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To all Sections of the Communist International.

**** At ten minutes to seven on the evening of the 21st January, Lenin died suddenly under symptoms of paralysis of the respiratory organs. The funeral will take place on the 26th instant. The Communist International has lost its most eminent Guide and Teacher. The International Proletariat has suffered the greatest loss since the death of Marx. Let us do homage before the open grave of the great Teacher of the Working Class! The International Proletariat knows what it has lost in the person of Lenin. The Communist International and the Soviet Union will consolidate their ranks for carrying on the work in the spirit bequeathed by Lenin.**

The Executive Committee of the Communist International:

Moscow, 22nd January 1924.

(Signed) **Zinoviev.**

Lenin.

By Julius. (Vienna.)

The greatest act of modern history, the setting up and the victorious maintenance of a Workers' and Peasants' Republic over an area embracing over a sixth of the surface of the Globe, is mainly due to his work.

He formed the soul of the fight which was carried on during the Menshevik regime in the year 1917 with the slogan: „All Power to the Soviets!“, for the setting up of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It was he who issued the slogan for the October insurrection. Under his genial leadership, the Soviet Republic has victoriously maintained itself through all interior strife, and to day stands foursquare as an impregnable stronghold.

His significance for the labour movement of the whole world has already been recognized, even by the reformist leaders. The Amsterdam, as well as the shattered fragments of the Second International, had repeatedly declared that the maintenance of the Soviet Republic was also of vital importance to them, and that its overthrow would signify the end of all the gains obtained by the reformist labour movement. But today they declare, as they have always: this indirect help constitutes all that the workers have received from Lenin. To follow his example in other countries would not lead to the well-being of the labour movement, but to its ruin. As a matter of fact, Lenin's activity in Russia only represented a portion of his entire activity. His world-histo-

rical significance does not consist of his having been the leader of the Russian proletariat during a certain epoch, but of his having been the leader of the World Proletariat. A second Marx, a congenial Disciple of the Master. Marx has shown us the aim, Lenin the path. Marx tells us: What Lenin tells us: How.

In order to free itself from the fetters of political suppression, the proletariat before all needs a revolutionary party. His first great act was the creation of the Bolshevik Party. It is ridiculous, when the opportunists declare, that the difference between their conception and Lenin's regarding the role of the party consists in that he stands for dictatorship over the masses, while they are for self-government by the masses. He who has any intimate acquaintance with the reformist trade unions and the Social Democratic parties, could tell a tale as to how much the masses have to say in the decisive moments of these organizations. The policy of the reformists has been from time immemorial: the masses are absolute when they do as we wish! The reformist trade unions and Social Democratic parties, at their very best, maintain themselves on the opportunist instincts of the workers. At the first moment, however, when the revolutionary instincts of the masses led by them begin to seek expression, they leave them in the lurch or violate and betray them.

The party ideal of Lenin was the revolutionary party, basing itself on the revolutionary instincts of the mass. In his conception of the role of the party, Lenin was far in advance even of the most radical and valued leaders of the old Second International. Let us call to mind the polemics between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg in 1904 in the „Neue Zeit“. Our genial Martyr, Rosa, already at that time had her doubts as to whether the Social Democratic Party would be capable of leading the masses in a revolutionary situation. She had no confidence in the Social Democratic Party, the leaders of which could not be other than conservative. She however, did not pass from this to the conclusion that it was precisely a revolutionary party which was needed, but simply relied upon the revolutionary instinct of the mass, which at the decisive moment would force its way through and drag the leaders along with it. But in the meantime it has turned out that a party organized on a reformist basis, as is the Social Democracy, could in the decisive moment, carry off the victory as against the revolutionary instinct of the masses.

The Bolshevik Party has helped the Russian Revolution to victory, and only it proved itself capable of defending the gains of the Revolution. The question of the revolutionary party has been decided by History in favour of Lenin. The application of this teaching is not limited by any geographical boundaries. The proletariat can only be victorious and maintain its victory in so far as it acts in accordance with this teaching. Here one sees the appropriateness of the words: „By their fruits ye shall know them.“

The second principal teaching of Lenin is, that the proletariat must be capable of shifting the balance of the forces in society in its favour, by winning over, or at least neutralizing, certain important non-proletarian strata. The worker' parties of the Second International were, at their best, but mere craft parties of the town workers which served to sharpen the antagonism between urban consumers and rural producers, thus supplying the class enemies, i. e. the agrarian-capitalist block, with millions and millions of auxiliary troops. Even the best elements of the old Second International, the Marxist Left, failed to understand that the proletariat must adopt another attitude towards the peasants. These comrades were not actuated by craft interests, but they set up a principle antagonism between proletariat and peasantry: The proletariat, in their view, stood for collective ownership of the means of production, while the peasantry were adherents of private ownership. For this reason they considered that there existed an unbridgable gulf between the proletariat and peasants. But the fact is that peasants, in their overwhelming majority, are not exploiters; they work themselves, and within the state they are often a suppressed class. Why has the leadership of these broad peasant masses been left to the workers' enemies, who use them as auxiliary troops against the proletariat? Against the will of this class, a victory of the proletariat becomes very difficult, while the chances of a permanent victory are very remote. With their help the victory can be obtained in all countries. Our attitude towards the peasantry, which was realized by Lenin in Russia with such signal success, and whereby he opened up an entirely new outlook, is the second main guarantee for our victory.

Lenin was an orthodox Marxist, but he had nothing to do with Marx doctrinarism and with a dogmatism which has nothing in common with Marxism. He was a politician and not a metaphysician. He did not permit the setting up of domas: either in the peasant question or in any other. Classic examples of this are furnished by his attitude in the question of the Brest-Litovsk peace, and in the question of the new economic policy. As a result of the long protraction of the world war and the failure of attempts to end it by diplomatic artifices, there gradually grew up the opinion that the war could only be ended by the revolutionary insurrection of the proletariat in all countries. It was this which caused the Bolsheviks to issue, after their obtaining power, the appeal to all the warring peoples to conclude an immediate peace. By this they sought to revolutionize the masses in the belligerent countries. The Brest-Litovsk negotiations were also conducted with an eye to revolutionizing the masses. A certain degree of success was obtained: the difficult situation of the Entente governments in those days, the huge political strikes in Germany and Austria. But this was not sufficient to compel an ending of the war. The moment arrived, when a revolutionary Russia was obliged to conclude peace with an imperialist power. The „Left“ scouted the idea, pointing out that the war — as had been said up to now — should only be

ended by a revolutionary insurrection. They proposed to retreat right up to the Urals, as a testimony that the Russian proletarians were remaining true to their determination only to recognize a peace resulting from the insurrection of the proletariat. Lenin perceived that such a retreat would have as a result the setting up of a counter-revolutionary government in Russia. On the other hand, the conclusion of peace would procure a breathing space which would give the revolutionary government the possibility of preparing itself for further struggles. He therefore said to his Left comrades: „If one chalks a circle round a chicken, it is afraid to over-step the circle. That is reasonable because the chicken, which has not itself chalked the circle, does not know how easy it is to step over it. But you yourselves have inferred from the long duration of the war, that it can only be ended by a general insurrection on the part of the people. But now you see that you are mistaken, and that there still remains another possibility. Why are you afraid to step over this circle which you yourselves have drawn?“

It was the same with the New Economic Policy. The political power of the proletariat was to serve for the setting up of the socialist planned economics. But this proved from the outset, in a country like Russia, where there exists thirty million petty undertakings, to be an impossibility. If one had insisted further upon this principle, not only the peasants and the petty artisans, but also the proletariat would have risen against the Soviet rule. It was therefore necessary to find a way out, to conclude a compromise. Lenin unhesitatingly pursued this way and thereby saved the Soviet Republic.

Those who continually reproached Lenin with exercising the dictatorship over the masses, must be told, that Lenin perceived the necessity of certain compromises far earlier than other people. For example, he realized already at the beginning of 1918, that war Communism could not permanently suffice, but he had to take into account the mood of the masses and the mood within the Bolshevik Party. He also realized that this mood was also one of the objective factors of the development. He stood for his opinion from the moment when he perceived it to be correct. But he insisted upon it being carried out only, when he could assume that the overwhelming mass of the proletariat had come to understand it.

Lenin was a great realist in politics, but not a realist in politics who only takes into account the forces of the enemies of the working class — Lenin was quite capable of taking these forces into account — but he was also one of those who reckoned upon the proletariat. Nay, more, Lenin also knew, how this power can be developed up to the point, when it is capable of overcoming its enemies. He made his calculations very coolly, but he was bold, where it was necessary to be bold. But, before all, he calculated very thoroughly. He was the first disciple of Karl Marx, who transformed the ideas of the Master into deeds. When Marx died in 1883, it was only a small community, which gathered around his grave. The labour movement was, in its initial stage, very little affected by Marxism. It is safe to say, that only some dozen or so men understood Karl Marx at that time. Only two or three lines were published by the papers at that time regarding the passing away of the old revolutionary of '48 and of the founder of the First International.

Lenin dies a leading statesman, at the head of the largest country of the world, at the head of the first Workers' and Peasants' state. The whole globe, adherents and opponents alike, stand spell-bound at the news of his death. A people numbering a hundred million accompanies him to his grave as its greatest son. And millions and millions of proletarians throughout the whole world see in this departed one their leader who being dead, still points out the way to their emancipation.

Today, two worlds stand opposing one another.

A capitalistic world, which still possesses all the material means of power, but nevertheless is writhing in death agony and is at the end of its resources; and the world of Lenin, the world of the rising proletariat, which has already created for itself in Russia a powerful stronghold, and possesses in all the other important countries, large and growing parties which pursue the way indicated by the Great Leader. There is no doubt that this way leads to its speedy emancipation.

Lenin wore himself out in the struggle, but he saw already the approach of victory.

He died in triumph!