LENIN

BY

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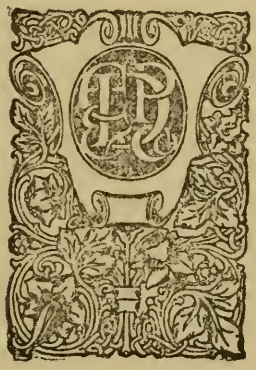
AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION

FROM THE FRENCH



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book has two purposes in view.

It studies on the one hand a very strong and a very curious personality. No man, not even Peter the Great, has had more influence on the destiny of my country than Lenin. No man, not even Nicholas II, has done it more harm. In speaking of a despot it is natural that I should look for comparisons among men of his own kind!

Russia has given the world great geniuses and profound thinkers. In their effect on the Western world not one of them has had an influence at all comparable to that of this doctrinaire who is perhaps not even very intelligent. For this disconcerting situation to become a fact, two world calamities were necessary: the war and the social revolution. They paved the way for the destroyers—the Ludendorfs and the Lenins.

On the other hand, this book is meant to be a study in social philosophy. The *idea* of a communist revolution is its principal concern. A search for the origins of Bolshevist doctrine leads us back to the theories of Karl Marx, Michael Bakunin and Georges Sorel, who today, after the

"acid test" of 1914-1919, stand revealed in a new light.

At the very beginning, I want particularly and frankly to forewarn the reader of the general standpoint from which my book is written; so that he may read it or lay it aside according to the character and the strength of his political convictions.

The author of this study is a socialist[1] who is, at the same time, a *counter-revolutionist* and an *anti-militarist*. These two words are used here not in the factitious and artificial sense in which they circulate in soap-box oratory, but in their strictly literal and precise meaning. One can be an anti-militarist without insisting that the flag be relegated to the dung-heap. One can be a counter-revolutionist without sharing the political ideals of Stolypin. What these words really mean is this:

We do not want wars or revolutions, either today or in the future. We have seen them close at hand and have had enough of them. These

[1] The author belongs to the labor party led by Miakotine and Pechekhonof, former colleagues of Mikhailovsky, and of Tchaikovsky, the present head of the government at Archangel. This party is probably the only one in Russia which has stuck to its original platform, the main planks of which are: national defense, free from all chauvinism and all imperialistic policies; fidelity to alliances; the democratic "bill of rights"; a constituent assembly; a union of all forces recognizing the sovereignty of universal suffrage; the most far-reaching social reforms brought about in a legal manner. This is also the party which took the initiative in the conferences leading to the Union for the Rejuvenation of Russia (Revolutionary Socialists, Social-Laborites, Social-Democrats and Cadets of the Left).

two phenomena are about equal in value whether considered from the point of view of morals or from that of human progress. They are as alike as two peas. We consider them the worst calamities that can befall free peoples.

All countries of Europe except Russia have institutions which permit of the conflict of ideas without resort to barricades and machine guns. That is why we hope that the revolution destined eventually to upset Bolshevist tyranny will be the last one. If this is a mistaken hope, so much the worse for Russia!

In another book, *Armageddon,* written during the years 1914–1917 (in Russian), I tried to show that the World War meant a terrible crisis (and perhaps ruin) for certain principles which guided the partisans as well as the adversaries of the social order of the old civilization. I was glad to find a similar idea expressed in a recent article by Guglielmo Ferrero.[1] The well-known historian draws a parallel between the crisis of today and that of the third century of our era brought about by the civil wars which followed the death of Alexander Severus and which led to the overthrow of the authority of the Roman Senate. Ancient civilization did not survive that crisis. Will ours have a better fate? Has it, or will it find, a principle on which to base a stable social order? This is the problem with which we are faced. It is

[1] Guglielmo Ferrero, "La Ruine de la Civilization Antique," *Revue des Deux Mondes,* September 15, 1919.

certain that one would look in vain for such a saving principle among the men who are responsible for the late war, as well as among those who would now plunge us into the abyss of universal Bolshevism.

The nightmare which started in 1914 is not yet over. The wine is drawn and we must drink. Nothing truer or sadder than this was ever said! Yes, we must drink the wine that others have drawn. We must drink it to the dregs!

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PART I

CHAPTER I

THE STAGES IN LENIN'S CAREER

IT is not my intention to give the reader a detailed biography of Lenin. A few facts of his life are necessary, however, to fulfill my larger purpose. I have taken them almost entirely from Bolshevist sources, especially from the volume which Zinoviev, the intimate friend and colleague of Lenin, has devoted to the present master of Russia.[1] The tone of beatified admiration which penetrates this book is very striking. So true is it that every Don Quixote has the Sancho Panza he deserves!

Let me begin by marking some of the crucial stages in Lenin's life, reserving for later chapters an account of the ideas of the Bolshevist leader and their evolution.

Vladimir Iliitch Oulianov, who has won world-wide notoriety for himself in the last few years under the pseudonym of "Lenin," was born on April 10, 1870, at Simbirsk. His father, a "state

[1] G. Zinoviev, *N. Lenin, W. J. Oulianov* (in Russian), Petrograd, 1919.

counselor," was superintendent of the public schools there. This school superintendency was a rather high position under the old Ministry of Education. Its incumbent had a right to the title of "Excellency" in Russia.

Lenin comes from the hereditary nobility. A legend, now widely circulated, even boasts of the antiquity and the riches of the Oulianov family. But Zinoviev says, perhaps as a sop to the democratic sensibilities of the public, that the father of Lenin was of peasant origin. It would in any event be very difficult to draw conclusions as to the "influence of environment and heredity" on the personality and actions of Lenin. His nature is a remarkable combination of the pretentious violence of the country squire with the elementary shrewdness of the peasant.

Lenin was still in school when a tragedy—one of the common tragedies of the old Revolutionary agitation—took place; and in it his elder brother played the leading rôle. At this time the *Narodnaia Volia*[2] party which was carrying the entire burden of the revolutionary struggle at the end of the reign of Alexander II, had been driven out of existence. This party organized a series of attempts on the Czar's life, the last of which, that of March 1 (March 13), 1881, was successful. A large number of the conspirators were hanged.

[2] "The Will of the People." The word *Volia* has a double meaning in Russian: *will*, but, in poetical language, also *liberty*.

Herman Lopatine,[3] the last of the party's leaders, was arrested and thrown into the Schlusselburg prison.

The unequal struggle between a handful of intellectuals and the most powerful autocracy in history seemed to be over. Brutal reaction exemplified in Alexander III and in Pobiedonostsev, his favorite adviser, triumphed. But the ideas which inspired the party, and especially the idea of fighting absolutism by terrorism, had not lost value in the eyes of the Russian intellectuals. The principal theorist of the *Narodnaia Volia* party, Nicholas Mikhailovsky (the famous publicist, sociologist, and literary critic), maintained, later on, that the terrorist attacks failed to realize their objective—the political freedom of Russia—not because they were pushed too far, but because they were not pushed far enough. The impression produced on the Russian mind by the assassination of Alexander II was very great. If Alexander III, who was much more reactionary than his father, had met with the same fate in spite of all the precautions of an improved police system, reaction might, quite possibly, not have been able to stand this second blow. That, at least, was the belief of the younger revolutionary set to which the student, Alexander Oulianov, Lenin's

[3] This famous revolutionist, the intimate friend of Marx, and admired by Herzen and Turguenev, died in 1919. In spite of the extreme poverty of his last days he disdainfully refused the pension offered him by the Bolshevist government which he hated.

elder brother, belonged. A new attempt, this time on the life of Alexander III, was prepared by a small group of young men of which he was the leader. It was to take place March 1 (March 13), 1887, on the sixth anniversary of the death of Alexander II. The Czar was to be bombed on the Nevsky Prospect. But the police, warned ahead of time, caught the terrorists red-handed with the bombs in their pockets; and successfully forestalled the attack. Alexander Oulianov and four of his comrades were hanged in the jail-yard of the Schlusselburg fortress. This tragedy, known as "the affair of the second First of March," gave the death-blow to the *Narodnaia Volia.*

This party held to theories known in the history of Russian thought as "*populist* ideas." The *Populist* (Narodniki) thought that Russia could escape the capitalistic stage of economic development which all the old European nations have been traversing. They thought that the people could pass directly, without intermediary phases, into a universal millennium; and they believed, more or less, in the presence of socialistic instincts in the Russian peasant. In their lofty idealism they taught that it was the duty of all Russian intellectuals to devote their lives and their knowledge to the cause of the unhappy masses whose age-long poverty had furnished the means for a small minority to attain a high degree of civilization. They did not subscribe to the

doctrine of economic materialism, which, indeed, Mikhailovsky subjected to a very remarkable critical analysis. Not accepting the theory of scientific socialism which expects the world to be freed by the working class alone, they did not believe that the *proletarization* of the peasant masses could contribute to the cause of universal progress.

At the beginning of the '90s this mixture of utopian and of sound ideas, for which so many Russians struggled and died, met with very violent opposition from the younger generation now being brought up on the theories of Karl Marx. A struggle started between Mikhailovsky and his school, on the one hand, and, on the other, the Marxians, whose main protagonists were Plekhanov, the leader of the Social-Democrats, and Struve, who now belongs to the Right of the Cadet Party. This famous controversy between Populists and Marxians is really not yet over. Even today two Russian socialist parties, the Social Laborites and the Revolutionary Socialists, follow the ideas of Nicholas Mikhailovsky (rejecting, of course, those which have been refuted by experience[4]); while Marxism remains the theoretical basis of the Social Democratic Party.

Alexander Oulianov belonged, so it seems, to

[4] Mikhailovsky himself realized that it was impossible for Russia to avoid the capitalistic stage of economic development.

the generation of Populists which was already familiar with the ideas of Karl Marx. Just before the attack of March 1, 1887, he was planning, with M. Koltzov, the publication of a "socialist library," the first pamphlet of which was to be an article of Marx's on Hegel's philosophy, translated by him.[5]

Vladimir Oulianov (Lenin), after finishing his course in the *lycée,* went to study law at the University of Kazan. At that time he frequented the small groups of students engaged in studying Populist literature; but he deserted this camp the moment he discovered Marx. Having been expelled from the University of Kazan for "taking part in agitation," he went to Petrograd where he passed the State examinations in law. This was the Russian equivalent for admission to the bar.

"The legal career," says Zinoviev, "did not appeal to Comrade Lenin. Vladimir Iliitch often spoke humorously[6] of his few days 'in the toga.' " He gave up legal practice almost immediately and became a "professional revolutionist." Russia is the only country left where revolution is a profession; and this "Russian trait" is of no slight importance in the history of modern Russia; a great many of the politicians who played an important part in the events of 1917–1919

[5] D. Koltzov, "The End of Narodnaia Volia and the beginnings of Social-Democracy. The '80s" (in Russian).

[6] Humor is nevertheless a quality which Lenin seems to lack entirely.

are revolutionists by profession and have never learned any other trade.

"When Lenin was expelled from the University of Kazan," M. Zinoviev tells us, "he came to Petrograd. Already inoculated with the ideas of Marx at Samara, he went through the capital on a hunt for Marxians. But he did not find any. The Populists were masters still; and the working class was just beginning to take an interest in politics. Young Comrade Lenin, however, in less than two years, organized the first groups of working men and gathered about him a small number of Marxian intellectuals."

In the early '90s Lenin took part in the formation of the "Union of Struggle for the Freedom of the Working Class." "Acting in the name of this organization, he managed our first strikes, and wrote his first simple and unassuming pamphlets—they were circulated in mimeograph copy—in which he voiced the economic needs of the workers of Petrograd. He spent day and night in the workers' tenements. The police persecuted him. He had only a small circle of friends. Almost all the self-styled 'revolutionary intellectuals' of the day greeted him coldly; for about this time the Populists were proscribing Marxians and burning the first Marxian works of Pelkhanov in which Lenin had studied."

One can see from this quotation the "passion for style" (as one of Gogol's characters said) which is characteristic of M. Zinoviev's talent and

which leads him to exaggerate the truth (exaggeration is also one of his accomplishments) by making the young Lenin a kind of unappreciated prophet persecuted by the wicked Populists, who, by implication are represented as acting in conjunction with the police!

In reality Lenin was doing in Petrograd just what hundreds of other men were doing at that time. He was attracting no particular surveillance from the authorities; and certainly "almost all the self-styled revolutionary intellectuals of the day" were paying very little attention to him. Let us remark in passing, that Lenin's imprisonment (to say nothing of Zinoviev's) was very short and does not bear comparison[7] with the real martyrdom suffered by many of these Populists who are today being treated as "reactionaries" by the Bolshevist rulers of Russia!

The persecution he is said to have undergone at the hands of the mysterious Populists who "burned the books of Plekhanov" is pure fiction. On the contrary, the period which Lenin himself called the "honeymoon of genuine Marxism" was approaching. "Marxian books," as he writes, "were appearing one after the other. Marxian newspapers and Marxian magazines were being founded; everybody was posing as a Marxian. Followers of Marx were being coddled and made much of, and publishers were rubbing their hands

[7] This is equally true of Trotsky, Lunatcharsky, Kamenev, and all other outstanding Bolshevist leaders.

in glee over the unheard-of vogue of Marxian books.'"[8]

Towards the end of the '90s, Lenin was arrested and sent into exile. From that time on he became an "emigré" and remained one, save for a few short interruptions, until 1917.

In 1901, together with Martov and Potressov, Lenin founded a magazine called *Iskra* (*The Spark*), which has played an important part in the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia. For two years later the Russian Social-Democratic Party, founded in 1898, split into two factions, Bolshevist and Menshevist. Lenin resigned editorship of *Iskra* (Menshevist) and founded the first Bolshevist organ, *Vpered* (*Forward*). In 1905 "the first, the historic, Congress which laid the foundations for the Communist Party of today" (the third Congress of the Social-Democratic Party) was held. This Congress was inspired and directed by Lenin. With the division of the party into two factions, he became the undisputed leader and the recognized mouthpiece of the Bolshevists.

In 1905 the first Russian revolution began. M. Zinoviev characterizes the part which Lenin played in it as "something immense, something decisive." He is quite right! Lenin *lost* the first Russian revolution.

The measures he was advocating at this time

[8] N. Lenin, the essay entitled "Que Faire?," in *Twelve Years* (in Russian, Vol. I, p. 195.

were as follows: boycott of the Duma; struggle against the "counter-revolution of the Cadets;" organization of an armed uprising for the establishment of a revolutionary and democratic dictatorship. We will have something more to say of these ideas, when we come to consider his pamphlet on "Two Tactics of Social Democracy." Lenin had a wrong impression of the respective strength of the two camps in this struggle; and the Menshevists speak of his error as a crime. But the events of 1917, though they took place under conditions far different from those of 1905, have shown that the Menshevists probably exaggerated the importance of the conservative forces in Russia.

From an *external* point of view, the rôle of Lenin in the revolution of 1905 was somewhat overshadowed. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies of Petrograd was founded and run by the Menshevists. Its first president was Khroustalev-Nossar, and its second, Trotsky. Lenin did not take any part in it.

"He was present," says M. Zinoviev, "at only one or two of the meetings of the Soviet of Petrograd in 1905. Comrade Lenin told us how he attended the session of the Soviet in the hall of the Free Economic Society, sitting in the gallery, invisible to the public, and for the first time watching the Soviet of Workers' Deputies of Petrograd in action. Comrade Lenin was living in Petrograd illegally, and the Party forbade him

to appear in public too openly. The official representative of our Central Committee at the Soviet was A. A. Bogdanov. When the tip was passed around that the Soviet was to be arrested, we forbade Comrade Lenin to go to that last historic session so that he would not be involved. He saw the Soviet only once or twice in 1905. But I think that even then, while he was looking down from the gallery of the Free Economic Society upon this original 'workers' parliament,' the potential power of the Soviets first dawned upon his mind.''

In 1907 Lenin went abroad again.

''Lenin was an exile twice,'' M. Zinoviev tells us. ''He spent several years abroad. Some other comrades, myself among them, shared his second period of exile. And whenever we were sad and dejected, especially toward the last, during the war, whenever we lost courage (those comrades who have been exiles like us know what it means not to hear a word of one's native tongue for years and years),[9] Comrade Lenin used to say to us: 'What are you fellows complaining for? Do you think you know what banishment means? Plekhanov, Axelrod—they knew real exile. They had to wait twenty-five years before seeing the first revolutionary workingman!'

[9] One is agreeably surprised to learn that Zinoviev suffered so much in the cafés of Geneva at not hearing his "Russian native tongue." But he naturally says this out of that same "passion for style" and for the benefit of comrades who have not been in exile; because those who were know very well that our exiles hear nothing but Russian.

"Vladimir Iliitch, indeed, suffered in exile like a caged lion. He could make no use of his great and inexhaustible energy; and he got along only by doing what Marx had done under similar circumstances. He spent fifteen hours a day in the library, and it is partly due to this that he is today one of the most learned Marxians, and on the whole one of the best read men of our age."

M. Zinoviev is undoubtedly an entirely competent judge on this point.

Lenin published several pamphlets abroad and supervised the publication of several Bolshevist papers. In 1912 he settled in Cracow in order to direct the Bolshevist movement in Russia at closer range. His devoted friend and most intimate collaborator in the movement in Russia was then Malinovsky, a Social-Democratic member of the Duma.

Malinovsky had been a secret agent of the Police Department. There were a few acts of burglary in this man's dark past with which the police were very familiar. They offered to overlook these minor sins if he would devote his talents to the secret service. He accepted. The Police had the effrontery to put him up as a candidate for the Duma. He was elected, thanks to the double support of the Bolshevists and the police. As president of the "parliamentary wing" of the Bolshevists, he made ultra-revolutionary speeches on all important occasions. Some of his speeches

were inspired or even dictated by Lenin, whom Malinovsky often went to see in Cracow. Others came from the pen of Bieletzky, the head of the Police Department, one of the most remarkable police officers in czarist Russia, which produced many excellent detectives. Malinovsky served his two masters at one and the same time. Thanks to him and to the writer Tchernomasov, another officer in the Police Department, who ran the *Pravda,* the official organ of the Bolshevists, Bieletzky not only had full knowledge of everything that went on at Bolshevist headquarters; but was able to exert a certain mysterious influence on revolutionist policy. Malinovsky had the full confidence of Lenin and Zinoviev. When Bourtzev accused a third well-known Bolshevist, Jitomirsky,[10] of being an *agent-provocateur* of the Police Department, Lenin sent Malinovsky to him to ask for proof of this accusation. At the same time Malinovsky was commissioned by Bieletsky to find out if possible from Bourtzev the sources of the latter's information on the *agents-provocateurs.* But Bourtzev, whether by happy chance or from instinctive distrust of the man, made no revelations to him in spite of all his efforts.[11]

[10] This accusation was absolutely justified; the documents which were found after the revolution show conclusively that Jitomirsky was an agent-provocateur.

[11] Vladimir Bourtzev, "Lenin and Malinovsky," No. 9-10, of *Struggling Russia,* May 17, 1919. The sources of Bourtzev's information on the Malinovsky affair are quite numerous. While he was imprisoned under the Bolshevist régime in the Peter-and-Paul Fortress, his companion in

In 1914, Djounkovsky, under-secretary of State of the Interior, found out that a secret agent of the police was a member of the Legislative Assembly. He regarded this situation as intolerable for the good name of the Imperial Government and demanded the man's immediate resignation from the Duma. Malinovsky obeyed and left the country. Nothing official was ever published about this matter; but this extraordinary case of treason was common talk in society and in the press. Lenin and Zinoviev supported him in spite of the open and formal accusations made against him by Bourtzev in December, 1916. They did not submit to the evidence till after the revolution, when the material proofs of Malinovsky's career as an *agent-provocateur* were published.[12]

Through Malinovsky and Tchernomasov, as well as sincere Bolshevists who often went to Cracow to get their instructions, as Catholics go to get theirs at the Vatican, Lenin had a very great influence on the Bolshevist movement in Russia. It is quite possible that the mysterious views of Bieletzky were absolutely in accord with the extremist policies of Lenin. I shall revert to this subject in a following chapter.

seclusion was Bieletsky, who was shot later on. The former head of the secret service had nothing more to hide. He confided to Bourtzev all the ramifications of that wonderful detective story. The methods Bieletsky used far outstrip the imagination of Conan Doyle.

[12] Malinovsky carried on Bolshevist propaganda in the Russian prison camps in Germany during the war. When he returned to Russia of his own accord after the Armistice he was shot with Lenin's sanction.

The war found Lenin in a small village of Galicia. He was first arrested by the local authorities; but the central government in Austria realized immediately that it was more advantageous to its cause to give complete freedom of action to a Russian of that breed. Lenin was released and left for Switzerland. His rôle in the propaganda which ended in the Conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, as well as in those Conferences themselves, is well known. He naturally belonged to the extreme left of the Zimmerwaldians. At Kienthal, with the support of Radek, he proposed sabotage and armed revolt to put an end to the war between the nations and to begin that between the classes.

In March, 1917, he went back to Russia by way of Germany in the famous "sealed car," which was not so tightly sealed as has been supposed. This is the sensational journey which attracted the attention of the whole world to Nikolai Lenin. Up to this time, in spite of his great authority in revolutionary circles, most of the Russian intellectuals had only the vaguest notions of his personality, to say nothing of the proletarian rank and file, to whom his name meant nothing at all. The word Bolshevist, which has since become so commonplace, was of very restricted circulation at that time. But those were days of patriotic intoxication over new-born freedom in Russia. People asked themselves in astonishment why a Russian should be going through Germany to get

back to his own country; why a revolutionist should be asking favors of the agents of an Imperial Chancellor; and especially why that Chancellor made haste to do the revolutionist the little favor which was asked. It can be said without exaggeration that Lenin owes his first notoriety to that episode of the "sealed car."

His first speech was not a success. It was made early in April (1917) at the Soldiers' and Workers' Council at Petrograd, where the Bolshevist program (which has since been "realized") was formulated. Among those who attacked him most violently were some of his future colleagues and associates. Steklov who is at present editor of *Isvestia,* the official organ of the Soviet government, said, for example, that Lenin's program was that of an anarchist; and that Lenin was booming his candidacy for the empty throne of Bakunin. It is well known, I suppose, that no worse insult could have been offered a Russian Social-Democrat than to call him an anarchist and compare him to Bakunin. Lenin's political position was therefore one of "splendid isolation."

Trotsky had not yet returned from America. For that matter he had not yet come over to Bolshevism.[13] During the war he (as well as M. Lunatcharsky, the People's Commissar of Education) had worked hard under the pseudonym of

[13] In the articles which he published in Switzerland, Lenin continually denounced the opportunistic, the "bourgeois," ideas of Trotzky.

"Antid Oto" for the *Kievskaia Mysl* and *Den,* which were neither defeatist, nor out-and-out pacifist, nor even Zimmerwaldian papers; and which were, in fact, later suppressed as counter-revolutionary by the government whose principal posts their former editors now adorn. Lenin's only faithful supporter at this time was Zinoviev; and their names were long inseparable. Not for some time still did the phrase "Lenin-Trotsky" come into usage, replacing that of "Lenin-Zinoviev." Only one of the tricks of a cruel and unjust fate has put the engaging figure of the President of the Commune of Petrograd somewhat in the shade.

Bolshevism was probably even less well known abroad. Karl Liebknecht in Germany and Alexandre Blanc in France were still a hundred leagues behind Lenin's program. As for the Shapiros, the Koritschners, the Bela Kuns, they had not peeped as yet, and were of no concern to anybody.

The rest of the story is familiar to everyone. From the day of his return to Russia (April 4, 1917) each step of Lenin's was honored with world-wide advertisement. The history of his doings in 1917–1919 cannot yet be written. Its stages —we are only speaking of stages here, remember— are: a violent campaign of disorganization carried on in Russia from the balcony of the Kchesinsky Palace and through the columns of *Pravda;* the unsuccessful revolt of July, 1917; his flight

into Finland; his return from Finland in October and his triumphal entry into the Smolny Institute at the head of the government of the People's Commissars; the armistice with Germany; the peace of Brest-Litovsk; experiments with communism; an unprecedented reign of terror; the Third International; the "dictatorship of the proletariat;" chaos; civil war; and the complete collapse of Russia.

These exploits were crowned with universal glory. In 1918 when the Bolshevists paraded in their Congresses the foreign, not to say exotic, delegations which came all the way from the Indies, from Afghanistan, from Zanzibar, from Kingdom Come, to greet in the name of the communist organizations of their countries the great Republic of the Soviets and Lenin, its Pope, they were the delight of the humorists and the joy of the cynics. But the joke was clearly on the humorists and on the cynics. For here we find the socialist parties in Italy and Norway resolutely taking sides with the Third International; and here is the Italian *Avanti* striking out and marketing a large medal of Lenin, "profile and full face," with the inscription *ex oriente lux*;[14] here are the newspapers speaking of a general strike in Italy to celebrate the birthday of the Russian dictator,[15] and Italian workers beginning to give their first-born sons his name! In Ger-

[14] *Avanti* (Milan), June, 1919.
[15] *Daily Mail*, April, 1919.

many a parliamentary idealist, Karl Liebknecht by name, who has called himself a Social-Democrat for twenty years, nevertheless gives up the party made famous by his father to become a "communist"—because Lenin prefers that name. And in France another parliamentary idealist, Jean Longuet, if you please, talks seriously of the "radiation of the Russian Revolution;"[16] while the official organ of the French Socialist Party goes into ecstacies over the "genius," the philosophic "originality," "the penetrative acumen," "the wonderful revolutionary spirit," "of the greatest statesman of the age!"[17] And an English writer, finally, speaking of the "page of history the Bolshevists are writing," dares to say that it will seem as "white to posterity as the snows of Russia!"[18]

Really as white as all that, Mr. Arthur Ransome?

[16] See Longuet's article in *Le Populaire*, June 20, 1919.
[17] *Humanité*, August 1 and September 2, 1919.
[18] Arthur Ransome, "For Russia, A Letter to Americans."

CHAPTER II

LENIN'S WRITINGS FROM 1894 TO 1904

LENIN began his literary career with a little propaganda pamphlet, addressed to the workers of Petrograd, and entitled "Workers' Compensation."[1] This fact would almost be sufficient by itself to show that he is not a "writer" though he has written a great deal. Lenin is always the political propagandist, whether he writes on workers' compensation or on Berkeley's philosophy. That is why he treats these two subjects in exactly the same manner; as indeed is very natural, since Berkeley interests him from the same point of view as workers' compensation. This is far from being a weak point in the curious personality with which we are dealing. The immortality that Lenin aspires to is not the immortality of letters. Natures, moreover, as single of purpose as his are very rarely found outside insane asylums; and this singleness of purpose—others might call it proneness to the *idée fixe*—carries with it a certain strength, as the case of Lenin shows.

[1] Need we advert that Zinoviev finds in this negligible pamphlet of the young Lenin the classic model of "Marxism made easy for the plain man?"

Lenin's literary and political activities may be classified under three headings: (1) the campaign against the Populists; (2) that against the legitimate Marxism of the Russian Moderates and the German Revisionists; (3) the split inside the Russian Social-Democratic Party.

The part played by Lenin in the struggle against the Populists was quite a minor one in spite of what is said of it by Zinoviev. This Boswell of Bolshevism, in describing the impression which Lenin's articles (published under the *nom-de-plume* of Toulin) are alleged to have made in those early days (1895), uses the following very up-to-date language: "Somebody, someone with brain and brawn, is stirring things up in that petty-bourgeois slough of despond. The stagnant waters are beginning to come to life. A new face is peering above the horizon—and there is a scowl of dissatisfaction on it. Something fresh and original is in the close air!"

All of which is simply another product of Zinoviev's "passion for style." In reality Lenin's articles attracted scarcely any attention at all. The debate between the Marxians and the Populists was confined to the fields of political economy and philosophy. Lenin did not know any political economy at that time; as for philosophy, he is ignorant of it still. Struve surpassed him in learning; Plekhanov in literary talent (that is not saying much); and they are the principal figures in the controversy with the Populists. The most

important article by Lenin, "The Economic Bases of Populism and the Critique of M. Struve"[2] (1895), in so far as it deals with Populist doctrine, contains very little that is new. It is more interesting in the light of what he says of Struve himself. I may observe, in this connection, that Struve occupies a unique position in Lenin's literary activities. He is, if I may say so, the Bolshevist leader's bugaboo. For a good quarter of a century Lenin has not missed an opportunity to attribute every imaginable crime to this, the principal, champion of Marxism in Russia. And not to be outdone Trotsky has also paid some attention to the same monster, whom he found worthy of a special pamphlet entitled: "Mr. Peter Struve in Politics."

In the autumn of 1894, before a small committee meeting in Petrograd, Lenin read an article against Struve (who was in the audience) entitled "The Reverberations of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature." That article already contained some of the Bolshevist ideas of today. Lenin emphasized the fact that in all the writings of Marx the transition from the present régime to the new appears as a sudden breakdown, a sudden collapse upon itself, of capitalism. He repeated, following an opinion of Sombart, the belief, so

[2] The book in question, by P. B. Struve, created a great sensation at the time. It is his *Critical Remarks on the Economic Development of Russia* (1894). This book, as well as that by Plekhanov, *On the Development of the Monistic Conception of History*, mark the beginning of the Marxist era in Russia.

characteristic of him, that "there is not a trace of ethics in the whole of Marxism." He protested against Struve's assertion that "Marx went too far in denying the necessity for the State." All this was in fact, as Lenin said later, "a warning to Struve from a revolutionary Social-Democrat."[3] On the other hand, Lenin agreed with Struve in affirming "the necessity, inevitableness and progressive character of Russian capitalism." This was a shaft aimed at the Populists and their utopias. It is interesting to note, however, that it is the now very Marxian Lenin who is trying to make Russia avoid the capitalistic stage, on which she had barely entered, and plunge directly into the blissful era of communism! To be sure, twenty-five years have passed since that time. But Lenin, nevertheless, now out-utopias the utopian Populists in believing that a country with a population of 150 millions, eighty per cent. of whom are peasants; a country with industry still undeveloped in spite of great natural resources, could pass through the capitalistic stage in twenty-five or thirty years and be ripe today for the communist régime!

Another Lenin article devoted somewhat later to Struve, who had at the time become one of the leaders of moderate Russian liberalism, is entitled: "The Persecutors of the Zemstvos and the Hannibals of Liberalism." This is probably

[3] N. Lenin, *Twelve Years* (in Russian), Vol. I, pp. iii, 76, 63, 62, 44.

the Bolshevist leader's best effort in political theory. Lenin accuses Struve of not pushing his democratic program far enough. He quotes the words of his liberal antagonist addressed to the rulers of Czarist Russia: "It is with sincere regret that we foresee the enormous losses in men and material to result from this absurdly conservative and aggressive policy which is as devoid of political insight as it is of moral justification." To these words, which the events of the present day have fully justified, Lenin adds: "What bottomless pit of doctrinairism is opened by this attitude toward the revolutionary upheaval! The author seems not to realize the great historical importance which a good dressing-down administered to the Government by the people of Russia would have." Here the real Lenin is speaking. Perhaps even today he is filled with the desire to give the capitalistic régime a good "dressing-down!" Unfortunately in these experiments in social pedagogy, one never knows, after the thrashing is over, which side held the whip end, which side gives, and which takes!

Moreover, there was no question at that moment of attacking the capitalistic system. Lenin, quite to the contrary, was talking with a great deal of conviction of an alliance with liberalism. "If the liberals," he said, "can manage to organize in an underground party, we will welcome the development of political self-consciousness in the

controlling classes; we will support their demands; we will try to make the policy of the Liberals and that of the Social-Democrats supplement each other. But even if, as is more than likely, they are unable to get together in this way, we will not abandon the Liberals, but will try to strengthen our union with some of them, keep them posted on our own plans, support them by denouncing in the labor press all the ignominies of the government and the local authorities, and urge them to support the revolutionists. Such an exchange of services between Liberals and Social-Democrats is actually taking place at present; but it must be extended and made more efficient. We have freed ourselves from the illusions of anarchism and Populist socialism, from disregard for politics, from faith in the development *sui generis* of Russia, from the conviction that the people are ready for revolution, from the theory of 'participation in Power,' and from the notion that a few heroic intellectuals can win against Absolutism."

This was written in 1901. Whatever political changes have taken place since then, one cannot read these lines *in a work by Lenin* without blank astonishment! "Exchange of services between Liberals and Social-Democrats!" . . . Many Liberals in 1918–1919 paid with their lives or their liberty for the attention which Lenin and his colleagues on the Extraordinary Commission paid them. Others, like Struve, had to flee to escape

from the Bolshevist executioners.[4] It is even more interesting to hear Lenin call the idea that the people are ready for revolution "a dangerous illusion."

Lenin made a great name for himself in Social-Democratic circles with the pamphlet he published abroad in 1897: "The Problems of the Russian Social-Democrats," to which Axelrod, one of the founders of the party, but today a rabid adversary of the People's Commissars and of their leader in particular,[5] wrote a flattering preface. There were three editions of this pamphlet. But the reasons for its success are quite beyond our comprehension. It is very badly written (as most of Lenin's articles are) and contains nothing but commonplaces.

The works of Lenin on political economy are his soundest efforts. He has, in general, no literary talent. His political pamphlets are of scant importance; but undoubtedly he has read extensively in the field of economic science. This is the subject where he is best equipped. His principal economic works are *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (written to prove that Rus-

[4] We may recall, in this connection, that Struve formerly had occasion to render valuable personal services to Lenin. Zinoviev speaks of them in his biography of his master: "Struve was Lenin's friend and rendered inestimable services to him as well as to the Social Democracy of that time." I have heard the same thing from Struve himself.

[5] "Axelrod," says Zinoviev indignantly, "did nothing but tell stories to all who would listen to him, that Lenin would be a second Netchaiev; that in his struggle against the 'old fogeys' he would be guided solely by considerations of personal ambition, etc."

sia has already entered on a capitalistic stage); and a series of articles on the Russian agrarian question.

Needless to say that on the agrarian matter, Lenin has always been one of the most rabid anti-revisionists; and he has, moreover, changed position many times. In his pamphlet, "The Needs of the Village"[6] for instance, he declared himself in favor of giving absolute liberty to the peasant to do what he wishes with his land, selling it if he desires. With his unquestioned mastery of the arts of the demagogue he there held up his Social-revolutionist adversaries (who stood for the nationalization of landed property) to the scorn of the laborers in the villages as despotic trustees bent on denying the peasants the right to dispose of their property freely. But shortly afterwards he broke radically with this theory of *laissez faire,* and adopted the doctrine of land nationalization. It was just as easy for him to write another pamphlet then to prove the opposite of what he had demonstrated a few years before. Since 1905, accordingly, he has been quite uninterested in the right of the peasant to sell his piece of land; he demands support, instead, for the "aspiration of the revolutionary peasantry to abolish private proprietorship in land."[7]

[6] N. Lenin, "The Needs of the Village. An Open Letter to the Rural Poor" (in Russian), Petrograd, 1905.

[7] N. Lenin, "The Revision of the Agrarian Program of the Labor Party" (in Russian), Petrograd, 1906, p. 31.

In 1898 the first congress of the Social-Democrats, which founded the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia, took place. A program was outlined there which exaggerated the importance of a purely economic tactic on the part of the proletariat. Against this movement which came to be termed *economism,* Lenin immediately took the field. Early in 1902 he published, abroad, his famous pamphlet *"Que Faire?,"* which started a very violent controversy and which remained the best known of his writings down to 1917. In it Lenin proposes the creation of a corps of *professional revolutionists* to make a business of revolution and of the art of fighting the secret police.

Lenin here gives an accurate and picturesque description of the revolutionary movement of the '90's. "Because of our primitive methods," he says, "we have lowered the prestige of the revolutionist in Russia. Weak and hesitant in matters of theory, cramped in his views, seeking in the apathy of the masses an alibi to justify his own weakness, more like the secretary of a trade union than a tribune of the people, incapable of those grand and audacious resorts which inspire even one's adversaries with respect, inexperienced and awkward in his professional technique—the art of fighting the secret service—our revolutionist is not a revolutionist at all: he is nothing

but a pathetic *koustar,* a 'dub', a poor devil living by a trade he has never learned."

"Our militants will doubtless find me severe in this. They must forgive me, for I mean to be just as severe toward myself. I too am one of those *koustars.* I have been working in a group of people who set out to do great things—and we, who are members of that group, blush with shame at the thought that we also are only *koustars,* and that too at a time, of all times in our history, when one might truly paraphrase the well-known saw: 'Give us organization, and we will overturn Russia'! But the more keenly I feel that shame, the more bitter I am against those false Social Democrats who dishonor the name of revolutionist by their sermons, and who seem not to realize that it is our duty not to degrade the revolutionist to the status of the *koustar,* but to raise the *koustar* to the dignity of the revolutionist!"

No one can deny that Lenin managed to make himself a very finished model of the professional soap-boxer. Those who saw with their own eyes the fruits of agitation which he carried on in 1917 from the balconies of the Hotel Kchessinsky and through the columns of the *Pravda,* those who saw the Russian army fall to pieces bit by bit and the Russian population lose its nerve from day to day under the same agitation, will do full justice to

the surpassing demagogy, the rare professional talent of this man Lenin.

But our admiration must stop right there. When the October revolution brought victory to the Bolshevists, Lenin, the accomplished agitator, became the *koustar* again, and started the era of *koustar,* or "dub," socialism. There were very few professional revolutionists in his camp. The rank-and-file of his followers was made up of a small number of sincere — however ignorant — communists lost in a mass of adventurers of every sort, fishers, as the French say, in muddy waters, common police-court criminals. The amateurs, the *koustars,* of socialism, and professional crooks, formed the legions of our Bolshevist pretorians.

At the second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party in August, 1903, the split between the Menshevists and the Bolshevists was foreshadowed.[8] The dissension hinged, at that time, on technical questions of organization. Today the divergence between Bolshevist and Menshevist is far more fundamental. Many men who were then the adversaries of Lenin are among his closest associates now—Trotsky, for a conspicuous example. On the other hand, Plekhanov, who, without joining the Bolshevists in 1903, had supported Lenin in many points, later became his

[8] The latter obtained the majority of votes at the Congress; and it is from that fact that this well-known word is derived: Bolshevist meant "one who voted with the majority."

rabid antagonist. When one reads the accounts of the second Congress and the political pamphlets and editorials of the period, it is hard to grasp the connection between the discussions of that time and those of today. Such a connection nevertheless exists; but it is a matter of niceties of scant interest to the general reader. The discussions, of course, had a very sectarian, a very Talmudic, character. Two sessions of the Congress, to illustrate, were devoted to a debate on the first article of the constitution of the Party. Lenin wanted it stated in the following terms: "Whoever endorses the Party platform and supports the Party both with financial contributions and with regular personal service *in* one of its organizations is considered a member of the Party."

Martov, the leader of the Menshevists, on the other hand, demanded the following formula: "Whoever subscribes to the Party platform, supports the Party with financial contributions and with regular personal service *under* one of its organizations is considered a member of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia."

The difference between *in* and *under* is what Lenin, Plekhanov, Martov, Trotsky, Axelrod, Martynod, Akimov, Libet, Popov, Broucker, and company talked about for two days, and wrote about for two years afterwards. The mind wearily

reverts to some Œcumenical Council in Constantinople: Is the Son *similar* (*opnoloudros*) to the Father, or is He identical (*opnopoudios*)? Should God the Father be called Creator, or Creator of Heaven and Earth? If a good Social-Democrat still maintains that the difference between the formulæ of Lenin and Martov really had a great practical importance, Gregory and Nectarius said the same of their hair-splitting at Constantinople.

In short, all the jawing at the Second Congress, simmered down, according to Lenin, to a struggle between revolutionary Social-Democrats, who obtained a majority and of whom he was the leader and the Opportunist elements, "less firmly grounded" (still according to Lenin) "in theory and principles." Martov and several others, on the other hand, saw a "revolt against Leninism" in these arid debates.

CHAPTER III

LENIN'S IDEAS AND POLICIES DURING THE FIRST RUSSIAN REVOLUTION (1905-1906)

IN May, 1905, the third Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, or to be more exact, the first Bolshevist Congress (for the Bolshevists alone took part in it), was held in London. The Menshevists met simultaneously in Geneva. The split between the two branches of the Party was wider than ever because of the problems which came up in the first Russian revolution. Lenin, whose influence dominated the Congress of London, wrote a book on this schism which is most interesting on the background of what he is saying and doing today.[1]

The main ideas of the Congress of London, that is to say of Lenin, may be reduced to this:

"The immediate interests of the proletariat, as well as the exigencies of its struggle for the final objectives of socialism, demand the most complete political freedom; hence the substitution of a democratic republic for absolutism.

[1] N. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* (in Russian), Geneva, 1905.

"The establishment of a democratic republic in Russia is possible only as the result of a victorious uprising of the people whose organ must be the provisional revolutionary government, which is alone capable of assuring free elections and of convoking, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage with the secret ballot, a Constituent Assembly expressing the real will of the people."[2]

These are the very words of the man, who, thirteen years later, brutally dissolved the Constituent Assembly, convoked on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage with secret ballot; and who set up in Russia that "full freedom of elections" with which everybody is familiar!

There are things in Lenin's pamphlet, however, which seem still more incredible today.

"The Marxians," he wrote, "are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does that mean? It means that those democratic transformations in the political régime, and those economic and social changes which have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves involve the overthrow of capitalism and of bourgeois rule; but on the contrary will clear the ground for the first time for an extensive and rapid development of capitalism which will be European and not Asiatic; and for the first

[2] The resolution of the Congress of London (May, 1905).

time will make possible the domination of the bourgeoisie as a class."[3]

"It is reactionary to look for the salvation of the laboring class elsewhere than in the gradual development of capitalism. In countries like Russia, the working classes suffer less from capitalism than from lack of a well-developed capitalism. The working class is therefore intensely interested in the greatest, freest, and most rapid development of capitalism. Hence the bourgeois revolution is extremely advantageous to the proletariat. The bourgeois revolution is absolutely necessary in the interests of the proletariat."[4]

From this Lenin drew the following practical conclusions:

"In setting the realization of the minimum-program as the goal of the provisional revolutionary government, the resolution [of the Congress of London] rejects *eo ipso* the foolish and semi-anarchistic idea of the immediate realization of our maximum-program and of the conquest of power with a view to a socialist revolution. The present state of economic development in Russia (an objective condition), and that of the class-consciousness and organization of the proletarian masses (a subjective condition indissolubly bound up with the former), make the absolute and imme-

[3] N. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social Democracy," in *Twelve Years*, Vol. I, p. 410.
[4] Ibid., p. 411.

diate liberation of the working class impossible. Only the most ignorant people can fail to perceive the bourgeois character of the present democratic revolution; only the most naïve optimists can forget that the laboring masses still know very little about the aims of socialism and the methods whereby socialism may be attained.'"[5]

It must be supposed, therefore, that the economic development of Russia (the objective condition), and the socialistic education of the proletarian masses (the subjective condition indissolubly bound up with the former), have made miraculous progress since 1905! Though it is hard to judge the "subjective condition"—since such a judgment might itself be accused of "subjectivism"—we have exact data on the "objective condition." The war and the revolution have seriously impeded the economic development of Russia.[6] Russian industry has been partly destroyed and partly paralyzed. Under these circumstances this comparison of Lenin's ideas in 1905-1906 with his policies in 1917-1918 is very edifying.

It must not be thought, however, that Lenin's program in 1905 was a rational and consistent one. He was already talking of the "revolutionary and democratic dictatorship of proletariat and peasantry." How this idea could have been compatible with that of the Constituent Assembly

[5] N. Lenin, Ibid., p. 397.
[6] See Raoul Labry's book on Bolshevist Industry.

and political liberties has been and remains his secret, a secret which no one but the Bolshevists have been able to fathom. But the following may help:

"It will, of course, be a democratic and not a socialistic dictatorship," wrote Lenin. "It will not be able to touch the foundations of capitalism (without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary development). It will, at the very best, be able to bring about a new and fundamental re-distribution of landed property to the advantage of the peasants; to establish consistent and complete democracy as a preliminary to the setting up of a republic;[7] to remove not only from rural but from factory life all Asiatic and despotic features; to start seriously improving the condition of the workingman and his standard of living; and, *last but not least,* to spread the revolutionary conflagration over Europe as a whole. But even such a victory would not make our bourgeois revolution a socialist revolution."[8]

The goal which Lenin proposed in 1905 for his "revolutionary and democratic dictatorship" (except for the *last but not least* part of it) was surpassed in 1917 by the Provisional Government. That Government introduced the eight-hour day

[7] This formula was meaningless, because it is obvious that the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship" could only have been established *after* the downfall of the Monarchical régime.

[8] N. Lenin, Ibid., p. 416.

and government control of industry (something far better than Lenin's modest formula of "improving the condition of the workingman and his standard of living"). It put an end to "all Asiatic and despotic features in Russian life" (but not for long, however, as the Bolshevists have introduced in their stead features which were known neither to the old régime nor to Asia)! A fundamental agrarian reform [9] and a most radically democratic constitution were accepted by everyone in advance; and the Constituent Assembly would surely have voted for them without resort to a dictatorship. Hence the program of the Provisional Government which Lenin criticized so severely went much further than the one he advocated in 1905 for the "revolutionary democratic dictatorship."

It is true that "at the very best" this dictatorship might spread the revolutionary conflagration over Europe as a whole. Here we find an abrupt leap in the thinking of this agile intellectual. "We must not fear a decisive victory for social democracy in the democratic revolution of peasants and workingmen," said Lenin; "for such a victory would enable us [10] to arouse all Europe; and when the socialist proletariat of the West has over-

[9] Lenin's agrarian program was very modest at that time. He later realized that it was "far too limited."

[10] It is obvious here that it is no longer a question of "at the very best." Lenin is very positive in his predictions.

thrown its bourgeoisie, it will in turn help us to bring about a socialistic revolution." Here Lenin has completely forgotten all that he himself said above on the necessity of a general and free development of capitalism in Russia, scrapping both the objective and the subjective condition on which he has been insisting. The idea of an immediate socialist revolution which at that time was "foolish," "semi-anarchistic" and above all "reactionary," suddenly becomes realizable provided the proletariat of Europe come to Russia's rescue. This is an expression of that "Messianic expectation" which has always been Article I in the Bolshevist creed, as we can still see today. Are things going badly in Russia? Karl Liebknecht will help us. Is Karl Liebknecht no more? Very well, Bela Kuhn will do it! And so on!

Lenin, as a good Marxist, thought at that time that industrial worker and peasant could act together only so long as the struggle against reaction lasted. "But," he said, "the time will come when the struggle against absolutism will be over. Then it will be ridiculous to rely on a union of proletariat and peasantry—on a democratic dictatorship, in short. It will then be time to consider a socialistic dictatorship of the proletariat."[11]

Now the struggle against absolutism is over; and, in spite of that, proletariat and peasantry

[11] N. Lenin, Ibid., p. 436.

seem to be acting together just the same. The Commissars of the People, despised by all the peasants and a majority of the industrial workers, call themselves the "Government of Workers and Peasants." The ingenious Bolshevist theorists first tried to entice to their cause deputies from the *batraks* (agricultural laborers without land); then committees of the *biedniaki* (indigent paupers); and finally committees of *sredniaki* (moderately poor); now they are talking of peasants pure and simple. And that unity of purpose between peasant and industrial worker, that unity which it was "ridiculous to speak of" in 1905, still exists. Needless to say, this unity is a reaction to the personality of Lenin. For with "scientific socialism" all things are possible!

There is a particularly interesting point in this same article of Lenin's (the one written in 1905), where he deals with the question of terrorism:

"If the revolution wins a decisive victory," said Lenin, "we will settle our reckoning with absolutism by using the methods of the Jacobins; or, if you prefer, we will settle it in what the French Revolution called, a 'plebeian manner.' The whole of the French Terror, according to Marx (*Nachlass,* Vol. III, p. 211), was only the 'plebeian' method of settling accounts with the enemies of the bourgeoisie—absolutism and feudalism. Are those who frightened the Social-Democratic work-

ers of Russia with the ghost of Jacobinism during the Democratic Revolution familiar with these words of Marx?"

"The Bolshevists, the Jacobins of the Social-Democracy of today, *expect the public, that is to say, the proletariat and the peasantry, to settle accounts* [12] *with the monarchy and the aristocracy in this 'plebeian' manner, pitilessly annihilating, that is, all enemies of liberty,* forcibly repressing their propaganda, and refusing the slightest concession to the accursed heritage of serfdom, Asiaticism, and outrage to humanity."[13]

This shows the disingenuousness of Bolshevist assertions today, to the effect that their reign of terror was a reply to the intervention of Entente imperialism, to the action of the Revolutionary Socialists, and to the attacks of the Czecho-Slovaks.[14]

The Bolshevist Terror was, in reality, at least to a certain extent, the realization of a project formulated by Lenin fifteen years ago. The acts of the Extraordinary Commission, the shootings and massacres of hostages, the assassination of the Czarevitch and of the daughters of Nicholas

[12] The Russian expression is somewhat stronger than "settle accounts."

[13] N. Lenin, ibid., pp. 417 to 418.

[14] This assertion was recently repeated by Lenin himself to a United Press correspondent: "Terrorism," he said, "was the answer of the proletariat to the action of the bourgoisie which was in conspiracy with the capitalists of Germany, America. Japan and France (*Humanité*, August 6, 1919).

II, the wholesale execution of nobles and their families, the cruelties and tortures in the prisons—all were part of the program of "settling accounts" in what Lenin terms the Jacobin or "plebeian" manner which he outlined in 1905. And this malice aforethought is all the more cynical from its skulking under cover of "respect for humanity" and of protest against "Asiaticism!"

It is strange, and yet rather characteristic of the old régime that the book from which I take this quotation appeared openly in Poland in 1908, while Stolypin was in power—and Stolypin was the demi-god of all Russian reactionaries. In any free state, failure to suppress such a book might have been quite natural. But the Russia of Stolypin was not a free state. The novelist Merejkovsky was prosecuted for not having treated the Emperor Alexander I (who died in 1825!) with sufficient respect in one of his novels.[15] The famous author, Korolenko, was brought to trial for publishing in his magazine (*Rousskoie Bogatstvo*) a posthumous work of Leo Tolstoi, *The Legend of Fedor Kousmitch,* in which Catharine II, if you please, is represented in a manner that is hardly flattering. The followers of Tolstoi were considered dangerous and were persecuted, exiled, and

[15] That charge was false, moreover, as M. Merejkovsky proved in his speech to the court in his own defense.

thrown into prison. The books of Tolstoi himself were burned.

Now one is inclined to ask: Why this official indulgence[16] toward a book which contained a direct appeal for an armed uprising and a reign of terror? Was it pure stupidity on the part of the Czar's government? That is quite possible—stupidity was always one of the chief virtues of the old order in Russia! But there was probably a better reason in this case. We know, from abundant evidence, that the Police Department deliberately allowed a Bolshevist paper to be published in Petrograd. To be sure, its editor was an *agent provocateur;* but the articles printed were none the less Bolshevistic, ultra-Bolshevistic indeed. At the same time they persecuted the magazines and newspapers of the Moderates; imposing heavy fines, and sending their editors to prison for years.

It is very possible that the Police Department wanted to repeat the experiment of an armed uprising like that of 1905 in Moscow. That was a great triumph for the police. Organized by the Bolshevists under the direction of their Congress of London (that is to say of Lenin), this outbreak gave the Government of the Czar the opportunity

[16] I am told that the sale of the volume containing Lenin's article was later suppressed, but without further legal consequences. I bought it at a book-store in Petrograd. The very fact that dealers were able to publish it and sell a good number of copies is significant enough.

to exterminate all the forces of the revolution in a short decisive struggle of a few days. It is possible that the Police Department was preparing another experiment of the same kind and was aiding Bolshevist propaganda with this end in view.

Plekhanov and many others considered Lenin's tactics in 1905 a crime against the revolution; but, it is well to remember that both sides staked everything on the result. Lenin has that quality which all strategists value: he never exaggerates the strength of his adversaries. "Rashness succeeds as often as it loses; its chances in life are even," said Napoleon, who knew what he was talking about. Both the Police Department and Lenin were "taking chances"—an armed outbreak could ruin the cause of revolution, as was the case in 1905; but it might also be the finish of the monarchy, as proved to be the case in 1917!

CHAPTER IV

THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF LENIN

AFTER the failure of the first Russian revolution, Marxian thought in Russia underwent a crisis. Many Social-Democrats, Bolshevist as well as non-Bolshevist, felt the need of giving their socialistic ideas a philosophic basis other than that of the materialism of Engels, Mehring, Lafargue or Plekhanov. A series of articles on philosophy was written by Social-Democrats, such as Lunatcharsky, Basarov, Bogdenov, Iuchkevich and others.

"At this time," says Zinoviev, "a literary *maraude,* an unheard-of literary disintegration began.[1] They wanted to sell the workers the rotten ideas of bourgeois philosophy under the label of Marxism."

This phenomenon immediately attracted the angry attention of Lenin, who saw a danger in it. He had never gone into philosophy up to that time and did not think in general that "philosophic" problems which had not been solved by

[1] Among the "they" were M. Lunatcharsky, to-day the colleague of Lenin and Zinoviev in the Council of the People's Commissars. Hence this discreet formula: *they wanted.*

Marx and Engels could exist for a good Social-Democrat! The effrontery of deserters from materialism made him furious. These Social-Democrats who were rising in revolt—a *révolte à genoux* to be sure—against the dialectic materialism of Marx and Engels had to be brought to their senses!

Lenin shut himself up in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and started to study bourgeois philosophy. I heard one of his friends say that he learned (!) bourgeois philosophy in six weeks; but according to Zinoviev, Lenin gave two years of his life to this subject. At any rate, he wrote an extensive book, which appeared in 1908 and which Zinoviev glorifies as a "great theoretical work and an important contribution to philosophy, which lays the foundation for Communism."

This work is indeed extremely curious, though mainly from a psychological—not to say pathological—point of view. Lenin's manner of treating the problems of philosophy is absolutely astounding. The works of the most abstract philosophers are treated from the point of view of Bolshevism so as to confound its adversaries. The poor philosophers of the past would be astonished to learn what Lenin was able to find in their doctrines.

Lenin quotes a very inoffensive article by Blei ("Metaphysics in Political Economy" in the

Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie) and accompanies his quotation with this remark: "The reader is probably annoyed at our quoting at such length this gibberish of incredible platitude, this pseudo-scientific nonsense served up in the terminology of Avenarius. But, as the German proverb has it, 'He who would understand the enemy must visit the enemy's country'; and the philosophic review of Avenarius is a real enemy country for Marxians."

It is therefore clear that Lenin was interested in philosophy exactly as an enemy is interested in an enemy. He "studied"—that is to say, he glanced through—a pile of books on philosophy, for the same reason that German officers studied—and more seriously—the Russian language.

The style of the quotation just given is that of Lenin's whole book. I will pick out a few examples at random:

"In philosophy the kiss of Wilhelm Schuppe is not worth any more than that of Peter Struve or of Menchikov[2] in politics" (p. 71). . . . "Mach approaches Marxism here as Bismarck approached the labor movement, or as Archbishop Evlogy[3] approached democracy" . . . (p. 155). "Lunatcharsky says:[4] 'A wonderful page in religious

[2] A Russian reactionary publicist recently shot by the Bolshevists.

[3] A prelate known for his reactionary views.

[4] Lenin says (p. 400), with a horror worthy of Homais, that "comrade Lunatcharsky is beginning to talk of religion."

economy: I say this at the risk of making an irreligious reader laugh.' Whatever your good intentions may be, comrade Lunatcharsky, your coquetteries with religion only call forth a smile" (p. 217). "And here are similar German Menchikovs [he is referring to Schubert-Soldern], obscurantists as pure as Renouvier, all living in concubinage with the empirocriticists" (p. 249). . . . "That the author of such a remark [Henri Poincaré] may be an eminent natural philosopher we can readily admit. But it cannot be denied that only a Iuchevitch could take him seriously as a philosopher. . . . You are wrong, Monsieur Poincaré; your works prove that there are people in existence who can think only of things that have no sense" (pp. 350-351). . . . "I will confine myself to showing up the article of our eminent Black-Band philosopher, Lopatin.[5] . . . The idealist *true-Russian* philosopher, Lopatin, is to the contemporary idealists of Europe what the Alliance of Russian People is to the reactionary parties of the West" (p. 360). "Hermann Kohen . . . goes so far as to preach the introduction

Whatever value may be attached to the researches of Lunatcharsky on "religious economy," it is astonishing that Lenin should have entrusted the portfolio of education to such a dangerous clerical. It is at least just as unwise as entrusting foreign affairs to Trotsky, whom Lenin called a "bourgeois opportunist" in 1915.

[5] Professor Lopatin is a philosopher as well-known in Russia as Schuppe, Schubert-Soldern, Mach and Kohen in Germany. The terms Black-Bands, Real-Russian and Alliance of the Russian People were given to men and organizations of extreme and brutal reaction at the time of Nicholas II.

of higher mathematics into the *lycées* in order to fill the students with the spirit of idealism which our materialistic era deprives them of. . . . This is certainly the wild dream of a reactionary. . . . But it is extremely interesting . . . to see by what skillful means the representatives of the educated bourgeoisie try to conserve, or find a small place for, the fideism[6] engendered in the masses by the ignorance, the servitude, and the foolish savagery of capitalistic contradictions" (p. 371). . . . "The Russian natural philosopher, Chwolson, went to Germany to publish a cowardly *Black-Band*[7] pamphlet against Haeckel" (p. 422).

One's emotions on reading things like this in a "philosophical work" are varied enough. For my part, they fill me chiefly with terror at the thought that this man, who considers himself an apostle of the future and who in reality has the psychology of a monk of the Middle Ages, is today the absolute master of a hundred million people!

It would be childish to criticize Lenin's "system of philosophy." Moreover, he does not claim any originality in this realm and always emphasizes

[6] Fideism," Lenin says, "is the doctrine which gives faith the place of knowledge, or which, in general, attributes a certain importance to faith." Lenin has no idea that he is himself one of the most successful "fideists."

[7] Chwolson, professor of Physics at the University of Petrograd, had a discussion with Ernest Haeckel on questions of scientific philosophy which had no relation to politics.

the fact that he subscribes wholly to the doctrine of "dialectic materialism."[8]

The Bible of this doctrine is not even the writings of Marx, but Engel's "Anti-Dühring" (*Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwalzung in der Wissenschaft*) which Lenin considers the first and last word of human wisdom. It is *ad majorem gloriam* of the doctrine of Bolshevised "dialectic materialism" that he denounces the crimes of philosophers such as Hume, Kant, Berkeley, Avenarius, or Renouvier, and criticizes the natural philosophers: "the German Mach, the French Henri Poincaré, the Belgian[9] Duhem" (p. 365) as well as the traitors and deserters of Russian materialism.

The general tenor of his elucubrations is as follows:

Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Mach, Poincaré and others, as good servants of the bourgeoisie, have expounded doctrines repellant to common sense in order to keep the proletariat enslaved. Lenin enthusiastically quotes a tirade against these philosophers which has immortalized its author, Lafargue, "a pupil of Engels" (p. 237):

[8] We must do Lenin this much justice: he has not the mania for keeping "up to the minute," which is the rage in the camp of his collaborators and suits them so well. The Bolshevists hardly know how to read and write; but they are cubists in art, futurists in literature, and would be insulted if one accused them of being *vieux jeu* in anything whatsoever.

[9] For the sake of symmetry probably Lenin calls the famous philosopher of Bordeaux a Belgian.

"The workingman who eats sausages and gets five francs a day knows, and knows very well, first that his employer is cheating him, and second that he is eating pork; or he knows first that his employer is a robber and second that sausages are nourishing and have a pleasant taste. But not at all, says a bourgeois sophist named Pierson, Hume, or Kant, as you will: the workingman's opinion on that subject is his personal opinion, something purely subjective; in other words he would have been equally right in thinking that the employer is his benefactor and that sausages are hashed leather; for he cannot know the thing in itself."

There are, however, sophists and sophists. Lenin has some indulgence for Kant, whom he takes for a kind of intermediary between the idealists and the materialists. "When Kant admits that something which is outside of us (a certain *thing in itself*) corresponds to our ideas, he is a materialist. But when Kant declares that this *thing in itself* is inconceivable and transcendent, he is an idealist." Kant would therefore be a kind of bourgeois "center," like the Cadet Party (the comparison is Lenin's, of course): "The followers of Mach criticize him from the right, we criticize him from the left" (p. 231). Mach is a much more wicked sophist in Lenin's eyes. "The philosophy of the learned Mach is to science what

the kiss [10] of the Christian Judas was to Christ." Lenin does not treat his party colleagues any better when they show some indulgence for "fideist" doctrines.

Hence he gives terrible warning to Lunatcharsky who "stooped to disgraceful assertions (p. 418) of a fideism which, if he were frank and consistent, would place its author on the level of a Peter Struve." (Lenin, as I said before, overlooked no opportunity for abusing Struve.)

This brief outline of Lenin's philosophy would not be complete without quoting some pearls from another book on "philosophy" which appeared almost at the same time as Lenin's and which is written in very much the same spirit by one of his comrades in the Bolshevist Party, Chouliatikov.[11] This book is even more interesting than Lenin's own work: in the first place it is more calm, more academic. Lenin scolds, rages and thunders against the bourgeois philosophers. In Chouliatikov's book there is not a single vulgar word: quietly and methodically he denounces the great philosophers, and discards them one and all with scientific serenity. Lenin deals chiefly with modern philosophy while Chouliatikov goes all the way back to Descartes (and after all why should

[10] Play on the word "kiss" is one of Lenin's favorite literary embellishments.

[11] V. Chouliatikov, *The Justification of Capitalism in Western European Philosophy, From Descartes to Mach* (in Russian), Moscow, 1908.

this old reactionary be handled with gloves?). Moreover, Chouliatikov is, if possible, even more consistent than Lenin, which adds to the pathological interest of his book. The ideas and methods of the two authors, however, are very nearly alike.

"It is generally thought," Chouliatikov begins, "that philosophy is a very innocent thing. People commonly fail to see in it a weapon to be used against the working class. That is the most naïve and deplorable mistake that can be made. Philosophy is no lucky exception; on the sacred 'heights of speculation' the bourgeoisie remains, as elsewhere, ever true to itself. It speaks of nothing but its own immediate gains and the tendencies of its own class; but it talks a very special language and one which is hard to make head or tail of. Without exception all the terms and philosophic formulæ with which it operates—all its 'elements,' 'ideas,' 'conceptions,' 'presentations,' 'senses,' 'absolutes,' 'things in themselves,' 'phenomena,' 'modes,' 'attributes,' 'subjects,' 'objects,' 'souls,' 'material elements,' 'forces,' and 'energies'—help it to identify and distinguish social classes, groups, and their reciprocal relations" (p. 6). They are so many "conventional signs."

Just as many officers spend years deciphering the code signals of the enemy, Chouliatikov set himself the task of learning the code of bourgeois

philosophy and of bringing to light the secrets by means of which the philosophers, in the pay of capital, have been able to cheat the proletariat for centuries. And his book does indeed reveal the most carefully guarded mysteries of bourgeois philosophy.

The proletariat can learn, for example, that "according to the system of Descartes, the world is organized like a manufacturing enterprise" and that "the Cartesian concept of man is a reproduction of the organization of a factory" (p. 27). The conception of time with the same philosopher is the result of an "innovation brought in by industry," of which, as the author confides, some idea can be had from the description given in the 16th century by a certain Meudorger of the typographical plant of the Kobergers where the workers had to start working at a "fixed hour" (p. 30). Spinoza is presented in a still worse light: Spinoza's concept of the world is "a hymn to triumphant capital, to capital which absorbs and centralizes everything! . . . A sublime, an enchanted system!—such is the almost universal idea of the Spinozian concept of the world. . . . A man far removed from all earthly thoughts, the ideal type of the thinker devoted entirely to pure speculation! This is the almost universal idea of the personality of Spinoza. . . . But . . . when Spinoza died, the hearse which carried his remains was, as everybody knows, accompanied

with great pomp by the flower of the Dutch bourgeoisie; and if we look more closely at the circle of his friends and acquaintances we find there the flower of the bourgeoisie not only of the Netherlands, but of the whole world. The bourgeoisie thought of Spinoza as its 'bard' " (p. 42).

After this the reader will not be astonished to learn that "the God of Liebniz is the proprietor of a wonderfully organized factory" and that the "philosophy of Liebniz is the deification of the constructive genius of the manufacturing interests" (p. 45). But the most notorious representatives of "manufacturist thought" are Hume and, especially, Kant (pp. 72-79): "As long as the elasticity of the manufacturist capital of the 18th century is not very great . . . the idealogist of the German bourgeoisie [Kant] finds it possible to defend the static conception of the soul" (p. 79). Chouliatikov has also revealed the secret meaning of Fichte's syllogisms: "They are a hymn to specialization: differentiation between concept and function" (p. 92).

Nor does he hide from us the fact that the whole of contemporary philosophy serves to justify modern capitalism. "The doctrine of Avenarius on coördination, that of Mach on the relation between the physical and the psychic, that of Wundt on object representation, all are doctrines of the same sort, examples of the solution of the same problem put before the ideologists of the van-

guard of the capitalistic bourgeoisie—examples of attempts to reproduce by means of philosophic symbols the way in which the bourgeoisie explains the increase, and, at the same time, the defeat of the forces of its organizing geniuses!"

The reader who comes across this gibberish will probably enjoy a few moments of subdued mirth. Let him not forget, however, that we are here confronted by a manifestation of a mania for persecution which, under certain political conditions, can prove to be far from inoffensive. So long as it is a question of accusations brought against Spinoza and Leibniz all this is not very serious. But we must realize that Russia is governed today by Chouliatikovs, that Lenin is a Chouliatikov, and that the Extraordinary Commission—in addition to all kinds of common bandits—is made up of a goodly number of Chouliatikovs. I am not exaggerating when I say that thousands of Russians were shot by the Bolshevists on accusations of counter-revolutionary conspiracy just as well grounded as the charges of a secret alliance between Spinoza and the bourgeoisie of the world, or the attributions of a "manufacturist" character to the philosophy of Liebniz and Kant.

Without making Lenin responsible for all the "philosophic" notions of Chouliatikov, we can see exactly the same mentality working in the two authors; and we can well understand that the coming into absolute power of a man who was able

to write such a book is a very serious danger to our thirty centuries of civilization. For what, indeed, is the difference between Lenin and the Kaliph Omar who burned the library of Alexandria? "If these books contain what is in the Koran they are useless. If they contain what is not in the Koran they are harmful!" If you substitute the word "Anti-Dühring" for the word "Koran," you will have the exact attitude of Lenin. Moreover, he has said himself that "books will be the undoing of the social revolution," and he was perfectly right. If he were disposed to be absolutely consistent today, if his actions were not limited to some extent by the more enlightened influence of Lunatcharsky and others, to what further trials would unhappy Russia not be exposed? In the Soviet Republic the natural sciences might be tolerated at a hazard; for a Judas Mach would not be able to exploit them for reactionary deduction. But mathematics, which are infected with the germ of idealism, might present some danger. Philosophy and the humanities would be forbidden outright; for the Humes and Kants have no other aim but that of cheating the worker at the pleasure of the employer who gives them their pay. As for the Avenariuses, the Schubert-Solderns, and the Menchekovs, their place would obviously be in prison . . . unless they were to be shot, as the real Menchekov was actually shot. The affair of the "cowardly" Chwolson and of

the "Black-Band" Lopatin would directly concern the Extraordinary Commission in its struggle against counter-revolution, against speculation, and against philosophy. It must be seen to that professors teach only what is in the "Anti-Dühring." As for art, it is, in its very essence, absolutely "fideistic," and as such would be mercilessly suppressed!

Do not imagine that this is an exaggeration of Lenin's views. What other conclusion could be consistently reached by one who knows all the truth, the supreme truth; and who calls everything which does not agree with the truth, to be mad, reactionary and "cowardly." The Shakespearian imagination of Ernest Renan conceived the terrible spectre of a savage threatening civilization, of a drunken Caliban taking vengeance on everything that came his way. Bolshevism is the realization of that dark vision. Calibanism in philosophy! Cannibalism in politics! That is what Lenin has given to the world.

CHAPTER V

PROPHECIES IN GENERAL AND THOSE OF LENIN IN PARTICULAR

I REALIZE that in this chapter I must attack a legend which seems to be indestructible: in the minds of many people, often of people who are far from being his admirers, Lenin remains "the man who foresaw everything."

Not long ago *Humanité,* the French socialist organ, published the following statement which shows a certain phase of the voluntary blindness one notes in the Parisian cult of Russian heroes:

"More than a year ago," says *Humanité,* "at the time when Viscount Grey was publishing his pamphlets on the League of Nations, the People's Commissar, Lenin, denounced him as the instrument of Anglo-Saxon plutocracy. Lenin has a genius for sensing unsuspected connections between things, though he paints them so black that his revelations, because of the surprise they create, often find many of us incredulous at first. But as time goes on and as we become more familiar with the style and thought of this great mind, we eventually have to admit that besides a rich and highly-developed philosophic insight, he has

a keenness of perception which alone would make him one of the most famous statesmen in history. The article from the *Times* which follows is a complete justification of Lenin's prophecy."

This extraordinary preface is followed by a quotation from the *Times,* which says that Russia must choose between "becoming a part of the family of nations," or "falling into the position of being a vassal of Germany." Without touching upon this question in any way, we may express some astonishment at the fact that denunciations of the "bourgeois" foundation of Viscount Grey's ideas, which during the war were common enough in the Socialist Press of Germany, should be considered as proof of Lenin's genius, of his "powerful mentality," "philosophic insight," and "keenness of perception." Moreover, all the praise of the Bolshevist leader's genius for political prophecy is practically of the same character.

When one asks Lenin's admirers for details of his prophecies, they usually say that the Bolshevist leader predicted that the war would end with the revolution.

I do not dispute this claim of his to glory (granted that it is one); nor do I dispute the fact that he has a certain narrow-minded sagacity. I think, however, that he has shown this much more brilliantly in other matters (especially in his leadership of the Bolshevist movement) than in this famous prophecy.

For indeed, what was it to predict that the European war would end in a revolution? What was it to say that "the guns of the proletariat of every country will be turned in a very different direction from that in which the aggressors of the imperialistic bourgeoisie would wish to see them turned?"

This is only repeating a commonplace of revolutionary talk, one which was familiar everywhere before the war, in all propaganda pamphlets, in all speeches at Socialistic meetings, and on all occasions when people discussed questions of capitalist politics, colonial enterprises, armaments, disarmaments, the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, or the brotherhood of the proletariat. Lenin remembered this platitude at the time the Great War broke out; and it is on this little exercise of memory—let us admit it was a lucky guess—that people are basing his claim to immortality today. For that matter, we must remember that Lenin shares this title of "seer" with Zinoviev;[1] and yet everybody knows from all accounts, the limitations, as regards foresight, of Lenin's distinguished *alter ego*.

The prophecies—by all sorts of people—relating to the great tragedy which began August 1, 1914, generally fall into three distinct classes:

[1] The articles which these two writers published in Switzerland during the war were compiled in Petrograd in 1918, in a large volume which bears the title "Against the Current." The name of Zinoviev comes before that of Lenin.

1. Most of the witnesses of this drama, men of all parties and intellectual leanings, thought that this war would develop like all others; that there would be victories and defeats, victors and vanquished, secret negotiations and open negotiations; that there would first be an armistice and then a treaty of peace; after which life would go on again pretty much as it did before the war. Opinion, of course, was very much divided on the question as to which of the two coalitions would be victorious; everybody also thought that the war would be infinitely shorter than it turned out to be.

In this class (in the pro-Ally camp as well as among the pro-Germans) there were a majority and a minority. It was the majority view to believe—and sincerely—in the possibility of a "righteous" victory and a "righteous" peace. The Fourteen Points had not yet been formulated; but the political aspirations which later found a badly written expression in the program of President Wilson were in evidence in both camps. People did not agree as to which side represented "righteousness"; but in any event, "righteousness" was to prevail.

On the contrary, the minority, "those who refused to be fooled," attached much less importance to "righteousness." They believed, often without caring to proclaim it too openly, that victory would be the triumph of force; and that

the war would not only be very much like all other wars, but that the peace which would mark its end would be very much like all other pacifications: the triumph, that is, of the national rapacities of the victors. They were certain that the "noble candor" of the men who were looking for noon at ten o'clock in the morning, and for justice where there could be no justice, would be disappointed once more.

Now, as is well known, nobody, except everybody, has more wit than Voltaire. Taken all in all, everybody was more or less right. The war, as both majority and minority expected, had its victories and its defeats, its conferences and its Armistice; and finally its Treaty of Versailles which, while it incarnated the victory of the "righteous," as half the world believed, is not as the cynics predicted, without some likeness to that of Brest-Litovsk or to those of Frankfort or Campo-Formio. The Paris Conference, with its mysterious Councils of "Four" and "Ten," was not very different from other assemblies of the kind; it was practically the Congress of Vienna—without the fancy dress balls.

Nevertheless, from a more general point of view, both the "majority" and the "minority" were not quite right. They mistook the scale of the great war. They failed to grasp the reality of those phenomena which bear the names of Bolshevism, civil war, and Terror. Whatever the outcome of these formidable disturbances, which

are to be noted in some form everywhere, Europe will not be the Europe it was before. In this sense the late war was decidedly not like other wars.

2. But to other observers the question of the World War had a very different aspect. They took no stock in the "righteous peace" business; but neither did they think that this war was like other wars. They thought that it would lead to revolutions as savage and bloody as the war itself. But not convinced of any Providential mission assigned to the proletariat, they expected only an increase in universal savagery to result from the world conflict. *A priori* they could not grant that a catastrophe such as the World War could have any really good results, whether in progress toward the brotherhood of the peoples or in increased material well-being brought about by revolutionary changes in the economic régime. In their eyes the idealists who thought that universal brotherhood would be the outcome of the most bloody of all wars were being as roundly fooled as the "realists" of the various imperialistic schools who expected victory to bring an increase in the riches of their respective countries. To expect five years of savagery to engender the brotherhood of man was, in their view, as naïve as to think a Berlin-to-Bagdad Railway would pay the billions the war would cost.

The people in this category were, as the event proved, those nearest the truth. I trust I may

be allowed to make that statement although I am of their number.[2]

Yes, they were right in saying that nothing good could come out of the world catastrophe; and that, if this war ended in a decisive victory for either side, the victor would impose his stern will on the vanquished without bothering much about justice and ethnographical frontiers. Yes, they were right in saying that the brutality of the human animal, which was let loose in 1914, would of necessity give a stamp of horror to those subsequent convulsive movements which the Zimmerwaldians had heralded as "liberating revolutions." Yes, they were right in pointing out, at the height of the military successes of the Germans in 1918, when Hindenburg's army was at Château-Thierry and when German imperialism seemed to be triumphant, the great fragility of this triumph and of the entire political structure of Bismarck. Yes, they were right in thinking, with Lenin and contrary to opinion in general, that revolution was a great probability in the country which suffered most from the war. And the near future will show that they were all right, as against Lenin, in holding that the communist régime could not become firmly grounded in a ruined and devastated Europe; and that its famous social revolution, the "last revo-

[2] I developed these ideas in an article entitled "The Dragon," written at the beginning of the war; and in my book *Armageddon* (July, 1918), in which that article was incorporated.

lution," was just as absurd, and even more savage and hateful, than the "last war!"

In view of the abstract evidence for such prophecies and their generality in bearing, there is no ground for vanity in having made any one of them. I consider the historical prophet, in a true sense of the word, an impossibility, except for a few exceptional cases. So long as philosophers have not found any way of disposing of "His Majesty Chance," we will have to give that gentleman credit for a very great part in the direction of human affairs! For that reason, when we hear that So-and-so "foresaw everything from the first day of the war," we are, *a priori,* dealing with a legend.

3. Lenin and his few acolytes made up the third class of intellectuals in 1914. They believed that the World War would end in a world revolution which would overthrow the capitalist régime and set up the era of communism in its stead.

From the beginning of the war, Lenin expressed his ideas on the course that should be taken, as follows:

"War is not an accident nor a sin as the Christian popes (who like all opportunists preach patriotism, humanitarianism and pacifism) believe; but an inevitable part of capitalism, as legitimate a form of capitalistic life as peace. The war of the present day is a war of peoples. . . . Conscientious objectionism, strikes against

war, and all such stuff are utter rot—a miserable, cowardly pipe-dream! What idiot believes that an armed bourgeoisie can be whipped without a fight? It is sheer lunacy to talk of abolishing capitalism without a terrible civil war or a series of terrible civil wars! The duty of socialism rather is to agitate for the class struggle during war. The task of turning a war between peoples into a war between classes should be the only concern of socialism, when an armed imperialistic conflict arises between the bourgeoisies of the various nations. Away with this sentimental, hypocritical and foolish claptrap of "peace at any price!" Up with the flag of civil war!

"The Second International is dead, the victim of opportunism! . . . The Third International inherits the task of organizing the forces of the proletariat for a revolutionary attack upon the capitalistic governments, for civil war against the bourgeoisie of all nations, for the attainment of political power, and for the victory of socialism!"[3]

As for the *immediate* causes of the catastrophe, Lenin seemed to believe, along with a general accusation against international capitalism, that the war was a *defensive* war for Germany who was threatened on all sides.

"We know," he said, "that for scores of years three brigands (the bourgeoisie and gov-

[3] N. Lenin, *The Social-Democrat*, No. 39, November 11, 1914.

ernments of England, France and Russia) were preparing to attack Germany.. Should we be surprised because two of the brigands started the attack before the three received the new knives they had ordered?"[4]

Hence the socialists should attack the two coalitions of brigands at the same time. This is the general idea which influenced Lenin's policies on the extreme left at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, where his influence was predominant. From this point of view he did not deviate, in theory; though, practically, his action was useful to Germany, since his work of disorganization attained in no Teutonic country the degree of perfection it reached in Russia.

However, to repeat, this theory of Lenin was a commonplace in revolutionary pamphlets before the war. For real prophecies—and here I directly approach the legend I mentioned above—for real prophecies, however vague and general in language, one looks in vain in the articles of Lenin dealing with this period. He gives only imperatives: he did not foresee; nor did he even try to foresee, the course political events were to take; although he hoped, of course, that they would tend toward world revolution. He was not even sure that the proletariat would follow him:

"We cannot guess," he wrote in 1916, "no one can guess, just how large a section of the pro-

[4] N. Lenin, "The Russian Sudekums" (in Russian), in *The Social-Democrat*, February 1, 1915.

letariat will go over to the Socialist-chauvinists and the Opportunists. That, the summons to battle, the call for the social revolution, alone can tell. But we know one thing for certain: the 'defenders of the flag' in imperialistic wars represent only a minority of the population.'"[5]

It is therefore pure fiction to say that "Lenin from the very first day of the war foresaw the outcome of events." He did not foresee even the attitude of the western socialists toward the catastrophe. Zinoviev reports that he had a discussion with Lenin on this latter subject in which Lenin thought that the German socialists would vote against the military appropriations; while Zinoviev was sure that they would refrain from voting at all. As the event proved, they voted *for* the appropriations.

Now, if Lenin was so far off the track in judging the temper of the Second International, he is quite possibly mistaken as to the internal stability of the Third. In the mass of writings he published in Switzerland (and later in Russia) in 1914–1917, there are not many political prophecies. Most of them are false: as, for instance, his famous postulate that the war would end by the fraternizing (*bratanie*) of the soldiers at the front. The Russian army disintegrated in 1917; the Bulgarian, Austrian, Turkish and German armies met with the same fate a year later; but

[5] N. Lenin, "The Order for Disarmament" (in Russian), in *The Social-Democrat*, No. 2, October, 1916.

there was never any serious question of fraternization between enemies. It was a case of *conquered* soldiers taking to their heels to get away from *victorious* soldiers.

We do not blame Lenin for not having been a better guesser. But since people say that he "predicted everything," I am merely setting the matter right. Lenin has shown his political talents, not in prophecy, but in his skill at turning the great mass of hatreds that the war built up to the benefit of his own ideas.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSONALITY OF LENIN

LENIN is a man who combines ideas which he believes to be the ideas of the future with a mentality that belongs to the Middle Ages.

We must first deal as cavalierly with one of the slanders against Lenin as we dealt with one of the fictions invented to glorify him. People saw, or pretended to see, in Lenin a paid agent of the Germans. That is absolutely false. Lenin did more for Germany (in signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk) than all her paid agents put together; but a German agent he never was. He never served Germany for the sake of serving Germany (which, by the way is more than can be said for all of his associates and subordinates).

He did not touch a cent of German money for himself. I have not the shadow of a doubt on this point. Why, indeed, should he have done so? He has always lived frugally, not to say in hardship; people who have known him for a long time cannot point to a single indulgence, to a single extravagance, habitual to him. Nowadays when the Bolshevists have millions within reach and while the most scandalous rumors (often well authenticated) are circulating about his col-

leagues, no one breathes a word against Lenin. In a flock of black sheep, he is "the Bolshevist who has remained poor." He has won general admiration for his scrupulous honesty.

Did he take German money for his propaganda?

I must say that in 1917 socialists who had known him for a long while and who had formerly been his friends (I could mention some very well-known names) were frank to say that they considered this not only possible but very probable. One of them put himself on record to that effect: "For the 'Cause,' Lenin would steal a pocketbook, if necessary. He would stop at nothing if he considered it beneficial to the revolution." Such is the almost unanimous opinion of his intimates, who, despite party animosities, have always been the first to recognize his personal disinterestedness.

History may perhaps discover a final answer to this question some day. Meanwhile impartiality obliges us to mention two facts that seem to weaken this "German money" charge.

Today all the German archives, all the records of secret expenditures abroad,[1] whether by the military or by the civil authorities, are at the disposal of the present German Government, which has good reason for not liking the Bolshevists. If these archives contained documents or evidence at all compromising to Lenin, why

[1] To those who know Germany, there cannot be any doubt as to the existence of a model system of accounting for the most secret expenditures.

should Scheidemann, Bauer, David and Müller, not make use of them? Why should they spare such a dangerous adversary?[2]

Moreover, General Ludendorf who, as dictator, must have known what was going on, said nothing in his memoirs about money which Lenin is alleged to have received from Germany. He even considers it a mistake on the part of the civil authorities to have granted the Bolshevist leader the famous "pass" in March, 1917.[3]

One might answer that Scheidemann and Bauer, as well as Ludendorf, probably have too much respect for state secrets of such importance to reveal them lightly. As it is not so absolutely certain that the late war is to be the *last,* Germany may still need the help of all kinds of secret agents in the future. So, under such circumstances, it would not be wise to reveal, for any reason whatsoever, the names of those who once were of service to her. And, indeed, so far as I know, the government of democratic Germany has taken no action against those numerous agents in all countries who were paid for service

[2] It goes without saying that the German Government could have nothing to gain by compromising a Ganetzky or any other poor wretch of Russian Bolshevism. To publish such expenditures would serve no positive purpose; and it would have been an obvious mistake to show up the venality of the lesser Bolshevist agents.

[3] There is this much truth in General Ludendorf's judgment on this point: since the great service which Lenin did for Germany could not save her from disintegration and defeat, it would have been better for her not to push things quite so far in Russia.

rendered the government of imperialistic Germany.[4]

So, unquestionable as is the rôle which Germans played in the development of Bolshevism in Russia,[5] it cannot be said that Lenin received money from the Government of William II.

What can be said with certainty is that in all his policies, before as well as after the Revolution, he has shown absolute political immorality.

Nothing exists for him except his idea. He has no other rule of conduct except the interests of the cause of Bolshevism. The bad faith he so often showed in his opposition days is equalled only by the cool versatility of his policies at the head of the Bolshevist government. What did he not say against Kerensky for having applied the death penalty at the front to preserve discipline? Well, a few months later, without any reason whatsoever, he is shooting tens of thousands of men himself. Trusting that any liberties with the truth were possible in view of the age-long ignorance of the Russian people, he did not

[4] It was only by mischance that von Jagow's telegram, which served as a basis for charges against Judet, fell into the hands of the Allied powers. Nevertheless, in that case also, it was to the advantage of the Germans to make things disagreeable for the French nationalists, their life-long enemies.

[5] Trotsky innocently gives the following account of conditions on the Russian front before the Bolshevist revolution (*The Advent of Bolshevism*, p. 63): "Circulating among the soldiers were a number of sheets *which they wrote themselves* in which they were invited not to stay in the trenches longer than 'from now till the first snow flies.'" Written by themselves, you see! The Germans and the Bolshevists did not figure in the matter at all!

mind if his accusations were always as stupid[6] as they were spiteful.

I will quote, for an example, the fact that he charged the Constitutional-Democratic Party (The Cadets) with having organized the *Pyanys Pogromy*—the pillaging of the wine cellars of Petrograd. To appraise this accusation it is sufficient to name the party leaders: Miliukov, Nabokov, and Vinaver, all lawyers and university professors! As for the leader of this party, Lenin characterizes him in one of his speeches as an "absolutely, hopelessly, ignorant man." Many faults have been found with the strong personality of Miliukov; but this is the first time, I believe, that he has been accused of "ignorance." Lenin, for that matter, has often acknowledged that he considers slander a legitimate weapon in political combat.

But this slanderer is at the same time a despot; and has always been one; today he rules as an

[6] He has a very close rival in Trotsky in the stupidity of his slanders. Here is an example: The Russian soldiers who came to Marseilles in 1916 assassinated one of their officers, Colonel Crause. It seems a copy of the paper which Trotsky was then publishing in Paris (*Nache Slovo*) was found in possession of one of these soldiers; and that was one of the reasons for the expulsion of Trotsky from France. Was Trotsky embarrassed? Not at all! Trotsky made a sensational "statement" with reference to the matter: "The Russian Government organized a little assassination in France through its *agents-provocateurs* in order to give weight to their argument against me." (See *Twenty Letters of Leo Trotsky*, Paris, 1919, p. 20.) That the Government of the Czar should have had one of its Colonels assassinated *to give an argument in favor of deporting Trotsky to Spain* is a discovery which seems to show the sheer folly of its author.

autocrat over a country of a hundred million people, just as yesterday he ruled with iron hand over a dozen or more Russian exiles in Switzerland. His own colleagues and friends have often accused him of arbitrary and autocratic ways. In one of his old articles he ironically indexes the epithets which his comrades in the party gave him: "Autocrat, bureaucrat, Formalist, Centralist, one-sided, pig-headed, stubborn, narrow, suspicious, unsociable."[7]

We will not deny ourselves the pleasure of quoting an opinion which a man who is not suspected of anti-Bolshevism today, for it is no less than Mr. Trotsky himself, formerly had of Lenin. It is well known that this "brilliant understudy" of the President of the Council of People's Commissars hates his chief, although he pays him the most elaborate compliments. This enmity does not date from yesterday, although it may be somewhat intensified today by jealousy on the part of the ambitious man that Trotsky has become.

I have before me a pamphlet[8] which Trotsky devoted to the Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, or, rather, to Lenin. I will make a few quotations from it:

"History, with the ruthlessness of Shakespeare's Shylock, has demanded its pound of flesh

[7] N. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards* (in Russian), Geneva, 1904, p. 137.

[8] Trotsky, *The Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Labor Party in Russia* (in Russian), Geneva, 1903.

from the living organism of the party. Alas! We have had to pay it![9]

"We speak of the need for looking at history impersonally. But we need not push that virtue so far as to ignore the personal responsibility of Comrade Lenin. At the Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Russia, that man, with all his energy and skill, played his rôle as disorganizer of the Party" (p. 11).

" 'The state of siege' which Comrade Lenin insisted upon so energetically needs a strong authority. The practice of organized distrust needs an iron hand. The system of terror[10] is crowned by Robespierre.

"Comrade Lenin mentally reviewed the personnel of the Party and arrived at the conclusion that the iron hand needed was his own and his alone, and he was right. The hegemony of Social-Democracy in the struggle for freedom meant, from the very logic of the state of siege, the hegemony of Lenin over Social-Democracy" (p. 20).

"In demonstrating, before the Congress, the purpose of the Central Committee Comrade Lenin showed his fist (I am not speaking metaphorically) as its real political symbol. We do not re-

[9] Trotsky wrote then as he talks today. No audience can resist the grandiloquence of this Mirabeau of grocery clerks.

[10] All these terms had reference to the internal organization of the Social-Democratic Party; they had, so to speak, an ironical and symbolical meaning. Did Trotsky think that the time would come when terror, to himself and Lenin, would be anything but a symbol?

member whether this pantomime for centralization was duly incorporated in the resolutions of the Congress. It was a serious oversight if such was not the case. That fist would have been the appropriate weather-vane for the entire edifice!" (p. 28).

"Comrade Lenin made of the modest Council an all-powerful Committee of Public Safety in order to play, himself, the rôle of the 'incorruptible Robespierre'" (p. 29).

We know that Lenin, for his part, is not among the admirers of Trotsky. Without mentioning the affectionate remarks which he formerly hurled at Trotsky before and during the war, he wrote, in 1918, at the conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, one of the bitterest arraignments (signed with the nom-de-plume of Karpov) of the cult for "grandiloquent hot-air" among revolutionary orators—a cult of which Trotsky has always been the high priest.

The despotism of Lenin and the absolute immorality of his political conduct, which often seem cynically humorous,[11] have gradually alienated all the independent members of the Social-Democratic Party of Russia from him. He was formerly bound in warm friendship to Plek-

[11] We could quote as an example the delicious story of a certain inheritance which was finally put at the disposal of the Bolshevists, that is to say of Lenin. I emphasize the fact that it is not a question of *personal* dishonesty. Lenin has always lived simply, though all the funds of the Party were at his beck and call.

hanov,[12] who later became his mortal enemy. Alexrod, Potressov, Alexinsky, and Martiv were all very intimate with him. But only docile, mediocre men, fawning courtesans like Zinoviev, have been able to enjoy the good-will of Lenin for any length of time.

Even today he treats most of his distinguished colleagues as errand boys. In 1918, the Social-Revolutionary paper, *The People's Cause* (*Dielo Naroda*), published an extraordinary reprimand which he addressed to Zinoviev, President of the Commune of Petrograd, who was guilty of letting a "bourgeois" reporter get into the Bolshevist sanctuary at the Smolny Institute. He treats this high dignitary the way Peter the Great treated his gentlemen-in-waiting.

Lenin, moreover, has always tolerated the worst characters about him. Today he is surrounded with all kinds of common criminals, especially thieves. Incorruptible as he is personally, he seems to feel quite set up, in the midst of this ignoble crowd. In this respect his relations with Malinovsky are very interesting. According to Bourtzev[13] Malinovsky confessed his past crimes to Lenin and went so far as to say he could no longer be a member of the Duma, as he was too severely compromised. Lenin is said to have interrupted him, refusing to hear the story out, and observing that "such things could

[12] "Lenin was in love with Plekhanov," says M. Zinoviev.

[13] Bourtzev, "Lenin and Malinovsky," in *Struggling Russia*, No. 9-10, May, 1919, p. 139.

be of no importance in the eyes of a real Bolshevist." This story is probable enough: did not one of the best known Bolshevists, Radek, who was expelled from the German Social-Democratic Party (before the war), begin his political career by stealing a watch? What we refuse to believe is that Lenin could have known or guessed Malinovsky's rôle as an *agent-provocateur;* though our assurance that he did comes from Malinovsky himself.[14]

This weakness of the Bolshevist leader for the worst type of adventurers can easily be explained, however. Lenin's great strength, the strength which has made him the true prophet of our plunge to the depths of revolution, lies in his ability to appeal to the lowest instincts of human nature. The worst cynic would not have carried on a revolution any differently from this experienced agitator. For the work of destruction which the Bolshevist régime involved, he exploited with masterly hand the powerful social weapon which hatred supplies. For the benefit of his ideas he turned to account every animosity arising from the normal hardships of life increased by the additional hardship of the war—the hatred of the worker for the capitalist, of the employee for his employer, of the peasant for the landed proprietor, of the proletarian Lett for the Lett of wealth, of the Chinese

[14] "According to Malinovsky, Lenin understood and could not help understanding that his (Malinovsky's) past concealed not merely ordinary criminality, but that he was, in the hands of the gendarmes, a *provocateur.*" (Ibid., p. 139.)

coolie for the country which maltreated him, of the oppressed Jew for the Jew-baiter, and (above all) of the soldier and sailor for the officer who enforced harsh and irksome discipline. Hatred, hatred, nothing but hatred! Such was the Archimedian lever which Lenin used to pry himself into power with such ease! But nothing permanent can be built on the foundation of hatred alone. Sooner or later Lenin will be the victim of the Frankenstein whose parts he assembled in order to master Russia!

But it would not be right to depreciate the remarkable qualities of the man.

It is said that politics is a matter of the pen and of the tongue. Lenin, too, is a publicist and an orator. But as such he is only second rate. His pamphlets are badly and carelessly written. No translation, unfortunately, can render quite the banality of his style. He uses the most commonplace metaphors, the most hackneyed expressions, and he indulges in epithets that show an extreme of vulgarity.[15] His writings accordingly are always tiresome and hard to read, in spite of the psychological interest his sectarian logic might arouse.

As we suggested, Lenin knows very little outside of political economy. Russian and European civil-

[15] I tried to count the number of times in one of Lenin's recent articles that the Menshevists and the Social-Revolutionists (many of whom spent several years in the convict-prisons) are treated as "lackies of the bourgeoisie;" but the task took too much time.

izations are still strangers to him. In them he sees a manifestation of the capitalist world which he hates with all the violence and venom of which a fervent and narrow-minded man is capable. Maxim Kovalesky has said that Lenin would have made a good professor. He might have in political economy, were it not that he despises every idea not agreeing with his own.

He speaks violently but without recourse to smooth periods, witty expressions, or impassioned flights. Trotsky and some of the other Bolshevist leaders are certainly far better orators than Lenin. A Bolshevist laborer, however, told me that he preferred the simple manner of Lenin to the musical sing-song of the nightingales of the Party. Can Lenin's be the real eloquence that scorns rhetoric? I suspect, rather, that it is a case of Lenin's profound knowledge of his audience; for he is a past-master of mob psychology.

It cannot be denied that Lenin is a born leader, a magnificent "handler of men." I have often had the opportunity of witnessing the great influence he has over people, especially people who from temperament, opinions, and social position, ought not easily have fallen prey to such a man. Let me, if I may, mention two cases which impressed me particularly. They deal with the first days of the triumph of the Bolshevists in 1917, and the people concerned were of a different stamp altogether from those who later succumbed under the spell of Lenin's personality.

The first case was that of a mechanic in a factory in Petrograd, a man some fifty years old, a hard worker, father of a family of children, a calm, easy-going sort of fellow, not over-intelligent and quite uneducated, but very honest withal. He called himself, and probably thought he was, a Revolutionary-Socialist; but like most of the workingmen of Petrograd he had been influenced since the spring of 1917 by the active and well organized propaganda of the Bolshevists. The factory was a very old-fashioned one; the workers for the most part were not skilled laborers, but peasants who had secured jobs there at the beginning of the war. Most of them could not have had any serious political convictions; but almost all called themselves either Menshevists or Revolutionary-Socialists. Those were the most moderate political parties to which a workman could decently belong; and it was considered bad taste not to be a member of any party. Times have changed very much since then: today, it seems, the workingmen of Russia refuse to have anything to do with political parties! And with good reason! The Bolshevists were not very numerous at this time; but they formed a compact minority, received tactical instructions continually, and were able to browbeat the other men; suffice it to say that they managed to force all the workmen and foremen in the factory in question to subscribe to the *Pravda,* the Bolshevist newspaper run by Lenin. They themselves were bossed by a very

intelligent and arrogant young workman who knew how to look after his own personal interests very well, and who had belonged to the *Union of the Russian People* (the "Black-Bands") before going over to Bolshevism!

Immediately after the Bolshevist *coup d'état,* the workers of this factory went to a local meeting and "swore allegiance to the new régime." They worked out and adopted a pompous resolution where the spelling was inclined to be somewhat capricious but the meaning of which was perfectly clear: the former Revolutionary-Socialists and Menshevists hailed the power of the Soviets, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the immediate conclusion of a general peace "without annexations and indemnities," and so on — all according to instructions received by the Bolshevist group in the factory. Hundreds of resolutions of this sort were being railroaded through all the factories and all the regiments in Petrograd.

The man of whom I am speaking was commissioned to carry this resolution to the Smolny Institute, which was then the seat of the Bolshevist Government. He took it there and was immediately received by Lenin himself, an attention the man had not in the least expected. The sly old demagogue, who was "too busy" to see the ambassadors of foreign powers, who later passed on Count Mirbach, the omnipotent German governor, to a clerk, Sverdlov, designating the latter,

ironically, as the "highest official of the Soviet Republic," had plenty of time to receive an unknown mechanic who was bringing a resolution from a quite negligible factory! . . . Let the admirers of Bolshevism shed tears of tenderness at this democratic "trait" in the President of the Council of People's Commissars! For my part, I admire the surpassing art of the demagogue. That was just the way to become popular in a country where the lower classes had been treated like cattle for centuries and centuries.[16]

Well, I saw this laborer just after he had come back from his interview with Lenin. He was quite beside himself and hardly to be taken for the same man. Ordinarily calm and discreet, he was now talking like an energumen. "There's a man for you!" he kept saying over and over again. "There's the man I'm willing to risk my skin for! . . . Now there's going to be something really doing. . . . Ah, if only we had had a Czar like that! . . . Then what would have been the use of the Revolution?"

This last sentence was so striking it clung indelibly in my memory. I have given it word for word. The poor man, like M. Jourdain, was talking Shakespeare without knowing it: "Cæsar is dead, let his murderer be Cæsar!"

"But what did he say to you?" I asked him

[16] I have been told that Lenin often went with his wife to public balls given by the Bolshevists and attended by servants, sailors and cab drivers; and talked politics there like Haroun-al-Raschid, but without any incognito.

later on, when he had calmed down a bit. I received only a vague answer. "Everything belongs to you people,"—or something of the sort, Lenin must have said to him. "Everything belongs to you people! Take it all! The world is for the proletariat. Don't listen to anybody but us. . . . The workers have no other friends. We alone are the ones to look after the people who work for a living."

The old laborer must have heard those meaningless phrases, that promise of heaven on earth replacing his long life of poverty, at least a hundred times. Was it the contagion of real faith that seemed to give them new meaning in his eyes? Was it the magnetic influence of an overwhelming personality?[17]

My second example is of a very different nature. A young man some twenty years of age, of an excellent and wealthy family, very intelligent

[17] I must add here what the results of Lenin's interview with the workers' envoy were for this particular factory. It must be a fairly typical case. It goes without saying that the Menshevists and Revolutionary-Socialists in the factory immediately became members of the Bolshevist Party. A few days later there was a violent demonstration against the superintendent who was a very honorable man with liberal convictions. Then the workers followed Lenin's advice literally and "took everything," at the same time letting the company pay their wages. They began to sell the machinery and raw materials to junk dealers. In January, 1918, the factory shut down for good. The peasant-laborers went off to the country. As the war was over, they were no longer afraid of conscription; and could they foresee civil war? The skilled laborers entered the pay of the State (if the term can be applied to Bolshevist Russia), either as employees on the payrolls without jobs, or (a small minority) as Red Guards.

and well educated, a complex and delicate nature, a talented poet, a student at the Polytechnique School and for the time being at the School of Artillery, found himself by chance the night after the Bolshevist *coup d'état* in the hall of the Smolny Institute. On that night of triumph all the Bolshevist leaders were making inflammatory speeches to the excited, undisciplined soldiers gathered there. While neither Trotsky nor the others made any impression on the young man, Lenin, on the contrary, who was greeted with a magnificent ovation, quite upset him.

"It was not a political speech," he told me. "It was a cry from the very soul of a man who had been waiting for that moment for thirty years. I thought I was listening to the voice of Girolamo Savonarola." This young man, moreover, was not a Bolshevist and did not become converted. He was the unfortunate Leonid Kannaguisser [18] who a year later shot and killed the Bolshevist Uritsky, the executioner of the Commune of Petrograd.

Savonarola? Yes, perhaps! Lenin has some of the characteristics of Savonarola; but more, probably, of those fanatics one meets so frequently in the history of religious sects in Russia. From a moral and intellectual point of view this man takes after Savonarola and after Tartuffe. He

[18] This unfortunate young man, whose brilliant talents and noble character gave so much promise for the future, was shot by the Bolshevists. Dark rumors went through the capital that he had been subjected to torture four times.

has a nature at once complex and arid; for spiritual involution does not mean spiritual richness, necessarily. Lenin is a madman with the lunatic's cunning; a sort of scholar, and at the same time a visionary in a small way; a man who knows the masses without knowing anything of men. He is a complex primitive type, a combination of simple traits: elementary fanaticism, elementary cunning, elementary intelligence, elementary madness. This is perhaps the reason for his strength; for what is more elementary than the half-educated unfortunates who make up the mass of Russian workers?

A socialist writer told me of his disappointment the first time he heard the Bolshevist leader speak. Lenin's eloquence seems to impress young poets and old workingmen much more deeply than it does men of scientific mind. "I expected a sociological analysis of the crisis pending; I heard nothing but shouts of fury and cries of hate: 'Arrest the capitalists!' 'Hustle them to jail!' I could hardly believe my eyes and ears. Was this maniac really Lenin, the famous Lenin?"

"And how did the audience take it all?" I asked him.

"They gave him a tremendous ovation," he answered, shrugging his shoulders. "*Quod erat demonstrandum!* What else could you expect? All his catch-words have a terrible directness and simplicity. 'Down with war!' 'Arrest the capitalists!' 'Workingmen of Russia, take every-

thing you can find!' But it was with their help, just the same, that he gained control of Russia!"

"*Timeo homines unius libri,*" said Thomas Aquinas. But "men of one newspaper" are much more dangerous than "men of one book," especially if that paper is called the *Pravda.* The simplicity of the Bolshevist formulæ is Lenin's first source of strength. I have already mentioned the second, which is the misanthropic character of his policies. The third is the faith he has in those policies and in himself: an *emigré,* living in poverty and leading a mere handful of refugees, he ever nourished the hope of conquering Russia, Europe, the whole world!

Ernest Renan, in *Don Luigi Tosti,* speaks of "that contempt for the mob, that combined feeling of revolt and impotence, that something—strong, harsh and stoical—which is the distinctive characteristic of brave Italian souls." Lenin has all of that. He has been credited with that dreamy temperament, which according to the stock criticism of foreigners, is essentially distinctive of the Slav. I am not very fond of generalizations on the traits of nationality or race, so very often are they mere banalities, and often false banalities at that. Lenin, I will nevertheless venture, is very Russian; and yet in many respects he is the opposite of the Slav, in the sense in which that word is commonly used by specialists in national psychology. Slavs are said to be weak; Lenin has a will of iron. Slavs are said to be

romantic; Lenin has not a single trace of emotionalism. Slavs are said to have a passion for metaphysics; no one could be less interested in abstractions than Lenin. His dream, if dream he has, is the acme of the commonplace; a string of barracks ruled by Bolshevists, that, more or less, is his ideal.

And what is the objective of his political policies? Great social experiments, first of all; for this man is an experimentalist gone mad. With all his faith in himself and his ideas, can he really believe seriously in the immediate and permanent success of his wonderful experiment at the Kremlin (or shall I say Bicêtre)? That is doubtful, at least. A few months ago he told Maxim Gorky (I got this from a French friend, who, in turn, heard it from Gorky's own lips), that "the most astonishing thing in this whole business is that no one has yet put us out."

But is not a negative result of this experiment *in anima vili* worth something? A great lesson in Communism will come out of it in any case. That, it would seem, is the opinion of all the Communists of the Kremlin. "If we fail," said one of the most famous Bolshevists, "we will put off our work until later on, that's all. The social revolution will take place some other time." It is all so very simple, when you think of it! The destruction of a State, the ruin of a people, a few million dead, does all that matter, is that of the

slightest importance, in the eyes of men who have such lofty aims?

And the final result of Lenin's policies? The lasting hatred of the Russian masses for everything socialistic!

"I see in the events of our time a real triumph of the defeated and humiliated bourgeoisie; its conquerors are more bourgois than the bourgeoisie itself.

"Lenin is right; the life which was upset by the Communist Revolution will bring to the Russian village the 'gospel of a new truth.' Except that this gospel, with a few possible modifications, may well prove to be nothing but our old Civil Code. The law will recognize the 'accomplished fact,' close its eyes to many things, and register as 'bought' what in reality was 'stolen.'

"The bayonet has created a new upper class in Russia, a plutocracy of recent date, capitalists in khaki, profiteers in the red cap. I saw men dancing at their parties, their *tanzoulki,* in the palaces of the Raiewskys and of the Pobedonostsevs. The aristocrats of today do not dance so well as those of yesterday, but they know much better how to defend their rights.

"To amateurs in historic teleology, I must offer an answer to the question: 'Why Lenin?' The Destiny that rules us appointed Lenin to fix eternally the triumph of private property! Such a rôle for the Bolshevist pope is probably the cruel-

est jest History ever played on one of its favored darlings.

"Protopopov[19] ever seemed grimly bent on compromising the reaction and hastening the outbreak of revolution. Lenin is doing just the opposite: he is compromising the revolution and preparing the ground for reaction. As between these two autocrats, you may take your choice.

"Our revolution resembles our war as a daughter resembles her mother. Lenin is the legal heir of the grand-duke Nicholas Nicolaievich. The offensive Lenin is carrying on against capitalism is in every respect like the campaign of Nicholas in the Carpathians, save that after his retreat, where will 'the positions prepared in advance' be?

"There is a beautiful statue by Turgan in the Luxembourg Museum, called *The Paralytic Led by the Blindman.* Russia led to destruction by this deadly man might well adorn her armories with copies of that statue."[20]

[19] A Russian minister who was very unpopular during the latter part of the old régime.

[20] Landau-Aldanov, *Armageddon,* Petrograd, 1918.

CHAPTER VII

THE THEORIES OF THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION: MARX, BAKUNIN AND SOREL

IT is a very curious fact and one perhaps without precedent except in the history of Christian doctrine, that almost all the elements involved in the desperate social struggle now raging over the four corners of Europe, go back to a single man: Karl Marx. In Germany, Scheidemann and Hasse, Noske and Liebknecht, David and Ledebur, Ebert and Rosa Luxemburg; and in Russia, Lenin and Plekhanov, Trotsky and Potresov, Martov and Tsereteli, Kamenev and Dan!

Even the theorists of the bourgeoisie, to show the impossibility of a communist régime in Russia, have not failed to appeal to the writings of the author of *Das Kapital.*

On the purely theoretical side of the question, this has long been the case. Twenty years ago, in the famous controversy between Kautsky and Bernstein, both contenders appealed (more or less successfully!) to the works of Marx; much as theological contenders of old brought out the Bible to prove (successfully) the positive and negative of every proposition. But twenty years ago, the lusty give-

and-take was carried on in the *Neue Zeit,* in the *Sozialistische Monatshafte,* on the floors of socialist conventions. Now the belligerents have "stepped outside" into the streets of Berlin, of Munich, of Dresden; and syllogisms use machine guns and bayonets in their major premises.

Who is right? What in fact, would be the attitude of Marx and Engels if they were still alive today? Is Bolshevism the necessary outcome of Marxism; or is it rather the negation and the opposite of Marxism?

Bolshevism is, we can all agree, not literal Marxism; but it seems to be the logical corollary of certain ideas which Marx held as a young man, combined with elements borrowed from anarchism and syndicalism. Rosa Luxemburg said once that the Marxist theory was the child of bourgeois science; and that the birth of this child had cost the life of its mother. It could be said more correctly that Bolshevism is the illegitimate child of Marxism and anarchism, that it has caused both its parents great sorrow, and will continue to do so.

Karl Marx's affirmations were clear and positive, so long as he was dealing with the past and present of the capitalist system. But he became more vague and less cocksure as the question of the future came up. Perhaps Marx thought he knew how the capitalist world would end. But the event proves he was mistaken. The failure of this extraordinary mind shows once more the

folly of historical prophecies. That he did fail as a prophet is quite obvious today.

In saying all this, I am not thinking of those statistical arguments (relating to division of wealth in the period from 1850 to 1900) which were brought up long ago by Edward Bernstein and his school. Suffice it to compare the excellent analysis of economic facts which we find in the first volume of *Das Kapital* with the political prophecies of Marx, which were nearly always false, to understand what danger there is in definite prophecy even for minds as powerful as his.

We read in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847: "The bourgeois revolution can be only the immediate prelude to the proletarian revolution."

Two years later Marx tried to prove to Lassalle that the proletarian revolution would break out the next year at the latest. In 1850 he was preaching the idea of a revolution that would continue agitation "till the day when the power of the State shall be taken over by the proletariat, and when the forces of production (or at least the main ones) shall be concentrated in the hands of the proletariat."

In 1862 Marx wrote to Kugelman: "It is evident that we are on the verge of a revolution. I have never doubted that, since 1850."

In 1872, in a letter to Sorge, he maintained that "the conflagration was starting all over Europe."

As for Engels, he said, some thirty years ago: "The government of the Czar will not be able

to survive this current year; and if they start something in Russia, good day and good night!"

Which provokes the comment that faith is faith, even when it calls itself science!

I will not stress the prophecies of Marx and Engels with reference to foreign affairs. It is sufficient to recall that Marx considered Bismarck "a mere tool of the cabinet of St. Petersburg;" and that Engels said, in one of his letters to Sorge: "If war breaks out one can say *with absolute certainty* that after a few battles Russia will come to an understanding with Prussia at the expense of Austria and France."

But has not the very foundation of "scientific" socialism, the famous "catastrophic collapse of capitalism," been reduced to nothing by the experiences of these last five years? In the beginning of 1918, I wrote in *Armageddon:*

"The authors of scientific socialism did not describe the form which the social revolution would take, nor the length of time necessary for it to gain the upper hand over the master class. Engels maintained that the débâcle of the capitalist régime would be preceded by a great war, and Karl Kautsky expressed a similar opinion.

"One may therefore suppose that in July, 1914, the over-production of commodities predicted by Marx began, which brought on the war and *eo ipso* determined the "catastrophic moment" of the social revolution. It can be easily seen, however, that in the course of the last four years of

European history the laws immanent in the capitalist system have ceased to be so immanent, and tendencies have developed which work in exactly the opposite direction: instead of a socialization of wealth, which the Marxians predicted, the war brought on an unprecedented destruction of wealth. When the long-awaited day for the "expropriation of the expropriators" came, it was discovered, unfortunately, that in spite of the great number of "capitalists" there was nothing left to expropriate. The world, which is now being rebuilt on a new principle, receives, as its main heritage, devastated countries, sunken ships, burned powder, exploded shells, the obligation of feeding millions of invalids and orphans, and a few hundred billions of national debts which will never be paid.

"As for Russia, her only implement of production today is the bayonet. In reality the Jacquerie of Pougatchev in the 18th century presented almost as many possibilities of socialism as our own Apocalyptic days.

"It is evident that henceforth socialism will become more and more a problem of the development of the forces of production. But as there is always, in socialism itself, a problem of redistribution, terrible conflicts will probably take place in the future, especially with reference to the colonial question."

More than a year after writing these lines I had

the satisfaction of finding some of the ideas I had expressed in them in an article by Karl Kautsky.

This—I quote from an Italian reviewer—is what the eminent theorist of Marxism says:

"The economic basis from which socialism was to rise was the great wealth created by capitalism making possible the inauguration of a régime of material welfare for everybody. This wealth has been almost entirely destroyed by five years of war; and hence the economic basis of socialism has all but vanished.

"Part of the proletariat has deduced from its acquisition of political power that it is entitled to material welfare immediately, which, of course, is impossible under present economic conditions. The other part is tired of these exaggerations and feels the impossibility of realizing them. Having lost all judgment on economic matters, our workingmen have no thought-out programme; and therefore remain undecided, instead of energetically opening the way for radical reforms now more necessary than ever before because of the universal misery.

"Another and a worse heritage which the war has left the revolution is the cult of violence. This long war has inclined the proletariat to ignore economic laws and given it faith in the strong arm. The 'spirit of Spartacus' is, at bottom, the spirit of Ludendorf; and just as Ludendorf has not only ruined Germany but at the same time strengthened militarism in the enemy countries, in France

especially, Spartacus is likewise leading his own cause to ruin and encouraging a policy of violence in the majority. Noske is the natural counterpoise of Spartacus."

Now it would be difficult to see in the assertions of Kautsky anything but a confession of the failure of the prophecies of scientific socialism, a confession which is even more remarkable for its honesty in that it is made by the foremost theorist of that doctrine. And if it be true, as the anti-socialist press maintains, that Karl Kautsky has abandoned some of the Marxian positions which seemed to be almost impregnable, that would appear to be due to the surprises the Great War has brought him.

Does this mean that the socialists did not foresee the war? Such an assertion would be altogether unwarranted. It is true that many socialists have been responsible for one terrible misunderstanding. In the famous phrase of the *Communist Manifesto,* "the proletariat has no country," they saw the indicative instead of the imperative (did Marx himself see the imperative save at a few scattered moments of Messianic exaltation?). To such the World War must have brought a bitter disappointment; it happened that the proletarians did have their countries, good or bad as the result may have been; it happened, also, whether for better or worse, that the German workingmen, instead of hurling themselves upon the German capitalists, rushed against the

French workingmen and the French capitalists. But it would be absolutely unjust to say that the socialists did not foresee the war. They incessantly warned against this terrible danger threatening the world—in their press, and in their international congresses (in Brussels in 1891, in Zurich in 1893, in Stuttgart in 1907, and in Basle in 1912). But what the socialists, and especially the Marxians, did not really foresee was the great effect a world war would necessarily have on their doctrine and destinies.

With the war, chaos began, a chaos in doctrine and a chaos in practice. And chaos reigns today more widely than ever. It is not so long ago that Haase, Scheidemann, and Liebknecht were friends and comrades, members of the "greatest and most efficiently organized party in the world," which polled four million votes at elections and had a theoretical common ground which was as intellectually brilliant as it was logically unassailable. Alas, from this common ground they have today drawn conclusions which lead them to shoot and kill one another. The "Marxian" press accuses the "Marxian" Scheidemann of having sent assassins to murder the "Marxian" Kurt Eisner! The "Marxian" Haase calls the "Marxian" Noske an executioner. The "Marxian" Hoffman has the "Marxian" Levin and Landauer shot. And all in the name of Marx! What a disgrace and what a débâcle!

This débâcle Lenin seems to have foreseen.

"What we are suffering from today in the realm of ideas," he wrote in 1908 in an article against the revisionists, "that is to say, our polemics against the theoretical correctives which are being applied to the doctrine of Marx, . . . the working class will necessarily have to suffer on an infinitely larger scale when the proletarian revolution brings all these questions under discussion to a crisis, brings all differences of opinion to bear on points of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and forces them in the full midst of battle to distinguish between friends and enemies and to discard poor allies in order the better to deal a decisive blow at the common adversary."[1]

It is true that a remarkable change in the situation took place which Lenin could not foresee. Former revisionists are found today among the independents, and former orthodox socialists among the Bolshevists!

The lesson that is forcibly taught by all this chaos is that fate seems thus to take vengeance on those who think they know the *whole* truth. "Scientific" socialism has the glory of giving social science a new method of investigation; but its error was in making a philosopher's stone out of the method of Marx. This stone was less a gold-maker than a gold brick.

Karl Marx, the great Utopian of scientific so-

[1] N. Lenin, *Marxisme et Révisionisme, A la mémoire de Karl Marx* (a collection of pamphlets), 2d edition, published by the Soviets of Petrograd, 1919, p. 11.

cialism, preached the advent of a new Messiah—the proletariat. Human experience is passing judgment on him today. It gives a flagrant lie to this "expectation" of an "economic savior" in the person of the proletariat, just as it confounds the hope in a *moral* Messiah, in the person of that same proletariat. All Marxians thought they saw "the refuge of all civilization, all intelligence, and all truth" in the working class. Not so, Marx himself, indeed. He had little confidence in human nature. But among the Bolshevists today, and especially among the German Spartacides and the French and Italian extremists, the best minds are infected with a moral, though not a sociological, Messianism. Realities are gradually taking vengeance on them. Experience is showing that the proletariat is very decidedly inferior to the bourgeoisie from the intellectual point of view. From the moral point of view it is at best equal but in no sense superior. The proletariat is more industrious, less selfish (it owns less to be selfish about), and more disposed to take risks (it has less to lose), than the bourgeoisie. It has, on the other hand, moral defects which come from its very low intellectual level. Under these conditions it can be said with great probability that the hope of a Messiah in the proletariat will bring Western Marxians the same cruel disillusionment that it has already brought the most sincere and intelligent Marxians in Russia. No, the moral and intellectual presuppositions of the socialist

régime are still far from being confirmed. We have the sad right today to be more pessimistic than Schiller was in 1793.

* * * * *

We know that Michael Bakunin furnished Turgienev, who knew him very well, with the prototype of his character, Roudin—a man devoid of will-power, a useless individual (though a good talker), incapable of doing anything serious in this world. This detail is very interesting when one thinks that before the rise of Lenin, Bakunin was the only Russian who ever played a very great rôle in the revolutionary history of Europe; and the results of his activity and thinking can still be felt today, a full half century after his death.

Bakunin was neither a philosopher nor a theorist. He undoubtedly had the gifts of a writer; but he wrote very little and then quite against his own inclinations. His writings, always vital and interesting in spite of their many faults, tend to be discursive, digressive. Most of them were left unfinished; others were published only after the author's death. He frequently changed his mind in the middle of a pamphlet, to the no little confusion of the reader. In the matter of style, Bakunin is the exact opposite of Karl Marx, his eternal antagonist, whose writings, from their logical form, are like mathematical theorems.

Lenin has not the broad rich nature of Bakunin,

to whom he is very inferior in native endowments. Lenin would be mortified to have anything at all in common with the great anarchist. Still the resemblance between these men is striking: many of Lenin's favorite thoughts derive from Bakunin—whether directly or indirectly does not concern us here.

The main idea underlying the political policies of Lenin (from the end of 1917 on) is the denial of the principle of universal suffrage. The Constituent Assembly is, in his eyes, "the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."[2]

This happens to be Bakunin's favorite postulate: "Universal suffrage," he says, "so long as it is exercised in a society where the people, the mass of the workers, are economically subject to a minority, can produce only fake elections, antidemocratic in essence, and absolutely opposed to the needs, instincts, and real will of the people."[3]

This, in turn, is a repetition of the famous dictum of Proudhon in his *Idées révolutionnaires:* "Universal suffrage is another name for counter-revolution." I may add that Bakunin considered this one of the cardinal differences between his own views and those of Marx. "The Marxians," he said, "good Germans that they are, naturally worship the power of the State, and they are also necessarily prophets of political and social disci-

[2] Lenin, *Report to the First Congress of the Communist International,* July 31, 1919.

[3] Michael Bakunin, "L'Empire Knouto-germanique" (1871), in his *Œuvres,* Vol. II, p. 311.

pline, champions of government 'from the top down'—always in the name of universal suffrage and the sovereignty of the masses, who have the privilege and the honor of electing their masters—and of obeying them.'"[4]

Lenin, however, goes much further than Bakunin. The latter rejected universal suffrage only so long as "inequality of economic and social conditions continues to prevail in the organization of society." Now the inequality, as everybody knows, has been suppressed in Russia through the generous efforts of the Bolshevists; but there has been no talk of re-establishing universal suffrage! Lenin finds the Soviet system much safer. And he is right!

The same is true in the matter of the "bill of rights." "In no capitalist country," says Lenin, "does 'general democracy' exist. Even in the most democratic bourgeois republic 'free speech and free assembly' are meaningless phrases," etc.[5] And here is what Bakunin says: "In the freest, most democratic, countries like England, Belgium, Switzerland, and the United States, the freedom, the political 'rights,' which the masses are supposed to enjoy, are nothing but a fiction."[6]

Furthermore Bakunin is but expressing one of Lenin's favorite exaggerations when he says that

[4] Bakunin, "*Lettre au journal La Liberté, de Bruxelles*" (1872), in his *Œuvres*, Vol. II, p. 345.
[5] Lenin, l.c.; *Humanité*, July 29-30, 1919.
[6] Bakunin, "*Le manuscrit rédigé à Marseille*" (1870), in *Œuvres*, Vol. IV., p. 190.

to enter the International one must "agree that the wealthy, exploiting, governing classes will never voluntarily, whether through generosity or a sense of justice, make any concession to the proletariat, however urgent, however insignificant, that concession appear; because to do so would be contrary to nature in general and to bourgeois nature in particular . . . which means that the workers will be able to attain their emancipation and gain their rights as human beings only after a great struggle, waged by the organized workers *of the whole world against the capitalists and exploiting land-owners of the whole world.*'"[7]

But most important is the fact that Bakunin and Lenin have the very same conception of the conditions which make a revolution possible.

Bakunin was always firmly convinced that a revolution could be started anywhere and at any time.

"Just suppose," he wrote in 1872 to his Italian friends, "a shout were raised in all the villages of Italy: 'War upon the castles! Peace for the cottage dwellers!' as was actually the cry during the revolt of the German peasants in 1520; or perhaps this slogan, which is even more expressive: 'The land for those who work it!' Do you think that many peasants in Italy would sit tight? Burn at the same time as many registries of deeds

[7] The italics are Bakunin's; see his *"Fragment"* (1872), in his *Œuvres*, Vol. IV., p. 423.

as possible, and the social revolution would be a fact!"

This dream of a social revolution led by the rural poor always haunted Bakunin's imagination. He reverts to it in several of his works. That point also Bakunin regarded as a fundamental difference between himself and Marx. According to Bakunin, "all nations, whether civilized or uncivilized," could free themselves at one stroke and go directly over to communism without following the outline laid down by Marx of a "stingily measured emancipation of the working classes not to be realized in full for a very, very long time."

On the important question of preservation or destruction of the State, the ideas of the anarchistic Bakunin are, of course, absolutely definite:

"Say 'State,' and you say violence, oppression, exploitation, and injustice, all erected into a system and made fundamental conditions for the very existence of society."[8]

"Say 'International Association of Workers,' and you deny the existence of the State."[9]

"The means and the prerequisite, if not the principal objective, of the revolution, is the annihilation of the principle of authority in all of its possible manifestations; and this means the complete abolition of the political, the juridical State."[10]

[8] Bakunin, "Letters to a Frenchman" (1870), in *Œuvres*, Vol. IV., p. 54. [9] Ibid., p. 45.

[10] Bakunin, *"L'Empire Knouto-germanique"* (1871), in *Œuvres*, Vol. II., p. 344.

Lenin's ideas on this question are vague and contradictory. We nevertheless find in the same report, presented to the Congress of the Third International, a paragraph (§ XX) which reads:

"The suppression of the State's power is the aim of all socialists, and first among them, of Marx himself.[11] Without the realization of this aim, real democracy—which means equality and freedom—cannot be realized. Now, this aim can be attained in practice only through the democracy of the Soviets, the proletarian democracy, that is; for in calling the labor organizations into direct and constant participation in the administration of the State, we immediately prepare for the total suppression of the latter."

However, in other paragraphs of this pamphlet, it is no longer a question of suppressing the State, but rather of re-enforcing it by bringing the masses into closer touch with its administration.

There is perfect agreement, nevertheless, between the ideas of Lenin and Bakunin with reference to administrative apparatus. Bakunin thought that in 1870 (Paris Commune) the great crime of the "pedantic lawyers and scholars who made up the Government of National Defense was not to have completely broken up, while they were about it, the administrative apparatus of armed France. . . ."

[11] Need we point out that this appeal to the authority of Marx is very risky? Bakunin considered his illustrious antagonist a "worshipper of the power of the State!"

Lenin prides himself on having smashed this apparatus in Russia to smithereens. "The Soviet organization of the State," he says, "is alone capable of overthrowing once and for all the old bourgeois bureaucracy which was, and had fatally to be, preserved under the capitalist régime, even in the most democratic republics; and which was indeed the greatest obstacle in the way of real democracy for industrial laborer and peasant. The Commune of Paris took the first step of historical importance in this direction, and the Russian Soviets have taken the second."

Some of the practical ideas which have made Lenin famous are mere plagiarisms of Bakunin's schemes. The device of sending expeditions of industrial workers and Red Guards out to the rural districts is nothing but that.

It would be wrong, however, to maintain that Lenin and Bakunin had the same notion of the general character of the Revolution. These two leaders are very different sorts of men and their outlooks cannot of course be identical.

Bakunin thought the Revolution could do everything, even defeat a foreign enemy. In this he was a loyal descendant of the Jacobins of 1793. His faith in the necessity for revolution in France was probably never stronger than after Sedan. He was convinced that the social revolution of the French peasants led by the *Corps-francs* would be able to destroy the army of Moltke and thwart

the imperialistic designs of Bismarck. All his writings of this period show this same unshakable faith.[12]

We know that Lenin was not such a fire-eater. His policies are inspired not by the memory of Valmy and Jemappes but by that of Kalusz and Tarnopol. He has no faith whatsoever in the military capacities of the Revolution. Bakunin, in 1871, wanted to convert the whole country into "one vast graveyard to bury the Prussians in." He preached "war to the death, a barbaric war, war with knife, tooth and nail, if necessary."[13] Lenin preferred to conclude the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. And today rumor has it that in the secret conferences at the Kremlin he is always the one to favor conciliation and amicable compromise with the Entente. Lenin knows that war was too much for the Czar and for Kerensky; he realizes it may be too much for him as well. He asks for peace accordingly, thereby showing himself once more a better strategist than Trotsky and his other associates.

On the other hand he is much more energetic than Bakunin in dealing with the defenseless. He preaches and prescribes the most bloody terror. Bakunin suffered infinitely more from reaction than did Lenin. He was twice condemned to death and spent many years of his life in the fortress of Olmütz, where he was chained to the wall; and in

[12] *Œuvres*, Vol. IV., p. 247
[13] Ibid., Vol. II., p. 293.

the terrible fortresses of Peter-and-Paul and of Schlusselburg, where he lost all his teeth from scurvy. Never, however, did he preach terrorism. Cruelty was repugnant to his generous spirit.

But, again unlike Lenin, Bakunin had neither personal ambition nor thirst for power. His works accordingly do not originate the idea of a dictatorship of the proletariat, though the social foundation on which he rested his socialist revolution, in theory, is exactly the same as that which Lenin is using today. While Lenin would never acknowledge this, Bakunin has expressed the situation in the baldest terms:

"By 'flower of the proletariat' I mean that great mass, those millions of non-civilized, illiterate, disinherited, poverty- stricken people whom Engels and Marx preferred to subject to the paternal régime of a *very strong government*"[14] —for their own good, of course, since, as everyone knows, all governments govern in the interests of the masses! "By 'flower of the proletariat' I mean that great popular rabble, that *canaille,* which, being practically free from all taint of bourgeois civilization, carries within itself—in its passions, its instincts, its aspirations, in all the needs and sufferings of its general position in society—the germs of the socialism of the future. This *canaille,* taken by itself alone, is strong enough this very minute to start the

[14] "These are the literal words used by Engels in a very instructive letter written to our friend Caffiero." (Bakunin.)

Social Revolution and carry it to triumphant victory.''[15]

* * * * *

M. Georges Sorel, in my opinion, has been thought of too much as the theorist of the proletarian revolt through the general strike. That is perhaps his own fault, for he has too often identified his work with that mediocre notion, which the post-war revolutions in Russia, Germany, Austria, and Hungary have most decidedly refuted. M. Sorel is nevertheless the spiritual father of syndicalism. He, alone among all socialists perhaps, is the philosopher, the psychologist, and even the poet, of ''creative violence.'' Karl Marx was only a sociologist and as such was without doubt infinitely superior to Sorel; but it probably would never have occurred to him to take the psychological theory of violence seriously. In this, more than anything else, we find the spiritual kinship between Sorel and Lenin.

The theorist and present leader of Bolshevism borrowed from Karl Marx (misrepresenting him often, though not in my opinion, as a general rule) the theory of the class struggle; the notion of the ''proletariat-Messiah'' (''scientific'' socialism); the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and that of the ''catastrophic collapse'' of capitalism. From Bakunin he took his faith in the possibility of the communist revolution no matter how, no

[15] Bakunin, *"Fragment,"* in *Œuvres*, Vol. IV., p. 414.

matter when, no matter where; and this faith he managed—Heaven knows how—to reconcile with his Marxism. Finally he found in Sorel, who is not one of his favorites meanwhile, a deep conviction of the necessity and of the holiness of violence.

I will not give in detail the theory of the proletarian strike which is to Sorel the theory of the Social Revolution itself. I think everyone is sufficiently familiar with that famous theory. I will simply quote a few fragments from his hymn to "creative violence," which is particularly timely today in the light of our experience with the Great War and with the Bolshevist revolution.

"Not only can the violence of the proletariat make sure of the revolution of the future, but it seems also to be the only means within reach of the nations of Europe, enervated as they are by humanitarian mollycoddleism, to regain their former virility. Violence forces capitalism to concern itself solely with its material rôle in life; and tends to give it back the aggressive assertiveness it formerly possessed. A growing and solidly organized working-class can force the capitalist to remain passionate in the industrial struggle: if, in the face of a rich bourgeoisie greedy for conquest, a united and revolutionary proletariat should arise, capitalistic society would attain its historical perfection. . . . The danger which threatens the future of the world can be averted if the proletariat clings obstinately to its revolu-

tionary ideas, so as to realize as nearly as possible the conception of Marx. . . . The violence of the proletariat exercised as a pure and simple manifestation of class feeling, and class struggle, appears in this light to be a very beautiful, a very heroic thing. . . . Those who teach the populace to strive for some superlatively high ideal of justice, forward looking toward the future, cannot be cursed out too roundly. Such people would fix permanently on the State the ideas resulting in all the bloody scenes of 1793; while the concept of the class struggle tends to purify the concept of violence. . . . The idea of the general strike, continually revitalized by the emotions which proletarian violence provokes, fosters an absolutely epic state of mind. . . .'"[16]

Sorel is a very personal thinker; he is also, as he says himself, a self-educated man. This combination was necessary, indeed, to create the philosophy of violence and the myth of the general strike. Three men, in all his vast readings, seem to have had a particular influence on Sorel: Marx, Renan and Bergson—one of the strangest mixtures conceivable: "Capital," "The Prayer on the Akropolis," "Time and Freewill"—syndicalism! To this list we might add the names of Darwin, Nietzsche, and Hartman.

This peculiar amalgam of ideas, worked out in the intellectual laboratory inside Sorel's head,

[16] Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, pp. 128, 130, 161, and 388.

forms a whole which is very original, intensely personal, and often interesting. In studying this system, today especially, one is inclined to ask why Sorel selected the general strike as the one supreme manifestation of violence. All his arguments could be just as well or even better applied to military mutiny and civil war. It seems that in this matter Sorel was much impressed by the failure of the first Russian revolution. But, now, after we have seen a number of successful revolutions, I wonder whether, if Sorel were writing his *Reflections on Violence* over again, he would not abandon the idea of the general strike, which has failed, and create a new myth of armed civil war? I do not mean this as facetious merely. The fact is that in reality, the general strike plays no necessary part at all in Sorel's system.

It is true that the "normal development of strikes" entails "a string of acts of violence" which serves to keep up the morale of revolutionary syndicalism. This "string" has a peculiar fascination for Sorel, especially when it is a question of bourgeois employers who are disposed to make their employees happy.

Certain it is, at any rate, that the Russian Revolution has taken place without any proletarian strike, and has surpassed in its consequences the wildest of Sorel's dreams. The "string of acts of violence" which follow a revolution are infinitely more imposing than those following on a general strike. And since experi-

ence has shown that civil war is quite possible in our time, I do not see what remains of the principal *raison d'être* of all this strike mythology.

What is absolutely incomprehensible is Sorel's understanding of the future. Let us grant that the transition from capitalism to socialism is carried out, once and for all, under "catastrophic" conditions which are beyond human foresight. But after that? What use, after the revolution, does Sorel think he can make of those brutal forces of hatred and violence which have been unchained and exalted by the fierce struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? The analyst of the *Reflections* has no answer to give to this question. How could he have any? He says himself that his sociological tendencies are fundamentally pessimistic. We must not therefore expect from him the usual cant about a Heaven on earth so soon as hated capitalism has been crushed. But since the class struggle, which quite entrances Sorel today, will have to disappear after the fall of capitalism; and as there can be no more strikes in a society without classes, what on earth will become of Our Lady Violence —all dressed up with no place to go? What other mythology can be improvised to take the place of the proletarian strike? But to suppose that violence, one of the primitive instincts of man, to begin with, and which has been pent up, nourished, whipped to a frenzy, as the syndicalists would

wish, will suddenly disappear after the mysterious "catastrophe" of the transition from capitalism to socialism is utterly naïve from the psychological point of view—so naïve in fact, that a man of Sorel's ingeniousness would probably suppose no such thing. Well, then, what other answer can he give to this question? Or does a redeeming agnosticism again relieve him of the need of answering?

Since the general strike is nothing but a myth to Sorel, I will refrain from analyzing its theory as the critics of syndicalism generally do. I will simply note that, in the Russian and German revolutions, the proletarian strike, like the general strike, played hardly any part of consequence, for the simple reason that both revolutions were brought about by the soldiers and not by the workers at all. This was a turn of affairs quite unforeseen by Sorel, as it was, moreover, by most socialists.

On the other hand, Sorel guessed very closely what the governmental policies of the revolution would be. "Experience has always shown that our revolutionists will argue from 'reasons of State' as soon as they get into power. They will then adopt police methods and regard justice as a weapon to abuse their enemies with.[17] If by chance our parliamentary socialists should gain control of the government, they would show themselves to be true successors of the Inquisition, of

[17] Ibid., p. 156.

the Old Régime and of Robespierre. . . . Thanks to this *reform*, we might again see the State triumphant at the hands of hangman and headsman."[18]

I do not know whether Lenin and Trotsky can be counted among the "parliamentary socialists" for whom Sorel has so little affection; but I do know that these gloomy prophecies, the pessimism of which might have seemed exaggerated before the Bolshevist revolution, have on the contrary fallen far short of the truth. The Bolshevists have literally re-established the methods of the Inquisition, of the Old Régime, of Robespierre—save for the political tribunals perhaps. Lenin was able to dispense with these by shooting his enemies without any trial at all. That, in fact, is much simpler!

Sorel thought, however, that war, the symbol of which, according to him, is "proletarian violence," was above the mean and criminal methods "parliamentary socialists" would use once they were in power. "Everything which concerns war is done without hatred and without the spirit of revenge."

I am far from questioning the accuracy of the comparison between proletarian violence and military carnage; but I may say that Sorel has neither seen the wars of the past nor foreseen the character of the one we have all just been

[18] Ibid., p. 160.

witnessing and of which Bolshevism is the hateful, as it is the logical, outcome.

Lenin's governmental policy is absolutely permeated with Sorel's faith in violence and in the salutary effects of violence. He agrees with Sorel, furthermore, on more than one specific point. The question of the State, for instance, is disposed of in the *Reflections* in the following manner: "The syndicalists do not propose to reform the State, as did the men of the 18th century; they intend to destroy it; because they are determined to realize the idea of Marx that the socialist revolution must not end by replacing one governing minority with another."

Lenin, who claims to be governing in the name of the majority of workers and peasants[19] (the elections to the Constituent Assembly and to the municipalities did not prove anything, you see), absolutely agree with this: he considered that his task had to be one of continued and systematic destruction, for a while at least. "There are moments in history," he says, "when it is most important for the success of revolution to pile up as much débris as possible, to blow up, that is, as many old institutions as possible."[20]

He accomplished this task wonderfully. He did it so well, indeed, that later on when he decided to start "the prosaic job of clearing up the junk" he failed completely. Never was power more

[19] N. Lenin, *The Problems of the Soviets in Power*, p. 4.
[20] Lenin, Ibid., p. 40.

absolute than that of the Bolshevists; and yet Russia has never been a "State." "Such huge bodies are too awkward to get to their feet again when once they have fallen down. They cannot be held up when once they have lost their balance; and their fall is always a very violent fall."[21]

And here is another very Sorelian idea which dominates Lenin's mind: "It can be said that a great danger threatening syndicalism would be any attempt to imitate democracy. It is far better to be satisfied for a while with weak and chaotic organization than to fall under the domination of syndicates patterned after the political institutions of the bourgeoisie."[22] Now we read in Lenin's great speech at the Pan-Russian Congress of the Councils of National Economy, held in Moscow in May, 1918, that "there is a petty bourgeois tendency to transform the members of the Soviets into 'parliamentaries' on the one hand and, on the other, into bureaucrats. We must struggle against all that."

As intellectual types, Lenin and Sorel are not very much alike. Sorel's thought, in spite of its inconsistencies and erratic inequalities, is certainly more interesting, more original, but much less coherent. This latter defect is due perhaps to the disadvantage he labors under of having a very wide but somewhat undigested erudition. Of course he often tries, like Lenin, to abuse

[21] Descartes, *Discours de la méthode.*
[22] Sorel, Ibid., p. 268.

"bourgeois science;" but that task is uncongenial enough to a writer who on every page refers two or three times to works ninety per cent of which are not socialistic.

Lenin is infinitely more adept than Sorel at abuse of "capitalistic science" and "capitalistic philosophy." In his political works he hardly ever quotes a scientist not of "the Party"—and if he does, it is to say, with all due deference to Sorel, that Bergson is a "bourgeois" and a "Christer!"

As for the practical accomplishment of Russian Bolshevism, it finds its condemnation in this fragment from Sorel which I will quote in full although it is a trifle long:

"I call attention to the danger which revolutions, produced in an era of economic decay, present for the future of a civilization. All Marxians do not seem to have paid due attention to Marx's ideas on this subject. He thought that the 'great catastrophe' would be preceded by a terrible economic crisis; but we must not confuse the crisis Marx had in mind with any form of disintegration. Crises seem to him the result of a too daring adventure in production which has created productive agencies out of proportion to the automatic regulating methods at the disposal of capital. Such an adventure takes for granted that the future be regarded as promising for the most powerful capitalistic enterprises, and that confidence in a coming period of economic ex-

pansion be absolutely preponderant at the time in question. For the middle classes, who may still find existence possible under the capitalist régime, to venture joining in revolt with the proletariat, prospects of production must seem to them as brilliant as the conquest of America must have seemed to the English peasants who left ancient Europe to hurl themselves into a life of danger in the new world."

We wonder whether present-day Europe (not to mention Russia) with its hundreds of billions of debts, offers, at just the moment chosen by Lenin, the glowing economic outlook which the author of the *Reflections on Violence* requires for successful revolution!

CHAPTER VIII

SOME FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF BOLSHEVISM

I COME now to the Communist doctrine as it is today. *Humanité* recently published[1] a long report which Lenin made to the Congress of the Third International at Moscow, in March, 1919. "It is," says *Humanité,* " a very important document in which the powerful theorist has set forth his ideas in the form of propositions on the controversial question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and bourgeois democracy."

This document is indeed interesting. Powerful or not, Lenin is unquestionably the only theorist of the Bolshevist doctrine. Bolshevism has its orators like Trotsky and Zinoviev; its men of letters, like Lunatcharsky, Kamenev, Vorovsky, Sfeklov; its business men, like Krassin; and finally its ikons like Maxim Gorky; it has, however, only one theorist and philosopher—Lenin.[2] As is evident, the authorship, as well as the formal official character of this document,[3] gives it ex-

[1] July 29, 30, and 31, 1919.

[2] Details of the personality of most of the Bolshevist leaders can be found in a very interesting book by Etienne Antonelli, *La Russie bolchéviste,* Paris, 1919.

[3] At the Third International all nations, I think, even the Hindus and the Patagonians, were represented. Messrs. Sa-

ceptional importance. We can consider it the last, the most authoritative, word on Bolshevist doctrine.

Lenin begins by saying that to talk of democracy in general, without specifying the class you are talking about, "is just making fun of the principles of socialism and especially of the doctrine of the class struggle." Why universal suffrage, which gives absolutely equal rights *de jure* and practically *de facto* to the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry, in the transformation of society through legislation, should be "bourgeois democracy," Lenin does not explain. He considers it an axiom posited on the authority of Karl Marx (that might be disputed), and on the historical experience of the Commune.

"The Commune of Paris," he said, "lauded by all those who pose as socialists (for they know that this praise wins great and sincere sympathy for them among the laboring masses), showed with striking force the quite accidental, the very relative, value of bourgeois parliamentary government and bourgeois democracy—institutions which may have marked great progress over the confusion of the Middle Ages, but which today, when we have the proletarian revolution before us, should be radically modified. Nevertheless,

doul and Pascal spoke for France. I do not know the names of the German delegates; Karl Radek, who is a German off and on (when he is not an Austrian, a Pole, a Russian or a Ukrainian), could not have been there, as he was interned in Berlin.

at just this time when the Soviet movement is carrying on the work of the Commune, the traitors to socialism forget all the practical lessons the Commune of Paris taught us and go on repeating the old bourgeois rhapsody on 'democracy in general.' The Commune, my friends, was a non-parliamentary institution!" (§5).

What a sudden passion for the Commune of Paris! And yet here is what Lenin wrote about this same Commune fourteen years ago:

"History records, in the Commune, a labor government which was not then able to distinguish between the elements of the democratic, and the elements of the socialist revolution, which confused the problems of the struggle for the Republic with those of the struggle for socialism; which was not able to solve the problem of a vigorous military offensive against Versailles; and which made the mistake of not taking possession of the Bank of France. . . . In short, whether one is talking of the Commune of Paris, or of any other Commune, the answer will always be that it was a government which *ours must not imitate.*"[4]

What is the Soviet Government, after all? Is it a government so inspired by the Commune as to avoid imitations of the Commune—this is what Lenin desired in 1905? Or is it, on the contrary, a Government "which, as everybody knows, is

[4] N. Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy* (in Russian), Geneva, 1905. The italics in the quotation are Lenin's.

carrying on the work of the Commune," as Lenin said in 1919?

In no other matter is the hypocrisy of Bolshevism so apparent as in this question of the form of government. For many years they themselves glorified the notion of a Constituent Assembly. We have already seen how Lenin advocated this idea in his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*. We know that the resolutions of the first Bolshevist Congress (London, in May, 1905), inspired and dictated by Lenin, expressly proclaimed (§2) the necessity of "setting up, after the revolution, a provisional revolutionary government alone capable of guaranteeing absolutely free elections, and of convoking on a basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot, a Constituent Assembly expressing the real will of the people." Moreover, Trotsky published several pamphlets demanding the summoning of a Constituent Assembly with equal urgency. Nor did all this take place before the war when problems presented themselves in a different light. In 1917, also, the Bolshevists were forever harping on the necessity of convoking the Constituent Assembly. The greatest crime they attributed to the provisional governments of Prince Lvov and of Kerensky was that of "sabotaging" the Constituent Assembly and of delaying the general election on a variety of pretexts.[5] They did not, it is true,

[5] Trotsky had the impudence to repeat this reproach after the dissolution of the Assembly by the Bolshevists (*The Advent of Bolshevism*, Paris, 1919, p. 48).

abandon the Soviet idea, but at the same time they asked for the *immediate* convoking of the Assembly.[6]

It was only toward the end of 1917, when the obviously anti-Bolshevist results of the election —held under Soviet control and subject to the most brutal pressure—began to be seen, that their press started a campaign, at first as prudent and as tentative as it was treacherous, not so much against the principle of the Constituent Assembly as against the Constituent Assembly itself. The Bolshevists were obviously trying to see how the land lay: they did not know whether the people would follow their candidates. Then they gradually grew bolder. It became evident that the public was too tired of fighting to give armed assistance to anyone whatsoever. They were sure of the government regiments in Petrograd, which had been bribed by the promise of not being sent to the front. The bulk of the army actually engaged with the Germans was clamoring to get home and would probably accept anything done by anybody who promised peace at any price. Lenin staked everything on one throw; the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in the most brutal

[6] This does not prevent Lenin from quietly writing today, in the same "Report on the German Independents": "The absurd attempt to combine the Soviet system (the dictatorship of the proletariat) with the Constituent Assembly (the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie) clearly reveals the intellectual poverty of the yellow Socialists and Social Democrats—their narrow, bourgeois, reactionary outlook, and their timid retreat before the ever-increasing strength of the new democracy of the proletariat."

manner. The sailor Jelesniakof was the Bonaparte of this Communist "18th Brumaire." Then the Bolshevists immediately began to trot out arguments, or rather dogmatic affirmations, against the whole principle of universal suffrage. Today the Bolshevists have good reason for thinking that they are hated by the people, that elections based on universal suffrage throughout Russia as a whole would show an overwhelming majority against them; and their theoretical assertions are as frank as may be. In this famous report (§21) Lenin explains quite bluntly: "The Constituent Assembly—that is to say, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie!"

Today the Soviets are the whole show. It is Soviet this and Soviet that. The word and the idea have become world famous—the word adopted by all the languages on earth, and the idea by all admirers of Bolshevism. Who indeed invented "Sovietism?" Was it Lenin? Not at all.[7]

It was the notorious Parvus.

Lenin, if you please, makes that assertion himself in an article which appeared in the *Münchner Post* in November, 1918. Lenin at that time was very hostile to Sovietism, which he styles a "Menchevist invention." It was in reply to Lenin's

[7] I have said before in the first chapter of this book that Lenin, according to his biography written by Zinoviev, attended only two or three sessions of the Soviet of Petrograd in 1905, and then only as a simple spectator in the public gallery. It is easily understood that if he had been a partisan of Sovietism at that time his rôle would have been less in the background; he would have been president in place of Krousalef-Nossar, Trotsky, or Parvus!

strictures that Parvus set forth the following ideas:

1. That the workers and soldiers would be devoted to the Revolution only when they themselves gained control of the revolutionary movement;

2. That, for this reason, the interest of the proletariat would certainly become dominant in the Revolution;

3. And that this eventuality would finally lift the Revolution out of the mire of factional quarrel and sectarian dispute inside the revolutionary movement.[8]

My interest here again is simply in keeping matters straight. Lenin is not the originator of "Sovietism," the great revolutionary idea which is now sweeping the world. It was Parvus, Parvus the henchman of the Sultan and of Kaiser William II, Parvus the speculator, Parvus, the war profiteer,[9] Parvus, finally, an outstanding German propagandist who, as such, also invented the ingenious plea—for socialist consumption—that Germany had the right to victory because she had the most powerful proletariat and the best developed industry and should therefore be preserved to lay the groundwork of world revolution!

Of course the fact that Parvus invented Sovietism does not prove anything against the idea

[8] E. Buisson, *The Bolsheviks*, Paris, 1919, p. 55.

[9] Parvus admits having made several millions in trade during the war.

itself. Neither does it prove anything against Lenin. What difference does all that make, provided Lenin did undergo a radical change of mind, did come sincerely to believe in Sovietism, as he had once sincerely believed in the Constituent Assembly? Unfortunately, however, he never sincerely believed in either of them. Here is another little pill for the idolators of both Lenin and the Soviet idea to swallow. I am taking it from a source which I consider above suspicion; the same biography of Lenin by Zinoviev. The Communist Boswell, without suspecting the trouble he may be making in the end for his master and friend, sets forth Lenin's state of mind after the failure of his first attempt at a *coup d'état* in July, 1917: "We went through a period," says Zinoviev, "when we feared everything was lost. Comrade Lenin even thought for a moment that the Soviets, corrupted by the Accordists,[10] might not prove to be of much use. He threw out the hint that we might have to seize power over the heads of the Soviets."[11]

How splendid all this is! How grateful we should be to M. Zinoviev for giving us this information! Oh, the principles of these impostors! They stand by universal suffrage so long as they think it will give the Bolshevists a majority. They let universal suffrage go hang the moment they see that the Constituent Assembly is very decided-

[10] "Accordists" (*Soglachateli*) were those who favored an understanding with the more moderate political elements.
[11] Zinoviev, *N. Lenin*, Petrograd, 1918, pp. 58-59.

ly against them. They then proclaim the holy principle of Sovietism! But if, at a given moment, it looks as if the Soviets themselves were being "corrupted" by anti-Bolshevism, the password is immediately sent out that "we had perhaps better gain control without the Soviets." For "Sovietism," then, some other phrase could have been substituted—the dictatorship of the Bolshevist Committee, perhaps, or the dictatorship of Lenin—why not? Rest assured that whatever is proposed, the sympathizers of Bolshevism the world over, who live in a perpetual state of grace, would have immediately accepted it with the same awestruck and inspired admiration. The situation is quite as simple as that!

It is perfectly obvious that Lenin was determined to gain power on any principle that would put him into power. He was bent on satisfying his dangerous mania for social experiment. All those famous "principles" which some people are so carefully studying today, all those *theses, propositions, preambles, paragraphs* (Lenin excels in such rigmarole), were pretexts created *ad hoc*—that, and nothing but that!

Lenin, in fact, quickly realized that instead of acting "without the Soviets," it was more convenient to emasculate and denature such expressions of popular will as survive in this parody of ideal democracy.

Russians who have lived under the Soviet régime cannot help laughing when they read the

"Constitution" ("fundamental law" are the words used) of the "Federated Socialist Republic of the Soviets of Russia," adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Soviets, July 10, 1918.

It is not so much that the document is very badly and pretentiously written, with no regard for logic, and with a total absence of juridical training on the part of its authors. Logic, after all, is only a bourgeois prejudice; and one cannot reasonably expect much technical jurisprudence among men who scarcely know how to read and write. But the amusing thing is the contrast between all these pretentious articles, sections, paragraphs, and items, and the sad realities they hide.[12] It requires extraordinary impudence to assert that the members of the Soviets are elected by the people; for there has never been such a cynical parody on the election system since the world began—suffice it to recall that, except for Bolshevists, there is no freedom of speech or press in Soviet Russia. But things are even worse than that: threats, extortion, terror, falsification of ballots. It is a case merely of nomination of candidates — that is all the elections in the "Socialist Federated Republic of the Soviets of Russia" amount to. The members of the Soviets are elected, but by Bolshevist committees!

[12] Lenin, Lunatcharsky, Kamenev and Vorovsky are, I believe, the only Bolshevist leaders who have a certain amount of education. Trotsky is quite untrained as his writings show, though they reveal intelligence and unquestionable journalistic talent. As for Zinoviev, Uritsky, Volodarsky, Peters, Dsierjinsky, Sverdlov, Kalinine, Goukovsky, they are ignorant men in the strict sense of the word.

For that matter, the Bolshevists do not conceal this fact, or at least they do so very badly. Here is the resolution they adopted at the Congress of the Third International:

"On the basis of the propositions and after hearing the reports of the representatives of the different countries, the Congress of the Communist International declares that the main duty of communist parties in countries where the Soviet system does not yet exist is:

"1. To explain to the laboring masses the historical significance, the political and practical necessity, of creating a new proletarian democracy to take the place of bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system;

"2. To develop the Soviet system among the employees in all manufacturing concerns, in army and navy, and among the tillers of the soil and the poor peasants;

"3. To make sure of a solid and trustworthy communist majority inside every Soviet."[13]

Some naïve person will probably ask how a "solid and trustworthy" majority can be assured if the principle of free elections is admitted. But those of us who have seen these elections will not ask such questions. We know very well how it is assured. That is why we shall not pay much attention to this "Constitution of the Federated Socialist Republic of the Soviets of Russia," limiting our comment to a few words about Article

[13] *Humanité*, July 31, 1919.

IV, Chapter XIII, Paragraph 65, items *a* to *g*. This "paragraph" provides:

"The following people can neither vote nor be elected:

"a. Those who employ labor to derive profit therefrom.

"b. Those who live on income not derived from their own labor: income from capital, industrial enterprise, landed property, etc.

"c. Private business men, middlemen, or commercial travellers and salesmen.

"d. Monks and priests belonging to ecclesiastical and religious orders.

"e. Officers and employees of the former police force, of the special corps of *gendarmes*, and of the 'Okhrana,' as well as members of the former ruling dynasty of Russia.

"f. Persons legally declared afflicted with mental diseases, the insane, and those under guardianship.

"g. Persons condemned for felonies committed for gain, during the period fixed by law or court sentence."

I will add, for the amusement of jurists, that the preceding paragraph (§64) enumerates, in just as detailed a manner but in a slightly different language, those who *have* the right to vote and be elected to the Soviets. The reader must therefore not be astonished at not finding children mentioned under *item g* of paragraph 65. It is expressly stated in the preceding paragraph that

the right to vote belongs to "all those who have attained the age of 18 on the day of the elections." The local Soviets, however, after ratification by the central authorities, may "lower the legal age fixed by this article."[14] This Chapter XIII "On Suffrage" with its numerous "and so forths" is so well drawn up that if the Constitution and all its articles, including paragraphs 64 and 65, were not a joke in the first place, the authorities would be put to it to define which citizens of the "Federated Socialist Republic of the Soviets of Russia" have the right to vote and which have not.

To cite only the most absurd passages in these two paragraphs:

Though the industries of Russia have been nationalized, paragraph 65, section *b*, deprives those who derive an income from manufacturing enterprise from voting. Trade has all been nationalized (on paper, of course); and yet section *c* deals with private (?) business men, middlemen, and salesmen. Landed proprietors, among those who live on an income not derived from their own labor, are also disfranchised. What is this all about? The land, which has been "nationalized," is today in the hands of peasants. Does the income of a peasant who works with his family on a

[14] The local Soviets probably have no great knowledge of the Constitution and of the rights it gives them, and of this one in particular. In all administrative departments, all the commissariats swarm with boys who are under the legal age fixed by this article.

hundred acres of "nationalized" land, come from his work or from landed property? Has the peasant the right to vote or not?

But, for that matter, if one were trying to catalogue all the foolish things in this "Constitution," one could choose almost any paragraph. I selected the sections relating to the ballot because it struck me that if this paragraph were literally applied almost all the Bolshevists themselves would suffer; for with the exception of "members of the former ruling dynasty of Russia," there are representatives among them of all the classes mentioned in sections *a, b, c, d, e, f,* and *g,* of paragraph 65. No end of adventurers are settling their little affairs under the Bolshevist standard. Some of the officials of the Soviet Republic have made fortunes which would make poor Bela Kuhn turn green with envy. This gentleman on "retiring" took the paltry sum of five million kronen with him. Nor are "persons condemned for felonies committed for gain," a rare exception in the Soviet Government. And only one guilty person out of a thousand is condemned —thanks for that much![15] Who else? The offi-

[15] Lunatcharsky, the People's Commissar of Education, recently said to a young French girl who was trying to get back her jewelry which had been left on deposit in a bank and who had gone through all the preliminary steps successfully only to meet refusal from the last official: "What can you expect, Mademoiselle? You had hard luck, that's all. You have run across an honest man, probably the only one we have. Take his name! He is a pearl of rare quality." (Robert Vaucher, *L'Enfer bolchévik à Pétrograd,* Paris, 1919, p. 217.)

cers and members of the former police, of the special corps of *gendarmes,* and of the Okhrana? They are just swarming in Bolshevist circles. The Commissars themselves have often deplored the presence of this vermin in their midst "eating away," as they charge, "the flower of the communist régime." Lunatics? As many as you like, especially sadists. Who, for example, would call Peters a normal person? The monks? That depends on the order. Some of the Bolshevists (the best ones perhaps) seem to have altogether the mentality and psychology of our old ascetics.[16]

The dictatorship of the proletariat, which this Constitution tries to express in legal form, is a Marxian idea, expounded—as is undeniable—in many of the early works of Karl Marx. It is true that attempts have been made by real Marxians, such as Akimov, to interpret Marx in a different sense.[17] Akimov tried to show that Marx understood the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as a democratic government.

His arguments are not without some weight. The Commune, which Marx and Engels considered a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was in reality, even as they describe it, a government

[16] M. Pascal, a French officer who had been sent to Russia and who suddenly turned Bolshevist, is an example of this. I had the pleasure of knowing him when he was a clerical Catholic. That was just two years ago.

[17] Akimov, *Contribution to the Study of the Work of the Second Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Russia* (in Russian), Geneva, 1904, pp. 36-53.

based on universal suffrage applied to the region around Paris. He recalls how Marx (in *The Class Struggle in France* and in the *18th Brumaire*) accused the bourgeoisie of abandoning universal suffrage and of creating, thereby, "a class parliament of usurpation." He also points out that the dictatorship of the proletariat was never part of any early platform of the Marxian socialist parties of western Europe. The programmes of Erfurt and Vienna, those of the Belgian, Swedish, and Italian socialist Parties, and the statutes of the International, do not contain the phrase. It appears first in the declaration of the Social-Democratic Party in Russia. Akimov finally quotes Marx's description and characterization of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (which, we must add, was far surpassed in horror by the present régime in Russia), and very judiciously observes:

"So there you have dictatorship! Is that what the proletariat is asked to struggle and die for? Need we merely substitute the word 'proletariat' for the word 'bourgeoisie' to get the ideal state of the future we all look forward to?"

As I have already suggested, however, this question is of very little importance to us. Whether Karl Marx was or was not in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat neither increases nor diminishes the value of it as a political concept, the fallacy of which has been clearly demonstrated by the Russian experiment.

Events in Russia have shown first of all that the dictatorship *of* the proletariat is in reality a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. Never, in history, has a parliament been more weak, more impotent, more abject, and more lacking in all dignity, than the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the face of their Bolshevist masters. Just remember that the Central Russian Council greeted the signing of the infamous Peace of Brest-Litovsk with a burst of applause, though that treaty aroused protest even on the part of the People's Commissars. The slight deference the Bolshevist leaders pay their parliament is evident enough, a degradation due on the one hand to the low average of education in the Russian working class, and consequently in its delegates, and on the other to the election system described above.

Edward Bernstein said twenty years ago[18] that the present moral and intellectual development of the working class was such that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be nothing but a dictatorship of soap-boxers and editorial writers. This observation, which was made before the practical experience of our day, undoubtedly shows great wisdom. Those of us who have actually lived through such a dictatorship can go even further. We may say that Bernstein's observation holds true of large cities such as Moscow

[18] E. Bernstein, *Theoretical Socialism and Practical Social Democracy*, pp. 297-298.

and Petrograd. In the provinces and villages the dictatorship of the proletariat is more often a dictatorship of bandits of the worst sort. The most lawless elements of the population—brigands, robbers, vagrants, ne'er-do-wells—emerge from their dens to terrify peasant, workingman and honest citizen and create horrors which still await their Dostoievsky. A dictatorship of soapboxers in the large cities, a dictatorship of brigands in the villages and provinces, a combination of the two in the medium sized towns (as well as in certain central institutions such as the famous Extraordinary Commission)—that is what the dictatorship of the proletariat means.

It is very likely the experiment would not be materially different in the most civilized western countries.

We conclude, therefore, that every socialist party which aims to substitute clear and accurate thinking for pure demagogy must take the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat in hand and put an end to it as a most unfortunate idea. In Russia the Socialist Labor Party did this expressly and with great emphasis by saying that it did not recognize any dictatorship whatsoever, whether that of the proletariat or of any other class, group, or persons. The socialist parties of the west would do well to follow this example.

In democratic countries, where the working proletariat represents a majority of the population, the idea is absurd, since universal suffrage

gives the workers a deciding voice on all political questions. If these countries are not ruled by socialist governments, that proves simply that all the workers are not socialists; in which case a dictatorship of the proletariat, even if it were a *bona fide* one (not, that is, a dictatorship of cliques) would always mean a tyranny of one part of the working class over the rest and over the majority of the population as a whole. In a country like Russia where the proletariat is a small minority, the system is the worst kind of autocracy, and one which ends by arousing the hatred of the great majority of the population, and of the peasants in particular, against all proletarian and socialist ideas. This state of affairs is not only unjustified, but extremely dangerous for society at large. The harm which the Bolshevists have done to socialism cannot be reckoned. The lesson to be derived from this should be a general repudiation of this evil doctrine on the part of all socialists.

Will this be the case? The opposite appears more likely; for it seems that hard and costly experience alone is able to teach humanity anything.

CHAPTER IX

LENIN AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

ALONG with the "dictatorship of the proletariat," Lenin's report to the Congress of the Third International deals with two other questions of no less importance—freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech. Here is what Lenin says:

"Moreover, the workers know very well that even in the most democratic bourgeois republic 'freedom of assembly' is only an empty phrase; because the rich always have the best public and private buildings at their disposal; they have ample leisure; and they enjoy the protection of the bourgeois authorities. The proletariat in the cities and in the country as well as the unpropertied peasants, an overwhelming majority of the population in short, have none of these three advantages. As long as things stand this way, equality, 'pure democracy,' is nothing but a snare and a delusion. To obtain true equality and inaugurate true democracy for the workers, their oppressors must first be deprived of their magnificent public and private buildings; the workers must be given leisure; and freedom of assembly must be assured, not by the sons of the aristocracy

or the capitalist class placed, as officers, in command of stupid soldiers, but by armed workers themselves."

It is evident that Lenin knows how to make full use of the injustices of the capitalist world. Who can deny that such injustices are as numerous as they are cruel? And yet this whole tirade is as false as it is hypocritical.

Freedom of assembly in the bourgeois democratic republics is not an empty phrase; and Lenin, who so often had the floor in meetings in Paris, Zurich and Geneva, knows this better than anybody else. The "sons of the aristocracy" and "capitalist officers" who guarded these meetings in normal times before the war were, actually, policemen of the civil service who were not much interested in what they heard and were not much inclined to mix in. Old timers might perhaps be able to mention a few cases where freedom of speech was interfered with by the police; but everyone must admit that such cases were extremely rare—political anachronisms, so to speak. I personally do not remember any such acts of violence. In the Saint Paul Riding School, in the Salle Wagram, and in Hyde Park, I have heard the most inflammatory tirades against the existing order, against capitalism, against government in general and governments in particular (against the Czar, Nicholas I, and M. Aristide Briand, for example); I have heard anarchistic and regicide speeches; I have heard Sebastian

Faure and the Spanish anarchists; and never did the police who were listening inside or watching at the door—with faces expressing the reverse of sympathy—intervene in any way.

In London the police often risk their lives to uphold freedom of speech, interfering to protect from the violence of an enraged crowd revolutionary orators who insult the government and the police. In fact the only cases I ever personally witnessed, where meetings were interrupted by brute force of arms, were in Russia, under the Czar and at the beginning[1] of the Bolshevist rule. I will also venture the opinion that the armed workers led by Bolshevist boys behaved far more brutally than the *gendarmes* of the Czar under the leadership of the "sons of the aristocracy."

But, says Lenin, the rich have the "best public and private buildings" at their disposal. The most magnificent of these unquestionably are the Parliament buildings. Very well! In the Palais-Bourbon, in the House of Commons, and in the Reichstag, all orators, rich and poor, have one and the same right to absolute freedom of speech. The only exception is, again, the Tauride Palace at Petrograd, which has been visited by "stupid soldiers" on three occasions. The First and the Second Duma were dissolved by the Czar's police,

[1] I say "at the beginning"; because later on under the "Terror," no non-Bolshevist meetings were allowed; and any anti-Bolshevist speaker who dared show himself at a government meeting, would have been jailed immediately, or else shot as a *saboteur*, White Guard, or counter-revolutionist.

who had unsuccessfully barred the gates of the Palace before the sessions began. The third case was the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by Lenin's sailors. This last spectacle was one of unheard-of vulgarity and brutality. The marines hurled obscenities and threats at the deputies, covering them with their guns under the benevolent eyes of Lenin himself — that great defender of liberty against the abuses of the bourgeoisie!

But besides Parliament buildings? It cannot be denied that the rich have finer edifices than the poor. But no one can say in good faith that the poor cannot hold meetings for lack of buildings in the so-called bourgeois republics. The rich and the poor generally hold their meetings in the same places, which either cost nothing, as is the case with Hyde Park in London, or which are within the reach of all pocketbooks, as is the case with the Salle des Sociétés Savantes or the Salle Wagram in Paris, where *L'Action Française* and the Socialist Party hold meetings in turn. As for leisure, everybody knows that socialist meetings are usually better attended than those of the rich; for the people who go to the former are more enthusiastic, more energetic, and interested in a larger variety of questions, than those who go to bourgeois meetings.

The second problem which Lenin "solves" in the same report is that of the freedom of the press:

"The 'freedom of the press' is also one of the essential principles of 'pure democracy.' But the workers and the socialists of all countries know a thousand times over that this freedom is a delusion so long as the best printing machines and the largest supplies of paper are controlled by the capitalists and so long as capitalism keeps its hold over the press itself, a hold which seems to be more decided, more brutal and more cynical the further democracy and the republican system are developed—the best illustration is the United States.

"To obtain real equality and true democracy for the workers—industrial and agricultural—the capitalists must first be deprived of power to employ writers in their service, to buy publishing houses and corrupt newspapers. For this reason the yoke of capitalism must be thrown off, the oppressors must be dispossessed and their power lessened. To the capitalist, 'freedom' means the freedom of the rich to profiteer and the freedom of the workers to starve.

"Freedom of the press means to the capitalists the freedom of the rich to buy the press and to create and misguide so-called public opinion. The defenders of 'pure democracy' again show themselves defenders of one of the basest and lowest systems ever devised for the domination by the rich over the organs of education of the poor. They are impostors who exploit exalted and deceptive phrases to prevent the people from ac-

complishing its historic task, the liberation of the press from the clutches of capitalism.

"Real freedom and equality can be assured only by a Communist régime, which will not allow anyone to acquire wealth at the expense of others, which will make it, in a literal material sense, impossible for the press to be enslaved, either directly or indirectly, by the power of wealth, and under which each worker (or equal groups of workers) will have equal rights in the use of publishing houses and supplies of paper which then will belong to the community."

Now all this is so much dialectic legerdemain from a trickster of no serious scruples. No one is going to deny the existence of terrible abuses of the power of wealth in the realm of journalism. But to deduce from them that the freedom of the press in society today is only a delusion is to betray very little zeal for the truth. With all the abuses of capitalism with which we have to contend (of this I will have something more to say in the last chapter of this book), the anti-capitalist press in democratic republics such as France and Switzerland, and even in constitutional monarchies such as England or Italy, has ample means for subsisting and for carrying on the most violent campaigns against existing governments and against capitalism.

This is possible for two reasons. In every country there are socialistic capitalists and even Bolshevistic capitalists who for some reason or

other are willing to give money to organs devoted to attack on the class to which these philanthropists belong.[2] Moreover, public subscriptions, such as the one recently started by *Humanité* and which, I think, brought in five hundred thousand francs, make the creation and development of great socialist organs possible. All free countries have them. The German *Vorwärts,* and *Freiheit,* the Italian *Avanti!* and the French *Humanité* have circulations of hundreds of thousands. These organs were absolutely unrestricted before the war. And even today, with all the abuses and stupidities of post-war reaction, the press which is most hostile to the existing authorities, (*Avanti!* in Italy, or the *Populaire* in Paris, for example, which are near-Bolshevist or pro-Bolshevist organs) have practically complete freedom to say anything they choose.[3] In my judgment all those who would read *Humanité* or the *Populaire,* if these organs had "the very best printing presses and largest supplies of paper at their disposal," as Lenin requires, already read them now.

But it is a piece of impudence in the Chief of the Soviet Government to be accusing the bourgeois republics of failure to respect the freedom of the press! In Russia, one has to go back, not

[2] Krassin, one of the three present dictators of Soviet Russia, is an example of a Bolshevist millionaire.

[3] No sincere democrat will deny that censorship is the most stupid and ineffective institution in the world; and we hope that full freedom of speech will be restored at once to all newspapers.

to the reign of Nicholas II, but to that of Nicholas I, to find anything comparable to the cynical brutality with which the Bolshevist Government has suppressed every trace of an independent press.

This impudence, however, is quite outdone by what the Bolshevist leader says, in the same document, with reference to the Terror:

"The murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg is an important event in world history not only because the best leaders of the true International had such a tragic end, but because the most highly developed State in Europe (we could say without exaggeration, in the whole world) has strikingly revealed its class character. If people under arrest, placed that is, by the authority of the State under the protection of the State, could be massacred with impunity by officers and capitalists serving under a government of 'patriotic socialists,' it follows that the democratic Republic, where such a thing is possible, is really a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

"Those who express their indignation at the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg but do not see this truth are either idiots or hypocrites. 'Freedom,' in one of the freest republics in the world, the Republic of Germany, means freedom with impunity to kill the leaders of the proletariat after their arrest! It cannot be any different as long as capitalism lasts; for the development of democracy has intensified rather

than relieved the class struggle, which, because of the results and tendencies of war, has now reached a paroxysm."

The murder of the unfortunate Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg was without doubt an inexcusable act. The government of Scheidemann, however, not only disavowed this crime, but immediately took steps to avenge it. This is not, of course, particularly creditable to the government of "socialistic patriots." Even under Nicholas II, attempts were made to apprehend and punish the murderers of Herzenstein and Iollos. It is therefore as false as it is impudent to say that "freedom in one of the freest republics of the world, the Republic of Germany, means freedom with impunity to kill the leaders of the proletariat, after their arrest!"

On the other hand, in the Soviet Republic, it is absolutely true that the assassination of political enemies is not only tolerated but even ordered by the government; and it takes place every day. I am speaking not only of acts such as the unpunished murder of Chingarev and Kokochkine, crimes far more abominable than the German murders; because those two unfortunate deputies were not militants like Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, but peaceful, and, as it happened, defenseless men, invalids, killed in the most cowardly way in a hospital! The government of Lenin knew the names of their assassins very well, for they were published broadcast in the newspapers.

Lenin did not dare, or did not care, to prosecute them; though he did in fact disavow the crime. This was during the early Bolshevist days when the government was still rather particular! Now, people are being arrested every day, "placed, that is, by the authority of the State under the protection of the State," only to be basely and cynically murdered, hundreds of them, at the order of the Soviet Government, without trial, often without being formally charged with any crime, and sometimes without leaving any record of their fate. And in the face of such things, the hypocritical head of the Soviet Government dares to accuse the democratic "socialist patriot" régime in Germany of the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg! This is the height of cynicism!

I have already shown by a quotation taken from an early work of Lenin's the falsity of his assertion that his Terror was the answer of the persecuted Bolshevists (poor devils!) to the conspiracies of the imperialists and counter-revolutionists the world over. The Terror was a premeditated act. What, then, is its value?

I am not naïve enough to suppose that the abominations committed by the Bolshevists can do them much harm in the opinion of the indifferent public, or even before the "tribunal of history." Acts of cruelty are never condemned once they succeed in their object. In our days of hatred and violence, in our world of blood and iron, those are condemned rather who are not "hard" enough.

The spillers of the most blood are called the *real,* the *strong,* the *masters of men.* To shrink from bloodshed is to be *weak, incapable, impotent.* The usual reproach brought against Prince Lvov and Kerensky is that they did not shoot Lenin the day he first opened his mouth. Lenin himself seems not to understand this stupidity on their part—to bear them a grudge for it.

No, history will not condemn the Bolshevists for massacring tens of thousands of bourgeois citizens any more than it will condemn those who will finally redeem Russia for massacring tens of thousands of Bolshevists. General Mannerheim, one of the war's heroes—he won the Russian Cross of Saint George and the German Iron Cross in a single war—was not discredited for shooting fifty thousand workmen, was he? Nor will Uritsky and Lenin be. These "condemnations of history" are part of the conventional flim-flam of humanity, as all politicians know perfectly well. How many little Robespierres and Napoleons (bourgeois and socialists of a feather) have I not met in the course of the last two years who boasted openly of their "atrocities" in the name of Russia redeemed, dressing them up a bit, probably, to fit the caveman pose better!

The fact is we are always confronted with this great argument: the French Revolution (which has had such a great influence on the imaginations of most demagogues down to our day) shows massacres, crimes, and atrocities quite as horrible

as the ones we are witnessing today! This is Lenin's favorite argument: "You call us cruel? But in 1793, the bourgeoisie was just as cruel as we are!"

Sinister precedents for the Bolshevist Terror are indeed not lacking. The massacres of Paris were as bad as those of Petrograd are now; the judicial drownings of Nantes are no better than those of Kronstadt and Sebastopol; Samson and his guillotine quite rivals the Chinese firing-squads employed by the Extraordinary Commission.

And yet the Bolshevist massacres arouse much more disgust than those of that great period. They are repulsive, first of all, because of the imitative character of their cruelty. It is as if the Bolshevists were consciously trying to ape all the worst features of the great men of the French Terror: massacre for massacre, hostage for hostage, drowning for drowning. They have had their September, their Revolutionary Tribunal, their common burial trench, their Louis XVI, their Marie Antoinette, their Dauphin, their ex-Nobles, as well as their Marat, their Carrier, and their Fouquier-Tinville. The guillotine alone was lacking; and Trotsky, the great dramatizer among the Bolshevist leaders, even thought of that early in the Revolution. If the Bolshevists were forced to rest content with the prosaic Chinese firing squad or the Lettish bayonet, they owe that humiliation to the backwardness, merely, of the Russian

steel industry. Another notable lack in the landscape of the Russian Terror is the popular enthusiasm around the scaffold. Common people do gaze at the jails of the Extraordinary Commission, but with expressions of somber stupor on their faces.

There was some reason to think, was there not, that a century of enlightenment could not have passed without teaching mankind a few lessons? The terrorist fanaticism of Robespierre, like the Catholic fanaticism of Torquemada, had at least the merit of being sincere. Was it conceivable that a new Inquisition could ever rekindle the *auto-da-fé* anywhere in Europe? Surely the disciples of Karl Marx must have made some progress over the disciples of Jean-Jacques Rousseau! Did they not see, moreover, what the Terror led to in 1793?

Nothing of the kind, alas! And, unfortunately, these people call themselves socialists. Up to the present time, socialism had never undergone the acid test of governmental authority, unless the experiment of the Paris Commune, which was short and indecisive, be called such. Hitherto, socialism has had its apostles and its martyrs; but never its inquisitors or its executioners! But the Bolshevists happen to call themselves socialists; and many people will find it to their interests to believe them. In spite of anything socialists may say, socialism will always be charged with the abominable Saint Bartholomews of the Kremlin.

"You are no better than the others," the "impartial" witness will retort to our defence.

The Bolshevists, however, were right in claiming to be imitating the French Revolution as closely as possible. Nothing did more harm to Russia and to the anti-Bolshevist cause than this easy external analogy, this superficial resemblance, between the two upheavals. This parallel influenced many intellectuals in Europe, beginning with M. Romain Rolland, who had almost agreed, so it seems, to be the "Kant" of the Communist Revolution; and ending with President Wilson, who refused to become its "Brunswick."[4] In the end, also, it gained, indirectly, no little sympathy for the Bolshevists among people who knew them only through the newspapers. I may say, without fear of paradox, that the hostility which some organs of the European press showed Bolshevism on the grounds of atrocities was very valuable to Lenin—so solidly is the moral and political reputation of those organs established. An influential member of the British Labor Party told Mr. Titov and myself quite seriously that "the British workers were sympathetic with the Bolshevists because our capitalistic press is not."

The external likeness of the French and the Russian Revolutions is indeed quite striking in some respects. The succession of events is much the same: enthusiasm, violence, civil war, terror,

[4] Mr. Wilson at one time formerly pronounced very severe judgment on the French Revolution, not alone in its acts, but also in its ideas.

chaos. A weak Czar wheedled by a foreign and unpopular Czarina; a liberal aristocrat leading during the first period of revolution;[5] then for the Gironde, overthrown and persecuted, and the "Mountain" victorious and triumphant, a Russian Vendée (we really went France one better—we had two) helped by foreign powers bent on "drowning the Revolution in its own blood"; and "those awful *emigrés* and counter-revolutionists" setting up another Coblentz in Paris and asking for the intervention of the reactionary armies; and those heroic revolutionists who, like the men of the Convention, astounded the world with their mad energy, raising armies, winning victories, taking insurgent towns by storm and razing them (Jaroslav surely is as good at Toulon!) . . .

But how different the performance looks when you observe the acting from a front seat and happen to know the actors off-stage! That "miserable Russian Coblentz" first of all! What strange ingredients in that "gang of reactionaries" who are stabbing the Bolshevist Revolution in the back! Those Comtes D'Artois, those Russian Condés! And who are they, if you please? They are Plekhanov, Kropotkin, Tchaikovsky, Lopatin, Madame Brechkovsky—Babuska(!), Axelrod, Zasoulitch, Vera Gigner, Ivanof, old war-horses, all of them, old champions of Socialism and Democracy, everybody that Russia is proud of in the annals of

[5] This seems to be a special predilection of revolutions: they begin with the titled noble; a Marquis de Lafayette or a Prince Lvov, a Maximilian of Baden or a Count Carolyi.

her heroic history![6] They are Korolenko, the great writer; Miakotone; Pechekhonov; Potresov — publicists of spotless reputation, known and esteemed in all countries! They are nine-tenths of the people who count for something in the culture expressing itself in Russian today! And what is the slogan of these servants of greedy reaction? Is it the *"vive le roi"* of the *emigrés* of Coblentz? No, they proclaim the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, based on that universal suffrage at which the Bolshevists so scoff!

On the other hand, it would be hard to find anything in the history of the French Revolution analogous to the friendship in which the Bolshevists consorted with the foreign enemy.[7] I have already explained why I never regarded Lenin as a paid agent of German imperialism. It is nevertheless true that the part the Germans played in the history of the *coup d'état* of October, first in the revolutionary, and later in the governmental activities of the Bolshevists, is very great. It is known that Austria-Hungary offered a separate peace to the Government of Russia just a few days before the Bolshevist uprising. Did the government of William II discover the Austrian plan from some secret source? Did the Kaiser order his agents in Russia to hasten the *coup d'état?* Or is it all a matter of pure coincidence?

[6] The Bolshevists have not a single name with which to counter this glorious Pleiades of their enemies.

[7] Interesting views on this question may be found in a book by Mr. Charles Dumas: *La Vérité sur les Bolshéviks*, Paris, 1919.

History may be able some day to untangle the jumbled lines of intrigue connecting Parvus, Ganetzky and Co. in Wilhelmstrasse, with the Smolny Institute. People in Petrograd at the time were able to observe with their own eyes the open activities of the German agents who were almost publicly buying machine-guns from the Russian soldiers whom they had bribed. Who, indeed, except German agents, could have needed Russian machine-guns and cannon?

From the point of view of the International it was legitimate, as the Bolshevists claim, to accept aid from the German imperialists—not, of course to help Germany, but as a war measure to their own advantage.[8] We can grant all this because Lenin will have it so. However, let us not look for precedents in the history of the French Revolution. I cannot see Robespierre using money supplied by Pitt, any more than I can see Danton signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. To them national self-respect was not, as it is to Lenin, "the point of view of a duel-fighting country squire"; and treaties were not, as Trotsky considered them in the sinister comedy of Brest-Litovsk, opportunities for satisfying so-called revolutionary, but in reality very bourgeois, vanity, by rubbing elbows with counts and princes in diplomatic tournaments!

Fate was surely kind to the Bolshevists in this

[8] At the same time the Bolshevists were accusing the *interventionists* of seeking aid from the democratic Allies.

disastrous story of the separate peace. If they find any sympathy at all left for them today in France, England and Italy, they owe it indeed to their lucky star. Who could have foreseen, at the end of 1917, that the Allies would win a decisive victory without the help of Russia? The Bolshevists did not at any rate; and Trotsky said publicly, in a speech on February 15, 1918, that he did not consider such an Allied triumph at all probable. Was the Peace of Brest-Litovsk[9] really a clever and deeply subtle manœuver? Is it true that the Bolshevists "took the Germans in," as they are boasting today? Not at all. The Kuhlmanns and the Czernins knew very well what they were doing. The Peace of Brest-Litovsk was, to use Lenin's famous expression, much more of a *peredychka,* a breathing space, for the Germans than it was for the Bolshevists. It enormously increased their chances of success on the Western Front where they were concentrating all the forces freed by the Russian collapse.[10]

[9] "The Bolshevists pride themselves today on having outguessed the German imperialists who made them capitulate at Brest-Litovsk; they regard the German revolution as their work. In reality, though they doubtless gave large sums of money to the Sparticides, they did a great deal more in Russia to prevent the overthrow of William II than they did in Germany to bring it about. Their evil influence on the Russian army, and the fear which the example of our country inspired in the Germans, retarded the defeat of Prussian militarism a full year." (Landau-Aldanov, *La Paix des Peuples*, p. 96.)

[10] There were 137 divisions of the enemy on the Russian front in 1916; and they were under command of the three most competent generals the Germans had: Hindenburg, Ludendorf, and Mackensen. There were 146 in August, 1917, on the eve of the fall of Kerensky. How many remained

What would have happened if the Germans had won a decisive victory before the arrival of American reënforcements (whether the United States should arrive in time was purely a technical question, the answer to which was not foreseen by far greater experts than the Bolshevists—by Ludendorf and Hindenburg notably)? With the western democracies crushed, triumphant German imperialism would not have left Russian Bolshevism in power for twenty-four hours. Having used the Bolshevists for their purposes, the Germans would have dismissed them with as little ceremony as was actually the case in the Ukraine and in Finland. They would have found a Skoropadsky or a Mannerheim for Moscow also.

This did not happen, however, and for a thousand reasons: strategic blunders, in the first place, of Ludendorf, who failed to drive the Allied army at Salonika into the sea in time; and to hoard his reserves sufficiently during the great offensive of April, 1918; a great effort on the part of the Allied armies and industries; famine in Germany created by the blockade; the collapse of Bulgaria and Turkey; and numberless other things. Among these latter was the Bolshevist propaganda in Germany, which, however, was but a single factor of very limited importance, and which would have had no importance at all without the concurrent

after the Peace of Brest-Litovsk? This fact alone was enough, I think, to justify the Russians who remained faithful to the Alliance in considering the invitation to Prinkipo given by the Entente to "all parties in Russia," a downright insult.

action of the other factors. The Bolshevists did not see the situation as a whole. Brest-Litovsk rendered German imperialism a great service which, however, was not great enough—no service would have been great enough—to assure a German victory. And such a victory would have meant the ruin of democracy and of socialism, to say nothing of Bolshevism.

The peace of Brest-Litovsk was black treason quite as much from the proletarian as from the patriotic point of view. Today after the Allied victory the matter presents a very different aspect from what it had in June, 1918, when the Germans were at Château-Thierry; and especially from what it would have had, if it had resulted in the setting up of a military German government in Paris as well as in Moscow. I wonder what M. Jean Longuet would have said then!

However, Germany may, as the end proved, have made a very bad bargain at Brest-Litovsk. Since the collapse of Russia did not save her from decisive military defeat and complete capitulation, it might have served her purposes better if a democratic Russia, the Russia of the Provisional Government, had been represented in the conference at Paris on the same footing as France and England. A Russia with a powerful voice in the discussion would probably have insisted, for many reasons pertinent to her vital interests, on the modification of some of the terms of the peace imposed upon Germany by the victors. But one

cannot foresee every thing. The political considerations of the German imperialists were based on the chance of victory or at least of a draw. Does not this prove that the Bolshevists are wrong in boasting about the Peace of Brest-Litovsk as a master stroke evincing the great wisdom of Lenin? In striking parallels with the French Revolution, they do not, in fact, emphasize this boast; they are willing to overlook this "master-stroke." And they are absolutely right. There is no example of such treachery in the men of the Convention, with whom the Bolshevists are so fond of comparing themselves.

There is another fundamental difference between the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution: in France, war came out of revolution; in Russia, revolution out of war.

The luxuriant blossoming of liberal ideas in the eighteenth century, as well as economic development in France, found its expression in the Great Revolution. The potential energy of the French people, which had been storing up for centuries, then became kinetic. The twenty-five years of war which followed were sustained on this formidable surplus of forces. Not only Valmy and Marengo but Austerlitz and Jena also are due, at least in part, to the enthusiasm behind these revolutionary ideas. The soldier who died for the glory of Napoleon thought he was dying for freedom!

How different is the Russian Revolution! Not only did it have the abortive preamble of 1905-

1907, which wearied and discouraged the present generation; but the Russian people entered upon victorious Revolution in 1917, already fatigued by three years of war waged under conditions infinitely more difficult than those confronting the other Allied peoples.[11] The material and moral effects they had made had quite exhausted them. Life was disorganized even at the beginning of the Revolution. All the evils which seemed to assume terrifying proportions as the Revolution wore on and which are often attributed to the Revolution entirely — desertion, graft and extravagance, economic chaos, the breakdown of the railways, the closing of the factories—already existed under the Czar. The revolution simply advertised them, and with understandable exaggeration.

The war itself was a terrific revolution which drained off the energies of the Russian people and sowed the seeds of a bleak and blear discouragement. When the Revolution broke we had lost

[11] Russia was under blockade for more than five years, a blockade more complete than the German blockade; for though Russia, for two or three years, received some aid from her allies over the slender threads of the Siberian Railroad and the line of the north, Germany received far more replenishment, not only from her own allies, but from Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Scandinavian countries, Italy and Roumania (for a time), and from the rich lands she conquered in France, Belgium and Poland. Moreover, if Germany was crushed by a four years' blockade, in spite of her wonderful organization, what can be said of Russia, which was always very badly administered and infinitely worse administered after October, 1917? That she has borne up at all proves the great natural richness of the country and a vitality in its people as extraordinary as their passivity. How long would England have survived had she been blockaded like Russia?

faith in everything. This collapse of Russian morale was not due, as is sometimes alleged, to military reverses solely. Had that been the case, the revolution would have come in 1915, after the great retreat, involving the fall of Kovno, Brest-Litovsk and Ivangorod. The fact is, Russia did not suffer a real "knock-out" during the first three years of the war. The reverses on the other fronts were quite similar to hers. Besides she had great successes: Eastern Galicia had been conquered; the Russian flag was floating over Erzerum and Trebizond. The strategic situation in February, 1917, was not so very, very bad. But faith had gone. Intellectually, from the very beginning of the war, Russia had been in the state of mind which Victor Hugo attributed to France in 1870: "The outlook is dark—fraught with possibilities of the best and worst: France herself deserves an Austerlitz, but the Empire a Waterloo!"

In point of fact the Revolution took place almost mechanically. The country had just enough energy left to do away with the old régime. The great enthusiasm needed to carry on simultaneously two enterprises, war and revolution, was not there and could not be manufactured. Germany herself could not have done what Russia tried to do. The Revolution degenerated rapidly; the problem of mutiny in the army, which insisted on demobilization, came to overshadow everything else.

CHAPTER X

SEMI-BOLSHEVISM: THE PLATFORM OF THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY

THE fundamental idea of Bolshevism as well as Lenin's practical program was recently summarized by him in the following description: "A dictatorship of the proletariat, coupled with a new democracy for the workers—civil war for a greater participation of the masses in politics."[1]

We must compliment the Bolshevist leader on one point: he expresses himself with a frankness and a clearness quite in contrast with the haziness prevailing today in the ideas of most European socialists.

One ought to read the interesting "Questionnaire on Bolshevism" conducted by *L'Avenir*[2] of Paris. This magazine asks the best qualified militant socialists to answer a few queries, of which the first two are as follows:

"Is the revolutionary transformation of the capitalist system into the socialist system possible at the present moment? If so, by what signs can this possibility be recognized, and in what does it consist?

"Can revolutionary power do without democratic sanction, and how?"

[1] N. Lenin, *Letter to the Workingmen of America*, p. 11.
[2] No. 37, p. 223, May, 1919.

The answers are not very instructive taken one by one; but in the mass, they are exceedingly interesting.

"The Socialist Party," says Madame Louise Saumoneau, for instance—she was the first to answer the questionnaire, clipping a section from the "program of the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations," "strongly repudiates any attempt to represent the Revolution as premature and the proletariat as insufficiently prepared for the exercise of power. . . . Revolution alone can bring about a rapid and complete solution of the world's problems of social reconstruction."

That is what the Socialist Party, in whose name Madame Louise Saumoneau is speaking, thinks. But M. André Lebey, who belongs to the same party and whose answer comes immediately after hers, does not seem to share this opinion. His letter, indeed, says: "It is mad, criminal and absurd to say that 'the present duty of the proletariat is to take over power immediately.' You know as well as I do that the working class is still very badly educated. It is backward intellectually and in material resources. Only when capitalist society has attained its maximum development and has spread its benefits everywhere will an insurrectionary movement, which cannot be 'ordered in advance,' perhaps become necessary."[3]

[3] I am, let me repeat, quoting only the first two answers. The others are no less contradictory.

On the other hand, one may read the following in a recent pamphlet by M. Albert Thomas: "We used to dream," he said, "that the propertied classes who had increased their riches and power and who, even during the war, had partly compensated for war losses by new inventions and methods, would preserve something of the new spirit that had come to animate them during the years 1914-18, and would be ready to acknowledge that they were managing production not in their own interests solely, but in the interests of all. We hoped they would come to see that the management of capital is a social trusteeship held for the common good, and to look upon their employees as equal partners in a public enterprise, entitled therefore to become parties in discussion and negotiation. Is this hope a delusion? Has a durable union, a union superior to all our selfish struggles, become impossible? I, for one, refuse to think so."[4]

Madame Saumoneau wants a revolution in France immediately. M. Lebey considers it a little premature; and M. Thomas does not want it at all. In the heart of the "united" Party there are three contrary or differing opinions on this rather important question. Which one expresses the official ideas of the Party? Should there be a revolution today, as Madame Saumoneau desires, or is it, on the other hand "mad, criminal and absurd," as M. Lebey insists?

[4] Albert Thomas, *Bolshevism or Socialism*, Berger-Levrault, 1919, pp. 13-14.

To conciliate these two positions would seem to be a task beyond human power; but the Extraordinary National Congress held in April, 1919, proved the opposite. It maintained the unity of the Party and "answered" the fatal question:

"The Socialist Party declares more vehemently than ever, with a conviction increased by recent terrible lessons, that the goal for which it is aiming is 'social revolution.'

"Social revolution means nothing more nor less than the substitution of a collectivist régime of production, distribution, and exchange for the present economic régime, founded on capitalistic private property and corresponding to a period in history which is now out of date.

"The future alone will show how this change, which is in itself the Revolution, will take place—whether through a legal transfer of titles, or a pressure of universal suffrage, or an exercise of force on the part of the organized proletariat."[5]

That is what M. Leon Blum in his *Comment on the Platform of the Socialist Party* calls "facing problems directly, without hypocrisy, or uncertainty!" I trust I may be allowed to disagree with him. Those accustomed to call things by their right names will find mere word-juggling in the passage which I have just quoted. From the strictly formal point of view, the Platform is probably correct. There can be no doubt that the legal substitution of the new economic régime

[5] *Policy and Platform of the Socialist Party*, p. 6.

for that of the present day may be called a social revolution. In the same sense one may speak of a "revolution" in chemistry, or a "revolution" in botany. Unfortunately, that is not the question. The question is how this transformation is to take place, whether by the "pressure of universal suffrage," or by "the exercise of force on the part of the organized proletariat." And the Platform has no answer to make to this question except to say modestly: "the future alone will show;" while M. Blum in his *Comment* begs his colleagues "not to confuse method with aim."

What is the meaning of all this? Here we have a world on fire; Europe perhaps at the point of death; a terrible experiment started by men in Moscow, who ask for nothing better than a chance to repeat it in Paris and London; the people confused; tension in the masses extreme—and the French Socialist Party thinks that this is the propitious time to say, with a tone of a prophet and a revealer, what has been said a thousand times before, that the final aim of socialism is the substitution, etc., and that this substitution is called the Social Revolution!

Has not the man in the street the right to say to the members of the Congress:

"Gentlemen, no one asked you about that. We knew that forty years ago. What we want to know is whether you, like the men of Moscow, intend to organize a 'movement of force' in the near

future and whether you are going to ask us to help you. That is what we want to know, because if there is going to be a barricade we must know on which side of it we are going to fight."

The "answer" is: "The proletariat cannot renounce any instrument of warfare in fighting for the attainment of political power."

"Any instrument of warfare!" The machine-gun is an excellent instrument of warfare; and experience in Russia (as Nicholas II and Lenin discovered) has demonstrated that with machine-guns a minority can impose its will on the majority for a considerable length of time. This sentence of the "Policy and Platform" must have pleased M. Alexandre Blanc who calls himself a Bolshevist. Perhaps that was the reason for its use. But must the French proletariat, can the French proletariat, do without universal suffrage, or even oppose universal suffrage, in order to gain political power; or must it on the contrary wait until it becomes a majority?

The "answer" to this is: "The Social Revolution has no chance of being successful unless it occurs at the proper time, at a time, that is, when conditions are ripe for it in material concerns as well as in the mentality of the public. The Party has always discouraged the workers from attempting movements that are premature and demonstrations that are impulsive."

This time André Lebey and Albert Thomas must be satisfied, which is perhaps again what the

Party leaders were aiming at. But the man in the street is still left in the dark: if he is not called on today, will he be called on tomorrow, and if not, when?

"The Socialist Party is no more master of the moment for the revolution than it is of the form the revolution will take."

But after all, on what do these things depend?

"The form of proletarian Revolution will depend, in the last analysis, on circumstances (!), especially on the nature of the resistance it meets in its efforts to gain deliverance. The Socialist Party would not shrink from seizing any opportunity the mistakes of the bourgeoisie might give it."

At any rate, the principle of universal suffrage is a "matter of circumstances" clearly. But not in the least clear is what the resistance of the bourgeoisie has to do with this case. Admitting that the principle is also a matter of circumstances to the bourgeoisie (as is doubtless the fact) and that the circumstances are such that the bourgeois think they are in a position to do without universal suffrage, the question is not even raised as to whether the Socialist Party has a right to meet violence with violence. In this event, it is evident that the bourgeois will be the ones to bring about the revolution and that the socialists will have no say on the point. But so long as the suffrage is not in danger, will they, can they, should they, use force? That is the question. The man in the

street is still waiting for the answer of the Congress.

"The Socialist Party is not master of the moment," says the Platform. "How can we foresee what form the Revolution will take?" asks M. Léon Blum. But whether the Party is master of the moment or not, whether it foresees the form of the Revolution or not, the question asked by *L'Avenir* must nevertheless be answered: is the present moment apt for instituting the collectivist régime of production, exchange and distribution, or is it not? If the answer is "no," the Party should say so frankly without thinking of the annoyance it may cause Madame Louise Saumoneau or M. Alexandre Blanc. If the answer is "yes," it must say "yes" despite the sorrow M. Albert Thomas and M. André Lebey would probably feel. And it is equally necessary to answer the second question of *L'Avenir* as to whether the presumptive Revolution can do without "democratic sanction." Specific answers to these direct questions would be worth infinitely more than generalities on the final objectives of the Socialist Party or of socialism, which is—who would have believed it?—the substitution of one kind of ownership for another!

However, if the platform of the French Party says nothing about the chances of success the different forms of social revolution have, M. Léon Blum lets fall a few very significant words on this subject which really deserves much better treat-

ment. He says: "If, on the other hand one—though not the most probable—of the hypotheses which we have had to consider should be realized, if the acquisition of power by the proletariat should be the result of a constitutional process whereby the socialists, under circumstances to be determined, should gain a majority in the parliament of their country, and if they then should find themselves in a position to bring about what really amounts to revolution—a radical transformation, that is, in the status of property—well, in spite of the constitutional origin, in spite of the legal character, of this transformation, it would be a revolution just the same!" The text of the *Comment* punctuates the conclusion of this rather involved sentence with the word "applause." I suppose this applause of the Congress was aroused particularly by M. Blum's sensational and novel idea that the real objective of socialism is the transformation of property status and that the transformation contemplated amounts to Revolution! I cannot imagine it as a tribute to his judgment as to the probabilities of the hypotheses "we have had to consider!" It is incredible, nevertheless, that a question of this latter nature should, under present conditions in the world, be silently passed over in the *Platform* of a national Socialist Party and dealt with in a casual phrase of *nine words* in a *Comment*. The socialists have not as yet gained a majority in Parliament and in the country. The French people, accordingly, and the

proletariat especially, have a right to expect the Socialist Party to tell them unequivocally the policy they are to be asked to support.

The *Platform* is more concise in answering the no less exercising question of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." It says:

"Whatever the form the Revolution assumes, the passing of the proletariat into power will probably be followed by a period of dictatorship."

The postulate is clear, and we can only congratulate the French Socialist Party on having profited so well by the wonderful lesson of the Russian Revolution. The French Bolshevists who refrained from adopting Bolshevist ideas until those ideas were thoroughly discredited, remind me, in their strategy, of those clever Egyptians, who kept as still as mice so long as the forces of Great Britain were absorbed in the Great War and postponed revolting till after the defeat of Germany!

"History clearly shows the meaning of this formula which is being so bitterly abused by the reactionaries today. History demonstrates beyond question that a new régime, political or social, can never be established solely on the legal structure of the régime it is replacing. The revolutions of the 19th century succeeded or failed according as they did or did not observe this principle. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' is nothing but this transition between the old order which has been abolished and the new one which is coming into its own."

And Mr. Blum's *Comment* continues:

"When a new régime,—whether it be a new political, or a new social, system makes no difference—has upset an existing order, it is condemned to failure in advance if to justify its existence, it depends, at the beginning, on the political, economic or social institutions which it has overthrown. (Applause.) . . .

"Here we are dealing with a rule of professional technique, one might say. Revolutions have failed or succeeded according as they were or were not sparing of constitutional legality during the period lying between the old order and the new—the intermediate period of dictatorship, in other words; which, when social revolution is involved, must be an impersonal dictatorship of the proletariat, just as at other times during other revolutions, it has been the dictatorship of Royalists, Bonapartists or Republicans."

This argument of the *Platform* and its paraphrase in the *Comment* (or is the *Platform* the paraphrase of the *Comment?*) does not, to my mind, prove anything at all. "All the revolutions of the 19th century," says M. Blum, "succeeded or failed according as they did or did not have an intermediate period of dictatorship." I am very anxious to know how M. Blum classifies the revolutions of the 19th century and which he thinks were successful. But the author of the *Comment* does not choose to multiply illustrations; he does not care to pose as "a history professor." He

contents himself with one example, "the last of the revolutions which occurred in France—the substitution of the republican for the imperial régime in 1870-71."

What, for instance, was the point of conflict between Gambetta on the one hand, and the rest of the Government of National Defense on the other? In the face of the approaching elections, an early date for which had been stipulated in the Armistice, Gambetta tried to set up a real dictatorship on a democratic basis. He insisted, for one thing, that former officials of the Empire be ineligible for election. That was not constitutional. "It makes no difference," answered Gambetta. "I am exercising a dictatorship, and if I do not exercise it, the Republic and democracy will be lost." And indeed, two or three years later, because Gambetta had not been able to seize and hold the intermediate dictatorship of the Republic, "a reactionary Assembly was able to form a conspiracy for the restoration of the Monarchy."

In the first place I do not know what this instructive fragment means by its phrase "a democratic dictatorship." Did it represent anything but the omnipotence of universal suffrage? If, for instance, in accordance with the Constitution of the Third Republic, the princes of formerly reigning families were exiled from France, does it follow that the French people have been living under dictatorship for fifty years? But without stickling on such points, as I try to follow M.

Blum's reasoning to the bottom and understand fully the historical example he cites, I find myself more and more perplexed. So then Gambetta "was not able to seize and hold the intermediate dictatorship." And, since all the revolutions of the 19th century failed if they did not observe M. Blum's rule about an "intermediate period of dictatorship," I conclude that the Third Republic must have been overthrown and the Empire restored. However, things were not quite so tragic as that. All that happened was "a reactionary Assembly forming a conspiracy to restore the Monarchy." That is literally all, and M. Blum's terrible rule is not so terrible as it seems. According to his own statement, the Revolution which established the Third Republic and which is undeniably one of the most *successful* revolutions we have had in Europe—since the régime it established has lasted already a good half century—took place without the "intermediate period of dictatorship." If the other examples M. Blum might give in favor of his thesis are as convincing as this one, he is decidedly right in not choosing to pose as a "history professor."

I will not go so far as to erect a general rule out of the opposite of the thesis of the *Platform,* namely that *every* revolution has been lost when it gives rise to a dictatorship. Revolutions are phenomena far too complex to be made dependent upon any one condition which must itself be dependent on a thousand different factors of the

most varied kind. Furthermore, as I have already suggested, it is very difficult to divide revolutions into two classes such as "successful" and "unsuccessful." I stop at the assertion that the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is not only one of the most dangerous, but also one of the most incoherent, political ideas ever conceived.

"The new order," M. Blum continues, "planned by the proletariat, will be established by a class, but in the interest and for the good of all men. Like the new juridical system it precedes and prepares, the impersonal dictatorship [6] if the proletariat is exercised in the name and in the interest of the whole of humanity" (or, at least, of the whole nation).

This goes without saying! Since Adam delved and Eve span, no dictatorship, personal or impersonal, has ever been exercised in this world save in the interest of the whole of humanity! The frank and honest dictators (it is, after all, a matter of frankness and honesty) have never denied this. "Take as your text the so-called 'general welfare,' " said Napoleon, "and you can go as far as you like."

[6] Georges Sorel wrote in 1907: "In socialist literature there is frequent reference to a future *dictatorship of the proletariat*, about which they are not very fond of giving explanations. Sometimes this formula is improved by adding the epithet *impersonal* to qualify *dictatorship* but that does not clarify the situation very much." (*Reflections on Violence*, p. 250.) It looks as if the authors of the *Platform* had exhumed this adjective on purpose to please M. Sorel, and so that he could have more than his usual fun with "the intellectuals who have taken up the profession of thinking for the proletariat!"

"However, this period of transition must be as brief as circumstances permit. Its duration will vary according to economic conditions, the degree of preparation and organization of the proletariat, and the nature and intensity of the resistance met."[7]

Since we are here considering a dictatorship merely as opposed to a democracy based on universal suffrage, we may ask how this dictatorship is to end of its own accord. If it suppresses itself as soon as "circumstances permit," what will it set up in its own stead? Anarchy? Universal suffrage? In this latter case can we hope for a complete reversal of public opinion—enlightened by the wonderful experiment successfully concluded by the proletariat—from despotism to democracy? I prefer not to be a history professor either; otherwise it would be very easy to show that no dictatorship, personal or impersonal—and the impersonal much less than the personal[8]—has ever prepared its subjects to be free citizens in a democratic state. All dictatorships have had just the

[7] *Platform*, p. 8.

[8] Cardinal Mazarin maintained rightly enough that people will put up with the absolutism of a king, even if it involves an extreme of tyranny; but cannot stand that of ten thousand feudal lords, scattered all over the map, for any length of time. For this same reason the dictatorship of the hundred thousand Bolshevist commissars who are terrorizing Russia today is the most unbearable tyranny the country has ever known. It is much worse than the Old Régime; for the absolutism of the gendarmes was at least modified by a code of law. The situation would even be more abominable than it is if 99 per cent. of these commissars were not so readily to be bought off with money. In Russia today *bribery* is the sole surviving guaranty of individual freedom!

opposite effect on public opinion. That is why no dictatorship has ever suppressed itself of its own accord. M. Blum might reply that the dictatorship of the proletariat will, in this respect as in all others, be different from the dictatorships hitherto known to history; and he will cite the current example of Moscow. Like many other European socialists, M. Blum should have taken a trip to Russia,[9] granted the Bolshevists would have let him in (which is very doubtful, for this champion of theirs is in their eyes one of the "bourgeois hypocrites"). He would there have seen first hand what the Russian people think of the Bolshevists—and, accordingly, the unlikelihood of "circumstances ever allowing" Lenin to substitute universal suffrage for the "period of transition." Of such a substitution—the "period of transition" has already lasted four years—Lenin is not even thinking. These observations, however, are purely academic; we all know how dictatorships end in reality. And the régime of Lenin—although it satisfies M. Blum's formula absolutely (it would be hard indeed to find anything better in the way of dictatorship and a more "sparing use" of "constitutional legality") will not be an exception.

[9] I see in M. Boussaton's answer to the investigation of *L'Avenir* (No. 38, p. 285) the sincere cry of a drowning man: "Russia might have thrown some light on the problem; but it is practically impossible for us to find out what is going on there. . . . We need documents! As for the moral and humanitarian side of the matter, what are we to believe?"

"The power of dictatorship during the period of transition must be exercised by the proletariat politically and economically organized.

"True, in this respect, to its traditional tactics, the Socialist Party realizes that the political and economic organs of the workingmen must normally determine the major lines of its policy."

We find ourselves in darkness here again. What does "proletariat politically and economically organized" really mean? Is it the C. G. T. (*Confédération Générale du Travail*); or is it merely the "Constitution of the Soviets," which has just been published jointly by the bookshops of the Socialist Party and by *Humanité?* In the latter case a few words should be added on the "poorest peasants," on the councils of deputies from the *batraks* and the *sredniaks,* or even better, the *Comitety Biednoty* (Committees of the Indigent) to bring us up to the *dernier cri* in Moscow styles.

It is very likely that an experiment with the Social Revolution among the better educated Western peoples would not be very different from what we see in Russia. The world has just lived through five years of warfare which has peculiarly intensified all human instincts of hatred and destruction. The very tone of controversy in the French newspapers (as in those of other countries) is sufficient to cause some distrust as to the pacific character of a possible revolution in

France.[10] All parties resort to the same vituperation, the same accusations of corruption and treason. Signs of moral and intellectual deterioration are evident in every country; and do not imagine that the Socialist Party is escaping this general taint. Two *socialist* deputies, MM. Basly and Cadot, recently introduced a bill in Parliament demanding the death penalty (with execution "within twenty-four hours") for monopolists, profiteers, and speculators; and two extremist papers approved the measure. "That is sane republican tradition," says *Humanité.* "During the Great Revolution were not the profiteers of that day quickly collared and hoisted up the nearest lamp-post?"[11]

"Only ignorant people," says the *Action Française,* on the other hand, "will be astonished to see the Royalists welcoming this timely resurrection of the 'roasting bees'[12] and the 'hanging sprees' with which our kings kept the 'rabble' in order for some nine hundred years or more."[13]

Now, without sympathizing with profiteers, speculators, and monopolists, one might hope that a modern civilized government had other means of settling economic questions than the "neckwear of the Revolution" and the *chambres ardentes* of our old kings.

[10] I mention France as one of the most civilized countries in the world.

[11] *Humanité,* July 11, 1919.

[12] The *chambres ardentes,* tribunals which condemned prisoners to death by fire.

[13] *L'Action Française,* July 11, 1919.

Almost touching indeed is this flocking together of such differently feathered fowl as Royalist and Bolshevist,[14] yet here we find M. Daudet asking almost every day for the guillotine for M. Caillaux; while M. Brotteau of the *Populaire* advocates a similar shampoo for Marshal Joffre's venerable head.[15] This is all journalistic fun-making, I am well aware. It would be idle to take such banter seriously in *normal* times. But let a revolution break out in France[16] and such jokes will turn, as they turned in Russia, to gallows, guillotines and—who can be sure—perhaps also to *chambres ardentes!* The Bolshevists have had theirs. . . ."

But not only the moral condition of humanity today must be considered. The *Platform* of the French Socialist Party (which, in fact, does not take the moral condition into consideration at all) sets forth a list of circumstances "favorable to the success of the social revolution." I will mention only two of these: "first, the close unity of the International Socialist Party; second, material prosperity, especially in all that concerns stocks of raw materials, food stuffs, machinery, and means of transportation." The first of these con-

[14] Five years ago, in spite of "sane republican tradition," a socialist declaring himself in favor of the death penalty would have been expelled from the Party.

[15] *Populaire*, July 12, 1919.

[16] "In time of revolution the class struggle has absolutely and inevitably always and everywhere taken form as civil war, *and civil war is impossible without the most terrible destruction and the most bloody terror.* . . . (N. Lenin, *Letter to the Workers of America*, p. 7.)

ditions, without being indispensable, is nevertheless not without importance. The second seems to me to be absolutely necessary. Well, does the Socialist Party believe that these two prerequisites obtain today? Will not everyone agree with me that we are today infinitely farther away from their realization than we were before the war in 1913, when the question of the Social Revolution had not as yet been raised by current events? Well then, would it not be better, instead of adopting on this matter a sort of agnosticism hardly in keeping with the frank dogmatism of the Marxian faith, would it not be more honest also, to tell the French workers plainly that the "proletarian hour" will not strike tonight, nor even tomorrow morning?

It is true that to get free from this agnosticism in one way or another would mean a split in the famous "unity" (unity!) of the French Socialist Party. But would that "unity," I ask, be able to withstand the first crisis of the Revolution (granting that it survived up to the moment of the Revolution)? The socialists of France owe a debt of gratitude to the French ministers, whose policies, good or bad, have kept them all united—Compère-Morel hobnobbing with Longuet, Thomas with Blanc, Lebey with Raffin-Dugens.

Augustus Bebel, commenting on the policy of Jaurès at the Amsterdam Socialist Congress, said: "After every vote in the French Parliament, we see the Jaurist group dividing into two or three

factions. For anything similar one has to go to Germany to the most despised of the capitalistic parties, the National-Liberals. But today a portion of the proletarian party in France shows the same tendency. The effect is naturally to compromise and demoralize the whole movement."[17] Since the crisis of war is now over and the crisis of revolution has not yet come in France, the French Socialist Party has hitherto but rarely shown the lamentable spectacle which Bebel condemned. I do not know, however, whether the intellectual and moral prestige of the French "United" Party has been increased by the fact that on one side of its parliamentary group sits M. Blanc, who openly calls himself a Bolshevist, and on the other M. Thomas, who maintains no less openly that "to fight Bolshevism is not to betray socialism but on the contrary to serve it."[18] In my opinion it would be more logical for each of them to keep to his own side of the house and leave the others alone, all the more since this wonderful "unity" is so ineffective in results. Though I hope very sincerely that the day may not come when the French socialists will see what the German, and we Russian, socialists have already seen—a barricade rising in their own midst!

[17] Bebel, Speech of August 19, 1904, at a full session of the Congress of Amsterdam. What would Bebel, who was then so severe with the French socialists, have said today at the spectacle presented by the German socialists?

[18] Albert Thomas, *Bolshevism or Socialism*, p. 7.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOCIALISM OF THE NEAR FUTURE: JEAN JAURÈS

BECAUSE of his great talents, the inherent strength of his character, the integrity of his political and private life, the extent and depth of his knowledge (in which he equalled, if he did not surpass Karl Marx), and because of the clearness of his political thinking, Jean Jaurès was one of the noblest men mankind has known.

I will begin this chapter by stating one of the fundamental ideas of this book: that the motto of all the democratic leaders of our day must be "Back to Jaurès."

But "back" does not wholly express my meaning. In spite of the great influence and exceptional prestige of the French "tribune," democratic and socialist thought and policy have never been sufficiently imbued with his ideals. The past belongs to Marx; the present, "alas," seems to belong to Lenin; I have some hope that the future may belong to Jaurès.

"Some hope," I say. Unfortunately nothing today gives promise of any triumph, in the near future, of the "Jaurès idea." Slandered by his

adversaries, frequently misrepresented by his friends, and honored by the men of Moscow, Jaurès will perhaps have long to wait for the recognition of his glory by all humanity.

The fate of this man is doubly tragic: a fanatic assassinated him, and the Bolshevists erected a statue to his memory! The paper which he edited with such great distinction for ten years gave an enthusiastic account of the ceremonies at the unveiling of this monument in Moscow. It did not see in this tribute an insult to the memory of the great defender of human rights; though the statue was set up two blocks away from the Lubianka, where the "Extraordinary Commission" tortures its prisoners, and barely a mile from Petrovsky Park, where "counter-revolutionists" are shot without trial.

Trotsky, it seems, made a beautiful speech at the unveiling; he did not care for the methods of the French Tribune but he paid homage to the ability of the man. Let the proletariat of the world forgive Jaurès for not having been a Bolshevist—that was Trotsky's general tone. When Leo Tolstoi died, Nicholas II, who admired Tolstoi's "ability" much as Trotsky admires the "ability" of Jaurès, asked the Lord to be merciful to that illustrious sinner.[1] Trotsky, praising Jaurès with faint damns, makes a good twin for the Romanoff despot.

When a famous "legal mistake" occurred in

[1] "May the Lord be a merciful judge to him!"—so Nicholas II, when Stolypin told him that Tolstoi was dead.

France, the victim of which was neither a proletarian nor a socialist, Jaurès devoted three years of his life to the cause of the millionaire officer against whom the injustice had been done. This fact alone ought to make his disciples go slow in setting him up today as a co-religionist and almost a friend of men who kill bourgeois because they are bourgeois and officers because they are officers.[2]

Among those who for the last twenty years have been carrying on a real anti-militarist campaign, (anti-militarist in the sense in which the word was defined in the preface to this book), Jaurès unquestionably did the most to denounce and foresee the terrible calamity of war.

This is what he said in the Chamber of Deputies on April 7, 1895:

"Everywhere great colonial competition is going on, in which the source of wars between European peoples is revealed in its very nakedness. Unrestrained rivalry between two groups of manufacturers or merchants may be enough to threaten the peace of all Europe. Well then, how do you expect that war between nations will not always be an immediate possibility? Will we not always be on the verge of war so long as human life is at bottom nothing but war and conflict in

[2] After the attempt upon the life of Lenin, 512 hostages, officers and bourgeois (the figures are the official statistics of the Bolshevists), were shot by order of the Soviet Government to avenge this act. How pleased Jaurès would be to have such admirers!

a society given over to disordered competitions, class antagonisms and political struggles, themselves often nothing but social struggles in disguise?"

He reverted to the same thought three years later in the columns of *La Petite République* (Nov. 17, 1898):

"If war breaks out, it will be a vast and terrible war. For the first time in history it will embrace all nations, all continents. Capitalistic expansion has made the whole earth a battlefield to be stained with the blood of men. The most terrible accusation that can be brought against capitalism is that it holds over humanity the permanent and ever more menacing threat of war. In proportion as the horizon of human possibility and promise widens, the dark cloud of war also spreads. It now darkens all the fields where men till the soil, all the cities where men trade and labor, and all the seas sailed by the ships of men. Humanity will escape from this obsession of slaughter and disaster only when it has substituted the principle of peace for the principle of war, a socialist order for capitalist disorder."

And three years before his death (Dec 20, 1911), he again called up the same spectre before the eyes of an unbelieving Parliament:

"We sometimes speak lightly of the possibility of such a terrible catastrophe; but we forget, gentlemen, that the war of tomorrow in the extent of its horror and the depths of the ruin it will

cause will be something unheard of in the experience of men. . . .

"We are asked to think of a short war, to be settled by a few claps of thunder and a few flashes of lightning. Do not be deceived. It will be a long-drawn-out conflict, varied with tremendous shocks between the opposing forces, as tremendous as those which took place in Manchuria between the Russians and the Japanese. Human masses will ferment in sickness, distress and pain, and waste away under the ravages of an artillery fire unparalleled in violence. Fever will take hold upon the sick, trade will be paralyzed, factories shut down, and the oceans' horizons once streaked with the smoke of steamships will return to the sinister unbroken solitude of former days.

"Yes, it will be a terrible spectacle and one to arouse all human passions. Consider this matter well, gentlemen. Listen to the warning from a man who, passionately attached to the ideals of his party, is convinced that to get justice and peace among men, it is necessary to change the form of property; but who also believes that it will be the noble distinction of the movement to proceed along lines of peaceful evolution, without unchaining those destructive hatreds which have hitherto been part of the history of all great social movements.

"But notice another thing: it is in time of foreign war—the invasion of a Brunswick, followed, you remember, by the famous '*journées de Sep-*

tembre'; such a catastrophe as that of France in 1870 or that of Russia in the conflict with Japan—that all the belligerent passions of a nation, concentrating on the social question, are whipped by the very fact of war into extremes of violence; and that is why the conservatives ought, of all classes, to be the most interested in preserving peace, the rupture of which inevitably means the release of all the energies of social disorder."

But was it only the chauvinists, nationalists *à la Déroulède*—who sometimes talked lightly of the possibility of European war? Did not Jules Guesde, a very rabid Marxian who was often antagonistic to Jaurès, formerly lay great hopes on a "fertile war?" Jaurès settled his accounts with this strange internationalism as follows:

"There is the same impotence, the same confusion in the foreign policy of Guesde. It goes without saying that he is definitely an internationalist. From the very beginning he has fought the chauvinism of Déroulède and other 'patriots,' and has marked the pitfalls into which this enthusiasm of belligerent charlatanism may lead the public mind. His internationalism, however, is not an internationalism of peace, which would allow the proletariat of Europe to acquire liberty in general and, through the latter, power, and so to concentrate all mental, moral and material resources, wasted today either by war or by an armed peace, on the problems incident to the necessary change in the status of property. No, it is not from the

regular growth of the proletariat nor from the progress of the democracies that he expects the deliverance of the wage-earners to come, but from deep commotions which will make the revolutionary force gush forth as in a torrent from a rent earth—the greater the cataclysms therefore the more productive the results. But there is no greater cataclysm than the bloody conflicts of great peoples who already have in them the inward quiver of approaching social wars. For in such struggles, where the national organizations of world capitalism strike at and ruin each other, all the bonds which normally embarrass the revolutionary proletariat will fall away, and from the governmental and capitalistic husks of the nations torn asunder by the shock of war, the International of labor will burst into bloom.

"What a cataclysm, indeed, what a piece of luck for revolution, if by chance Russia and England should hurl themselves against each other and destroy each other! Russia, the hot-bed of absolutism, England, the hot-bed of capitalism! Both stifling the proletarian spirit in the world! Both obstacles in the pathway of Revolution!

"According to Guesde, Russia is not only a Cossack menace to the republican or constitutional liberties of the West. By forcing Germany, her immediate neighbor, to be continually on tiptoe, Russia to some degree justifies German military imperialism—the guardian of Germanic independence; and the German proletariat itself hes-

itates to make an attack on the Empire for fear that, in all the risks of a terrible civil war, Czarism will intervene to make of Germany another Poland. England also is a drag on the international proletariat; because, having to some degree allowed her workers to share in the benefits of her economic conquest of the world, she keeps them stationary in a mood of conservatism or timid reform. The downfall of czarism would liberate the socialist democracy of Germany; the downfall of English capitalism would throw the proletariat of England into the universal revolutionary movement. That is why Guesde hailed the strained relations which developed in 1885 between Russia and England over Afghanistan, and glorified war as a harbinger of blessings.

" 'Far from being a black cloud in the revolutionary sky, that gigantic duel which the governments of Europe in gloomy foreboding see approaching, is all to the good for western socialism, no matter which of those two "civilizing" states comes out of the fight disabled. It would be even better if both of them were wounded unto death.

" 'A Russia crushed in Central Asia means the end of czarism, which managed to survive the assassination of a czar but could not possibly withstand the collapse of the military power on which it leans and with which it is interchangeable. The aristocratic and bourgeois classes, too cowardly to act of their own accord, and hitherto inclined

to let nihilist bombs explode in vain, will suddenly find themselves swept into power in a government now constitutionalized, now parliamentarized, now Westernized. And the first and inevitable effect of this political revolution in St. Petersburg will be the liberation of the laboring classes in Germany. Freed from the Moscow nightmare, sure of no longer finding the Cossacks of an Alexander behind the dragoons of a Wilhelm, the socialist democracy of Germany will be in a position to dance the revolutionary festival, the proletarian "89" on the ruins of the empire of blood and steel. Meanwhile, and even before the defeat itself—as the czarist papers themselves are obliged to confess—the bankruptcy of Russia will shake the foundation of the whole capitalist world.

" 'Hurrah for war then! Lo, the last "dangers" of peace have disappeared! Destiny is now to be fulfilled! In a few days, in a few weeks at the latest, the militarism of Moscow and the commercialism of England will be at each other's throats; . . . and may the outcome be the final downfall not of one but of both contenders.' "[3]

With all the respect due the character and integrity of M. Jules Guesde, it must be said that in all this rhapsody he played a bad trick on himself as well as on socialism. It is not only the fact that thirty years later M. Guesde became minister (I would be the last, certainly, to blame him for

[3] Charles Rappoport, *Jean Jaurès*, second edition, 1916, pp. 369-371. I have taken the quotations of Jaurès from this book.

that) in the coalition cabinet of the *Union Sacrée* and of "national defense," formed to carry on the war in which France fought side by side with the "militarism of Moscow" and "the commercialism of England" against the military imperialism of Germany, the "guardian of German independence" (phrases of M. Guesde which are word for word the theme of the manifesto of the 93 German scholars and of the reactionary press of the other side of the Rhine all through the war). This is a purely personal matter. But everything else in the passage I have just quoted is of equal soundness, beginning with the false prophecy that "in a few days, in a few weeks at the latest, the militarism of Moscow and the commercialism of England will be at each other's throats," and ending with the moral position in which socialism is left as compared with "monarchism, opportunism and radicalism"—the latter crying "disaster" at the advance of the terrible spectre of conflict; while the former, in joyful expectation of the "revolutionary dance," "hurrahs for war," and declares with satisfaction that "the 'last dangers' of peace have disappeared!"

The worst enemy of socialism could not have given it a blacker eye. Fortunately passages of this nature are rare in socialist literature. But it must be admitted that in the writings of Marx and Engels, and especially in their private correspondence, a few paragraphs are animated with the same spirit—M. Jules Guesde, moreover, is

one of the purest Marxians. The "masters" also from time to time wistfully contemplated the world *cataclysm,* either in the interest of national causes or in that of the "revolutionary dance."

Lenin expressly recognized that there was some truth in all this for certain classes of wars; and declared himself to be of Marx's opinion. "The wars of former days," he wrote in one of his articles in 1915[4] "were the continuation of bourgeois movements to free nations from foreign yokes or from Turkish and Russian absolutism. No question then interested socialism except as to whether the success of one of the two bourgeoisies in the struggle was preferable to that of the other; and the Marxists were able to rouse people in advance to wars of this nature by rekindling national hatreds, just as Marx did in 1848, and later on against Russia; and as Engels in 1859 spurred the Germans against their oppressors, Napoleon III and Russian czarism." On the other hand Lenin retorted to Gardenin, who was pointing to what he very justly called the "reactionary chauvinism" of Marx in 1848: "We Marxians are, and always have been, in favor of revolutionary war against counter-revolutionary states." Lenin and Zinoviev[5] based all their

[4] N. Lenin, "The Failure of the Second International," in *The Communist,* No. 1-29 (1915).
[5] G. Zinoviev, "On Maraudism," in *The Social-Democrat,* No. 39 (1915).

Swiss propaganda on the recognition of a difference in principle between the "imperialistic" war of 1914-18 and the "wars of national independence" of former days, notably, for instance, that of 1870, which, "by bringing about the unification of Germany fulfilled a very important and historically progressive mission" (Zinoviev).[6]

The absurdity of this method of reasoning is strikingly obvious, I think. If there are such things as "progressive wars," the war of 1914-18 which liberated Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugo-Slavia, was without a shadow of doubt much more so than the war of 1870 which did not liberate anything but reduced Alsace to slavery. The militarism of William II was more dangerous than that of Napoleon III; and Clémenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson, are certainly much less reactionary than Bismarck.

This line of thinking is entirely foreign to Jaurès. He does not believe in wars of any kind, and he takes little stock in the gaiety of the "revolutionary dance" which is to come out of a world conflict. Moreover, he never tried (as Engels did) to arouse patriotic hatreds even against oppressors. He never hurrahed for war with M.

[6] It would be very interesting to know what those French socialists who are flirting with Bolshevism think of this "difference in principle" between the wars of 1914 and 1870; and whether they regard the war of 1870 as really an "historically progressive" movement.

Jules Guesde. In this respect also the system of Jaurès is on a higher plane than Marxism.[7]

"A European war can bring the Revolution on. The controlling classes would do well to remember that. But such a war might also, and over a long period of time, provoke crises of counter-revolution, rabid reaction, and exasperated nationalism. It might result in crushing dictatorships, monstrous militarisms, and a long chain of retrograde violences, meanly motivated hatreds, vindictive reprisals, and degrading slaveries. We, for our part, refuse to take a hand in this barbaric game of chance. We refuse to risk, on one throw of such blood-stained dice, the certainty that our workingmen will some day be free, the certainty

[7] I may say in passing that Jaurès was duly appreciative of the remarkable gifts and powerful intelligence of Karl Marx. I do not think, however, that the moral and intellectual personality of this great fighter ever really appealed to him. M. Paul Boncour writes in his reminiscences of Jaurès: "I found him reading the correspondence of Marx and Engels. Jaurès often 'brushed up' in these sources of socialist doctrine. With that perfect good faith which seemed always to give him the freshness of spirit of a child, he said to me, fingering the heavy pages: 'How wrapped up in their blessed "doctrine" these fellows were, inflexible in their antipathies, indifferent to everything outside their own fights of the moment! I often wonder whether it is not a weakness, whether it does not diminish the fighting ability of a militant to try, as I am always trying, to understand the ideas of other people, and open up to so many other emotions not strictly pertinent to the political and social struggle itself.'" Indeed, therein lies the great difference between the natures of Marx and Jaurès; the author of *Das Kapital* had a very vast knowledge; but his emotions were aroused only by social and political combat, and then only so far as his personal ideas and the bearing of events upon them were concerned. In this respect Lenin is much nearer to Marx than Jaurès was. Lenin can see and think of nothing except Bolshevism.

of honorable independence, under a European democracy, which the future holds in reserve for all peoples, and all groups of people, despite and beyond all divisions, and dismemberments.'"[8]

These words of a great orator are words also of a prophet. And yet Jaurès always trusted that humanity would be spared the World War. "Such a thing would be too stupid!" he would say, "therefore it will not be." "Such a thing would be too stupid; therefore it is sure to be!" would have been the reasoning of a Schopenhauer. "Jaurès," says Anatole France,[9] "knew very well that the war would help his party; but he did not want to purchase victory for the ideals closest to his heart at such a price."

A reservation is in point here. The war did help socialism, in that it developed among the masses a hatred for the governments which brought it about; but it also worked against socialism and in a much more important way, by destroying the moral and economic foundations on which socialism must rest. It was in anticipation and appreciation of this that Jaurès made so many efforts to fight off and forestall war. He was only too right. He did not succeed. And death was the reward of his efforts. "He suffered this fate," Anatole France nobly says, "that his

[8] Jaurès, *The July* (1915) *Conference on Militarism* (published by *Vorwärts* and quoted in M. Charles Rappoport's book on Jaurès).

[9] Anatole France, "Jaurès" in *Humanité*, March 26, 1919.

soul, which was as beautiful as peace, should die with the death of peace."

People commonly speak of three phases in the political career of Jaurès as a socialist: he was regarded as a "revolutionary" during the years 1893 to 1898, from the time he joined the Socialist Party up to the coming into power of the Waldeck-Rousseau-Millerand ministry; as an "opportunist," a "reformist," from 1898 to 1904, up to the Congress of Amsterdam; and thereafter as a "revolutionary" again, during the period of "unified" socialism, in which the war outbreak—and death—found him.

This analysis into periods and changes of policy is sound so long as the merely external affiliations of the great French orator are concerned. But the doctrine, the system of thought, of Jaurès, presents much greater unity. In this respect his tendencies, even as a mere youth when he sat in Parliament in the Centre and supported the policy of Jules Ferry, do not differ greatly from his more mature thinking. He certainly had a right to claim as he did claim:[10] "I have always been a republican and a socialist: the social Republic, the Republic of organized and sovereign Labor, has always been my idea. For it I have always fought from the very beginning even with all my inexperience and ignorance as a boy.

[10] Jean Jaurès, *Discours parlementaires*, 1904.

"Just as I am falsely said to have abandoned the doctrine and platform of the Left Centre for the doctrine and platform of socialism, so it is falsely alleged that in the years from 1893 to 1898 I advocated a method of violent revolution and frequented extremist republican circles, only to adopt later on an attenuated 'reformism,' and revolution at a lagging evolutionary pace. To be sure, in the enthusiasms of the first great socialist successes in 1893, I sometimes nursed the illusion of a complete, immediate, and almost too easy, victory for our ideals. And in the heat of struggle against the systematically reactionary ministries which defied us, threatened us, tried to cast us out of the body politic of the Republic, outlaw us, ex-communicate us from national life, I did appeal to the great forces of the proletariat; as I would again tomorrow, if the authorities tried to prevent the free, legal evolution of collectivism, the orderly redemption of the working class. But in all my speeches in that time of storm—the bitter emotions of it I can still feel—the essentials of our socialist policies of today can easily be recognized: the same fundamental anxiety to unite socialism with real love of country, to complete democracy in politics by democracy in life; the same reliance on the power of the law, if only that law be not abused by the recklessness of reactionary parties or deformed by class treachery."

All of Jaurès is there, all the great lesson of

his theory and practice: social democracy as the logical and necessary result of political democracy; progressive reform where opportunity is given for the free clash of ideas before a public opinion which decides; threat of violent revolution where that opportunity is threatened; revolution itself where it is denied.

To this program, political thought of today, though enriched by the great experience of 1914-19, cannot add a single word. It is the program of today. It is the program also of tomorrow.

In 1904, Jaurès was beaten at Rheims and Amsterdam by the combined efforts of Jules Guesde, Vaillant, Bebel and Kautsky. On what question? On the question as to whether socialists should work in cabinets with bourgeois ministers. Very well! In 1915, Jules Guesde became a minister as the colleague of Briand, Ribot and Denys Cochin, and Vaillant encouraged him in doing so; as for the German non-compromisers, Bebel, if he were alive, would surely be Chancellor of State today, if not President of the German Republic; and M. Kautsky, though maintaining a critical reserve, is at present a fairly cordial supporter of the ministry, and is even in a receptive mood for a portfolio itself.

Events have shown that the non-participation of the socialists in power is not a question of principle nor a symbol of party faith; but a question of pure tactic, depending exclusively on political circumstances. Jaurès, perhaps, made a tactical

error in defending the entrance of M. Millerand, a socialist at that time, into the Waldeck-Rousseau-Galliffet cabinet. But on the principle at issue, he was undoubtedly right.

The attitude of Jaurès on the Dreyfus case—the second question of policy which then separated him from Jules Guesde and Vaillant, does not give rise to any question at all in our time. The well-known phrase, "Jaurès saved the honor of French socialism by his position on the *Affaire*" is generally recognized as true today. Moreover, since Jules Guesde has since served as minister in a war cabinet, all the attacks he made against Jaurès for supporting the cause of a professional military officer [11] have peculiarly lost their point.

[11] "Here is, we are told, a special victim who has the right to a special campaign on our part in his behalf and a deliverance at our hands which would constitute an exceptional case in socialist polity. This victim is a member of the ruling class, a staff captain. Rich in his youth, through the robbery of laborers exploited by his parents, and free to become a useful man, free to put the knowledge he owes to his millions to the benefit of humanity, he nevertheless chose what he calls a military career. He said: 'I will use my splendid education, my unusual intellectual training, to slaughter my fellowmen.' Interesting, this victim, isn't he! (Loud Applause.) Oh, I understand very well that you workingmen, you peasants, who are taken away from the factory and the plow, put into a uniform and given a gun, under the pretense that you are needed to defend your country, have the right, the duty even, to cry out to us, the organized proletariat, when you fall foul of this terrible military justice! You are not in the barracks of your own free will. You have never voluntarily accepted either the military rules, or the military organization of the so-called military justice, which you put up with. But he knew what he was doing when he chose the career of arms; he deliberately entered on this path, upholding the courts-martial so long as he thought that they would bear only on the poor man; and that he would some day be the commanding officer

In addition to these two questions of tactic, however, there were two points of theory in dispute between the camps of Jaurès and Guesde which have not lost any of their interest since that time. I say two points, though they are really reducible to one: the class struggle and the revolution.

A misunderstanding exists to the disadvantage of reformist socialism, to which "reformists" themselves have often contributed: it has to do with their notion of the class struggle. People have preferred to think that the difference between the revolutionists and the reformists lay in the fact that the former recognized, while the latter did not recognize, the "class struggle." The misunderstanding arises, as is often the case, in the ambiguity and nature of the word "recognize." To my mind the question has no meaning whatsoever.

The class struggle is a fact which no man in his

who would set the wheels of that blind, secret and merciless justice into motion against the poor man! Such is the victim in whose behalf they are trying to mobilize all the forces of the socialists and of the proletariat!" (Jules Guesde, speech at the Lille Hippodrome.)

I have quoted this long passage in extenso because it is a fine example of all the elements of sectarian socialism which Lenin himself would not disclaim—easy and eloquent demagogy, an appeal to the instincts of hatred, coupled with an extremely simple scheme of thought. Fate has cruelly punished M. Jules Guesde, a sincere and conscientious man, by making him "under the pretence that he was needed to defend his country," work in 1914-15 in collaboration with these miserable "commanding officers." He was able to see that life is much too complicated for sectarian formulæ to simplify. How superior is the great and noble farsightedness of Jaurès to this narrow and blind ritualism.

senses can help perceiving. One may build exaggerated hopes on this fact, as the Marxists do. It may be deplored, as, for instance, Christians deplore it. But the fact itself cannot be denied.

Harmonious coöperation of the classes today is as a general rule not a reality but a utopia. The Russian Revolution has shown that the bourgeois are nearly always as "maximalist" in their *desiderata* as the proletariat: one side wants to get everything, the other wants to yield nothing. A glaring example of bourgeois stupidity, and bourgeois "maximalism" I witnessed in the Ukraine, after the Germans had driven out the Bolshevists and put General Skoropadsky in control. As for the stupidity, bankers, manufacturers, and landowners all seemed to believe [12] in the stability of the hated régime—a Cossack general supported by a foreign army! And as for the "maximalism," the temporary majority seized its chance to take vengeance on the workers and peasants for all the insults it had suffered during the short period of Bolshevism. Today, of course, the tables have been turned exactly. Dragonnades of landowners alternate with peasant jacqueries. But can one blame the illiterate peasants and work-

[12] With the majority it was an unshaken, almost religious faith—I can say that as an eye-witness. Business paper and securities leapt at once to dizzy altitudes, and yet there were hardly any sellers; everyone wanted to buy or else was waiting for a still higher rise before selling. A few months later the débâcle occurred—semi-Bolshevism under Petlioura, Bolshevism under Rakovsky, and finally ultra-Bolshevism under Grigorief. Many wealthy people lost their entire fortunes in the crash, to say nothing of those who lost their lives!

ingmen for not being more intelligent and less "maximalist" than the educated people of money? I grant you that the Russian bourgeoisie, from a political point of view, is the least intelligent in the whole of Europe!

This lesson may not have been absolutely in vain. Harmonious coöperation between mutually tolerant classes is and will long remain a utopia; but it has not been proved that the class struggle must necessarily overstep the limits of pacific electoral and parliamentary contest. The revolution cost the bourgeois too much for them lightheartedly to oppose universal suffrage (though some of their spokesmen are undoubtedly anxious to bring them to this). There is, therefore, reason to hope that universal suffrage will be recognized by both camps as the pivot of the future struggle.

This was, I believe, the general idea of Jaurès. Isolated sentences of the great French tribune may doubtless be quoted to the contrary. Jaurès was a man of extraordinary activity. He wrote a great deal and lectured even more. He acknowledged himself that he often had to write and talk with no chance for a careful weighing of words. It would therefore be unfair to judge his doctrine by occasional remarks escaping him in the heat of debate. Sentences of an extremism which, if I dare say so, is a little too ready, are also found in his historical studies. I am not very fond of some pages in his "History of the French Revolution." That book is, of course, a prodigious work of labor

and learning, of admirable eloquence always, not without finesse and irony here and there. It is also a fairly impartial work, in spite of its frank title as a "socialist" history. But I do not like Jaurès as a "Montagnard" any more than I like Anatole France as a "comrade." I do not like the veneration Jaurès shows for Danton, with whom he had nothing in common except eloquence (but how different the Attic eloquence of Jaurès from the demagogy of Danton!). I do not like to see this "Dreyfusard" sitting in stern judgment on the Girondins who, "at a time when the revolutionary mind needed complete serenity, unity and enthusiasm, brought on those unintelligible 'September days,' during which the responsibility of parties and individuals is almost impossible to determine."

Moreover *obiter dicta* of this kind have never fooled those who honestly and in good faith were seeking for the true doctrine of Jaurès. M. Charles Rappoport, who is neither a reformist nor a moderate, in a very authoritative and conscientious book devoted to the famous orator, speaks of "his concept of things as organically reformist," in the period after, as well as in the period before, the Congress of Amsterdam;[13] and he calls Jaurès a "Prometheus of evolution."

[13] Charles Rappoport, *l.c.*, pp. 59 and 372. The admiration which he has for Jaurès does not prevent M. Rappoport today from considering the Social Revolution as the one beneficent panacea (see his article in the *Journal du Peuple*, for July 30, 1919).

Let Jaurès speak for himself, however:

"The revolution of the future must proceed by enlightened and legal methods. The organization of the proletariat as a class party does not in any way imply recourse to violence. There is nothing in it incompatible with the idea of evolution and a constitutional policy of universal suffrage. The proletariat knows that by using violence it is making things harder by sowing the seeds of panic.

"Nothing good can be expected from convulsions which shake society to its very foundations. After a few lamentable totterings things would return to their present, or something approaching their present, equilibrium. The proletariat will come into power not through some lucky turn of events in a political turmoil, but through the legal and methodical consolidation of its own forces.

"More than that, even if a sudden *coup* is successful, its success will not be an enduring one. It will have no morrow of promise. There are small property holders even in the villages; and if a minority should for a minute abolish that property, nuclei of resistance would form everywhere. Only through delicately and accurately planned transactions in which the interests of small holders are fully safeguarded, will the latter submit to a change from a capitalistic to a socialistic status; and transactions and guarantees of such intricacy can be made only after the calmest deliberation and through the legally expressed will of the majority of the people in a country.

"Quite apart from convulsive crises which cannot be foreseen before they occur, nor controlled after they have occurred, there is only one sovereign tactic for socialism today: the legal conquest of a majority. The revolutionary appeal to force can be only a great deception for the workingman of our time."

It is a pity the Bolshevists did not carve these words of Jaurès on the statue they erected to him at Moscow.

CHAPTER XII

THEORIES THAT ARE DEAD AND IDEAS THAT ENDURE

POLITICAL theorists must today apply themselves to disengaging from a tangle of data the great lessons of these last five years, the most extraordinary years in human history. On the benefits it will derive from these lessons the future of mankind depends.

The truth very rarely issues from the clash of conflicting opinions; and almost never from the clash of political opinions. But the clash of events is the very best of teachers for the few who sincerely and hopefully search for the truth in them. The only trouble with this method of learning is that it costs so much.

The time in which we live will certainly be considered a period of *crises* by future historians. Vico would without any hesitation have placed it in his category of "critical periods" and as a model specimen of such. No general idea of life, no political theory, no social institution, but has been more or less shaken by the terrible ordeal of 1914-19. Some have been destroyed, or at least eliminated from European life, I will not say forever (forever is a word that should be banished

from sociology), but for a very long time at any rate.

Absolutism, in the first place, seems to be in this latter group, the despotic and medieval absolutism of the Nicholas II type, as well as the "enlightened" and modern absolutism of the William II variety. Absolutism, as a political idea, is dead. It seems quite unable to find rational defenders. The Bonalds, the Stahls, the de Maistres, the Pobiedonostsevs, have had their day. Their spiritual descendants dare go no farther backward than English constitutionalism. The divine right is no longer fashionable in Europe. To make it at all palatable, it must be seasoned with a certain amount of democracy. The near future will show whether even this mixture has much appeal for the generations now rising.

Other evil political ideas have been more fortunate. For some of them the issue is still far from decided. It is hard to establish with certainty just the amount of stability there is in that idol which bears the vague name of *imperialism*. No other *word* was more discredited in the minds of the masses during the five years of the war; no other *idea* gave more convincing proofs of its vitality. The imperialism of Germany on the one side and that of the Entente on the other were violently stigmatized, only to end in the treaties of Brest-Litovsk and Versailles. Fate thought best to give an hour of *decisive victory* to each of the parties in the conflict; and both showed their

hands. But great as is the power of words (and of hypocrisy) in this best of all possible worlds, the time will come when the idol of imperialism will be either universally worshipped or else broken into bits. Of the two alternatives the second is the more likely to come true. There is nothing, however, to prove that this will be so. Is war, the chief corollary of imperialism, a dead idea? Theoretically, yes. Victory is a dangerous will-of-the-wisp. That we see clearly enough today. All the belligerent nations were conquered and ruined, Germany a little more, France a little less. And yet who would risk asserting that this war has been the last?

And third, capitalism. There have been socialists, even many socialists, who failed quite to perceive the power and flexibility of the present economic régime. So much used to be said about its "intrinsic incoherence" that people ended by believing it incapable of resisting any serious test. Moreover, the ordeal when it came was more terrible and more severe than could ever have been foreseen. What did it all show?

It showed, without doubt, the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of our proud civilization; but that very civilization, quite as much as its bankruptcy, is to be attributed to the capitalist régime. Alas, it would be more just to call it the bankruptcy of humanity; for in the eyes of idealists and of optimists who thought men good and beautiful, humanity has undeniably failed, revealed

itself as something ugly, something miserably ugly!

But we can ignore the moral and intellectual side of the question. What about the power, the stability, of the present economic system? There is no doubt as to the answer here. We must recognize that capitalism has shown itself more stable, and infinitely more flexible, than its supporters—let alone its adversaries—believed. The capitalist system was able, without breaking down, to survive the great catastrophe which befell it, and which, partially at least and with no vital necessity, it also provoked. And it was able to do this, because it was sufficiently versatile to adapt itself to new circumstances, to transform itself artfully, audaciously, and with bewildering rapidity, of all which the German *Kreigs-socialismus* gave the most striking example.[1] It had to do so. But for the heroic device of *socializing* its capitalism, no country would have been able to withstand the war. Had blockaded Germany kept to the old system of the "free play of economic forces," she would have been destroyed in a few weeks. But it was also a very grave crisis for capitalism. The enemies of capitalism were won over to follow its example, which for that matter, they were unprepared or unable to follow. Rathenau has a disciple by the name of Lenin,[2]

[1] On the seventh day after the outbreak of war Germany already had her central committee of industry.

[2] In 1917 Lenin gave a lecture in Switzerland which showed how much he was impressed by the practical success of German military socialism.

though the disciple proves to be much less adroit than the master.

The fatal hour of *pure* capitalism like that of *pure* divine right was called on August 1, 1914. The hour of *amalgamations* has begun. On the whole, socialized capitalism is less illogical than the mixture of divine right with parliamentarianism.

In the fourth place, what became of the principles of democracy? Much has been said recently about a crisis in democratic theory. The experience of the terrible years just past has revealed the extreme instability and flightiness of conviction in the masses. Russia has given the most eloquent proof of this. Military chauvinism in 1914; a few days of patriotic and libertarian ecstasy in March, 1917; pacifism of a Bolshevist hue towards the end of that same year; complete prostration today—such are the stages through which Russian mentality passed in a very short space of time. Elections based on universal suffrage and taking place at yearly intervals would have given the most disparate results in Russia. In other countries these contradictions have been less manifest. A very marked psychological change is nevertheless to be seen everywhere. Just compare the German (or American) newspapers of 1914, with those of 1917, and those of 1919. The socialist organs, like the socialist rank-and-file, have undergone a similar evolution. *Vorwärts* (or *Human-*

ité) talks an entirely different language today from what it used at the beginning of the war.

The masses in every country were dragged into the war with an extraordinary ease which the most cynical prophets could not have foretold. Their resistance to the mental contagion, real or affected, of the intellectuals, proved to be virtually nil. The influence of governments and of the press surpassed the most sanguine chauvinistic hopes. The famous "political education" of the old parliamentary peoples amounted to nothing but resignation. This is only too true.

And yet, can we speak of a real crisis in the cause of democracy? I do not think so. In the first place, the political forms to which democracy was generally opposed failed in a much more striking manner. Then again, everything considered, universal suffrage, for all its sudden fluctuations and palpable mistakes showed solid good sense on the whole. The war did not start by popular vote: it was declared by the German executive power. Peoples and parliaments merely accepted a *fait accompli.* Could they have done anything else? In the case of Germany, particularly, they showed an incomprehensible cheerfulness and lightness of heart in so accepting the war. But once war was let loose upon the world the only practical way to stop it was to bring it to a successful finish. The war was a terrible calamity which, of course, could have nothing amusing about it. But in order not to lose the war, in order

for the peoples to escape slavery, enthusiasm and confidence were necessary above all. The parliamentary assemblies of all countries did everything in their power to arouse enthusiasm in the masses and inspire self-confidence in the leaders. On the whole, in spite of the great indictment that may be brought against the German parliamentarians, theirs was a defensible attitude.

When the "other danger" came, when the terrible temptation of Bolshevism arose before the peoples, universal suffrage gave a proof, which in my opinion is almost conclusive, of real good sense in the masses. It was not by chance that the People's Commissars in Russia or Hungary, and their emulators in Germany, had to proclaim "all power to the Soviets!" Universal suffrage everywhere brought the Bolshevists nothing but disappointment. Even in Russia, the elections for the Constituent Assembly, which took place after the *coup d'état* of October and under the strong pressure of the Bolshevist authorities, gave a great majority to the adversaries of Bolshevism. In Germany the ballot gave Bolshevism a knock-out blow. Whatever imperfections may be ascribed to universal suffrage and the principles of democracy, they have not wholly shattered the hopes reposed in them.

A disciple of Liebniz would say that a sort of pre-established harmony exists between the state of mind of a people, expressing itself through the suffrage, and the amount of social reform that

can be realized in a definite space of time. The German Constituent Assembly has passed such reforms, probably, as the political and economic condition of Germany makes it at present possible to realize: a very democratic republican constitution; fiscal reform which places the heavier burden of taxation on the propertied classes; confiscation of war profits; socialization of certain kinds of industry; very advanced labor legislation, etc.

The most difficult test which universal suffrage will have to undergo in the near future will take place in Russia. If the Russian people, who, with all their great qualities, still form one of the most backward nations in Europe, can avail themselves of universal suffrage, after all they have been through, without sinking into reaction and monarchy; if with their votes they preserve freedom, a federal constitution, and a republican form of government, democratic principles will win a victory which may without hesitation be called decisive.

In the fifth place, the principles of socialism are also traversing a crisis today. Yet the very considerations which incline people at present to think of socialism as a failure seem to suggest an opposite conclusion. In spite of the numerous faults committed everywhere by the socialists (along with everybody else), two undeniable facts dominate the political philosophy of our time:

a. The war clearly revealed the vices of the

old world which the socialists have always denounced;

b. The revolution showed the necessity of the social reforms which were a part of the program of the socialist parties.[3]

Under these circumstances, whatever the errors and illusions of its disciples, the socialist idea has stood the great test perhaps better than any other.

In the sixth place, it is more than permissible to speak, theoretically at least, of the complete failure of the revolutionary idea. The example of Russia has killed a great and glorious legend. I think it unnecessary, after all that has been said in this book, to dwell on the character of the Bolshevist Revolution. I need only ask this question: did a revolution lead of necessity to this lamentable end?

The answer is: yes. Given the terrible burden of the war and the moral disability the leaders of the first period of 1917 were under to conclude a separate peace, the Russian Revolution simply had to enter on its Bolshevist phase. Many costly mistakes were made which hastened the *débâcle* and the early passing of power into the hands of Lenin. But a separate peace with Germany was the only thing that might *perhaps* have prevented this ending of the Russian drama. The temptation of peace, which made Lenin's career, was too

[3] Was it not President Wilson's League of Nations which adopted, and caused national governments to adopt, the wholesome idea of the eight-hour day which only yesterday was denounced as anarchy, an idle dream, an absurdity, etc.?

great for the people, worn out by three years of war to resist.

If the revolution in Germany has so far taken a different course from that followed in Russia (the resemblances between the moral indices of both revolutions is nevertheless very pronounced), that is due less to differences in national traits and degree of civilization in the two countries than to the difference in nexus between the two revolutions and the war. In Russia the Lvovs, Sakinkovs and Kerenskys wanted to continue the war and had to do so; while the Lenins and Trotskys promised the masses immediate peace, and thus scored a victory over their adversaries. In Germany, the revolution of November, 1918, had immediate peace for its aim from the very beginning; and the men who came into power then began by offering the people peace abroad and peace at home; while their opponents, the Spartacides, did not hide their desire to plunge the country into the abyss of a civil war, the benefits of which had already been shown by the Russian Revolution. As for foreign policy, the Spartacides maintained an ambiguous attitude, even going so far as to preach a "holy war" in alliance with the Russian proletariat against the "capitalists of the Entente." The superiority of the Bolshevist tactic to that of the Spartacides is evident from this also, that it was only later, when the Bolshevist power was already organized, that Lenin gradually played, and one by one, his trumps of civil war.

His campaign of April-October, 1917, was primarily inspired by the idea of immediate peace with Germany. The Spartacides, on the contrary, being unable to win the German people over with the promise of external peace (since others had already signed the Armistice), were unwise enough to terrify them by suddenly conjuring up the discredited ghost of a civil, and perhaps of a "holy," war. The most stupid even went so far as to promise that a wonderful army of Trotsky's would materialize on the Rhine to fight the imperialists of the Entente. The exhausted people were appalled at such allurements; and hastened to support those who promised peace abroad and peace at home.

But if the Russian Revolution had to end in Bolshevism, was it therefore a mistake, a crime even, to bring it about?

There are several answers to this distressing question. It can be, and it is, said that nobody caused the Revolution; that it came on by itself. There is some truth in this. It is also said that the Revolution was caused by those who were its first victims—the Czar and his ministers. This is also true enough. It is said that, for all the catastrophes resulting from it, the Revolution was better than the stagnation of the old régime—on the principle that "the longest way round is the shortest way home." This is the opinion expressed in a diary by the unfortunate Chingarev, the Cadet deputy who, for no reason whatsoever,

was thrown into prison by the big Bolshevists and murdered in a hospital by some little ones. There is an element of truth in this again. It can be said that from the national point of view the Revolution was a disaster and a crime, for it has led to the breaking up of Russia, to general ruin, and unheard-of sufferings. That would be the answer of our Burkes, our conservatives, our moderate liberals. We will probably not support such a contention.

However, it is not the verdict history will bring in against the Russian Revolution which matters most at present. The important thing is the lesson for the future which the experiences of our day may teach. This lesson I state as follows:

The moral and political balance-sheet of revolutions which overthrow despotic régimes can be and nearly always is positive, in spite of the very heavy liabilities involved; since despotic régimes themselves are but slow revolutions and bear most of the responsibility for the *débâcles* in which they end. But in countries where universal suffrage with freedom of speech is guaranteed, when these two powerful instruments of liberty are in operation, every revolution is a catastrophe, and every resort to revolution a crime.

In the present stage of moral and intellectual development in the human race, revolution is attended by such terrible outbreaks of crime, such numbers of victims, so much ruin, such bitter hatred, such cynical demagogy, that men come to

hate the very idea which revolution hopes to realize. Though the purpose of revolution is very often a worthy one, the end is always massacre, savagery, and general political prostration. This is the criterion we can use in judging the revolutions of the past and of the future.

The Russian Revolution of March, 1917, was a blessing because it overthrew one of the wickedest despotisms in history. The German revolution was also a blessing because it substituted a free republican system for the virtual absolutism [4] of William II, who threw the world into mourning and reduced Europe to blood and fire. But the Bolshevist and Spartacide revolutions were disasters, crimes, because they were directed against régimes founded on the sovereignty of the people and furnishing all possible guarantees for the free conflict of ideas and movements.

"But very well then! If the revolutionary idea has failed, as you believe, what can you put in its place to lead humanity to a better destiny? Are you not reduced to the old-fashioned and naïve, not to say hypocritical, idea of a coöperation of classes? Wealth in control will never consent to renounce its ancient privileges for the benefit of society as a whole. It is Utopian to imagine that capitalism can be abolished without

[4] Germany had a certain freedom of the press and universal suffrage for the Reichstag which, however, was very far from being omnipotent. The great power of the Kaiser, to say nothing of the electoral system of Prussia, made popular sovereignty a myth.

civil war. Do you think that our millionaires will bow, without striking a blow, to the mere soundness of your arguments?'' (Lenin.)

No, I do not think anything of the sort. But neither do I think that capitalism can be abolished by civil war which, in the long run, simply strengthens ideas of social conservatism. This book is in general founded on a very clear distinction between facts as they are in reality and what one might like them to be. As far as the famous coöperation of classes is concerned, that is without doubt extremely desirable; on the principle that an agreement is always a thousand times better than a fight! But again, for the present, I can see such coöperation obtaining only in a few exceptional cases too rare entirely to serve as grounds for a political and social doctrine. The moral and intellectual level of humanity today does not permit us to have great hope in the near future either. As for a time more remote, I do not know and nobody knows—except the soapboxers—what Destiny has in store for us.

No, I have no more faith than Lenin has in the goodness and justice of millionaires; but neither have I faith in the virtue and magnanimity of the proletariat which he praises so highly. I do not believe that in general any serious political doctrine can be based on an appeal to virtue and magnanimity. It is to common sense and especially to the sentiment of self-interest that reform must talk; and even then, as experience again shows,

it does not always have the good fortune to be listened to. Humanity is guided by atavistic instincts, by waves of contagious emotion, which the doctrine of economic materialism has always ignored and which the war revealed in all their horror. Reason usually comes too late, like a policeman after the crime; but it comes nevertheless. It has not been shown that humanity is absolutely incapable of deriving some profit, a small profit it may be, from the hard lessons experience teaches.

Yes, those who in the present state of civilization would substitute friendly coöperation for class struggle are certainly Utopians. It is not enough, however, to recognize that the class struggle exists and must exist. We still have to decide in what form we want this struggle to take place. I believe that for some time, and beginning with our very day, progressive men in democratic countries will divide according to the type of combat they prefer.

The crux of the matter is this: do you want a class struggle in the form of a violent revolution with all that terrible word involves? If so, you must belong to the Third International, the International of Lenin. If not, you belong in the anti-Bolshevist camp.

For the word "revolution" in a free and democratic country means all that the doctrine of the Third International implies: adjustment of conflicting interests by violence, absolute denial of

the principle of universal suffrage, dictatorship of the proletariat, a Soviet constitution, civil war, abolition of civil and political rights, and, if need be, terrorism.

This is so evident that one wonders in astonishment how socialist parties, which call themselves, and are in their essence, anti-Bolshevist, can speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat in their platforms or wave the banner of social revolution in their propaganda—granted of course that this revolution is relegated by them to some indefinite future![5] For the dilemma is extremely simple: either "revolution" means to realize the ideas and aspirations of the majority of the people—in that case, in a democratic country where universal suffrage is omnipotent, it is a political absurdity; or else the revolution aims to impose the will of a minority upon the majority, in which case it implies an abrogation of universal suffrage, a dictatorship "*of* the proletariat" (so they say!), the substitution of Soviets for parliaments, and so on—all the features, in short, of Lenin's doctrine.

"But," a socialist of the school of Kautsky could still say, "you forget the resistance of the property-owners, the great inertia of capitalism. Do you imagine the principle of popular sover-

[5] Twenty years ago Kautsky was easily able to answer Bernstein by saying: "We can quietly leave the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat for the future. It is futile for us to be dogmatic about it today." This convenient evasion is unfortunately now no longer practicable.

eignty is a sacred unassailable dogma to our bourgeois? They burn incense to that idol so long as it is a beneficent deity; but the moment a Constituent Assembly elected by universal suffrage tries to take privileges away from them, you will see how much use they have for the suffrage, and for constitutionality. In that situation a violent revolution will have necessarily to take place."

I have never said that there could be no Bolshevists except in Lenin's camp. The bourgeois very likely have their own Bolshevists; and it is possible that in a crisis they may have recourse to Lenin's methods to keep what they have. Then it will probably be necessary to use force against them just as force must be used today against the dictators in the Kremlin. But in this case it would still be Bolshevists at the bottom of the revolution—the Bolshevists of the bourgeoisie. However, I do not think that this must be the fatal, inevitable end of our social conflicts. In the first place I doubt whether these conflicts will take the form of a magical and instantaneous transformation which will, to quote the famous simplist formula, "expropriate the expropriators" in a single day. We probably have before us a long and slowly unfolding series of far-reaching reforms each one of which will probably demand great sacrifices on the part of the privileged classes for the benefit of the majority. The *haute bourgeoisie,* you see, has had time to meditate on the terrible lessons of these past years. It is not

at all certain that our men of wealth will care to have recourse to force with all the great risks this involves, rather than submit to the will of the people. They will have fresh in their memory the fate of governments which have tried to rule with the mailed fist for the benefit of a minority against the majority—the fate of Nicholas II, of William II, and soon, probably, that of Lenin himself!

Under these circumstances we must not despair of the possibility of progress without violence and revolution. Conflict of ideas under conditions of equal freedom for everybody; class struggle, rabid if necessary, but without knives and without guns—a struggle carried on by the "twenty-five soldiers of Gutenberg," and by the ballot—such is my programme.

"But," the skeptic will tell me, "you said you were going to observe a clear distinction between what is in reality and what would be desirable. Certainly you will agree that your very *desirable* programme appears to be worlds removed from what it actually *is*. The earth, alas, seems to belong to knives, and especially to machine guns. Revolutionary ideas are gaining ground everywhere. There will always be revolutions just as there will always be wars."

I doubt whether I could confound this skeptic. Skeptics like cynics are more often right than they deserve to be. Nevertheless my guess is that the world will not always belong to machine guns.

Such clever weapons have this drawback, or rather this advantage, that in the long run people get sick of them. Two years, five years, ten years, and then the most obstinate and the most stupid begin to have enough of slaughter. Perhaps there will always be wars and revolutions; but meeting skepticism with skepticism we may say that such a statement could not be proved. At any rate much depends on what the educated people of the various countries stand for. The Russian Revolution has emphasized the important rôle that the so-called "intellectuals" could play in political change. I think that socialist intellectuals the world over (I am speaking only of those who are anti-Bolshevist) have abused the slogan of social revolution. It was easy to speak of such a thing when you did not have to show how, nor say when and where. But the hour came and went. The experiment has been tried. We now know what the social revolution is like. The word that stands for it must disappear from our political vocabulary. We renounce worship of this idol not in the name of conservatism, as has been done so often, but in the name of human freedom.

As I come to the end of my study, I should like to give a brief but less negative sketch of the platform from which I have criticized Leninism.

Socialism is today as much a problem of production as of redistribution of wealth. In every country the most important task at present is to find means of increasing production. In countries

like Russia, where natural resources are abundant and hardly exploited at all, the problem can be solved more easily than elsewhere. In the old civilized nations like France, Germany or England, the situation is not so simple. People will have either to emigrate or to fall back on new inventions, like those which were frequently put into practice during the war.

And for this latter reason the first duty of intelligent governments (admitting that there are a few) must be to give money to science without stint, and to pure, as well as to applied science (for one can never tell what practical benefits may result from researches which seemed at first to have no utilitarian bearing at all). Hitherto, unfortunately, the exact opposite of this has been done. Governments have begun economizing by cutting the funds destined to the universities. A great physicist of world renown recently said that with the resources he had today he was barely able to pay his laboratory errand boy; as for new instruments and expensive experiments, they were no longer to be thought of.

An enlightened government, no matter how poor the condition of its treasury, should give not millions, but hundreds of millions, to science. It should establish new schools and new professorships, and laboratories where not only experienced students, but all who show a taste for scientific research can work. Each country should strive to develop a "state of mind" conducive to

conditions which would attract intelligent young people toward science. (Hitherto, in Europe, the best talent has been absorbed by politics which feeds its devotees better and affords much greater and easier satisfactions to vanity.) It should pay scholars "royally" ("republicanly," they are very badly paid!); it should institute prizes and rewards for work in pure science, as well as for practical research. It should become a buyer of patents, and an editor of scientific journals to protect the *savant* from exploitation by the capitalist.

It is a very cheap business, of course, to dwell on material rewards for scientific work; everybody knows that scientists (like politicians!) seek in their labors only the satisfaction of duty well done. But the events of recent years have left us unconvinced as to the noble impulses of human nature. The war seems almost to have exhausted the reserves of idealism in the minds of our contemporaries. We do not think, accordingly, that large rewards and high salaries would spoil anything. It is probably a far better bargain to pay seekers after truth than to shower money and power, as we have been doing, on these men to whom we owe this present state of world chaos. We gave billions lavishly for the work of the Hindenburgs and the Ludendorfs. Can we not find millions for the Edisons and the Pasteurs? They could not be better spent!

The second problem, and one of greater impor-

tance, before the legislator in every country today is that of education of the coming generation. For the one which passed through the crisis of 1914-19, with all the heroism it displayed, did not come up to the mark. We can repeat today what Schiller wrote in 1793:

"The attempts of the French people to reestablish themselves in the sacred rights of man and gain political liberty have only revealed their impotence . . . and because of this impotence not only the unfortunate French themselves but a considerable part of Europe and a whole civilization have been thrown back into barbarism and slavery. The moment was most favorable; but it found a corrupt generation unworthy of it, a generation which could not rise to the wonderful opportunity before it. And this failure shows that the human race has not yet emerged from the age of childish violence, that the liberal rule of reason came too soon, when we were still unprepared to harness the brutal energies within us. Surely we are not ripe for civil liberty when we are lacking in humanity to this extent.

"Man is seen reflected in his actions; and what is the picture afforded us in the mirror of the present day? Here the most revolting savagery; there, its opposite extreme, inertia! In the lower classes, a riot of vulgar anarchistic instincts, which, set free from the bonds of the social order, are bent on satiating every bestial desire with ungovernable fury. What prevented an earlier

explosion was not, as we now see, internal moral strength, but only restraining force from above. The French were not free individuals whom the State had oppressed; they were savage animals on whom kings had put wholesome chains. On the other hand, the educated classes reveal a still more repugnant spectacle of complete debility, weakness of spirit, and degradation of character, which is all the more revolting in that culture itself has a greater part in it. . . .

"Is that, I ask, the Humanity for whose 'rights' philosophy is extenuating itself, which the noble citizens of the world are thinking of, and in which a new Solon is to realize his constitution of freedom? I doubt it very much. . . . The French Republic will disappear as speedily as it was born; the republican constitution will sooner or later end in a state of anarchy, and the only hope for the nation will be for a powerful man to rise, it matters not from where, and calm the storm, re-establish order, and hold the reins of government firmly in hand. And let him, if need arise, become absolute master, not of France only, but of a great part of Europe!"

This is admirable as prophecy; but it was not the solution of the problem. Napoleon did not bring salvation to the French nation. He simply plunged it into a new crisis. Today it would be childish to look for the salvation of humanity through the rise of some "man on horseback." The generation which has lived through these

four terrible years cannot be courted with bouquets of military laurels. A complete reform of the moral and intellectual education of humanity can alone bring it the hope of better things.

As for the question of social reforms, everything must be done to make the rights and comfort of the workers compatible with the condition of maximum production on which the very existence of our civilization depends. It is from this twofold point of view that the problem of the socialization of industry must be approached and solved. Socialization must take place without curtailing production. Experiment alone can show the way; and in this all countries can only learn from each other and by the empirical method. The motto of these experiments should be the search for conditions of maximum comfort for the workers with a view not to the interest of capital, which in itself is of no consequence, but to the maximum development of production.

This research must be conducted on an international scale, as was the case with the introduction of the eight-hour day. Think of the hoots that once were heard when this "pernicious" reform was mentioned! And how readily it was accepted in 1919, when it was seen to be necessary. Perhaps the good sense of the controlling classes will triumph also in the question of international relations; people will perhaps end by seeing that the preservation of European civilization absolutely demands that the terrible nightmare of 1914-

1918 be forgotten, and a real League of Nations instituted in which there will not be a union of conquerors but an international parliament where questions which concern the whole world can be discussed and settled.

These five years of a censorship such as Europe has not known for a great many years have given us an opportunity to appreciate the real value of freedom of thought. Especially those who have lived under the Bolshevist régime will pause to reflect before they attack the conquests of "bourgeois" liberalism, though experience has been equally decisive in revealing the great abuses of capital in this matter. The incalculable harm wrought by a certain element in the capitalist press during the war, the hatred and falsehood it has sown abroad, give it the same moral standing as the Bolshevist or semi-Bolshevist organs. We have seen only too well and in almost every country the edifying example of great newspapers which the foreign enemy was able to buy in the full midst of the war and force to serve his own cause. We want everybody in the world to have full freedom to express his thoughts; but conditions which allow speculators and profiteers to buy newspapers with a circulation of a million, influence public policy according to their whim, and systematically corrupt and pervert the ideas of the masses, are intolerable.

Radical reforms are necessary here. We cannot enumerate them all. Perhaps the State should

found and support a certain number of dailies to make free forums of them. This idea is less fantastic than it seems. Since the news in these State papers would be true and absolutely impartial, it could no longer serve base political intrigues and selfish speculations on exchange. As for the editorials, they could be written in turn by esteemed representatives of every political hue. In this way the readers of the newspapers would be better informed than they are today; and instead of being influenced by papers faithfully submissive to the will of those who own them, they will be led by honest people of the most opposite views and will be able to form opinions after taking into account every pro and con. The practical difficulties in the way of this reform can be surmounted if recourse is had to organizations of men of letters who will choose editors from among the foremost writers of the day. Moreover, if the literary and artistic sections of the great dailies are entrusted to them, public morals and popular taste cannot help benefiting thereby.

The germ of this future state of affairs can be seen today in the organization of some of the socialist papers, such as *Humanité,* for instance, for which Thomas, and Alexandre Blanc, Renaudel and Longuet, Sembat and Frossard, may write in turn. The presence of politicians of such different opinions in the bosom of the same *party* is harmful and foolish. But the case is entirely dif-

ferent with *newspapers,* whose special aim is to present opposing political opinions to the public. The State newspapers should be a second parliamentary forum where all orators may speak freely without influences of an "editorial policy" to cramp them, and with no obligation toward each other save that, perhaps, of a certain amount of courtesy, which is still to be found in the parliaments but which has quite vanished from the press. They will not express opinions of a ministry like the "inspired" papers of today; on the contrary, they can and should give hospitality to the most violent attacks upon the men in power (just as the Official Journal—the French "Congressional Record"—published at the expense of the Government, gives the exact stenographic report of what all the speakers in the Parliament say). There is no question here of the general socialization of the press. Along with these "free forums," published at the expense of the Government, all the various private papers will continue much as before. Writers who have their own organs will continue to profit by them; and those who have none will find their chance in the organs of the State. It may be necessary to socialize the so-called "popular press,"—*la presse du boulevard*—which has sheets of enormous circulation and whose influence on the public mind is very clearly distinguishable from that of the others. It is inconsistent to proclaim a government monopoly in public education and leave untouched

these organs which form public opinion, which are a thousand times more powerful than the schools and are today distributors of corruption rather than of information. If such State newspapers were entrusted to corporations of writers they would be just as independent as the Academies and Universities, which are nevertheless supported by the State today in most countries. The "confiscation" of the "popular" papers must be carried out under conditions which will not encourage trouble-makers to create others like them. In this way only those men will publish newspapers who do so, not to make them instruments of financial intrigue, but to express tendencies of political thought with which they are in sympathy. I cannot give a detailed plan for such a "reform" here. I do believe, however, that a solution of the question of real freedom for the press is to be found along this line. Bolshevism has shown us an ignoble and shameless state of affairs where all the press has been "socialized" to the advantage of one party, and where independent opinion is cynically smothered. The present state of chaos in the western countries is without doubt infinitely superior to the régime set up in the Republic of the Soviets. In France and England all political opinions can be freely expressed. But the abuse of the power of money gives privileges to those elements which are usually the least trustworthy. The system proposed here seems to give guarantees for the greatest liberty and

equality, without disadvantage to anyone except a small handful of bankers.

The last question which I am to touch upon is probably one of the most important—the problem of land. Here the Russian Revolution has given us one of its greatest negative lessons.

There is no question as to the facts: the peasant wants the land to be his private property; he does not want any socialization that detracts in any way from his full possession of the soil he tills. One of the tragedies of the old Russian "intellectual" agitation lay in thinking, and making the people think, that they wanted something that they did not want. In 1917, by a fatal paradox, we had to persuade the Russians that they wanted to go on with the war while, as a matter of fact, they wanted to withdraw at any cost. This was the only point on which the people as a whole agreed with the Bolshevists, who, on this one point, gained their October victory. On that occasion it was our duty to go against our common sense. But need we persist today in thinking wrongly that the peasants are ready to give up private ownership of land? If we do, we will collide with another hard reality. Since the peasants in Russia form 80 per cent of the population, the conflict between socialist and democratic principles will be inevitable, if it be assumed that socialism is incompatible with the recognition of private ownership in land.

The Marxians formerly laid great store on the

"law" of the concentration of landed property and the "proletarization" of the peasant masses. Criticism from the school of Bernstein has shown the fallacy of these hopes; and the war revealed the invalidity of Marxian prognostication in general. It is therefore necessary to understand two things clearly: that, in the first place, it is impossible to force the communist principle and a "kind of happiness" on peasants who form the great majority of the Russian people and of many other peoples also; and secondly, that the continued "proletarization" of the peasants is a dream and not a pleasant dream at that. Under these circumstances the socialists should look for a solution of the problem in a reconciliation of their general doctrine with the principle of the private ownership in land—an ownership limited by certain laws of a necessity obvious to the peasant's common sense. The great socialist and democratic parties, especially those of Russia, which find their main support in the peasantry — the most industrious of all classes—should mold their policies toward such a conciliation. It is by no means an impossible one.

* * * * *

"Revolution is a form of that immanence which forces itself upon us from all hands and which we call Necessity.

"In the face of this mysterious complication of pleasures and sufferings the eternal question rises —the 'Why' of History.

"'*Why?*'

"'*Because!*'

"This answer of the ignoramus is the answer also of the sage.

"In the presence of these climacteric catastrophes which devastate—and rejuvenate—civilization, criticism of detail is hazardous. To blame or to praise men for the results they achieve is like praising or blaming figures for the sum they amount to. That which is destined to perish, perishes. The wind that must blow, blows.

"Eternal truth does not suffer from these storm winds. Above revolutions lie Truth and Justice as the starry sky lies above the tempest."

This serene philosophy of Victor Hugo [6] is not for the world of the present; I am not sure even that it is for mankind at all.

In "blaming" the men we see in action today (and why should we praise them?) we are also obeying Necessity.

In the face of a twofold catastrophe which has devastated civilization and which may perhaps "rejuvenate" it, we have not hesitated to pass judgment.

The Messina earthquake had its good side, I suppose: when the old city was destroyed, those who survived had to build a new and better one, one more suited to their needs. But if some Reason or other were presiding over human destiny, we could have gotten along without this earth-

[8] The passage is found in *'Ninety Three.*

quake very well. Were two hundred thousand victims and countless losses of property necessary to improve a town or get a new one built?

The European War and the Russian Revolution have "rejuvenated" civilization much as the earthquake "rejuvenated" Messina. I am not convinced that ten million men *had* to die, that the labors of generations *had* to be destroyed, to obtain this poor and downtrodden League of Nations of ours.

Nor am I convinced that the world *had* to be plunged into the abyss of Leninism to force ministries (and often public opinion) to understand the need for radical social reforms. But let us at any rate hope—however uncertain it all may be—that surmounting everything we have seen and endured in these last years, "Truth and Justice do in fact endure like the starry sky above the tempest!"