

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

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Toward the Multinational Revolutionary U.S. Communist Party

The U.S. from its earliest days has been unable to escape its origin. Every struggle of any moment in our history has been conditioned in a large part, by the fact that its founding was based on the forcible importation of Blacks from Africa, and that this original outrage has been compounded through 350 years of brutal exploitation and repression.

There have been few struggles in this country that have failed to reflect the continuing drive of Black people to achieve their freedom. And certainly the downfall of U.S. imperialism is already announced in the great upsurges of Black people that, in spite of repression and betrayals, are unceasing, sparking liberation movements within the U.S. of Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Asians and Native Americans, and winning increasing support among wide sections of the population, especially the very poor.

That is why the words of Mao Tsetung, in his statement of April 16, 1969, "In Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression," ring out with special force: "The struggle of black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class."

And "eventually" may not be so far off, if conscious revolutionaries are, with all the patience necessary, working to achieve the development of the strategy and tactics of unity and struggle. And we will have to master all the organizational forms necessary to consolidate and link together the great movements that arise and struggle against monopoly capitalism: the workers' rank-and-file movements, Black and brown people's movements, women's movements, youth and student movements, movements against repression and fascism in and out of prison, and the continuing struggle against U.S. imperialist aggression in Viet Nam and elsewhere.

This issue of *Red Papers* is devoted mainly to grappling theoretically and practically with the national question as it is developing in the U.S. This article proposes to grapple with some of the obstacles to achieving the necessary solidarity and strategy and tactics to unify revolutionaries in the creation and consolidation of the multinational revolutionary Communist Party.

As in everything in the U.S., this question is deeply influenced by the struggle of Black people. For instance, for some time revolutionary organizations have thought that the way forward was to produce both Black and white revolutionary parties and organizations, and somewhere down the road, these could possibly merge, or, even without merging, agree

on program, tactics and joint struggle capable of knocking the monopoly structure over and accomplishing the socialist revolution.

While today this conception seems utopian and not in the cards, it flourished for two main reasons. One was negative—almost no revolutionary work was being done among the working class, and revolutionary-minded individuals, mostly petit-bourgeois in origin, were looking for revolutionary get-rich-quick schemes, hoping to develop revolutionary enthusiasm into a substitute for hard and patient work. At that time, the Bay Area Revolutionary Union, a relatively small and local organization, was almost unique among anti-revisionist and anti-Trotskyite organizations in trying to direct its work towards the entire working class.

The second reason is far from negative—it flowed from the rapid development of Black struggle and Black revolutionary organizations that did much to change the political map of the U.S. Not only were revolutionary ideas and the conscious study of Marxism-Leninism spread among a large section of Black people, but this impetus was a major force in turning large sections of other Third World people and white youth to the study and practice of Marxism-Leninism. So, just as Black people's struggle against oppression was a leading force in militant economic and political struggle, so also was Black leadership exercised in the development of revolutionary, communist ideas and organizations.

Nor is this phenomenon over, and we in the RU try to give support to Black and other Third World revolutionary organizations. When we disagree with one aspect or another of their work and program, we do not engage in open and public polemic, but try instead to state as clearly as possible our own ideas to facilitate the exchange of views. Sometimes we also discuss our disagreements privately with these organizations, and, on the basis of mutual support, have held fruitful talks from which we have learned much and, hopefully, have been of some benefit to others. (This approach, needless to say, is not applied to counter-revolutionary organizations such as the revisionist Communist Party and PL or other Trotskyite organizations.)

The RU is a multinational organization and has been almost from the start. It is true that, originally in the Bay Area, it was composed mainly of white youth of student origin. But even then, its birth occurred in response primarily to Black and other Third World struggles. But as we began directing our main activity to the working class, as our members began rooting themselves in industrial work, we met a significant



Black and white members of United Steel Workers build unity during 1972 Clark strike in Chicago.

number of white and Third World workers who, as they became revolutionary-oriented, wanted to be, saw the necessity of being, in a multinational communist organization.

This does not mean we are opposed to the development of national caucuses in the work place, or Black and other Third World revolutionary organizations. To the contrary, we believe that, because of the uneven development of the national and class struggles at this time, both national and multinational forms of revolutionary organization are necessary. Because our working class is multinational, there are advanced, active fighters among the oppressed nationalities who see the importance of belonging to and building multinational organization now (and we certainly should not leave such people to the Trots and revisionists, with their opportunist brand of "multinational" organization).

And because U.S. history and its present teems with racial and national oppression, there are other Third World revolutionaries who, while recognizing the need for an eventual single party of the proletariat, feel that they can best serve the revolutionary movement by joining and building national forms of organization that carry forward both the national struggle and the struggle of the entire proletariat.

Also on this point, we are firmly convinced that there can be no such thing as a "white" revolutionary organization because white workers have no progressive interests as whites, but only as members of the multinational working class. Their interests are the same as the interests of the entire proletariat, unless someone wants to argue that racism and white chauvinism are really beneficial to white workers. Clearly they are not, and for this reason, in the concrete conditions of the U.S.—and in particular the intensity of national oppression and the depths of racism and national chauvinism—white revolutionaries must be in a multinational organization at this time.

And by being in such an organization together, by working and struggling side by side with each other, white, Black and other Third World comrades will gain vital experience in building a multinational organization, an experience required to build a deep and lasting multinational unity among workers and their revolutionary communist leadership, their Communist Party.

In *Red Papers 1* we expressed the belief that, based on the leadership then being exercised, we expected a major section of the leadership of the yet-to-be-created revolutionary Communist Party would be Black and other Third World people. This is also our present view. There are sound objective reasons for this. The most significant is the high proportion of Third World people in the industrial working class—making it possible to unify Third World workers and to develop and merge both the national and class struggles.

The RU has recognized this from its inception. In *Red Papers 1*, we identified the dual nature of Black people in this country as members of an oppressed nation and, at the same time, overwhelmingly members, along with all other workers, of a single U.S. proletariat. *Red Papers 2* developed this concept further to establish that the national question in the U.S. can be distinguished from other national questions around the world in that here, the question is, in essence, a proletarian question where elsewhere it is, in essence, a peasant question, and we stated:

Exactly because the Black national question is in essence a proletarian question, Marxist-Leninist organizations among the Black people are increasingly playing a leading role in these struggles, directing the main blow clearly against the imperialist enemy and pointing the way to the unity of the entire proletariat. This new fact of Black and brown leadership of the proletarian struggle as a whole is shaking the entire structure

of white supremacy which has been a strong prop of the U.S. ruling class in preventing the revolutionary unity of its victims. The success of the ruling class, even during periods of extreme crisis, in getting sections of white workers to support or tolerate the oppression of Black people, beginning with slavery and continuing down to today in the denial of economic equality and democratic rights, is a major reason why the monster of U.S. imperialism has been able to prolong its parasitic life and the suffering of the peoples of the world.

Historically, Third World workers have sought unity with white workers, based on equality and dignity, in recognition of their common exploitation and their common enemy. It has been the virulence of white racism which has too long prevented the coalescing of the working masses into a mighty anti-imperialist bastion.

In the course of struggle, which produced a rising tide of national consciousness and heightened pride, militant Third World individuals emerged to give voice and leadership to long-frustrated demands. As revolutionary organization developed among Third World groups, they were correctly concerned to develop independent leadership in their national struggle and their potential leadership in the revolutionary struggle as a whole.

It was undoubtedly inevitable, given the historical circumstance of super-exploitation and acute oppression and the relatively low level of political understanding of white workers of the source and purpose of racism, that Third World revolutionaries have developed their own revolutionary organizations. Having been dominated, often misled and accorded, at best, token representation in most organizations set up by white people, they demand the right to formulate their own programs, determine priorities and exercise control.

This is a correct aspect of self-determination. As long as national oppression exists, the resistance to it will mount; national organizations—revolutionary, petit-bourgeois, and reactionary—will exist and struggle for leadership of oppressed peoples' struggle. This is a worldwide phenomenon and, here, the U.S. is not unique.

The Marxist-Leninists working mainly among the white masses recognize the need for many forms of organization working for progress, but will be specially concerned and supportive of those Third World organizations which combine proletarian ideology with revolutionary practice. And Third World and white Marxist-Leninists will recognize the compelling need to establish the multinational Communist Party in which there is no second-class membership, arrogance and paternalism, a Party rooted in mass struggle and developing the authority and support to lead the people in defeat of the class enemy.

Of course, in recognizing the development of many Third World people into communist leaders of the struggle as a whole, there is no implication that this will happen automatically simply because they are Third World and their peoples most oppressed. It will happen only as Third World communists develop the theory and practice that enables them to unite Third

World workers, win the leadership of workers in the national struggle, and, at the same time, to speak in the interest of the whole working class. It won't happen automatically, but it will certainly happen. No matter the ups and downs of class struggle among Black and other Third World peoples, the lessons will be learned and the goals achieved. This is not due so much to the special virtues of communists; it is the special virtue of workers and other oppressed peoples that they will not stop struggling.

Also, in a similar vein but with a different focus, white communists cannot mouth acceptance in principle of the leadership of Third World revolutionaries in order to cop out of their essential task of winning white workers to the support of Third World struggles and to revolution, cannot wear their personal support as a halo while they fail to generate mass support. This is not just a platitude, but represents a real condition and problem.

The intensity of exploitation and oppression of Third World peoples in the U.S. compelled widespread activities of resistance and rebellion when the greatest overt support came from white intellectuals and liberals motivated by a sense of humanitarianism or guilt. Many of these "supporters" never gave serious thought to U.S. revolution and their relationship and responsibility to the U.S. proletariat as a whole. They viewed the Black movement in isolation from the total context of U.S. bourgeois society, limiting their horizons and initiative, content with a narrowly defined supportive role for a relatively unlimited host of Black demands.

In many instances, such acceptance of this role did not mean simple modesty and willingness to learn from and respect the leadership of others, but an abdication of the responsibility to contribute more positively and constructively as the occasion required. This is not at all to condemn such supporters; they are certainly welcome and helpful. But, however helpful and worthy of commendation, it cannot be considered the fulfillment of communist responsibility.

Many of these supporters, under the impact of the struggle and with the help of Third World revolutionaries, have accepted larger responsibility. But quite a few have, in their practice, elevated this partial practice into principle, accompanying it with the most "revolutionary" rhetoric. And some of these people are very harmful in that they influence others into either a sectarian dogmatism or scatter-brained adventurism, or both at once.

In *Red Papers* 4 we have dealt with at least some features of adventurism and we will not repeat those arguments here, but we have to consider in the rest of this article our differences with the theory and practice of some groups which we consider quite sectarian, though, in some cases, probably well-motivated. They can be classified roughly together as those who consider that the most important and pressing task at this time is to develop a new anti-revisionist Communist Party and, furthermore, that this can be accomplished by debating theoretical differences.

The RU also desires the creation of this Party as soon as possible, and yesterday would have been infinitely preferable to tomorrow. But we are convinced that it cannot be accomplished by wishing it

or declaring it. This is not China in 1921, and a dozen or so can't get into a room, see the need and declare themselves. Then it was possible (not quite so simply of course) because they had the help of an international communist movement that checked up on them, considered their work carefully, gave criticism and assistance.

Even then, there were false starts and grave setbacks. Today, when many groups are relating to Marxism-Leninism and trying to master its application to U.S. struggle, there is only one test, the test of practice. For this reason, we are convinced that we have to learn how to root ourselves in popular struggle. We have to learn how to advance the United Front against Imperialism, under proletarian leadership, or we will not be able to build a lasting Communist Party.

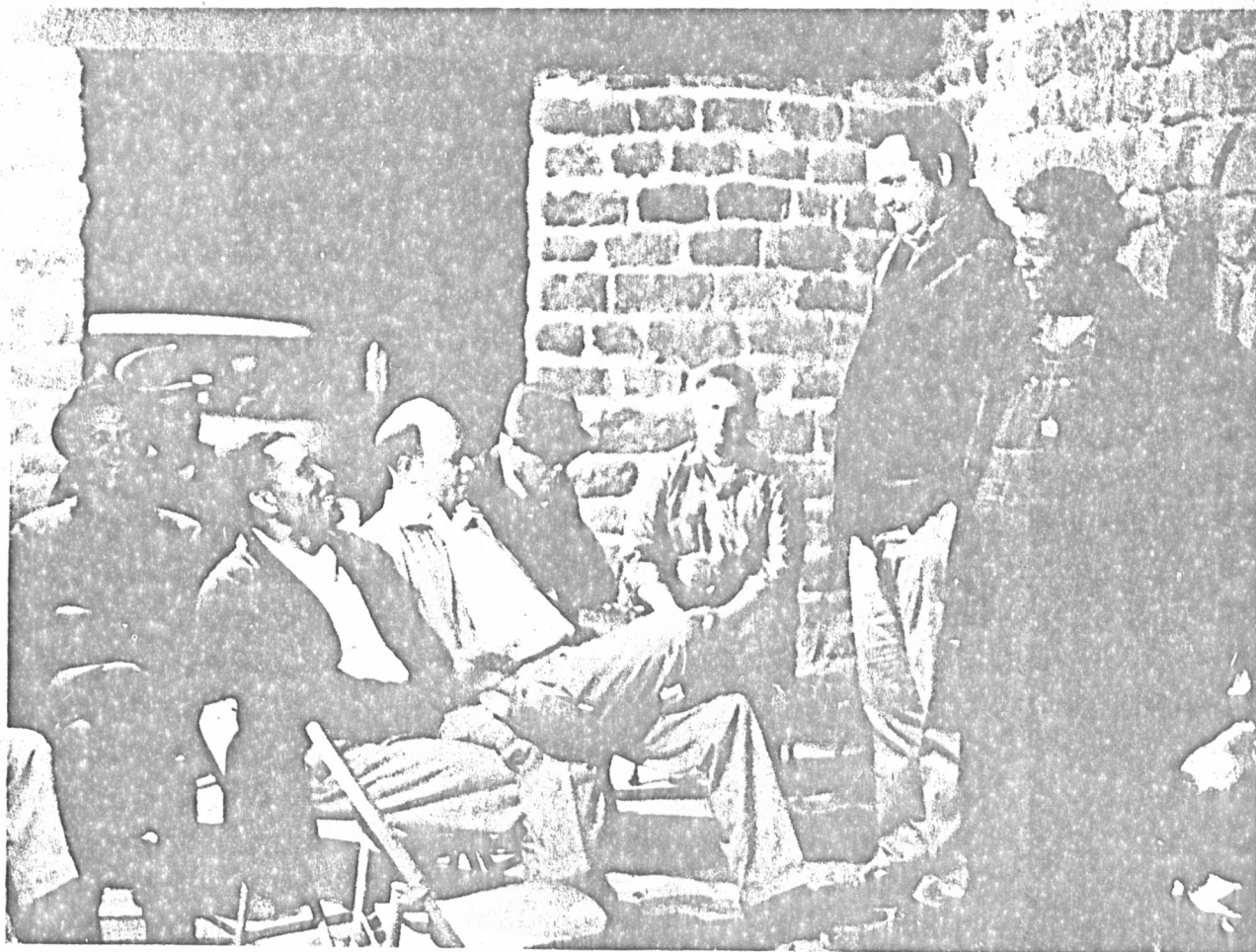
The consciousness of the need to bring an end to the racism, poverty, disease and degeneration of U.S. imperialism grows among all the peoples of the U.S., as the cost of trying to hang on to and expand its bloody profit forces the ruling class to put the working and oppressed peoples and even the middle classes increasingly through the wringer. Inflation, a 40% tax bite (direct and indirect), unemployment, growing hunger and disease, and a breakdown of almost all essential services in almost every city of any size, are producing more and greater struggles of the exploited and oppressed, and the consciousness of the name and nature of the enemy rises.

This is not to say that the rulers are no longer to promote division, disunity, and confusion, or that they are without resources among the masses. But it is to say that these resources shrink as they are hemmed in by the peoples of the world and meet a mounting resistance here, so that their ability to confuse and control the minds of their subjects weakens to the point where, increasingly, repression must do the work normally left to propaganda, and where the wielders of repression stand exposed.

Still, the consciousness of the exploited and oppressed is relatively undeveloped—in the face of the very real, almost desperate crisis of the imperialists. • Unity and organization, while growing somewhat, is very low, far behind the general understanding of the disease of the system. It is here that the conscious work of revolutionaries among the masses, developing the politics, organization and unity necessary to smash imperialism, demands that we bring into effective existence the vanguard party of the working class to lead all the oppressed people, the general staff of a sustained offensive against the exploiters leading to the destruction of their power and their end as a class.

But the building of this party, the development of the revolutionary practice, and the winning of political authority among the people, is, in the light of recent and past history, certain to be a complicated and difficult process. This process has been made especially difficult by the retreat of the left through the years of

Black and white woodcutters unite to form the Gulfcoast Pulpwood Assn. and fight the big paper industry in the South.



McCarthyism in the 1950's and the exposure of the revisionists' seizure of power in the Soviet Union—a retreat that turned into a rout as the Communist Party of the U.S., riddled by defection and the absence of revolutionary leadership, became and continues to be thoroughly revisionist and liberal-reformist.

This failure of the left in the fifties and early sixties meant that an entire generation was lost to the revolution. And with the new revolutionary upsurge, sparked by the mushrooming Black struggle and the revolutionary resistance of the Vietnamese, culminating in winning many young people, Third World and white, to the study and practice of revolution, it was perhaps inevitable that, shorn of intimate connection with the past and with inexperienced leadership, the many successes could not be consolidated in the face of mounting attack. Thus, division and desperation led to the splitting of many political organizations that had made important contributions to anti-imperialist struggle.

Of course, this splitting activity was accelerated by counter-revolutionary obstruction by Progressive Labor and other Trotskyite groups, but the truth is that we revolutionaries cannot blame our failures on the enemy, neither on the direct actions of the class enemy nor its counter-revolutionary puppets who operate under a left umbrella. Our major criticism has to be directed against our own work and our proven inability at a trying time to consolidate our ranks, unify our ideologies, and advance to a higher level of unity in struggle.

It is from this history that many around the country are learning. Thus, it is possible to forecast, even though the splitting is still continuing and the level of organization is still quite low, that the current pessimism among past movement activists is less significant than the continuing determination of a growing number of revolutionary groups, as yet not united, to forge real links with the working and oppressed peoples of the U.S., to plant themselves in the mass struggles of the people, and to remold their own ideology, so that they are prepared for long, arduous and patient struggle. It is along this path of learning from mistakes that we will certainly develop a new revolutionary unity, and a new revolutionary party.

And in case there is still some doubt, the RU does not consider itself to be that party, nor does it see itself as developing into it. The party will have to come from a merging of forces now in motion and from forces not yet in motion. The RU is a multinational communist organization seeking to apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the realities of U.S. life, is firmly dedicated to helping bring that party into being, and certainly hopes and intends to be part of that necessary transformation that will lead to victory.

In *Red Papers* 1, we took note of the growing interest in Marxism-Leninism among the active groups in the Black and youth movements and, feeling optimistic about the rising tide, postulated the coming together of these forces so that we then prescribed: "At the present time, the building of collectives on a local basis, and the exchange of experiences between them, can contribute the most to the creation in the near future of a Marxist-Leninist Party."

Since then, of course, the way has not seemed so clear. Many collectives have formed, have tried to work among the working class, and there has been a high casualty rate among them. Black revolutionary organizations, beset by ruling class terror and split by internal division, no longer present such a clear guidepost as class struggle in the Black nation sharpens.

And while we then simply noted the development of an anarchist trend, it is apparent today that this trend grew for a period and produced setbacks to the movement. So we have to acknowledge that, while in some ways the level of activity has remained high, and among the working class has shown considerable increase, the level of organization has seriously declined. And as the divisions have multiplied, the influence of the revisionist party and the right-wing Trotskyites, the Socialist Workers' Party, has grown somewhat.

These are certainly negative features, but these failures, these shortcomings in theory and practice, are leading to a serious summing up of experience on the part of many revolutionaries and revolutionary collectives. And while there is division and disruption, there is also the certainty of consolidation and realignment, and there are already such developments and new growth.

This certainly is based on the increasing determination of many of the collectives around the country to more thoroughly proletarianize their practice and, at the same time, to rid themselves of individualism, arrogance and other bourgeois hangups. The RU is also determined to sum up its experience and the experience of others, in an effort to fulfill the prediction made in *Red Papers* 1: "The Marxist-Leninist Party is the general staff of the working class struggle. There is one enemy, monopoly capitalism, and to defeat it we will need, and will achieve, a unified general staff."

The most important thing we want to emphasize is that this unified general staff can only be created through active participation in class struggle. It cannot be created, as the groups we referred to earlier seem to think, by theoretical debates or, as some of these groups have done, by simply declaring themselves to be the Party or the sole basis of the Party. For the most part, the activity of these groups in any particular struggle is to relate to it by giving advice instead of diving into the fray. Because their concentration on their single objective of forming the Party prevents them from learning from the struggle, their advice tends to be thoroughly defeatist to the strugglers, telling them in effect that their struggles are useless, are bound to be sold out and liquidated, and that they ought to be struggling only for a Party to lead them to the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism.

They have read Mao and, accepting the correct thesis that any group is divisible into advanced, middle, and backward elements, they decide, correctly, to first focus on the advanced workers. The catch lies in who they consider advanced. In general, their idea is that an advanced worker is one who accepts a piece of communist propaganda and says, "right on!"

Our conception is quite different. To us, the advanced worker is one who has the respect of fellow workers, to whom they come when they are in trouble and need to discuss their problems, whom they rally

around when they face a collective problem, and who provides leadership in struggle. And this is true even if the individual professes some anti-communism. His anti-communism is socially and media-conditioned and can be overcome through his work with communists, precisely because of the devoted practice he has shown toward others.

Of course, the one who says "right on" should not be neglected and should be brought into the work, but will not become an advanced worker until accorded that honor by co-workers. In general, also, these groups accept the idea of the United Front against Imperialism and don't particularly quarrel with the RU's five spearheads, but insist that the building of such a United Front has to wait for the creation of the new anti-revisionist Communist Party. We believe this Party can only be created by all of us working together to further build and consolidate the United Front under proletarian leadership.

The genuine revolutionary forces must begin to engage in common practice, side by side, and, on the basis of summing up that practice, engage in comradely and constructive ideological struggle to forge a unified line, strategy, and tactics, to develop various kinds of workers' organizations—national and multinational forms, etc. That, we believe, is the correct, non-sectarian way to build the Party.

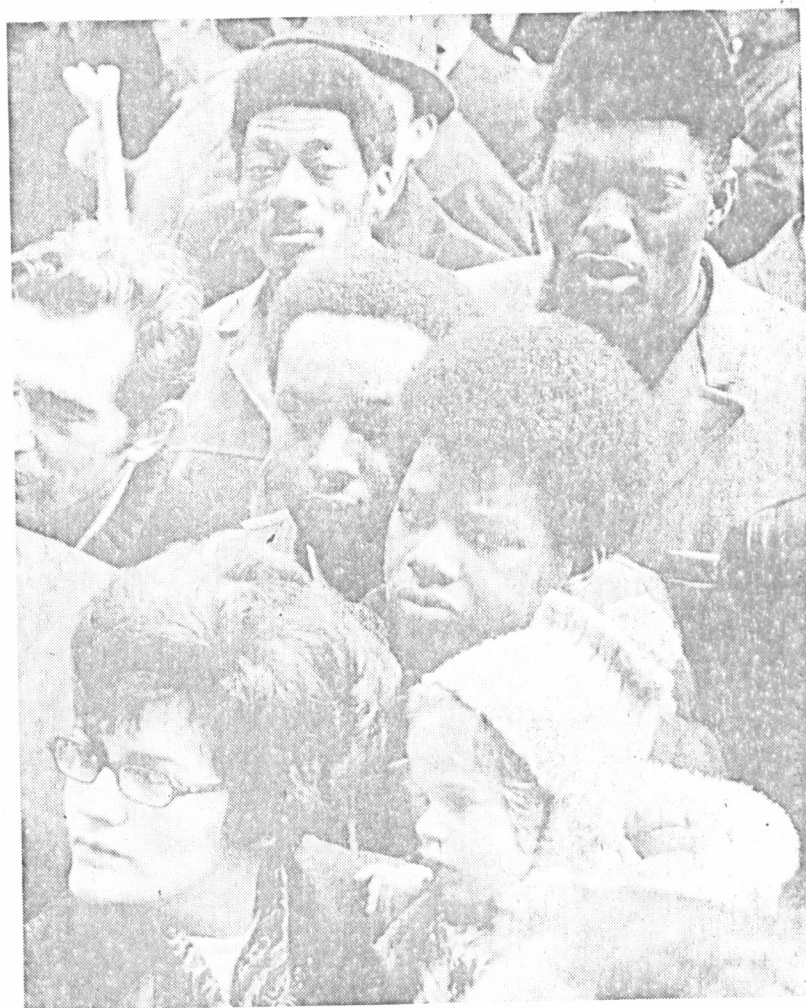
We think a major reason for a sectarian and dogmatic tendency to develop among some groups is that it is much easier to maintain an ideological

position than to effect a result, and this tendency to divorce oneself from practice is protective because practice can blow one's pet schemes sky-high.

Perhaps the root cause of most of the problems we face lies in individualism, sometimes manifesting itself in "group individualism." This has been an international problem, of course, but here the U.S. certainly leads the world. There is that overwhelming tendency to consider oneself or one's group the center of the universe, and it is only honest to say that it is a problem also in the RU and we do not always fully succeed in our struggle against it.

Here we have much to learn from Albania and China; their principled polemics and victories against the sell-out of Marxism-Leninism by Soviet revisionism has given courage to us who try to grasp historical and dialectical materialism not to be shattered by temporary setbacks and serious deviations along the winding road. And their principled determination to thoroughly overcome the dead hand of the past, right down to the level of the individual, expressed in the Chinese slogan, "Fight self, combat revisionism," has to be the method by which we fight through to unity and victory.

We, the people of the U.S., are certain to win. The peoples of the world are our powerful friends who both weaken our enemy and teach us. We also learn from the blows of the class enemy and are inspired by the resistance of our peoples. Nothing on earth can stop us. ■



Marxism and Revisionism

There is a well-known saying that if geometrical axioms affected human interests attempts would certainly be made to refute them. Theories of natural history which conflicted with the old prejudices of theology provoked, and still provoke, the most rabid opposition. No wonder, therefore, that the Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, indicates the tasks facing this class and demonstrates the inevitable replacement (by virtue of economic development) of the present system by a new order—no wonder that this doctrine has had to fight for every step forward in the course of its life.

Needless to say, this applies to bourgeois science and philosophy, officially taught by official professors in order to befuddle the rising generation of the propertied classes and to "coach" it against internal and foreign enemies. This science will not even hear of Marxism, declaring that it has been refuted and annihilated. Marx is attacked with equal zest by young scholars who are making a career by refuting socialism, and by decrepit elders who are preserving the tradition of all kinds of outworn "systems". The progress of Marxism, the fact that its ideas are spreading and taking firm hold among the working class, inevitably increase the frequency and intensity of these bourgeois attacks on Marxism, which becomes stronger, more hardened and more vigorous every time it is "annihilated" by official science.

But even among doctrines connected with the struggle of the working class, and current mainly among the proletariat, Marxism by no means consolidated its position all at once. In the first half-century of its existence (from the 1840s on) Marxism was engaged in combating theories fundamentally hostile to it. In the early forties Marx and Engels settled accounts with the radical Young Hegelians

whose viewpoint was that of philosophical idealism. At the end of the forties the struggle began in the field of economic doctrine, against Proudhonism. The fifties saw the completion of this struggle in criticism of the parties and doctrines which manifested themselves in the stormy year of 1848. In the sixties the struggle shifted from the field of general theory to one closer to the direct labour movement: the ejection of Bakuninism from the International. In the early seventies the stage in Germany was occupied for a short while by the Proudhonist Mühlberger, and in the late seventies by the positivist Dühring. But the influence of both on the proletariat was already absolutely insignificant. Marxism was already gaining an unquestionable victory over all other ideologies in the labour movement.

By the nineties this victory was in the main completed. Even in the Latin countries, where the traditions of Proudhonism held their ground longest of all, the workers' parties in effect built their programmes and their tactics on Marxist foundations. The revived international organisation of the labour movement—in the shape of periodical international congresses—from the outset, and almost without a struggle, adopted the Marxist standpoint in all essentials. But after Marxism had ousted all the more or less integral doctrines hostile to it, the tendencies expressed in those doctrines began to seek other channels. The forms and causes of the struggle changed, but the struggle continued. And the second half-century of the existence of Marxism began (in the nineties) with the struggle of a trend hostile to Marxism within Marxism itself.

Bernstein, a one-time orthodox Marxist, gave his name to this trend by coming forward with the most noise and with the most purposeful expression of amendments to Marx, revision of Marx, revisionism. Even in Russia where—owing to the economic backwardness of the country and the preponderance of a peasant population weighed down by the relics of serfdom—non-Marxist socialism has naturally held its ground longest of all, it is plainly passing into revisionism before our very eyes. Both in the agrarian question (the programme of the municipalisation of all land) and in general questions of programme and tactics, our Social-Narodniks are more and more substituting "amendments" to Marx for the moribund and obsolescent remnants of their old

system, which in its own way was integral and fundamentally hostile to Marxism.

Pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism, as revisionism. Let us, then, examine the ideological content of revisionism.

In the sphere of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial "science". The professors went "back to Kant"—and revisionism dragged along after the neo-Kantians. The professors repeated the platitudes that priests have uttered a thousand times against philosophical materialism—and the revisionists, smiling indulgently, mumbled (word for word after the latest *Handbuch*) that materialism had been "refuted" long ago. The professors treated Hegel as a "dead dog",³⁴ and while themselves preaching idealism, only an idealism a thousand times more petty and banal than Hegel's, contemptuously shrugged their shoulders at dialectics—and the revisionists floundered after them into the swamp of philosophical vulgarisation of science, replacing "artful" (and revolutionary) dialectics by "simple" (and tranquil) "evolution". The professors earned their official salaries by adjusting both their idealist and their "critical" systems to the dominant medieval "philosophy" (i.e., to theology)—and the revisionists drew close to them, trying to make religion a "private affair", not in relation to the modern state, but in relation to the party of the advanced class.

What such "amendments" to Marx really meant in class terms need not be stated: it is self-evident. We shall simply note that the only Marxist in the international Social-Democratic movement to criticise the incredible platitudes of the revisionists from the standpoint of consistent dialectical materialism was Plekhanov. This must be stressed all the more emphatically since profoundly mistaken attempts are being made at the present time to smuggle in old and reactionary philosophical rubbish disguised as a criticism of Plekhanov's tactical opportunism.*

* See *Studies in the Philosophy of Marxism* by Bogdanov, Bazarov and others. This is not the place to discuss the book, and I must at present confine myself to stating that in the very near future I shall prove in a series of articles, or in a separate pamphlet, that *everything* I have said in the text about neo-Kantian revisionists essentially applies

Passing to political economy, it must be noted first of all that in this sphere the "amendments" of the revisionists were much more comprehensive and circumstantial; attempts were made to influence the public by "new data on economic development". It was said that concentration and the ousting of small-scale production by large-scale production do not occur in agriculture at all, while they proceed very slowly in commerce and industry. It was said that crises had now become rarer and weaker, and that cartels and trusts would probably enable capital to eliminate them altogether. It was said that the "theory of collapse" to which capitalism is heading was unsound, owing to the tendency of class antagonisms to become milder and less acute. It was said, finally, that it would not be amiss to correct Marx's theory of value, too, in accordance with Böhm-Bawerk.³⁶

The fight against the revisionists on these questions resulted in as fruitful a revival of the theoretical thought in international socialism as did Engels's controversy with Dühring twenty years earlier. The arguments of the revisionists were analysed with the help of facts and figures. It was proved that the revisionists were systematically painting a rose-coloured picture of modern small-scale production. The technical and commercial superiority of large-scale *production* over small-scale production not only in industry, but also in agriculture, is proved by irrefutable facts. But commodity production is far less developed in agriculture, and modern statisticians and economists are, as a rule, not very skilful in picking out the special branches (sometimes even the operations) in agriculture which indicate that agriculture is being progressively drawn into the process of *exchange* in world economy. Small-scale production maintains itself on the ruins of natural economy by constant worsening of diet, by chronic starvation, by lengthening of the working day, by deterioration in the quality and the care of cattle, in a word, by the very methods whereby handicraft production maintained itself against capitalist manufacture. Every advance in science and technology inevitably and relentlessly undermines the foundations of small-scale production in capitalist society; and it is the task of socialist political

also to these "new" neo-Humist and neo-Berkeleyan revisionists.³⁵ (See *Collected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 17-36.—*Ed.*)

economy to investigate this process in all its forms, often complicated and intricate, and to demonstrate to the small producer the impossibility of his holding his own under capitalism, the hopelessness of peasant farming under capitalism, and the necessity for the peasant to adopt the standpoint of the proletariat. On this question the revisionists sinned, in the scientific sense, by superficial generalisations based on facts selected one-sidedly and without reference to the system of capitalism as a whole. From the political point of view, they sinned by the fact that they inevitably, whether they wanted to or not, invited or urged the peasant to adopt the attitude of a small proprietor (i.e., the attitude of the bourgeoisie) instead of urging him to adopt the point of view of the revolutionary proletariat.

The position of revisionism was even worse as regards the theory of crises and the theory of collapse. Only for a very short time could people, and then only the most short-sighted, think of refashioning the foundations of Marx's theory under the influence of a few years of industrial boom and prosperity. Realities very soon made it clear to the revisionists that crises were not a thing of the past: prosperity was followed by a crisis. The forms, the sequence, the picture of particular crises changed, but crises remained an inevitable component of the capitalist system. While uniting production, the cartels and trusts at the same time, and in a way that was obvious to all, aggravated the anarchy of production, the insecurity of existence of the proletariat and the oppression of capital, thereby intensifying class antagonisms to an unprecedented degree. That capitalism is heading for a break-down—in the sense both of individual political and economic crises and of the complete collapse of the entire capitalist system—has been made particularly clear, and on a particularly large scale, precisely by the new giant trusts. The recent financial crisis in America and the appalling increase of unemployment all over Europe, to say nothing of the impending industrial crisis to which many symptoms are pointing—all this has resulted in the recent "theories" of the revisionists having been forgotten by everybody, including, apparently, many of the revisionists themselves. But the lessons which this instability of the intellectuals had given the working class must not be forgotten.

As to the theory of value, it need only be said that apart from the vaguest of hints and sighs, *à la* Böhm-Bawerk, the revisionists have contributed absolutely nothing, and have therefore left no traces whatever on the development of scientific thought.

In the sphere of politics, revisionism did really try to revise the foundation of Marxism, namely, the doctrine of the class struggle. Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle—we were told—and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the working men have no country. For, they said, since the “will of the majority” prevails in a democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.

It cannot be disputed that these arguments of the revisionists amounted to a fairly well-balanced system of views, namely, the old and well-known liberal-bourgeois views. The liberals have always said that bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction. The whole history of Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the whole history of the Russian revolution in the early twentieth, clearly show how absurd such views are. Economic distinctions are not mitigated but aggravated and intensified under the freedom of “democratic” capitalism. Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions. The events in Paris in the spring of 1871 and the events in Russia in the winter of 1905 showed as clearly as could be how inevitably this intensification comes about. The French bourgeoisie without a moment's hesitation made a deal with the enemy of the whole nation, with the foreign army which had ruined its country, in order to crush the proletarian movement. Whoever does not understand the inevitable inner dialectics

of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy—which leads to an even sharper decision of the argument by mass violence than formerly—will never be able on the basis of this parliamentarism to conduct propaganda and agitation consistent in principle, really preparing the working-class masses for victorious participation in such “arguments”. The experience of alliances, agreements and blocs with the social-reform liberals in the West and with the liberal reformists (Cadets) in the Russian revolution, has convincingly shown that these agreements only blunt the consciousness of the masses, that they do not enhance but weaken the actual significance of their struggle, by linking fighters with elements who are least capable of fighting and most vacillating and treacherous. Millerandism in France³⁷—the biggest experiment in applying revisionist political tactics on a wide, a really national scale—has provided a practical appraisal of revisionism that will never be forgotten by the proletariat all over the world.

A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. “The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing”—this catch-phrase of Bernstein’s expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less “new” question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it changes the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another.

The inevitability of revisionism is determined by its class roots in modern society. Revisionism is an international phenomenon. No thinking socialist who is in the least informed can have the slightest doubt that the relation between the orthodox and the Bernsteinians in Germany, the

Guesdists and the Jaurèsists (and now particularly the Broussists) in France, the Social Democratic Federation³⁸ and the Independent Labour Party in Great Britain,³⁹ Brouckère and Vandervelde in Belgium, the Integralists and the Reformists in Italy, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks⁴⁰ in Russia, is everywhere essentially similar, notwithstanding the immense variety of national conditions and historical factors in the present state of all these countries. In reality, the "division" within the present international socialist movement is now proceeding along the *same* lines in all the various countries of the world, which testifies to a tremendous advance compared with thirty or forty years ago, when heterogeneous trends in the various countries were struggling within the one international socialist movement. And that "revisionism from the left" which has taken shape in the Latin countries as "revolutionary syndicalism",⁴¹ is also adapting itself to Marxism, "amending" it: Labriola in Italy and Lagardelle in France frequently appeal from Marx who is understood wrongly to Marx who is understood rightly.

We cannot stop here to analyse the ideological content of *this* revisionism, which as yet is far from having developed to the same extent as opportunist revisionism: it has not yet become international, has not yet stood the test of a single big practical battle with a socialist party in any single country. We confine ourselves therefore to that "revisionism from the right" which was described above.

Wherein lies its inevitability in capitalist society? Why is it more profound than the differences of national peculiarities and of degrees of capitalist development? Because in every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgeoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new "middle strata" are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries, etc.). These new small producers are just as inevitably being cast again into the ranks of the proletariat. It is quite natural that the petty-bourgeois world outlook should again and again crop up in the ranks of the broad

workers' parties. It is quite natural that this should be so and always will be so, right up to the changes of fortune that will take place in the proletarian revolution. For it would be a profound mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianisation of the majority of the population is essential for bringing about such a revolution. >What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology, namely, disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx; what now crops up in practice only over individual side issues of the labour movement, as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on this basis—is bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution will sharpen all disputed issues, will focus all differences on points which are of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and will make it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies from friends, and to cast out bad allies in order to deal decisive blows at the enemy.

The ideological struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against revisionism at the end of the nineteenth century is but the prelude to the great revolutionary battles of the proletariat, which is marching forward to the complete victory of its cause despite all the waverings and weaknesses of the petty bourgeoisie.

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Differences in the European Labour Movement

I

The principal tactical differences in the present-day labour movement of Europe and America reduce themselves to a struggle against two big trends that are departing from Marxism, which has in fact become the dominant theory in this movement. These two trends are revisionism (opportunism, reformism) and anarchism (anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-socialism). Both these departures from the Marxist theory and Marxist tactics that are dominant in the labour movement were to be observed in various forms and in various shades in all civilised countries during the more than half-century of history of the mass labour movement.

This fact alone shows that these departures cannot be attributed to accident, or to the mistakes of individuals or groups, or even to the influence of national characteristics and traditions, and so forth. There must be deep-rooted causes in the economic system and in the character of the development of all capitalist countries which constantly give rise to these departures. A small book, *The Tactical Differences in the Labour Movement* (*Die taktischen Differenzen in der Arbeiterbewegung*, Hamburg, Erdmann Dubber, 1909), published last year by a Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, represents an interesting attempt at a scientific investigation of these causes. In our exposition we shall acquaint the reader with Pannekoek's conclusions, which, it must be recognised, are quite correct.

One of the most profound causes that periodically give rise to differences over tactics is the very growth of the labour movement. If this movement is not measured by the criterion of some fantastic ideal, but is regarded as the practical movement of ordinary people, it will be clear that the enlistment of larger and larger numbers of new "recruits", the attraction of new sections of the working people must

inevitably be accompanied by waverings in the sphere of theory and tactics, by repetitions of old mistakes, by a temporary reversion to antiquated views and antiquated methods, and so forth. The labour movement of every country periodically spends a varying amount of energy, attention and time on the "training" of recruits.

Furthermore, the rate at which capitalism develops varies in different countries and in different spheres of the national economy. Marxism is most easily, rapidly, completely and lastingly assimilated by the working class and its ideologists where large-scale industry is most developed. Economic relations which are backward, or which lag in their development, constantly lead to the appearance of supporters of the labour movement who assimilate only certain aspects of Marxism, only certain parts of the new world outlook, or individual slogans and demands, being unable to make a determined break with all the traditions of the bourgeois world outlook in general and the bourgeois-democratic world outlook in particular.

Again, a constant source of differences is the dialectical nature of social development, which proceeds in contradictions and through contradictions. Capitalism is progressive because it destroys the old methods of production and develops productive forces, yet at the same time, at a certain stage of development, it retards the growth of productive forces. It develops, organises, and disciplines the workers—and it crushes, oppresses, leads to degeneration, poverty, etc. Capitalism creates its own grave-digger, itself creates the elements of a new system, yet, at the same time, without a "leap" these individual elements change nothing in the general state of affairs and do not affect the rule of capital. It is Marxism, the theory of dialectical materialism, that is able to encompass these contradictions of living reality, of the living history of capitalism and the working-class movement. But, needless to say, the masses learn from life and not from books, and therefore certain individuals or groups constantly exaggerate, elevate to a one-sided theory, to a one-sided system of tactics, now one and now another feature of capitalist development, now one and now another "lesson" of this development.

Bourgeois ideologists, liberals and democrats, not understanding Marxism, and not understanding the modern labour

movement, are constantly jumping from one futile extreme to another. At one time they explain the whole matter by asserting that evil-minded persons "incite" class against class—at another they console themselves with the idea that the workers' party is "a peaceful party of reform". Both anarcho-syndicalism and reformism must be regarded as a direct product of this bourgeois world outlook and its influence. They seize upon *one* aspect of the labour movement, elevate one-sidedness to a theory, and declare mutually exclusive those tendencies or features of this movement that are a specific peculiarity of a given period, of given conditions of working-class activity. But real life, real history, *includes* these different tendencies, just as life and development in nature include both slow evolution and rapid leaps, breaks in continuity.

The revisionists regard as phrase-mongering all arguments about "leaps" and about the working-class movement being antagonistic in principle to the whole of the old society. They regard reforms as a partial realisation of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalists reject "petty work", especially the utilisation of the parliamentary platform. In practice, the latter tactics amount to waiting for "great days" along with an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both of them hinder the thing that is most important and most urgent, namely, to unite the workers in big, powerful and properly functioning organisations, capable of functioning well under *all* circumstances, permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realising their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook.

We shall here permit ourselves a slight digression and note in parenthesis, so as to avoid possible misunderstandings, that Pannekoek illustrates his analysis *exclusively* by examples taken from West-European history, especially the history of Germany and France, not referring to Russia *at all*. If at times it seems that he is alluding to Russia, it is only because the basic tendencies which give rise to definite departures from Marxist tactics are to be observed in our country too, despite the vast difference between Russia and the West in culture, everyday life, and historical and economic development.

Finally, an extremely important cause of differences among those taking part in the labour movement lies in

changes in the tactics of the ruling classes in general and of the bourgeoisie in particular. If the tactics of the bourgeoisie were always uniform, or at least of the same kind, the working class would rapidly learn to reply to them by tactics just as uniform or of the same kind. But, as a matter of fact, in every country the bourgeoisie inevitably devises two systems of rule, two methods of fighting for its interests and of maintaining its domination, and these methods at times succeed each other and at times are interwoven in various combinations. The first of these is the method of force, the method which rejects all concessions to the labour movement, the method of supporting all the old and obsolete institutions, the method of irreconcilably rejecting reforms. Such is the nature of the conservative policy which in Western Europe is becoming less and less a policy of the landowning classes and more and more one of the varieties of bourgeois policy in general. The second is the method of "liberalism", of steps towards the development of political rights, towards reforms, concessions, and so forth.

The bourgeoisie passes from one method to the other not because of the malicious intent of individuals, and not accidentally, but owing to the fundamentally contradictory nature of its own position. Normal capitalist society cannot develop successfully without a firmly established representative system and without certain political rights for the population, which is bound to be distinguished by relatively high "cultural" demands. These demands for a certain minimum of culture are created by the conditions of the capitalist mode of production itself, with its high technique, complexity, flexibility, mobility, rapid development of world competition, and so forth. In consequence, vacillations in the tactics of the bourgeoisie, transitions from the system of force to the system of apparent concessions have been characteristic of the history of all European countries during the last half-century, the various countries developing primarily the application of the one method or the other at definite periods. For instance, in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century Britain was the classical country of "liberal" bourgeois policy, Germany in the seventies and eighties adhered to the method of force, and so on.

When this method prevailed in Germany, a one-sided echo of this particular system of bourgeois government was the

growth of anarcho-syndicalism, or anarchism, as it was then called, in the labour movement (the "Young" at the beginning of the nineties,⁴² Johann Most at the beginning of the eighties). When in 1890 the change to "concessions" took place, this change, as is always the case, proved to be even more dangerous to the labour movement, and gave rise to an equally one-sided echo of bourgeois "reformism": opportunism in the labour movement. "The positive, real aim of the liberal policy of the bourgeoisie," Pannekoek says, "is to mislead the workers, to cause a split in their ranks, to convert their policy into an impotent adjunct of an impotent, always impotent and ephemeral, sham reformism."

Not infrequently, the bourgeoisie for a certain time achieves its object by a "liberal" policy, which, as Pannekoek justly remarks, is a "more crafty" policy. A part of the workers and a part of their representatives at times allow themselves to be deceived by seeming concessions. The revisionists declare that the doctrine of the class struggle is "anti-quated", or begin to conduct a policy which is in fact a renunciation of the class struggle. The zigzags of bourgeois tactics intensify revisionism within the labour movement and not infrequently bring the differences within the labour movement to the point of an outright split.

All causes of the kind indicated give rise to differences over tactics within the labour movement and within the proletarian ranks. But there is not and cannot be a Chinese wall between the proletariat and the sections of the petty bourgeoisie in contact with it, including the peasantry. It is clear that the passing of certain individuals, groups and sections of the petty bourgeoisie into the ranks of the proletariat is bound, in its turn, to give rise to vacillations in the tactics of the latter.

The experience of the labour movement of various countries helps us to understand on the basis of concrete practical questions the nature of Marxist tactics; it helps the younger countries to distinguish more clearly the true class significance of departures from Marxism and to combat these departures more successfully.

■
Reformism
in the Russian Social-Democratic
Movement
■

The tremendous progress made by capitalism in recent decades and the rapid growth of the working-class movement in all the civilised countries have brought about a big change in the attitude of the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. Instead of waging an open, principled and direct struggle against all the fundamental tenets of socialism in defence of the absolute inviolability of private property and freedom of competition, the bourgeoisie of Europe and America, as represented by their ideologists and political leaders, are coming out increasingly in defence of so-called social reforms as opposed to the idea of social revolution. Not liberalism versus socialism, but reformism versus socialist revolution—is the formula of the modern, “advanced”, educated bourgeoisie. And the higher the development of capitalism in a given country, the more unadulterated the rule of the bourgeoisie, and the greater the political liberty, the more extensive is the application of the “most up-to-date” bourgeois slogan: reform *versus* revolution, the partial patching up of the doomed regime with the object of dividing and weakening the working class, and of maintaining the rule of the bourgeoisie, *versus* the revolutionary overthrow of that rule.

From the viewpoint of the universal development of socialism this change must be regarded as a big step forward. At first socialism fought for its existence, and was confronted by a bourgeoisie confident of its strength and boldly and consistently defending liberalism as an integral system of economic and political views. Socialism has grown into a force and, throughout the civilised world, has already upheld its right to existence. It is now fighting *for power*, and the bourgeoisie, disintegrating and realising the inevitability of its doom, is exerting every effort to defer that day and

to maintain its rule under the new conditions as well, at the cost of partial and spurious concessions.

The intensification of the struggle of reformism against revolutionary Social-Democracy *within* the working-class movement is an absolutely inevitable result of the changes in the entire economic and political situation throughout the civilised world. The growth of the working-class movement necessarily attracts to its ranks a certain number of petty-bourgeois elements, people who are under the spell of bourgeois ideology, who find it difficult to rid themselves of that ideology and continually lapse back into it. We cannot conceive of the social revolution being accomplished by the proletariat without this struggle, without clear demarcation on questions of principle between the socialist Mountain and the socialist Gironde⁴³ *prior* to this revolution, and without a complete break between the opportunist, petty-bourgeois elements and the proletarian, revolutionary elements of the new historic force *during* this revolution.

In Russia the position is fundamentally the same; only here matters are more complicated, obscured, and modified, because we are lagging behind Europe (and even behind the advanced part of Asia), and we are still passing through the era of bourgeois revolutions. Owing to this, Russian reformism is distinguished by its particular stubbornness; it represents, as it were, a more pernicious malady, and it is much more harmful to the cause of the proletariat and of the revolution. In our country reformism emanates from two sources simultaneously. In the first place, Russia is much more a petty-bourgeois country than the countries of Western Europe. Our country, therefore, more frequently produces individuals, groups and trends distinguished by their contradictory, unstable, vacillating attitude to socialism (an attitude veering between "ardent love" and base treachery) characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie in general. Secondly, the petty-bourgeois masses in our country are more prone to lose heart and to succumb to renegade moods at the failure of any *one* phase of our bourgeois revolution; they are more ready to renounce the aim of a complete democratic revolution which would entirely rid Russia of all survivals of medievalism and serfdom.

We shall not dwell at length on the first source. We need only mention that there is hardly a country in the world in

which there has been such a rapid "swing" from sympathy for socialism to sympathy for counter-revolutionary liberalism as that performed by our Struves, Izgoyevs, Karaulovs, etc., etc. Yet these gentlemen are not exceptions, not isolated individuals, but representatives of widespread trends! Sentimentalists, of whom there are many outside the ranks of the Social-Democratic movement, but also a goodly number within it, and who love to preach sermons against "excessive" polemics, against "the passion for drawing lines of demarcation", etc., betray a complete lack of understanding of the historical conditions which, in Russia, give rise to the "excessive" "passion" for swinging over from socialism to liberalism.

Let us turn to the second source of reformism in Russia.

Our bourgeois revolution has not been completed. The autocracy is *trying* to find new ways of solving the problems bequeathed by that revolution and imposed by the entire objective course of economic development; *but it is unable to do so*. Neither the latest step in the transformation of old tsarism into a renovated bourgeois monarchy, nor the organisation of the nobility and the upper crust of the bourgeoisie on a national scale (the Third Duma⁴⁴), nor yet the bourgeois agrarian policy being enforced by the rural superintendents⁴⁵—none of these "extreme" measures, none of these "latest" efforts of tsarism in the *last* sphere remaining to it, the sphere of adaptation to bourgeois development, prove adequate. It just does not work! Not only is a Russia "renovated" by *such* means unable to catch up with Japan, it is perhaps even beginning to fall behind China. Because the bourgeois-democratic tasks have been left unfulfilled, a revolutionary crisis is still inevitable. It is ripening again, and we are heading toward it once more, in a new way, *not the same* way as before, not at the same pace, and not only in the old forms—but that we are heading toward it, of that there is no doubt.

The tasks of the proletariat that arise from this situation are fully and unmistakably definite. As the only consistently revolutionary class of contemporary society, it must be the leader in the struggle of the whole people for a fully democratic revolution, in the struggle of *all* the working and exploited people against the oppressors and exploiters. The

proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to this idea of the hegemony of the proletariat. The proletarian who is conscious of this task is a slave who has revolted against slavery. The proletarian who is not conscious of the idea that his class must be the leader, or who renounces this idea, is a slave who does not realise his position as a slave; at best he is a slave who fights to improve his condition as a slave, *but not* one who fights to overthrow slavery.

It is, therefore, obvious that the famous formula of one of the young leaders of our reformists, Mr. Levitsky of *Nasha Zarya*,⁴⁶ who declared that the Russian Social-Democratic Party must represent "*not* hegemony, *but* a class party", is a formula of the most consistent reformism. More than that, it is a formula of sheer renegacy. To say, "*not* hegemony, *but* a class party", means to take the side of the bourgeoisie, the side of the liberal who says to the slave of our age, the wage-earner: "Fight to improve your condition as a slave, but regard the thought of overthrowing slavery as a harmful utopia!" Compare Bernstein's famous formula—"The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing"—with Levitsky's formula, and you will see that they are variations of the same idea. They both recognise *only* reforms, and renounce revolution. Bernstein's formula is broader in scope, for it envisages a socialist revolution (=the final goal of Social-Democracy, as a party of bourgeois society). Levitsky's formula is narrower; for while it renounces revolution in general, it is particularly meant to renounce what the liberals hated most in 1905-07—namely, the fact that the proletariat *wrested* from them the leadership of the masses of the people (particularly of the peasantry) in the struggle for a fully democratic revolution.

To preach to the workers that what they need is "*not* hegemony, *but* a class party" means to betray the cause of the proletariat to the liberals; it means preaching that *Social-Democratic* labour policy should be replaced by a *liberal* labour policy.

Renunciation of the idea of hegemony, however, is the crudest form of reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic movement, and that is why not all liquidators⁴⁷ make bold to express their ideas in such definite terms. Some of them (Mr. Martov, for instance) even try, mocking at the truth, to

deny that there is a connection between the renunciation of hegemony and liquidationism.

A more "subtle" attempt to "substantiate" reformist views is the following argument: The bourgeois revolution in Russia is at an end; after 1905 there can be no second bourgeois revolution, no second nation-wide struggle for a democratic revolution; Russia therefore is faced *not* with a *revolutionary* but with a "constitutional" crisis, and all that remains for the working class is to take care to defend its rights and interests on the basis of that "constitutional crisis". That is how the liquidator Y. Larin argues in *Dyelo Zhizni* (and previously in *Vozrozhdeniye*⁴⁸).

"October 1905 is not on the order of the day," wrote Mr. Larin. "If the Duma were abolished, it would be restored more rapidly than in post-revolutionary Austria, which abolished the Constitution in 1851 only to recognise it again in 1860, nine years later, without any revolution [note this!], simply because it was in the interests of the most influential section of the ruling classes, the section which had reconstructed its economy on capitalist lines." "At the stage we are now in, a nation-wide revolutionary movement like that of 1905 is impossible."

All Mr. Larin's arguments are nothing more than an expanded rehash of what Mr. Dan said at the Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. in December 1908. Arguing against the resolution which stated that the "*fundamental* factors of economic and political life which gave rise to the Revolution of 1905, *continue to operate*", that a new—*revolutionary*, and not "constitutional"—crisis was developing, the editor of the liquidators' *Golos* exclaimed: "They [i.e., the R.S.D.L.P.] want to shove in where they have once been defeated."

To shove again toward revolution, to work tirelessly, in the changed situation, to propagate the idea of revolution and to prepare the forces of the working class for it—that, from the standpoint of the reformists, is the chief crime of the R.S.D.L.P., that is what constitutes the *guilt* of the revolutionary proletariat. Why "shove in where they have once been defeated"—that is the wisdom of renegades and of persons who lose heart after any defeat.

But in countries older and more "experienced" than Russia the revolutionary proletariat showed its ability to "shove in where it has once been defeated" two, three, and four times; in France it accomplished *four* revolutions be-

tween 1789 and 1871, rising again and again after the most severe defeats and achieving a republic in which it now faces its *last* enemy—the advanced bourgeoisie; it has achieved a republic, which is the only form of state corresponding to the conditions necessary for the final struggle for the victory of socialism.

Such is the distinction between socialists and liberals, or champions of the bourgeoisie. The socialists teach that revolution is inevitable, and that the proletariat must take advantage of *all* the contradictions in society, of every weakness of its enemies or of the intermediate classes, to prepare for a new revolutionary struggle, to repeat the revolution in a broader arena, with a more developed population. The bourgeoisie and the liberals teach that revolutions are unnecessary and even harmful to the workers, that they must not “shove” toward revolution, but, like good little boys, work modestly for reforms.

That is why, in order to divert the Russian workers *from* socialism, the reformists, who are the captives of bourgeois ideas, *constantly* refer to the example of *Austria* (as well as Prussia) in the 1860s. Why are they so fond of these examples? Y. Larin let the cat out of the bag; because in these countries, after the “unsuccessful” revolution of 1848, the bourgeois transformation was completed “*without any revolution*”.

That is the whole secret! That is what gladdens their hearts, for it seems to indicate that bourgeois change is possible *without* revolution! And if that is the case, why should we Russians bother our heads about a revolution? Why not leave it to the landlords and factory owners to effect the bourgeois transformation of Russia “*without any revolution*”?!

It was because the proletariat in Austria and Prussia was weak that it was unable to prevent the landed proprietors and the bourgeoisie from effecting the transformation *regardless of* the interests of the workers, in a form *most prejudicial* to the workers, retaining the monarchy, the privileges of the nobility, arbitrary rule in the countryside, and a host of other survivals of medievalism.

In 1905 our proletariat displayed strength unparalleled in any bourgeois revolution in the West, yet today the Russian reformists use examples of the weakness of the

working class in other countries, forty or fifty years ago, in order to justify *their own* apostasy, to "substantiate" *their own* renegade propaganda!

The reference to Austria and Prussia of the 1860s, so beloved of our reformists, is the best proof of the theoretical fallacy of their arguments and of their desertion to the bourgeoisie in practical politics.

Indeed, if Austria restored the Constitution which was abolished after the defeat of the Revolution of 1848, and an "era of crisis" was ushered in in Prussia in the 1860s, what does this prove? It proves, primarily, that the bourgeois transformation of these countries had not been completed. To maintain that the system of government in Russia has *already* become bourgeois (as Larin says), and that government power in our country is no longer of a feudal nature (see Larin again), and at the same time to refer to Austria and Prussia as an example, is to refute oneself! Generally speaking it would be ridiculous to deny that the bourgeois transformation of Russia has not been completed: the very policy of the bourgeois parties, the Constitutional-Democrats and the Octobrists,⁴⁹ proves this beyond all doubt, and Larin himself (as we shall see further on) surrenders his position. It cannot be denied that the monarchy is taking one more step towards adapting itself to bourgeois development—as we have said before, and as was pointed out in a resolution adopted by the Party (December 1908). But it is still more undeniable that *even* this adaptation, *even* bourgeois reaction, and the Third Duma, and the agrarian law of November 9, 1906 (and June 14, 1910)⁵⁰ do *not* solve the problems of Russia's bourgeois transformation.

Let us look a little further. Why were "crises" in Austria and in Prussia in the 1860s *constitutional*, and not revolutionary? Because there were a number of special circumstances which eased the position of the monarchy (the "revolution from above" in Germany, her unification by "blood and iron"); because the proletariat was at that time extremely weak and undeveloped in those countries, and the liberal bourgeoisie was distinguished by base cowardice and treachery, just as the Russian Cadets are in our day.

To show how the German Social-Democrats who themselves took part in the events of those years assess the situation, we quote some opinions expressed by Bebel in his

memoirs (*Pages from My Life*), the first part of which was published last year. Bebel states that Bismarck, as has since become known, related that the king at the time of the "constitutional" crisis in Prussia in 1862 had given way to utter despair, lamented his fate, and blubbered in his, Bismarck's, presence that they were both going to die on the scaffold. Bismarck put the coward to shame and persuaded him not to shrink from giving battle.

"These events show," says Bebel, "what the liberals might have achieved had they taken advantage of the situation. But they were already afraid of the workers who backed them. Bismarck's words that if he were driven to extremes he would set Acheron in motion (i.e., stir up a popular movement of the lower classes, the masses), struck fear into their hearts."

Half a century after the "constitutional" crisis which "without any revolution" completed the transformation of his country into a bourgeois-Junker monarchy, the leader of the German Social-Democrats refers to the *revolutionary* possibilities of the situation at that time, which the liberals did not take advantage of owing to their fear of the workers. The leaders of the Russian reformists say to the Russian workers: since the German bourgeoisie was so base as to cower before a cowering king, why shouldn't we *too* try to copy those splendid tactics of the German bourgeoisie? Bebel accuses the bourgeoisie of not having "taken advantage" of the "constitutional" crisis to effect a revolution because of their fear, as exploiters, of the popular movement. Larin and Co. accuse the Russian workers of having striven to secure hegemony (i.e., to draw the masses into the revolution in spite of the liberals), and advise them to organise "*not* for revolution", *but* "for the defence of their interests in the forthcoming constitutional reform of Russia". The liquidators offer the Russian workers the rotten views of rotten German liberalism as "Social-Democratic" views! After this, how can one help calling such Social-Democrats "Stolypin Social-Democrats"?

In estimating the "constitutional" crisis of the 1860s in Prussia, Bebel does not confine himself to saying that the bourgeoisie were afraid to fight the monarchy because they were afraid of the workers. He also tells us what was going on among the workers at that time. "The appalling state of political affairs," he says, "of which the workers

were becoming ever more keenly aware, naturally affected their mood. Everybody clamoured for change. But since there was no fully class-conscious leadership with a clear vision of the goal and enjoying the confidence of the workers, and since there existed no strong organisation that could rally the forces, the mood petered out [*verpuffte*]. Never did a movement, so splendid in its essence [*in Kern vortreffliche*], turn out to be so futile in the end. All the meetings were packed, and the most vehement speakers were hailed as the heroes of the day. This was the prevailing mood, particularly, in the Workers' Educational Society at Leipzig." A mass meeting in Leipzig on May 8, 1866, attended by 5,000 people, unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel, which demanded, on the basis of universal, direct, and equal suffrage, with secret ballot, the convening of a Parliament supported by the armed people. The resolution also expressed the "hope that the German people will elect as deputies only persons who repudiate every hereditary central government power". The resolution proposed by Liebknecht and Bebel was thus unmistakably republican and revolutionary in character.

Thus we see that at the time of the "constitutional" crisis the leader of the *German Social-Democrats* advocated resolutions of a republican and revolutionary nature at mass meetings. Half a century later, recalling his youth and telling the new generation of the events of days long gone by, he stresses most of all his regret that at that time there was no leadership sufficiently class-conscious and capable of understanding the revolutionary tasks (*i.e., there was no revolutionary Social-Democratic Party understanding the task implied by the hegemony of the proletariat*); that there was no strong organisation; that the revolutionary mood "petered out". Yet the leaders of the Russian reformists, with the profundity of Simple Simons, refer to the example of Austria and Prussia in the 1860s as proving that we can manage "without any revolution"! And these paltry philistines who have succumbed to the intoxication of counter-revolution, and are the ideological slaves of liberalism, still dare to dishonour the name of the R.S.D.L.P.!

To be sure, among the reformists who are abandoning socialism there are people who substitute for Larin's straightforward opportunism the diplomatic tactics of beat-

ing about the bush in respect of the most important and fundamental questions of the working-class movement. They try to confuse the issue, to muddle the ideological controversies, to defile them, as did Mr. Martov, for instance, when he asserted in the legally published press (that is to say, where he is protected by Stolypin from a direct retort by members of the R.S.D.L.P.) that Larin and "the orthodox Bolsheviks in the resolutions of 1908" propose an *identical* "scheme". This is a downright distortion of the facts worthy of this author of scurrilous effusions. The same Martov, pretending to argue against Larin, declared in print that he, "of course", did "not suspect Larin of reformist tendencies". Martov *did not suspect* Larin, who expounded *purely* reformist views, of being a reformist! This is an example of the tricks to which the diplomats of reformism resort.* The same Martov, whom some simpletons regard as being more "Left", and a more reliable revolutionary than Larin, summed up his "difference" with the latter in the following words:

"To sum up: the fact that the present regime is an inherently contradictory combination of absolutism and constitutionalism, and that the Russian working class has sufficiently matured to follow the example of the workers of the progressive countries of the West in striking at this regime through the Achilles heel of its contradictions, is ample material for the theoretical substantiation and political justification of what the Mensheviks who remain true to Marxism are now doing."

No matter how hard Martov tried to evade the issue, the result of his very first attempt at a summary was that all his evasions collapsed of themselves. The words quoted above represent a complete renunciation of socialism and its replacement by liberalism. What Martov proclaims as "ample" is ample *only* for the liberals, *only* for the bourgeois. A proletarian who considers it "ample" to recognise the contradictory nature of the combination of absolutism and constitutionalism accepts the standpoint of a *liberal labour* policy. He is *no* socialist, he has *not* understood the tasks of his *class*, which demand that the masses of the people, the masses of working and exploited people, be roused against absolutism in all its forms, that they be roused to

* Compare the just remarks made by the pro-Party Menshevik Dnevniy in No. 3 of the *Discussion Bulletin* (supplement to the Central Organ of our Party) on Larin's reformism and Martov's evasions.

intervene *independently* in the historic destinies of the country, the vacillations or resistance of the bourgeoisie notwithstanding. But the independent historical action of the masses who are throwing off the hegemony of the bourgeoisie turns a "constitutional" crisis into a *revolution*. The bourgeoisie (particularly since 1905) fears revolution and loathes it; the proletariat, on the other hand, educates the masses of the people in the spirit of devotion to the idea of revolution, explains its tasks, and prepares the masses for new revolutionary battles. Whether, when, and under what circumstances the revolution materialises, does not depend on the will of a particular class; but revolutionary work carried on among the masses is never wasted. This is the only kind of activity which prepares the masses for the victory of socialism. The Larins and Martovs forget these elementary ABC truths of socialism.

Larin, who expresses the views of the group of Russian liquidators who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P., does not hesitate to go the whole hog in expounding his reformism. Here is what he writes in *Dyelo Zhizni* (1911, No. 2)—and these words should be remembered by everyone who holds dear the principles of Social-Democracy:

"A state of perplexity and uncertainty, when people simply do not know what to expect of the coming day, what tasks to set themselves—that is what results from indeterminate, temporising moods, from vague hopes of either a repetition of the revolution or of 'we shall wait and see'. The immediate task is, not to wait fruitlessly for something to turn up, but to imbue broad circles with the guiding idea that, in the ensuing historical period of Russian life, the working class must organise itself not 'for revolution', not 'in expectation of a revolution', but simply [note the *but simply*] for the determined and systematic defence of its particular interests in all spheres of life; for the gathering and training of its forces for this many-sided and complex activity; for the training and building-up in this way of socialist consciousness in general; for acquiring the ability to orientate itself [to find its bearings]—and to assert itself—particularly in the complicated relations of the social classes of Russia during the coming constitutional reform of the country after the economically inevitable self-exhaustion of feudal reaction."

This is consummate, frank, smug reformism of the purest water. War against the idea of revolution, against the "hopes" for revolution (in the eyes of the reformist such "hopes" seem *vague*, because he does not understand the depth of the contemporary economic and political contradictions); war against

every activity designed to organise the forces and prepare the minds for revolution; war waged in the legal press that Stolypin protects from a direct retort by revolutionary Social-Democrats; war waged on behalf of a group of legalists who have completely broken with the R.S.D.L.P.—this is the programme and tactics of the Stolypin labour party which Potresov, Levitsky, Larin, and their friends are out to create. The real programme and the real tactics of these people are expressed in exact terms in the above quotation—as distinct from their hypocritical official assurances that they are “*also* Social-Democrats”, that they “*also*” belong to the “irreconcilable International”. These assurances are only window-dressing. Their deeds, their real social substance, are expressed in this programme, which substitutes a liberal labour policy for socialism.

Just note the ridiculous contradictions in which the reformists become entangled. If, as Larin says, the bourgeois revolution in Russia has been consummated, then the socialist revolution is the next stage of historical development. This is self-evident; it is clear to anyone who does not profess to be a socialist merely for the sake of deceiving the workers by the use of a popular name. *This* is all the more reason why we *must* organise “for revolution” (for socialist revolution), “in expectation” of revolution, for the sake of the “hopes” (not vague “hopes”, but the *certainly* based on the exact and growing scientific data) of a socialist revolution.

But that’s the whole point—to the reformist the twaddle about the consummated bourgeois revolution (like Martov’s twaddle about the Achilles heel, etc.) is simply a verbal screen to cover up his *renunciation of all revolution*. He renounces the bourgeois-democratic revolution on the pretext that it is complete, or that it is “ample” to recognise the contradiction between absolutism and constitutionalism; and he renounces the socialist revolution on the pretext that “for the time being” we must “simply” organise to take part in the “coming constitutional reform” of Russia!

But if you, esteemed Cadet parading in socialist feathers, recognise the inevitability of Russia’s “coming constitutional reform”, then you speak against yourself, for thereby you admit that the bourgeois-democratic revolution *has not been completed* in our country. You are betraying your bourgeois nature again and again when you talk about an inevitable

"*self-exhaustion* of feudal reaction", and when you sneer at the proletarian idea of *destroying*, not only feudal *reaction*, but *all* survivals of feudalism, by means of a *popular* revolutionary movement.

Despite the liberal sermons of our heroes of the Stolypin labour party, the Russian proletariat will always and invariably put the spirit of devotion to the democratic revolution and to the socialist revolution into *all* that difficult, arduous, everyday, routine and inconspicuous work, to which the era of counter-revolution has condemned it; it will organise and gather its forces for revolution; it will ruthlessly repulse the traitors and renegades; and it will be guided, not by "vague hopes", but by the scientifically grounded conviction that the revolution will come again.

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*The Anonymous Writer in "Vorwärts"
and the State of Affairs in the R.S.D.L.P.*⁵¹

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PREFACE

Vorwärts of March 26 carried an official statement on the Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and an anonymous article whose author, in line with a resolution adopted by Russian Social-Democratic groups abroad,⁵² heaps abuse on the Conference. The Conference was the culmination of the four years' struggle of the R.S.D.L.P. against the liquidators, and it was held in spite of all the intrigues of the liquidators who endeavoured at all costs to hinder the rebuilding of the Party. The Conference placed the liquidators outside the Party. It is therefore quite natural that the liquidators and their supporters should now attack the Conference.

Since *Vorwärts* refuses to print our reply to the infamous lying article of the anonymous writer and continues its campaign in favour of the liquidators, we are publishing this reply as a separate pamphlet for the information of the German comrades. It is devoted, mainly, to a brief statement of the significance, course and results of the fight against the liquidators.

*Editorial Board of "Sotsial-Demokrat",
Central Organ of the R.S.D.L.P.*

P.S. Our pamphlet had already been sent to the printer when we received Plekhanov's *Diary of a Social-Democrat* No. 16 (April 1912). This issue provides the best proof that *Vorwärts* was deceived by the anonymous writer and, in its turn, misled the German workers.

Plekhanov, while definitely stating that he is still no supporter of the Conference held in January 1912, says in so many words that what the Bund⁵³ is convening is not a conference of *existing* Party organisations but a "*constituent*" conference, i.e., one which is expected to found a new party; that the organisers of the conference follow a "*typical anarchist principle*"; that they adopted a "liquidationist resolu-