only to re-appear at another, and when every following group or cycle is accompanied by a sharpening of all contradictions, heading for the collapse of the whole system —at the same time in the new sequence of development which starts from the workers' dictatorship (I am not talking of the possibilities of destroying the workers' dictatorship from outside as in Finland), we are faced with a natural sequence where the development of contradictions begins to be eliminated. I mean to say by this that we will not be

faced with an extended reproduction of the contradictions of our system, but a continual decrease in their reproduction, and this reproduction of the system will be transformed on evolutionary lines into a development of Communism. The whole nature of the development acquires quite another sense, quite another significance in principle than under capitalism. One might indicate certain places in Lenin's works where this conception is confirmed. This is a kind of new sphere in theoretical constructions where new laws are formulated different from those which existed in the capitalist period of development. It is new—but it is quite clear that it has its practical and political conclusions.

If from our present Russian situation we take perfectly concrete problems of NEP, it is quite evident that we must make a number of conclusions from these theoretical premises. We will not overcome NEP by means of smashing up all shops in Moscow and the provinces but by eliminating it with the power of the growth and competition of our State industry and State organisations. I am only giving a small example, but you will see that therein lies the substance of a number of theoretical and practical problems of quite another nature, which we have not got down to formerly because in those days our social position was that of destroyers. We were the most decisive, courageous and consistent destroyers of a certain system, and now we are the most consistent constructors of another system. The aspect is different and the total sum of practical and theoretical problems is also different. It is quite clear that there is no break whatsoever with the old Marxist tradition,

here, because it is a question of continuing and adapting Marxist methods under absolutely new conditions which were quite unknown to both Marx and Engels in their concrete form, for the simple reason that there were no empiric data which would permit of making any generalisations.

There is one question in connection with this, which in my opinion acquires very great importance. This question has still to be developed from the theoretical point of view; it is the question of the **cultural problem** during the transitional period. I think that this is a question on which there are many theses scattered throughout a number of Lenin's works. One must add to these his speech at the Youth Congress, concerning the role and use of specialists and his speech and theses concerning Communist education as well as the question of the combination of so-called proletarian culture with old culture and definite succession in this respect. All these questions combined must also be subjected to theoretical analysis. They also represent one of the most important problems of modern times, and I think that we may even now say that certain fundamentals in the theoretical conceptions of Vladimir Ilyitch may also be found here. We must continue this work. This question is again quite new. No one had or could have broached it in the previous phase of historic development. This did not exist with the most revolutionary Marxist or with Marx himself. This is a new task—the task of our future.

Then we come to the third question, which I might call the question of **various types of Socialism.** In our country Socialism has come down

from the clouds on to earth, or at any rate nearly so. This is the question of the moment. How did we get down to the question of Socialism formerly, and how did Marx approach it? In one of Marx's letters it is put in this way. "We know the starting point and the tendency of development." This is a thoroughly unmistakable and correct formula. Take now Lenin's last article on co-operation and let us sort out the conceptions he exposes. In analysing the old views on co-operation Vladimir Ilyitch states that at the present time when power has been transferred into the hands of the working class the approach to this question has changed in principle and that if we were to bring the peasants to co-operation under the hegemony of the working class this would mean the realisation of Socialism. But this formula would be of no use in such a stage in Soviet England. And Vladimir Ilyitch frequently emphasised, in private conversations, in speeches, articles, documents and his works, that we must be very careful when drafting such formulæ for other countries.

Maybe the type of Socialism being constructed here shows great originality, which arises from the fact that Socialism is being built on material that already exists. It is as clear as daylight that the capitalist regime, standing at the threshold of collapse, has its general laws of capitalist development, but there is no doubt that in just the same way (if we take the general trend of capitalism in various countries), capitalism in one country has its specific form of organisation, while in another country a quite different form. If capitalism preserved the existing original characteristics in various countries, even during the period of

its decline when its cycle of development has already continued some hundreds of years and when it is confronted with the terrible force of levelling tendencies, it is self-evident that the original peculiarities will also remain during the time of construction of Socialism, since the starting point of this development is nothing else but capitalism.

Revolution in various countries also has its original features, and in the same way the construction of Socialism must also inevitably have its original features. If the peasantry played such a tremendous role in our country, this cannot be said with regard to England, because capitalism in our country was quite different, the social-economic structure was quite different, the relations between the classes were also of a different nature and our "moujik" is also quite different; for all these reasons it is quite natural that the starting point of the development of Socialism is different. There is also a difference in the intermediate forms through which the development of Socialism passes right up to the time when it is transformed into a universal world Communist system; in fact these forms will show an extraordinary difference. So you see that this problem must be theoretically worked out, forming as it does the basis on which one must make practical political conclusions.

When Vladimir Ilyitch worked in the Communist International, one of his warnings to those of us who were working there, was that we should on no account lose sight of originality in development, that we should not look at things in a stereotyped manner, that we should be able to distinguish and to perceive simultaneously both what is most

general and also the minor particularities which sometimes play a decisive role in the subsequent transition on the road to Communism. This is the third sequence of problems which was outlined by Vladimir Ilyitch, which has been solved in the main and which we must now develop and make definite.

In connection with the question of the peasantry and of the working class, a most original problem crops up which must be subjected to theoretical analysis. In one of the colleges where I studied, one of the comrades there—comrade Rozit—brought up this problem. I think that when this question is presented it deserves theoretical attention and just in this respect Vladimir Ilyitch did a great deal. This is the question of the **theoretical analysis of a two-class society during a workers' dictatorship.** By this we mean to say the working class and the peasantry. Whereas the capitalist regime was mainly occupied with the problem of analysing a three-class society—the working class, the bourgeoisie, and the land holders (which was after all simply an abstract analysis) it will be extremely interesting for us, theoretically, to approach the problem of two classes, the working class and the peasantry, in face of the abolition of the landowners' estates and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. Of course, as we approach nearer to a concrete path, a whole number of very significant modifications will arise, which might radically change the appearance of our picture both theoretically and practically. But this problem proceeds along the same lines as the problem of the alliance of the working class with the peasantry, because in

substance these classes are nothing else but class bearers of definite economic forms.

One cannot say that these are simply social forces and nothing more. Each class bears it own economic forms. When, in speaking of the peasantry, we take it as a social class category, we must not forget that this peasantry bears a definite form of productive units which might overcome us, which might develop along a course undesirable for us, but which might also take the path along which we **wish to** guide it. Consequently here the social class viewpoint has its purely economic significance and foundation, and the question of the relation of the classes is at the same time also a question of the relation of economic forms. The question of the hegemony of the proletariat over the peasantry is at the same time also a question of the relation between Socialist industry and peasant economy. The whole importance of this question is quite self-evident and I think that the presentation of the questions that I have here spoken about deserves very great attention.

Finally, there is still one sequence of problems which Vladimir Ilyitch also dealt with, which has tremendous significance for us all, for our Party and for the working class. For instance, there is the problem as to the various **contradictions** that have developed in the process of our present social development, after the proletarian dictatorship, and the problem of **tendencies, hostile to us, developed by these contradictions.** If, after the workers' dictatorship, matters will proceed in such a fashion as will amount on the whole to a revolutionary sequence, it by no means follows from this fact that

there will not be, particularly in the **first** phase of working class dictatorship, extremely great contradictions which even **increase** during certain periods of development. If I speak of the general possibilities of these contradictions disappearing and in fact even go so far as the advent of Communism, this means that I take a very long view—but one must not draw from this the conclusion that during definite concrete historical periods, especially at the commencement of this trend, there will not be any increase of contradictions.

For instance, with regard to this, there is a question of the so-called **regeneration** of the working class. This question is extremely important for us politically. Vladimir Ilyitch brought it up at the metal workers' Congress and, in fact, presented it frequently at quite a number of our meetings. He was the first to speak of the possibility of an uncultured proletariat being overcome by a more cultured bourgeoisie who might beat us with the forces of its cultural training. He made no bones about this danger, which indeed has enormous significance for us. This danger is embodied in the contradictory tendencies of our development and the contradictory position of the working class itself, which on the one hand stands at the bottom of the social pyramid, and on the other hand stands on the top of the social pyramid. This contradictory position of the working class, in turn, causes a number of other contradictions which can be solved and removed only after very many years and during complete historical epochs.

Vladimir Ilyitch presented these questions and

in principle solved them. We must now continue solving them, making the appropriate practical conclusions. These problems—the question of the nature of every revolution, that the workers were a culturally oppressed class, that every revolution is dangerous because of internal deterioration, which must and will be overcome by means of the antagonistic tendencies—the analysis of these tendencies, both harmful and useful in their mutual struggle and in the mechanics of their concatenation —all these problems could not be presented in a concrete form in the middle of last century nor could they be presented at the commencement of this century. But they could be and had to be presented when a definite amount of material had been accumulated which would permit us to judge the concrete forms of these dangers and of those tendencies, which we could support and strengthen in order to overcome these dangers.

I am not able to touch on a number of questions of secondary importance and in the same way cannot deal with the question of general formulations on working class tactics and strategy, since this applied field has its own generalisations; in the field of applied Marxism, i.e., in the field of applied theory, there is also a peculiar form of law in exactly the same manner as, for instance, in applied mechanics. In this respect Vladimir Ilyitch did stupendous things, but there is not a single book where all this is written out, split up into paragraphs and presented to you. Lenin's book dealing with the infantile malady of Left-wing Communism is an attempt to sketch this general teaching of strategy and tactics, and we now read this work with quite different eyes than formerly. I ought

to say that the reason for this is because we here have the embryo or rough sketch, or rather a short rough draft of general applied Marxism in the revolutionary epoch. In this remarkable work all the milestones are given whereby we may formulate the strategy and tactics of the working class struggle, and which we can use like a syllabus for the study of the strategy and tactics of the working class.

Lenin also takes the palm in this field, since he has such colossal experience gleaned from various situations. For instance he has the experience of our Party when it was a small group of a few people, when it entered the political arena in 1905 as a semi-legal Party, when it began operating as an underground Party, having its legal feelers, when it was absolutely illegal, when it attacked and retreated, etc., etc., and finally, when it became a ruling Party. Nowhere else was there such experience as this, such a variegated play of different forces, positions and situations, and the entirely different degrees of conduct arising from them, nowhere else was there such an understanding of original forms, such a keen seeking for varied paths of orientation. You will not find a single statesman who had this experience, either in the bourgeois camp or in Marx himself. There can be absolutely no question as to this.

One of the component parts of this general totality of problems of applied Marxism, which may be united, is the groups of questions of an organisational and internal Party nature. In this respect, we find, in exactly the same way, in Lenin's works on the organisational question, on Party structure,

on the relation between Party, class, masses, and the leaders, etc.—we find quite incomparable models which have now been verified by the experience of several revolutions, which have now to a considerable degree penetrated the consciousness of very wide masses, and which may be regarded as quite stable gains during the time of our class struggle that will become unnecessary only when the class struggle ceases. We have nothing better, and there will be nothing better, in this connection and in this field, in the field of applied Marxism, in the field of the structure of the Party organisation, the relation of Party organisations with all other organisations, and with the non-Party masses and even beyond class boundaries, because here another epoch has been overtaken, together with its various fundamental supports and the mechanism of the movement of the victorious workers' revolution.

We have concluded that in this connection we will not be able to think out anything better than Lenin, but certainly Leninist traditions will continue to be applied to concrete circumstances. Nothing could be more repulsive to Lenin than the transformation of Leninism into a dogma. He had a very poor opinion of the "old" Bolsheviks (in the bad sense of the word) who are able to repeat in a parrot-like fashion everything that was written a few years back. In private conversation he called them old fools. But in print he gave up resorting to this hardly academical formula and in all his conceptions he demanded decisively both from himself and others that side by side with a definite methodical content, the original conjecture be taken into consideration.

Anyone who does not take into consideration the march of events, who does not consider the original conjecture, will not create anything correct, either in theory or in practice. One cannot take up a position during new events without perceiving the growth of new forms, because life is eternally moving, continually producing these new forms and creating new situations and relations. It is the bounden duty of every theoretician and practician and the duty of every Marxist to sense all these new factors more than anyone else. Lenin sensed the new more than anyone else. If we examine his activity, if we examine both the theoretical formulæ and the practical slogans that he presented, we see an absolute fearlessness, an audacity and a quick sense of perception with regard to what is new, hitherto unequalled. The great changes of course in our Party policy, and the corresponding critical formulations which either preceded or coincided with these changes, represented the most excellent example of Marxist revolutionary dialectics, which fears no changes whatever and which at every change in the objective sphere corresponds with the essential changes and with the adaptation to what is new in the tactic and the strategy of the proletarian Party.

It very often happens that Marx is compared with Lenin and the question arises as to who was the greater, Marx or Lenin. And usually the reply to this is that Lenin was the greater in practice and Marx in theory. In my opinion there are no scales with which we might weigh such great figures, for the simple reason that one can neither place together nor measure up the greatness of types

of a different nature who have grown up under different conditions and played different roles. No, we cannot do this. Such a presentation of the question is absolutely erroneous in its root. But what we can say quite unmistakably is that these two names will determine the path of the working class as long as the working class will really exist as such. This is quite clear and we may console ourselves with the thought, after Lenin's death, that we have lived, struggled, fought and conquered under the permanent leadership of our great teacher.