

Readers'
Guide

to the

Marxist
Classics



TWO & SIXPENCE

READERS' GUIDE
to
THE MARXIST CLASSICS

Prepared and Edited

by MAURICE CORNFORTH

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FOREWORD

This Readers' Guide has been prepared with the object of helping both students engaged in self-study of the Marxist Classics and tutors of political education classes. It aims at giving a survey of works available to English readers in the current standard collections, covering the whole scope of Marxist-Leninist theory.

For this purpose the following classification of the material has been adopted:

1. Writings dealing briefly with the life and work of the four great teachers, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.
2. The most basic and comprehensive works setting forth the general principles of Marxism-Leninism.
3. Works dealing specifically with the general principles of dialectical and historical materialism.
4. Works dealing specifically with political economy.
5. Works concerned above all with the principles of the organisation, strategy and tactics of the working-class party, in the period up to the socialist revolution.
6. Works dealing with the development of the democratic revolution in Europe, and with the problems of the transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution.
7. Writings and speeches by Lenin and Stalin in the period of the preparation and carrying through of the Great October Socialist Revolution.
8. Writings and speeches by Stalin in the period of the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R., up to the Second World War.
9. Lastly, works by Lenin and Stalin on the national and colonial question.

A short introduction is provided to each part, and a summary is given of the contents of each work and of the principal lessons to be learned from it. Footnote references to other reading in connection with the subjects dealt with provide a system of cross-references. A reference index is provided at the end of the Guide, together with an index of titles showing in what English editions the various works referred to are to be found.

It is hoped that this plan will help readers to find their way among the many works available, to decide what to tackle and where to begin, and to get the maximum out of the study of each particular work read.

The Guide is also designed to help readers to find particular passages dealing with particular subjects, for purposes of study or reference. Lenin's advice that a socialist should form the habit of continually "consulting the classics" cannot be too much stressed. For example, the reader may be concerned in current political work with questions of nationalisation of industry and state capitalism. By the joint use of the reference index and the summaries he will be able easily to find where to consult Engels, Lenin and Stalin on this subject.

A word of advice to inexperienced readers.

In reading the Marxist classics one often comes upon whole passages which are found, at first reading, very hard to understand. Sometimes this is due to the inherent difficulty of the subject, sometimes to unfamiliar words, sometimes to the introduction of arguments against persons whom the reader has never before heard of and whose ideas are obscure or perverse. On encountering such difficulties, do not allow yourself to get "stuck." Even if you cannot understand the passage, read straight through it; you will soon find yourself picking up the

threads again when the difficult passage is past. And with more extensive reading and with greater familiarity with the subject, you can return to the work again and find that your first difficulty no longer exists or at all events is lessened. It. on the other hand, you stick at the difficult passage and puzzle over it too long, you may grow discouraged and never finish the book at all.

As regards difficult or unfamiliar words, it is hoped that this guide, and the various explanations and references given in it, may give some help in the mastery of such words. But words, like many other unfamiliar things, become understood as you become familiar with them and with their use.

Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action. In studying Marxism, it is never a question of learning certain phrases and definitions by heart, but of learning how the principles of Marxism were developed in the course of the struggle for socialism and how we in our turn can apply and develop Marxism in our own struggle, in proportion as we can advance our study of Marxism we are equipping ourselves the better for practical political work; and at the same time, in proportion as we ourselves gain political experience, we are equipping ourselves the better to understand and apply the teachings of Marxism.

1. MARX, ENGELS, LENIN AND STALIN

INTRODUCTION

Marx and Engels were the founders of scientific socialism. Their teachings have been continued and developed by Lenin and Stalin. The classics of Marxism comprise the works of these four leaders and teachers. They contain the guiding ideas of the working class struggle for socialism, the building of socialist society and the transition to communism.

Marx and Engels showed that socialism was not the invention of dreamers but the inevitable outcome of the development of modern capitalist society.

They showed that capitalism was creating its own gravedigger in the person of the proletariat,¹ the working class. Only the class struggle of the proletariat and its victory over the bourgeoisie,² the capitalists, would rid humanity of exploitation of man by man.

Marx and Engels therefore taught the working class to be conscious of its own strength, of its own class interests, and to unite in a determined struggle against the capitalist class.

They discovered the laws of development of capitalist society, and proved scientifically that the development of the class struggle must inevitably lead to the fall of capitalism, to the conquest of power by the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

They taught that the working class must rally around itself all the forces discontented with capitalism, and lead them in the storming of capitalism. At the head of all working people it must establish its own political rule, crush the resistance of the exploiters and create a new classless communist society.

And they taught that in order to achieve these aims the working class must have its own working class party, the Communist Party.

Lenin and Stalin have been the great continuers of the work of Marx and Engels in the new historical epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution.

Lenin developed Marx's teachings in new historical conditions. Leninism is accordingly defined as "the Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution."

The theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism has been further creatively developed by Stalin—the great disciple and collaborator of Lenin, who now leads the Soviet peoples in the construction of communism and teaches and inspires the peoples of the whole world in the fight for peace, democracy, national independence and socialism.

In this part, we introduce to the reader a few of the works dealing specifically with the personalities and lives of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and the services they rendered to the international working-class movement.

On Stalin, the reader should consult the official biography and the *Pravda* Articles published on his 70th birthday (*Soviet News* booklet).

ENGELS: Karl Mara, Speech at Graveside of Karl Mara

Engels' article on *Karl Marx*, written in 1877 for the German *People's Calendar*, gives an account of Marx's life and work. It shows how as editor of the *Rhenish Gazette* and

¹ *Proletariat* is a Latin word, denoting freemen—neither slaves nor serfs—who own no means of production. Thus the modern *working class*, which sells its labour power to the capitalists and from whose exploitation surplus value is produced, is a *proletariat*.

² *Bourgeoisie* is a French word, equivalent to "burgess" or "burgher," meaning the merchants and manufacturers of the towns. Thus the modern *capitalist class* is a *bourgeoisie*.

German-French Annual, as member of the Communist League, as exile in England, as founder and leader of the First International, Marx lived and developed his ideas in the thick of the working class struggle.

Surveying Marx's theoretical work, Engels singles out as his two most important discoveries (a) the materialist conception of history, (b) "the final elucidation of the relation between capital and labour" through the discovery of the nature of surplus value. He briefly explains the meaning of these two discoveries.

In his *Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx* (Highgate Cemetery, March 17, 1883) Engels again refers to these two great discoveries of Marx. He concludes:

"Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position.... His name will endure through the ages, and so also will his work."

LENIN: The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism

In this brief article Lenin explains how the teachings of Marx "arose as a direct and immediate continuation of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism."

Lenin shows how, taking as his point of departure the highest point reached by his predecessors, Marx revolutionised both philosophy, political economy and socialism.

Marx's philosophy is *materialism*, and he deepened and developed materialism by means of the conception of dialectics. He carried materialism to its conclusion in historical materialism, by wedding it to the understanding of human society, showing that the economic order of society is the basis on which the whole political and ideological superstructure of society arises.

Marx then studied *the economic order of modern capitalist society*. The doctrine of surplus value is the cornerstone of his economic theory. He traced the development of capitalism from the first germs of commodity economy and simple exchange to its highest forms, to large-scale production, showing that the capitalist system creates the great power of combined labour.

Marx elaborated *the doctrine of the class struggle*, showing that the working class was the social force which was capable of becoming the creator of a new social system.¹

LENIN: Karl Marx

This little book, which Lenin wrote in 1914 while in exile in Switzerland, contains a brief but comprehensive account of all the most essential elements of Marx's teachings, which it summarises under seven heads:

1. Philosophic Materialism
2. Dialectics
3. The Materialist Conception of History
4. Class Struggle
5. Marx's Economic Doctrine
6. Socialism

¹ Cf. Lenin, *Marxism and Revisionism*, where he shows how the revisionists "revise" all these three component parts of Marxist doctrine.

7. The Tactics of the Class Struggle of the Proletariat.

Here the reader will find (a) an outline of the main ideas of Marxism in each particular field of study, and (b) a vivid demonstration of the consistency and unity of conception of Marxism, which welds all the detailed studies into a single whole—the theory and practice of scientific socialism.

LENIN: Frederick Engels

Lenin's article written on the death of Engels in 1895, gives an account of the life of Engels, of his association with Marx and of his main works.

Summing up the teachings of Marx and Engels and their services to the working class, Lenin says:

“In a few words, the services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed thus. They taught the working class to know itself, and to become class conscious, and they substituted science for dreaming.... The emancipation of the proletariat must be the work of the proletariat itself. This is what Marx and Engels constantly taught.”

In his *Speech at the Unveiling of a Memorial to Marx and Engels* in 1919, Lenin again briefly summarised the services of Marx and Engels.

A further brief summary is given by Lenin in his article *On the Theory of Marxism*.

Stalin on Lenin

There are a number of speeches and articles on Lenin by J. V. Stalin.

In his speech *On the Death of Lenin*, delivered at the 2nd Congress of Soviets, January 26, 1924, Stalin took his famous vow to remain faithful to Lenin's behests. “There is nothing higher than the title of member of the Party whose founder and leader was Comrade Lenin,” he declared. Lenin's behests were:

To hold high and guard the purity of the great title of member of the Party.

To guard the unity of the Party.

To guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To strengthen the alliance of workers and peasants.

To consolidate and extend the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

To strengthen and extend the union of the working people of the whole world.

In an article on *Lenin as Organiser and Leader of the Russian Communist Party*, written on the 50th anniversary of Lenin's birth, Stalin explains that while there are some who convert Marxism into a set of “lifeless and meaningless formulas,” Lenin attached prime importance to the translation of Marxism into reality, “testing every step by experience, learning from mistakes and teaching others how to build a new life.”¹ He then shows how this was manifested in Lenin's work as organiser and leader of the Party.

In a speech *On Lenin* delivered at the Kremlin Military School in 1924 Stalin speaks of Lenin as he knew him, “as a man and a statesman.” He describes how he first met Lenin, “the mountain eagle”; and then describes his modesty, his fidelity to principle, his faith in the masses, his revolutionary genius. He illustrates Lenin's outstanding characteristics by examples from his work and political leadership.

In his *Interview Given to the First American Labour Delegation* in 1927, Stalin deals with the main questions on which Lenin contributed something new in development of the

¹ Cf. *History of C.P.S.U.(B)*, conclusion.

doctrines of Marx.

Lenin wholly and entirely based himself on the principles of Marxism, but he developed Marx's doctrines further, in accordance with new historical conditions. That is why Leninism is defined as "Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions."¹ In particular, Lenin continued and added to Marxism on the following points:

1. the analysis of imperialism and monopoly capitalism;
2. the dictatorship of the proletariat;
3. the building of socialist economy;
4. the leading role of the working class;
5. the national and colonial question;
6. the working class party.

¹See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism* and *On the Problems of Leninism*

2. THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM-LENINISM

INTRODUCTION

The substance of Marxism-Leninism, the basic principles of which have been applied and further developed in the theory and practice of world Communism, are expounded in a comparatively few fundamental works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

These are of varying degrees of difficulty, and it is important that the student should select the right works to tackle first. For the beginner, the best introduction to Marxism is to be found in Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. This, therefore, should be read first; and with it may usefully be read *Anarchism or Socialism* by Stalin.

The *Communist Manifesto* comes next. It should not be attempted first, because there is a difficulty in reading it, arising from its very comprehensive character and compressed style.

Next, the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*.

These three works—*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, the *Communist Manifesto*, and the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*—together comprise the most essential basic reading. There is a tremendous amount of material in them, and the student will need to return to them in the light of further reading in order to master their contents more fully. But a preliminary reading of these three works provides an introduction to the whole range of problems covered by Marxism-Leninism.

The ten works included here under the heading of “basic principles” have been classified as follows:

- A. General Introduction to Marxist Theory: The *Manifesto* and *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, in which the fundamental ideas of scientific socialism are put forward; together with *Anarchism or Socialism*
- B. More Advanced Reading: – Engels' great theoretical work *Anti-Dühring*, and Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, where he dealt with fundamental questions of the programme of the working class party.
- C. The History of the C.P.S.U.(B): – This shows how the teachings of Marxism were applied and further developed in the victorious struggle of the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin and Stalin.
- D. Leninism: – Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*, in which he deals with the basic conceptions and policies of Leninism, as the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and of proletarian revolution; and Stalin's *Problems of Leninism*, which deals especially with the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- E. Imperialism and the Proletarian Revolution: Lenin's *Imperialism*, which lays bare the nature of imperialism as the last stage of capitalism and the eve of the socialist revolution, and *State and Revolution*, which expounds the theory of the state and of the tasks of the working class in overthrowing capitalist class rule and instituting the rule of the working class, socialist democracy.

A. GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO MARXIST THEORY

MARX AND ENGELS: The Manifesto of the Communist Party

The Manifesto of the Communist Party (or, as it is most often called, *The Communist Manifesto*) contains the first and most complete summarised statement of the theoretical principles of Marxism and of the strategy and tactics of Communism.

It was commissioned by the Second Congress of the Communist League in November

1847, and it was first published in February 1848.

This was a stormy period: the period of the February 1848 Revolution in France and of the climax of the Chartist Movement in Britain, when the working class appeared for the first time on the stage of history as an independent force.

Readers who want to know something of the background of the Manifesto should read the various prefaces—written by Marx and Engels to different editions (published with the *Manifesto*), and should also turn to Engels' *History of the Communist League* and Marx's *Class Struggles in France, 1848-50*.

The *Manifesto* was an epoch-making document. Up to that time, socialists had been putting forward utopian schemes (imaginary projects for an ideal society) or were engaging in secret conspiracies, while the rising working class movement lacked a revolutionary theory. The *Manifesto* signified the union of scientific socialism with the mass working-class movement.¹

The fundamental ideas of the *Manifesto* may be summed up under five main headings:

1. THE THEORY OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE

The history of all societies since the break-up of the primitive communes has been the history of class struggles.

In capitalist society a stage has been reached when the victory of the exploited class, the proletariat, over the ruling exploiting class, the bourgeoisie, will once and for all emancipate society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.

The conception of the working class struggle set forth in the *Manifesto* follows from Marx's *materialist conception of history*, the essentials of which are summarised in Engels' prefaces to the English edition of 1888 and to the German edition of 1883.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Capitalism itself developed out of feudalism, and the capitalist class is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the mode of production and exchange.

The capitalist class has conquered exclusive political sway in the modern parliamentary state. In its development, it has played a most revolutionary role. It has brought into being the great new productive forces of modern industry. But in creating modern industry it has created its own gravediggers, the proletariat.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROLETARIAT

The growth of the proletariat as a class is accompanied by the growth of its organisation, both economic and political.

At first the proletariat is incoherent and scattered. It is originally dragged into the political arena by the bourgeoisie, which must appeal to the proletariat to help fight the remnants of feudalism. The *Manifesto* deals with the stages of political development through which the proletariat becomes organised into a class, and consequently into a political party, combined against the bourgeoisie.

While the proletariat fights against all relics of feudalism and for the fullest extension of democracy, it leads the struggle for socialism against the capitalists, a struggle which must culminate in the proletariat conquering power and becoming itself the ruling class.

¹ See also Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

4. FROM SOCIALISM TO CLASSLESS SOCIETY

With power in its hands, the proletariat makes drastic inroads into the power of the capitalists and into capitalist property relations.

From the rule of the proletariat will come classless society, in which will arise new people, new human relations—“an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”

5. THE AIMS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The *Manifesto* contains a trenchant defence of the aims of Communism, and it exposes various fashionable brands of “socialism” as expressions, not of the working-class standpoint, but of the reactionary standpoints of other classes—of the decaying aristocracy, the petty-bourgeoisie¹ or the bourgeoisie itself. The ideas of Communism, on the other hand, are not inventions of any would-be reformers, but spring from the existing class struggle.

Communists have no interests apart from those of the working class as a whole. Their policy is to fight for the immediate aims of the class, to form an alliance with every movement opposed to the existing social order, and in the movement of the present always to take care of the future, striving to unite the class for the overthrow of capitalist class rule and for the conquest of power.

ENGELS: Socialism, Utopian and Scientific

Of all the works of Marx and Engels, this is probably the best for the beginner. Written in a very clear and easy style, it introduces the reader to the basic ideas of scientific socialism.

Its three chapters were extracted from Engels’ much larger work, *Anti-Dühring*.²

The chief difficulty which a new reader is likely to find lies in the Introduction, where a variety of philosophical views are discussed. In this Introduction Engels deals with the history of modern materialism, and then refutes the views of the Agnostics and of the German philosopher Kant. The reader who finds such discussions difficult should read the Introduction *after* and not before the rest of the book.

The following are the main points dealt with in the three chapters of *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

1. Socialism was first put forward as the dream of an ideal society—a utopia. The Utopian Socialists (St. Simon and Fourier in France, Robert Owen in Britain) could not show how socialism was to be achieved in practice. For they could not point to the social force, i.e. the working class, whose class interest demanded socialism and whose struggle would bring socialism into being.

Engels shows that socialism must be turned from a utopia into a science, which means that it must be based on an understanding of the laws of development of society, of the class struggle, of the contradictions of capitalism, of the role of the working class.

2. Scientific socialism has a philosophical basis—dialectical materialism.

¹ The *petty bourgeoisie* consists of the small proprietors in capitalist society, engaged in private profit-making enterprise through the production and sale of commodities, but not exploiting labour, or not exploiting it on a large scale—small businessmen, shopkeepers, farmers, independent professional people, and so on.

² The beginning of Chapter I is taken from the Introduction to *Anti-Dühring*, while the rest of Chapter I comes from the first chapter of Part III. Chapter II is again extracted from the Introduction, and Chapter III reproduces Part III, Chapter II.

Dialectics,¹ says Engels, means studying things in their real motion and interconnection. He contrasts this with “metaphysics,” which considers things “one after the other and apart from each other.”

Engels goes on to contrast dialectical materialism with the dialectics of the idealist philosopher, Hegel.

3. Marxism extends materialism to the understanding of society and its laws. It demonstrates that the ultimate cause of all important historical events lies in the economic development of society, i.e. in changes in the mode of production and exchange. It is the development of production and exchange which leads to the division of society into hostile classes and to the class struggle.

The task of socialists is not simply to criticise existing capitalist society as unjust, but to understand the nature of the capitalist mode of production and its laws of development. The essential nature of capitalism was laid bare by Marx’s discovery of surplus value.

4. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the social production which capitalism has brought into being and private capitalist appropriation. This contradiction contains the germs of the whole of the social antagonisms of to-day. And Engels further shows how capitalism in its development necessarily passes through periodic economic crises.²

The solution of the contradiction can be achieved only when the working class, as a result of its struggle, establishes social ownership to match social production.

5. Engels goes on to show how, with the further development of capitalism, capital becomes concentrated into the hands of great trusts and combines.

At a certain stage in this process, the state must begin to undertake the direction of production. Yet capitalist state ownership is not socialism, for the workers in state industries are still exploited for capitalist profit. The taking over of productive forces by the capitalist state does not solve the social conflicts. It does, however, bring them to a head, and creates the technical conditions for going forward to socialism. For this it is necessary that the working class should seize political power, taking possession of the productive forces and utilising them, not for capitalist profit, but for the welfare of society as a whole.³

6. Here Engels deals with the nature of the state. The state is a product of the division of society into hostile classes, and its function is to preserve the conditions of class exploitation. It has therefore always been the instrument of the ruling class—in slave society of the slave-owners, in feudal society of the feudal lords, in capitalist society of the capitalist class. The modern state is essentially a capitalist machine, the organ of capitalist class rule.⁴

It follows that when socialism has abolished the exploitation of one class by another, there remains no more need for coercion and repression and therefore no need for any social

¹ See Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*; Stalin *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

² See Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*; *Wage Labour and Capital*; Lenin, *A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism*; Stalin, Report to 16th Congress.

³ On state capitalism and socialism see further Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and Left-Wing Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*; Stalin, *Report to 14th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*.

⁴ See Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.

repressive force, a state. So the state will wither away.¹

7. Finally, with the establishment of socialism, anarchy in social production is replaced by planned organisation. Consequently, instead of being at the mercy of economic forces which they cannot understand, men will be able more and more consciously to plan their lives and make their own history. “It is the ascent of man from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.”

STALIN: Anarchism or Socialism

This little book was written by Stalin as a young man of twenty-six, when he was leading the party in Transcaucasia. At that time a group of anarchists was disrupting the Transcaucasian workers’ organisations, and Stalin set out to explain the ideas of Marxism in opposition to those of the anarchists. The book was addressed to the ordinary rank and file workers, and contains a very simple and popular exposition of the fundamentals of Marxist theory; it is a model of how profound questions of theory should be linked with the immediate tasks of the working class struggle.

The book consists of three short chapters. The first two deal respectively with the *dialectical method* and the *materialist theory*. Here are set forth the same ideas which Stalin was to elaborate more fully in his *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

The third chapter deals with *socialism*. Stalin here explains the nature of capitalism, the nature of the future socialist society and of the transition from socialism to communism, the grounds for maintaining the inevitability of the advance to socialism, the nature of the working class struggle, the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the tasks of the working class party.

B. MORE ADVANCED READING

MARX: Critique of the Gotha Programme

Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Programme* deals with fundamental questions of the theory and programme of the working class party. It consists of a series of comments on points contained in the draft programme prepared for a unity conference of the German working class movement held at Gotha in 1875. Marx’s comments were suppressed by the opportunist leadership of the German Social Democratic Party, and were subsequently published by Engels in 1891, against the wishes of the leadership.

The intention of the draft programme—the “Gotha Programme”—was to provide a platform behind which the whole German working class movement could unite. But for the sake of “unity” it made a number of concessions on points of principle to the followers of the splinter group led by Ferdinand Lassalle.

What are the principal points clarified in Marx’s critique?

1. He shows that the capitalist mode of production has created the material conditions for advancing to socialism, and deals with *the way in which the social product will be distributed in socialist society*. Socialism is only the first phase of communism, and is guided by the principle, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his labour.” It will lead to

¹ The theory of the state was further developed by Stalin at the *18th Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, where he dealt with the functions of the Socialist State, and the question of the “withering away” of the state, in conditions of the existence of socialist countries surrounded by a hostile capitalist world.

full communist society, the principle of which is, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."¹

2. He attacks the reformist slogan of "a fair distribution of the products of labour," and exposes the theoretical confusion behind this slogan. For *the distribution of the products of labour, must always be a consequence of the mode of production.*² He likewise attacks the reformist slogan of "state aid under democratic control," and shows that the aim of the working class must be "to revolutionise the present conditions of production."

3. He attacks the conception that, relatively to the working class, all other classes are *only one reactionary mass*. It is necessary to examine concretely the actual position of each class at each stage of history, and not lump them all together as "reactionary." Thus the workers may fight together with sections of the capitalists against feudal survivals, together with the lower middle class for certain democratic demands, and so on.³

4. He affirms the *international* character of the working class struggle⁴ in opposition to the narrowly national aims of the Gotha Programme.

5. He refutes the conception of an "iron law of wages," according to which the worker's real wages can never be raised above a minimum subsistence level.⁵

6. He attacks the reformist slogan of a "free state," and shows that "between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.*"⁶

ENGELS : Anti-Dühring

Engels' great book *Anti-Dühring* (or, to give it its full title *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science*) contains the most complete and comprehensive exposition of Marxist teachings, ranging over the whole field covered by Marxist theory. It is a masterpiece, clear, simple and witty in its style, profound in its content, demonstrating in every field the power of the Marxist method.

The book is divided into three parts 1

- I. Philosophy.
- II. Political Economy.
- III. Socialism.

It is polemical in style, having been written, as its title indicates, against a certain Dr. Eugen Dühring, who was making a noise in the socialist movement in Germany in the 1870's. Dühring claimed to be the inventor of a complete "system" of philosophy and science, founded on eternal and self-evident "first principles," which enunciated the final truth about "all things under the sun and then a few more" and which, in particular, would instruct socialists as to their future policy. In exposing Dühring's nonsense and answering it, Engels

¹ See Lenin, *The State and Revolution*; Stalin, *Speech at Conference of Stakhanovites*,

² See Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Part II; Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Ch. 51.

³ See, for example, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League*.

⁴ See *The Communist Manifesto*.

⁵ See *Wages, Price and Profit*.

⁶ See Lenin, *The State and Revolution*. This book by Lenin contains quotations from and commentaries on a number of passages of the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

makes clear the Marxist standpoint.

Anti-Dühring first appeared as a serial in the journal *Forward*, beginning in 1877, and was published as a complete book in 1878. Parts of it were subsequently published separately under the title *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

Part I, on *Philosophy*, begins by refuting the idea that we can deduce anything from “self-evident first principles.” Principles are only valid, says Engels, in so far as they can be shown to conform to nature and history; they are therefore not the starting point of investigation but its final result.

He goes on to discuss the concepts of “the unity of the world” and of time and space,¹ and then devotes several chapters to natural science²—physics, chemistry and biology. In the chapters on biology in particular, the reader will find a profound discussion of the Darwinian theory of evolution and of the nature of life: subsequent science has more and more confirmed the standpoint taken by Engels in these chapters. In Chapter III there is an important discussion on the nature of mathematics.

Engels then devotes three chapters (9, 10, 11) to morality and law. He gives here a masterly treatment of the question, “Are there eternal truths?”

Turning to morals, he shows that in class society “morality is always a class morality.”³ There is a lengthy discussion on ideas of equality. “The real content of the proletarian demand for equality is the demand for the abolition of classes,” Engels declares. “Any demand for equality which goes beyond that of necessity passes into absurdity.”

The next chapter discusses “the question of so-called free will” and “the relation between freedom and necessity.” Freedom is knowledge of necessity.⁴

The last two chapters of Part I turn to the laws of dialectics, and discuss the conceptions of dialectical contradiction, of the transformation of quantity into quality and of the negation of the negation. Engels makes the real meaning of these conceptions clear in a series of examples. The methods and basic ideas of dialectical materialism are also explained by Engels in the Preface to the 2nd edition of *Anti-Dühring*, and in the general introduction to the book as a whole.

Part II, on *Political Economy*, begins by defining political economy as “the science of the laws governing the production and exchange of the material means of subsistence in human society.” The mode of distribution of the products is always in the last analysis based on the mode of production and exchange. Therefore inequalities in the mode of distribution of the products develop as consequences of the existing mode of production.⁵

From this standpoint Engels devotes three chapters to the criticism of the so-called “force theory,” which was put forward by Dühring. According to this theory, inequalities in the distribution of products are due to a minority having somehow imposed this mode of distribution on society by force. It follows that capitalist society can be reformed by securing a

¹ See Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

² See also Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*.

³ See also Lenin, *Tasks of the Youth Leagues*.

⁴ Cf. also what Engels says concerning the transition to the realm of freedom in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, extracted from Part III of *Anti-Dühring*. And see Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Ch. 3.

⁵ See Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

more equal distribution of products, without altering the basic capitalist mode of production. Engels gives a detailed criticism of this theory. He shows how the development of property relations and political institutions has been based on economic development; a brilliant chapter is devoted to military science and to its economic basis; he ends by showing that all political power is originally based on an economic, social function, and that since the development of capitalism has reached the point where the rule of the capitalist class has become a hindrance to further social development, this rule, and with it the capitalist mode of production and exchange, must be "inexorably abolished."

This whole argument is of vital importance, not only in relation to Dühring, but in relation to reformist theory generally, and is as topical to-day as ever.

Engels then devotes four chapters to a polemical defence and exposition of the labour theory of value and of Marx's theory of surplus value and capital.¹

There follows a short chapter on ground rent² and a long chapter contributed by Marx giving a critical estimate of the leading writers on political economy before Marx.³

Part III, on *Socialism*, opens with a critical account of the ideas of the utopian socialists, and then outlines the leading ideas of scientific socialism. These chapters were included in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, and have been dealt with above in connection with that book.

The last three chapters deal with Dühring's own proposals for the organisation of production and distribution, and of the state, the family and education, in his ideal socialist society of the future. In this connection Engels discusses questions of the division of labour, the abolition of the antithesis of town and countryside, and the distribution of products, as these will actually present themselves in socialist society. In the last chapter, replying to Dühring's proposal "to abolish religion," Engels briefly discusses the Marxist attitude to religion;⁴ and in connection with the family and education he shows that these will develop in accordance with the real requirements of the citizens of the future socialist society, not in accordance with the "eternal principles" laid down by any utopian reformer.

C. THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION (BOLSHEVIKS)

STALIN; History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)

Written by J. V. Stalin, edited by a Commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.(B), this book was first published in 1938. It makes available the experience and the lessons of the successful fight for socialism of the working people of the Soviet Union.

It shows how the teachings of Marxism were applied and carried into practice in the struggle for socialism, and how they were further developed by Lenin and Stalin in the course of that struggle.

It therefore introduces us to the fundamental ideas of Marxism-Leninism, showing how to apply and develop them in practice, and how to fight for them. And it arms us with knowledge of the laws of social development, confirming our certainty of the victory of communism throughout the world.

¹ See Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*, and *Capital*, Vol. I.

² See Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III; Lenin, *Agrarian Program of Social Democracy*, Ch. 3.

³ See Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*.

⁴ See Lenin, *Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion*.

The *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)* may be roughly divided into four periods:—

A. *From the Foundation of the Party to the First Russian Revolution of 1905-7.*

Chapters 1, 2 and 3 deal with the period up to and including the First Russian Revolution of 1905-7.

Here we learn, first, of the rise of the industrial working class in Russia and of Lenin's struggle for the formation of a working class party. This struggle involved:

- (a) The fight for the fundamental ideas of Marxism against the "populists" (Narodnism), who denied that the workers must play the leading part in the revolution;
- (b) The fight against opportunism in the working class movement.

In the struggle first against the "economists," who thought the workers should confine themselves to economic demands and not wage a political struggle, and then against the Mensheviks, who wanted to turn the working class party into an opportunist social-democratic party of the West European type, Lenin established the principles of the working class party of a new type.¹

In the First Russian Revolution which broke out in 1905 the Bolsheviks showed how to give leadership to the mass movement of the working class. In opposition to the Mensheviks who wanted to hold back the rising mass movement of the workers, Lenin and the Bolsheviks showed that the workers in alliance with the peasants must rise in revolt against Tsarism, overthrow it and clear the way for socialism.²

What are the principal points we can learn about from the study of these chapters of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)* ?

1. The fundamental teachings of Marxism on the growth of the working class and its struggle, and the role of the working class in the fight for socialism.

2. The relation of the economic with the political struggle of the working class, the tasks of political leadership, and the necessity to fight against the "economist" or narrow trade union type of reformism in the working class movement.

3. The political and organisational principles of the working class party of a new type.

4. The distinction and relationship of the bourgeois and the socialist revolution, and the leading role of the working class in the bourgeois revolution and in passing over from the bourgeois to the socialist revolution.

5. The strategic principles of working class struggle—uniting with all possible allies against the main enemy and isolating the compromising parties.

6. The mass political strike as a revolutionary weapon of the working class.

B. *The Period of Reaction and of the New Rise of the Working Class Movement, 1905-14.*

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the period of reaction which followed the defeat of the 1905-7 Revolution, and with the new rise of the working class movement before the First Imperialist War (1914).

After the defeat of the revolution the Bolsheviks showed how to retreat in good order, how to regroup the forces of the working class, how to combine legal with illegal work and to prepare for a new offensive against the landlords and capitalists. In this they had to fight

¹ See Lenin, *What is to be Done?; One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*; Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

² See Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution; Lecture on 1905*; Stalin, *On the Problems of Leninism*.

traitors and opportunists of all kinds, and above all the “liquidators,” who wanted to abandon all efforts to preserve the illegal organisation of the party.

At the same time, a number of intellectuals began a campaign to revise the fundamental ideas of Marxism in the light of the “latest” thing in bourgeois idealism. It was against them that Lenin in this period wrote his book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*; and in dealing with this, the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)* contains a classical exposition of the basic ideas of dialectical and historical materialism.¹

In this period, the Bolsheviks expelled the Mensheviks from the party and constituted themselves an independent Marxist Party (1912). The Bolshevik Party was able to extend its mass connections with the workers, to take the lead of the new struggles which were developing, to establish a mass daily newspaper (*Pravda*), and to carry on revolutionary propaganda and agitation through the Tsarist Duma.

What are the principal points taught by the study of these chapters?

1. How to retreat in good order after a defeat, regrouping forces, preserving the illegal organisation of the party and combining legal with illegal work.
2. The necessity of preserving the organisation of the party, fighting against liquidationist tendencies, purging the party of opportunist elements and constituting an independent Marxist party of the working class.
3. The necessity to preserve intact, defend and develop the theoretical foundation of the party—dialectical and historical materialism.
4. How the party can extend its mass connections with the working class and take the lead of rising working class struggle.
5. How the party can carry forward the working class struggle in a reactionary parliament.
6. The role of a daily newspaper as leader and organiser of the mass movement.

C. *The Imperialist War and the Victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, 1914-21.*

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 deal with the period of the imperialist war, the revolutions of February and October 1917, and with the foreign military intervention and civil war.

In the imperialist, war Lenin exposed the social democrats who sided with “their own” imperialist governments, made his profound analysis of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, and advanced the slogan “turn the imperialist war into civil war.”²

In February 1917 soviets (elected councils of working people) were set up, the Tsar was overthrown by a mass uprising, and a provisional government was formed with the backing of the capitalists and bankers. Lenin in his *April Theses* declared that the task was to pass straight on to the socialist stage of the revolution, which must place power in the hands of the working class in alliance with the poor peasantry.

The whole gigantic experience of the proletarian revolution of 1917³ is set forth and analysed in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 deals with the civil war and intervention, and makes clear why the workers and peasants won.

¹ See Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

² See Lenin, *Imperialism; Imperialism and the Split in Socialism; The Collapse of the and War*.

³ See Stalin, *International Character of the October Revolution, The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*.

What, then, are the principal points we learn about from the study of these chapters?

1. The policy of the working class in relation to war.
2. The nature of imperialism and the special features of the era of imperialism; the law of uneven development, and the possibility of the victory of socialism in a single country.¹
3. The fight against social chauvinism, i.e. against support of “one’s own” imperialism in an imperialist war.
4. The strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party in the victorious October Revolution.
5. The international significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution.

D. *The Building of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, 1921-36.

Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12 tell how socialism was built in the U.S.S.R.² It was built in ceaseless struggle against internal and external enemies.

Chapter 9 deals with the period of the transition from civil war to peaceful economic restoration—the New Economic Policy.

Chapter 10 deals with socialist industrialisation.

Chapter 11 deals with the collectivisation of agriculture.

Chapter 12 deals with the struggle to complete the building of socialist society, which was crowned with the new Stalin Constitution of the U.S.S.R. in 1936.

With that the building of socialist society in the U.S.S.R.—a society without exploitation of man by man—was completed. The Soviet people began their new advance from socialism to communism.

What are the principal points we learn about from the study of these chapters?

1. The significance of the New Economic Policy, as the policy by which the working class, in command of the state and of the key positions of economy, is able to lead the whole national economy towards socialism.
2. The alliance of the workers and peasants as an integral feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
3. The path of socialist industrialisation.
4. The path of collectivisation of agriculture and of the elimination of the last exploiting class, the kulaks or capitalist farmers, in the countryside.
5. The development of the international situation after the October Socialist Revolution, and the relations between the land of socialism and the capitalist world.
6. The victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. and its expression in the Stalin Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

At the end of the book the chief conclusions to be drawn from the work and experience of the Bolshevik Party are listed. They are:

1. The victory of the working class is impossible without a revolutionary working class party.
2. This party must master the theory of Marxism-Leninism.
3. The victory of the working class is impossible unless alien tendencies within the ranks of the working class are defeated.
4. The party must wage an uncompromising struggle against opportunists and capitulators in its own ranks.

¹ See Lenin, *The United States of Europe Slogan*.

² See Stalin’s articles and speeches in the volume *Problems of Leninism*.

5. The party cannot lead the class unless it is ready to criticise defects in its own work, to acknowledge and correct its own mistakes.

6. The party cannot lead the class unless it constantly strengthens its connections with the masses and is ready not only to teach the masses but to learn from them.

D. LENINISM

STALIN: Foundations of Leninism

Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism* consists of a series of lectures delivered at Sverdlov University, Moscow, for new Party members recruited during the Lenin enrolment which took place in 1924 after the death of Lenin.

The lectures explained to the new members how Lenin had developed further the most important points of Marxism, the theory and practice of the working-class struggle.

The following are the principal points dealt with:

1. Stalin defines Leninism as the "Marxism of the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution." He thus shows how Leninism is a further development of Marxism.¹

2. He explains how in the epoch of imperialism, i.e. of monopoly capitalism, the contradictions of capitalism have reached their extreme limit. Imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.²

3. He shows that the revolution is the result of the development of contradictions in the whole world system of imperialism. Hence the revolution begins, not as was formerly assumed, in the most advanced industrial countries, but in the weakest link in the chain of imperialism.

Russia was the local point of all the contradictions of imperialism and the weakest link in the chain. That is why the first socialist revolution took place in Russia, and why Russia became the home of Leninism.

4. Stalin shows how the relatively peaceful development of capitalism in the pre-1914 period gave birth to the opportunism of the Second International, and how it therefore became necessary to overhaul the entire activity of the International.³

5. He deals with the role of theory in the working-class movement, and shows that the role of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by advanced theory.⁴ Theory must always be tested in living revolutionary practice, must not be allowed to degenerate into a dogma, but must be developed with the development of the revolutionary struggle. Revolutionary theory alone can give the movement orientation and direction. Practice without theory gropes in the dark.

6. Expounding Lenin's theory of the proletarian revolution, Stalin shows how the task of carrying through the bourgeois democratic revolution, i.e., doing away with feudal survivals and establishing democracy, must pass straight into the task of the socialist revolution, the conquest of power by the working-class and the building of socialism.⁵

7. He deals with the peasant problem, showing that the working-class in order to fulfil its

¹ See Stalin, *Interview Given to First American Labour Delegation*.

² See Lenin, *Imperialism*.

³ See Lenin, *The Historical Destiny of the Teaching of Karl Marx*.

⁴ See Lenin, *What is to be Done?*

⁵ See Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution*.

revolutionary tasks must win as its allies and lead the mass of the peasants—marching with the whole peasantry as allies in the bourgeois democratic revolution, and then with the mass of the poorer and exploited peasants against capitalism.¹

8. He explains and defends Lenin's teaching that, in the epoch of imperialism, the socialist revolution can be victorious in a single country or in a group of countries alone, and that socialism can be built in one country.²

9. He deals with the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat, explaining:

- (a) That the dictatorship is necessary throughout the entire transition period after the seizure of power, in order to break the resistance of the exploiters, organise socialist construction and defend the country against foreign enemies.³
- (b) That the dictatorship represents the domination of the proletariat, in alliance with all the working people, over the bourgeoisie, the rule of the majority over the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a higher form of democracy, proletarian democracy, which can emerge only as a result of smashing the organs of bourgeois rule.⁴
- (c) Soviet power is the new state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, established in the Russian Revolution. Its chief characteristic is that "it draws the mass organisations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in state administration."⁵

10. Stalin deals with the national question,⁶ stressing that it has grown into a world question of the liberation of the oppressed peoples from imperialism. The national question can only be solved in the course of struggle to overthrow capitalist rule and imperialism. The working class must help and support all colonial liberation movements in so far as they tend to weaken imperialism. Stalin stresses the right of all nations to an independent political existence. Amalgamations of nations must be voluntary, based on mutual confidence, and must include the right to secession.

11. Stalin explains the elements of the science of leadership of the working class struggle, the way to determine correctly the strategy and tactics of the struggle at each stage. He shows that this depends on determining at each stage against what enemy the main blow is to be directed and what allies can be drawn into the struggle (strategy), and finding the correct forms of struggle, the right "link in the chain" (tactics).

12. He explains the Leninist conception of the working class party of a new type, the functions of such a party and how it must work. The party is:

¹ See Lenin, *Two Tactics, etc.*; Stalin, *The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Problem, Report to 4th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*.

² See Lenin, *The United States of Europe Slogan*.

³ See Lenin, *State and Revolution*; Stalin, *On the Problems of Leninism*; Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

⁴ See Lenin, *The Deception of the People, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, State and Revolution*; Stalin, *On the Problems of Leninism*; Marx, *Critique of Gotha Programme, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, The Civil War in France*.

⁵ See Lenin, *"Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution. Can the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?": Stalin, Report to 15th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*.

⁶ See Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question*.

- (a) The vanguard of the working class, closely bound up with the whole class.
- (b) An organised detachment of the working class.
- (c) The highest form of class organisation of the proletariat.
- (d) It acts as the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
- (e) It must preserve strict unity and voluntary discipline.
- (f) It must purge itself of all opportunists and traitors within its own ranks.

The party, Stalin concludes, must learn the Leninist style of work, combining practical businesslike efficiency with Bolshevik zeal and enthusiasm.

STALIN: On the Problems of Leninism

Stalin's *On the Problems of Leninism*, written in 1926, deals mainly with the dictatorship of the proletariat, false theories about which were being put forward at that time by Zinoviev and his followers.

Stalin begins by emphasising the international significance of Lenin's teachings. Leninism is not a special application of Marxism limited to Russian conditions.

After explaining the principal ways in which the bourgeois revolution differs from the proletarian revolution, and after explaining how the bourgeois revolution grows into the proletarian revolution, Stalin shows that the proletarian revolution can only be carried through by the dictatorship of the proletariat. The fundamental thing in Leninism is Lenin's teachings about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The main tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat are:

1. Suppression of the exploiters.
2. Building a firm alliance between the working class and the non-proletarian masses.
3. Organising socialist economy.

The dictatorship of the proletariat can be exercised only with the help of the mass organisations of the working class, and it is impossible without the guiding, unifying, leading role of the party.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the dictatorship of the party. It is the dictatorship of the class. As for the party, it does not function by methods of force and dictatorship. "The method of persuasion is the principal method employed by the party in leading the working class."¹

E. IMPERIALISM AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

LENIN: Imperialism—The Highest Stage of Capitalism

Lenin's *Imperialism* was written in 1916, that is, in the midst of the imperialist war. In it he sought to lay bare the essential nature of imperialism, and thereby to unmask the policies of the imperialist powers, the roots of imperialist war, the treachery of the social-democratic leaders who had gone over to the side of the imperialists, and to show the workers that the way forward was by the overthrow of imperialism.

Lenin showed that imperialism is a new stage of capitalism,² and he discovered its nature and its laws of development. He showed that the imperialist stage is the highest and last stage

¹ See Stalin, *Report to 14th Congress C.P.S.U.(B)*.

² An important explanation of this point, showing that imperialism is not a new economic system, is to be found in Lenin's report *On the Party Programme* at the 8th Congress of the Russian C.P.

of capitalism, and that the epoch of imperialism is at the same time the epoch of proletarian revolutions.

Imperialism is defined shortly as the *monopoly* stage of capitalism. In giving this definition Lenin makes clear its exact meaning with a wealth of factual material.

Then he demonstrates the special features of this monopoly stage:—

1. The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that monopolies play a decisive role in economic life;
2. The merging of bank with industrial capital has created “finance capital” and a “financial oligarchy”;
3. The export of capital has developed, as distinguished from the export of commodities;
4. International capitalist monopolies have been formed, which share the world among themselves;
5. The whole world is divided among the great imperialist powers.

Lenin traces the process of development of imperialist powers. He shows how the export of capital gives rise to the annexation of colonial territories, and to the subjugation of millions of colonial peoples to imperialist domination. The world is divided among the imperialists. But no division of the world can ever satisfy them. For there is a “law of uneven development” which means that as some imperialist powers expand and outstrip others, they put forward the demand for a re-division of the world corresponding to the new balance of forces. Hence imperialism is inseparable from imperialist wars.

Lenin then shows that with imperialism all the parasitical features of capitalism are accentuated. With imperialism, capitalism is in decay, the stage is set for colonial liberation and for the proletarian revolution.

At the same time Lenin shows how in the imperialist countries the super-profits made by imperialism are used to bribe a section of the working class, who therefore see their own interests as being tied up with those of imperialism. This is the basis for the growth of opportunism in the working class movement.¹

LENIN: The State and Revolution

The State and Revolution, written by Lenin on the eve of October, 1917, sets forth the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the state. The last chapter, which was to deal with the experiences of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and February 1917, was never written: Lenin was “interrupted” by the advent of the October Revolution.

The attitude to the state is a most vital question for the working class movement. Right-wing social democrats teach that the state is neutral and stands above classes. In this great book Lenin shows the falsity and treachery of this idea; he places before the reader the statements and arguments of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state,² defends and develops their teachings on the basis of an analysis of the experiences of the working class movement.

What are the principal questions dealt with in *The State and Revolution*?

1. Lenin shows that the state is an organ of class rule. It came into being as a result of society splitting into antagonistic classes, as an organ for the oppression of one class by

¹ See Lenin, *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*.

² See *Communist Manifesto; Critique of Gotha Programme; 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte; Civil War in France; Origin of the Family; Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

another. Its characteristic feature is the existence of a “public power” consisting of special bodies of armed men, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds, a state bureaucracy. This state machinery has become perfected in the capitalist state.

2. Lenin shows that the working class cannot lay hold of the capitalist state machinery and use it for their own purposes, but must smash it and replace it by the proletarian state—the proletariat organised as the ruling class.

The forms of bourgeois state, he says, are very varied, but they are all forms of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Similarly the transition from capitalism to communism will create a variety of political forms, but their essence will invariably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat. The object of the proletarian dictatorship is to crush the resistance of the exploiters and prepare the way for classless society—communism.

3. Lenin deals in detail with the difference between bourgeois and proletarian democracy. We can and must imagine democracy without parliamentarism, he says; and analysing the experience of the Paris Commune (1871), he shows how Marx recognised in the Commune a new form of democracy, proletarian democracy.

At the same time Lenin shows how the workers must always fight to defend and extend bourgeois democracy, because this provides the best conditions for waging the class struggle against the capitalists. He shows that the workers wage their struggle in alliance with all the oppressed people under capitalism, and how this class alliance must be continued and strengthened through the dictatorship of the proletariat after the defeat of the capitalists.

4. Lenin deals in detail with the meaning of the transition from socialism to communism, and with the economic basis of this transition.

Socialist society is organised on the slogan: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.” As production increases and an absolute abundance of products becomes available there will gradually be introduced communism, whose slogan is: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.” At the same time there will gradually disappear the antithesis between intellectual and manual labour, and between town and countryside. In the course of the transition to communism the state will gradually wither away.¹

Lenin’s lecture on *The State*, delivered in 1919 to students of Sverdlov University, presents the essential teachings about the state in a short and popular form. It is a splendid introduction for the beginner, who should read it before tackling *The State and Revolution*.

¹ But see further Stalin, *Report to 18th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*. On proletarian democracy and the socialist state see further Lenin, *The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution, Can the Bolsheviks Maintain Power? The Deception of the People, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*; and Stalin, *Report to 15th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*.

3. DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Marxism is dialectical materialism, and its application to the study of society is historical materialism.

Dialectical materialism holds that we cannot understand things rightly unless we understand how they are connected together and how they are developing and changing. For nothing exists unconnected with other things; nor is there anything fixed and changeless, but everything is in continual change and motion.

Dialectical materialism teaches us to pay attention to the opposite, conflicting tendencies which arise throughout nature and society, whose struggle results in change and development. In all development, gradual processes of growth (quantitative changes) lead to the emergence of something new, of a new stage of development (qualitative changes).

Dialectical materialism holds that the cause of all the motion and change in the world does not lie in any “higher” spiritual reality, but in the material world itself. For the world is by its very nature material. Matter is primary and spirit—mind, thought, etc.— is secondary.

Applying these ideas to human society, historical materialism is the discovery that the determining force of all social development is always to be found in the material life of society, i.e. in the mode of production, and that this provides the basis for the development of men’s ideas and political institutions. From the development of the mode of production arises the class struggle, and the class struggle is the driving force of history. In this development, all ideas and institutions play either a reactionary or a revolutionary role—either helping to maintain and defend the old system of society, or mobilising people to struggle against the old system.

It has already been pointed out (Part 2, Introduction) that the student of Marxism should begin all his studies with *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, the *Communist Manifesto*, and *The History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*.

In these books the leading ideas of dialectical and historical materialism are already introduced and expounded. The reader who wants to come to an understanding of the philosophy of Marxism and its application to society should therefore begin with these— and firstly with *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

Chapter IV of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)* contains a summary of the main ideas and principles of both dialectical and historical materialism. This is published separately, under the title *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*, by Stalin. This book should serve as the starting-point for a fuller study of the principles of dialectical and historical materialism. But the new reader should not attempt to tackle it unless he has first understood the contents of *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*. And here he will also derive great help from Stalin’s *Anarchism or Socialism*.

The next reading for the student who wishes to gain a fuller mastery of the ideas of dialectical and historical materialism will be Engels’ *Ludwig Feuerbach*. Then can follow *Lenin on Religion*, and Engels’ *Introduction to the Dialectics of Nature*, together with Chapter 9 of the same work, entitled *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man* (both published separately in *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, Vol. II).

Only after this should he attempt to tackle the longer and more difficult works *The Origin of the Family, Dialectics of Nature, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, What the friends of the People Are*, and the First Part of *Anti-Dühring*. The last-named work has already been

described above, under “Basic Principles.”

Other writings to which attention is drawn in this connection are Stalin’s *Marxism and Linguistics*, the *Marx-Engels Correspondence*, several short articles, etc., by Lenin, and the early works of Marx and Engels which they wrote before the *Communist Manifesto*.

Of the latter, *The German Ideology* and *Poverty of Philosophy* have both appeared in English translation. They are of very great importance as showing how Marx and Engels first developed and fought for dialectical and historical materialism. But many readers will find them difficult and will gain more from the later writings.

STALIN; Dialectical and Historical materialism

Stalin’s *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* is extracted from Chapter IV of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*. Defining dialectical materialism as “the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party,” he explains that it is dialectical in its method, materialist in its theory. Historical materialism is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life.

This book contains a brilliant exposition of the principal features of (1) the Marxist dialectical method, (2) Marxist philosophical materialism and (3) the Marxist science of society. In it are summarised the fruits of the whole experience of the application and development of Marxist theory in the course of the working class struggle for socialism.

1. Stalin shows how the Marxist dialectical method studies things always in their inter-connection and in their movement. It studies development as taking place through the transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes and as the disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things. Whatever we may consider, there is always something coming into being and something ceasing to be, something arising and something dying—and so the struggle between new and old constitutes the motive force of all development.

2. Stalin shows how materialism holds that the world is by its very nature material, that matter is primary and thought secondary, and that the material world and its laws are fully knowable.

3. Stalin shows how society, too, develops according to regular laws, so that the study of history becomes a science. The working class party must be guided by knowledge of the laws of development of society.

The determining force of social development is always to be found in the material life of society, and this provides the basis for the development of men’s ideas, theories and political institutions.

This does not imply, however, Stalin explains, that theories and political institutions are of no significance in social life. On the contrary, theories and institutions which arise on the basis of the new developing forces in material life themselves become an active force in that development.

The chief force in the complex of conditions of material life that determines the development of society is the *mode of production*. Here Stalin distinguishes (1) the *forces of production*, consisting of (a) the instruments of production and (b) people with their production experience and skill, and (2) the *relations of production*, which in their totality constitute the *economic structure* of society.

He shows how the forces of production continually develop. And corresponding to their development there are five principal types of relations of production—primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism.

Three principal features of production are noted.

- (a) Production never remains stationary for long, but is always in a state of change and development.
- (b) Change and development of the mode of production always begins with change and development of the productive forces. First the productive forces change and develop, and then, depending on these changes and in conformity with them, the relations of production, the economic relations, change.
- (c) The rise of new productive forces and new production relations begins within the old system and takes place independent of men's will and intentions.

In the course of development, the existing system of production relations becomes a fetter on further development of the forces of production. Then follows a period of social revolution. New relations of production are established by the revolutionary overthrow of the old relations of production, and this is effected by class struggle, by the overthrow of the old ruling class and rise to power of a new ruling class.

Stalin shows how the capitalist relations of production have become a fetter on further development, and how under socialism the way is free for a great further development of the productive forces.

In conclusion, he quotes the passage from Marx's Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy* in which Marx summed up the essence of historical materialism.

In this passage Marx said:

1. In social production men enter into definite relations of production, which arise independent of their will. The sum total of these constitutes the economic structure of society.
2. This economic structure is the real basis on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.
3. Therefore the mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness.
4. At a certain stage of their development, the forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters.
5. Then follows an epoch of social revolution. The economic foundation is changed, and with it the whole superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.
6. In considering such transformations we must distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, and the legal, political and ideological forms in which men become conscious of the conflict and fight it out.
7. No social order ever disappears until all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new and higher relations of production never appear until the material conditions of their existence have matured within the old society.

ENGELS: Ludwig Feuerbach

In *Ludwig Feuerbach* (the full title is *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*) Engels shows how the advance was made from Hegelian idealist dialectics to materialist dialectics, and from mechanical to dialectical materialism.

Feuerbach was a German philosopher of the mid-19th Century who turned from Hegelian idealism to materialism, and whose work had a big influence on Marx and Engels. This book by Engels, published in 1888, was originally written as a review article on a book on Feuerbach by C. N. Starke.

The following are its principal contents.

1. Engels explains the basic difference between materialism and idealism. It arises from the question—which is prior, spirit or nature? Idealism says that spirit is prior to nature. Materialism says that nature is prior to spirit. Material being is prior to mind and ideas.

Modern idealism has been specially concerned with the question whether we can gain reliable knowledge of material things, of the external world, and concludes that such knowledge is impossible. Engels refutes this view, and shows that practice demonstrates that our ideas can and do constitute a true reflection of external material reality.¹

2. He shows that the materialism of the past was mechanical materialism. Its great limitations were

- (a) that it conceived of the motion of matter as exclusively mechanical motion, and could not grasp other forms of motion of matter, such as chemical or living processes;
- (b) that it could give no account of development and evolution, either in nature or, still less, in history and human society.

3. He explains the essence of Hegel's philosophy and of the advance from Hegel to dialectical materialism.² Hegel considered every process of change and development as being a mere reflection of the self-development of the "Absolute Idea," which "does not only exist, where unknown, from eternity, but is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world." Marxism threw over such "idealist fancies" and "resolved to comprehend the real world, nature and history, just as it presents itself to everyone who approaches it free from preconceived idealist fancies."

Engel shows that dialectical materialism regards the world as a complex of processes, not as a collection of "ready-made things." Dialectics is "the science of the general laws of motion both of the external world and of human thought."

4. He discusses the essential ideas of historical materialism, as the application of dialectical materialism to the sphere of human society. He shows that the driving force of history is the class struggle, and that classes and class struggles are rooted in economic conditions. He goes on to discuss the economic foundations of the development of the state and of law, and then of political and social ideology, of religion, philosophy, etc.

In criticising Feuerbach's "philosophy of religion and ethics," Engel's attacks the approach which deals with abstractions such as "humanity," instead of with "real living men as participants of history."

As appendix are added Marx's eleven *Theses on Feuerbach*, notes by Marx in 1845 in which he summarised his own ideas as opposed to mechanical materialism.

ENGELS: The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State

Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* shows how the principles of historical materialism are applied in the interpretation of the development of primitive society and of the origins of civilisation.

Published in 1884, at a time when bourgeois ideas were becoming rife in the German Social-Democratic Party, it was aimed at winning the workers away from reformist illusions to a scientific and revolutionary conception of history past and present.

Engels' work was based on the discoveries of the American anthropologist, Lewis Morgan, whose *Ancient Society* was published in 1877. Morgan, who had lived amongst and

¹ See also Introduction to *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

² See *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

studied the American Indians, discovered in their kinship groups—or *gens*—the key to an understanding of primitive society and its development. The importance of Morgan's discoveries, which led him to conclusions fully in line with the materialist conception of history, was immediately recognised by Marx and Engels.

In *The Origin of the Family* will be found:

1. An account of the development of the social forces of production from the most primitive food-gathering and hunting stage, through primitive agriculture, the domestication of animals, to the upper stages of barbarism, when the smelting of iron ore and the invention of the alphabet led to the beginnings of civilisation.

2 The history of the development of the family, as the most elementary unit of human association, from group-marriage to monogamy. Engels showed how the development of private property led to the transformation of family relations and to the subjugation of women.¹ And he deals with the future of the family in socialist society.

3. An account of the kinship organisation—the *gens*—in primitive society, and of its disruption by the development of private property.

4. A demonstration of how the state arose with the division of society into antagonistic classes.² Engels traces the history of the rise of the state amongst the ancient Greeks, Romans and Germans, and shows in detail the nature and functions of the state as an instrument of the oppression of one class by another.

5. The last chapter contains a brilliant sketch of the whole development of civilisation. Engels shows how classes and exploitation arose out of the division of labour, and how in consequence every advance in production has been made only at the cost of fresh sufferings of the exploited.

ENGELS: Dialectics of Nature

Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* is an unfinished book. A few chapters were left by him at the time of his death in more or less finished form; but a great part of it consists merely of notes. In this book he intended to demonstrate how the discoveries of natural science confirm that the same dialectical laws which operate in human society operate also in nature, and how the dialectical method constitutes a great theoretical weapon of the natural sciences.

When Engels died in 1895, the manuscripts of the *Dialectics of Nature* fell into the hands of Bernstein (the "revisionist"), who did not see fit to publish any part of them. They never saw the light until published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in the U.S.S.R. in 1927.

Parts of this book are hard to follow for readers who have not at least some knowledge of the natural sciences—though those who have will find every page a veritable gold-mine of ideas.

But the general reader will find little difficulty with the Introduction (which deals with the history of science, and shows how the old view of the universe as a static system has been replaced by a picture of universal evolution); with Chapter II (which explains the dialectical law of the transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes); with Chapter IX—"The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man" (which gives a classical exposition of the Marxist view of human nature and its development); and with Chapter X—"Natural

¹ A collection of statements by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on women and their position in society is to be found in the volume *Women and Communism*.

² See Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.

Science and the Spirit World” (in which Engels gives his estimate of “Spiritualism.”)

The *Introduction* and *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man* have been published separately in the two-volume *Marx-Engels Selected Works*, and can be studied independently of the rest of the *Dialectics of Nature*.

Chapters III, IV and V—on “The Basic Forms of Motion,” “The Measure of Motion” and “Heat” contain vitally important material on the dialectical conception of the forms of motion of matter, and give a brilliant account of the dialectics of the science of mechanics.

Two chapters, on “Electricity” and “Tidal Friction,” are of mainly historical interest.

The long chapter of “Notes” contains material of the utmost interest and importance relating to the history of science, scientific method, the philosophy of science, the laws of dialectics, the materials of the special sciences.

LENIN: What the “Friends of the People Are” and How They Fight the Social Democrats

Lenin’s *What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats*, published in 1894, contains a most important defence and explanation of dialectical and historical materialism.

The reader should consult Chapter I, sections 1-4, of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* before reading this book, in order to understand its background. The self-styled “Friends of the People” are the Russian Narodniks; the Social Democrats are the Marxists. The book belongs to the period of the fight for the establishment of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party on a Marxist basis.

The Narodniks of the 90’s had renounced revolutionary struggle against the Tsarist government. They were attacking Marxism by means of crude misrepresentations; were denying the growth of capitalism in Russia; were voicing primarily the interests of the rich farmers (kulaks) and were singing the praises of kulak farming. In this book Lenin gave them their answer.

1. Replying to the jibe that Marxist historical materialism was an empty phrase and had never been properly expounded by Marx, Lenin answers: “Where does Marx not set forth his materialist conception of history?” He analyses the contents of Marx’s *Capital* and shows how in *Capital* Marx dealt in a concrete way with the “evolution of the economic formation of society” and demonstrated the way the social superstructure arises on the economic basis. Answering his opponents point by point, Lenin demonstrates the methodology of historical materialism.

2. Lenin completely exposes the misrepresentation of dialectics as an abstract scheme artificially imposed upon a given subject-matter.

And in this connection he exposes the misrepresentation that the Marxists believed Russia must first become a fully developed capitalist country before it could become a socialist country.

3. Lenin shows in detail how capitalism was developing in Russia and what inroads it was making into Russian peasant economy.¹ He shows how his opponents, under cover of all kinds of “benevolent” schemes, were supporting the landlords and capitalists. He deals with the rise of the industrial working class in Russia and shows how this rising class, in alliance with the exploited peasantry, is the force which can overthrow Tsarism and then advance to

¹ See Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

the socialist revolution.

LENIN: Materialism and Empirio-Criticism

Of this book by Lenin, A. A. Zhdanov wrote that “every sentence is like a piercing sword, annihilating an opponent.” It is a devastating attack against modern idealism, a brilliant defence of the materialist standpoint, and a development of the basic ideas of dialectical materialism in the light of scientific discovery.

It was written in 1908, in the period following the defeat of the 1905-7 Revolution in Russia. The reader should consult the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter IV, Section 1, in order to understand the background.

It was a time of great difficulty for the revolutionary working class movement in Russia. Reaction was making savage attacks upon the working class, and with this went an ideological offensive against Marxism, which fashionable writers represented as being exploded and “out of date.” This situation affected a group of the party intellectuals. They began to write books and articles claiming to “improve” Marxism and to “bring it up to date” in the light of “modern science,” but in reality attacking its entire theoretical foundations.

Lenin’s *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was written against this group. It safeguarded the theoretical treasure of Marxism from the revisionists and renegades. But more than that, it provided a new materialist generalisation of everything important and essential acquired by science, and especially the natural sciences, since Engels’ death.

The reader unused to philosophical literature will find an initial difficulty in understanding some of the terms used in this book, and the references to various bourgeois philosophers and scientists. The term “Empirio-Criticism” is used to denote a whole sect of modern idealists. Lenin shows that their theories are copied from those of the Anglo-Irish philosopher, George Berkeley (1684-1753), who taught that material things have no real existence and that nothing exists but the sensations in our own minds; from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who taught that we can have no knowledge of “things-in-themselves,” which are mysterious and unknowable; and from the Austrian scientist and philosopher Ernst Mach (1838-1916), who taught that bodies were nothing but “complexes of sensations.” Lenin’s references to and quotations from these philosophers and their modern followers are, however, sufficiently detailed for the reader who follows the argument attentively to understand what it is all about, even without prior knowledge.

In *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* is contained:

1. A devastating exposure of the idealism of the modern “philosophy of science” which pretends that matter existing outside us is an abstraction and that what “really” exists consists of “complexes of sensations.”

Ridiculing the “scientific” pretensions of this philosophy, Lenin asks:

“Did Nature exist prior to man?”

“Does Man think with the help of the brain?”

Science answers “Yes” to both questions; and that means that matter objectively exists independent of and prior to human consciousness and sensation.

2. The clear assertion and explanation of the most important features of the materialist conception of nature, in particular—

The practical test of knowledge;

The relationship of relative and absolute truth;

The absolute existence of matter, as the objective reality given to man in his sensations;

The objective validity of causality and causal laws;

The objectivity of space and time, as the forms of all being,

3. The analysis of the crisis in modern physics, which arises from the contradiction between new discoveries and the mechanistic ideas of “classical” physics. Lenin shows how two trends arise in physics, a materialist and an idealist trend. He exposes the sham pretensions of the latter and demonstrates that “modern physics is in travail; it is giving birth to dialectical materialism.”

4. The demonstration of the partisan character of *all* philosophy, of the irreconcilability of the struggle of materialism against idealism. Lenin shows that Marxism is materialism, irreconcilably opposed to every form of idealism and of attempted compromise between materialism and idealism.

Lenin on Religion

The Marxist-Leninist teachings concerning religion and the attitude of the workers' party towards religion¹ are summarised in three articles by Lenin—*Socialism and Religion*, the *Attitude of the Workers' Party towards Religion*, *The Attitude of Classes and Parties toward Religion*. In these articles Lenin demonstrates:

1. That all religion is a form of “spiritual oppression”—the “opium of the people.”
2. That the programme of the Marxist Party is based on materialist philosophy.
3. That the party resolutely demands the separation of church from state, and fights against both militant clerical reaction and “liberal” attempts to fog the minds of the people with religious illusions.
4. That the party does not include the propagation of atheism in its programme, nor does it demand atheism from all its members, but regards the abstract preaching of atheism and the artificial fostering of religious divisions amongst the workers as harmful and as playing into the hands of reaction.

Lenin on Dialectical Materialism: Articles, Letters and Notes

Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, published in the Soviet Union, contain very extensive material and comments on the essential ideas of dialectical materialism. Only a small part has been published in English translation, under the title *On Dialectics*. In these notes Lenin summarises the essential ideas of dialectics, particularly the idea of the unity and struggle of opposites.

In *The Significance of Militant Materialism*, written in 1922, Lenin sums up the tasks of the fight for materialism and the need for Marxists to make common cause with all those who adopt a materialist standpoint against idealism.

In *Two Letters to Maxim Gorky* Lenin expostulates with Gorky for flirting with the “god-seekers.”

In *Leo Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution*, Lenin applied the dialectical materialist method to problems of literature and literary criticism. He showed how Tolstoy reflected the contradictory outlook and moods of the Russian peasants.

Very important explanations of the nature of the dialectical method are contained in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, the section headed “Something About Dialectics”; and in *Once More on the Trade Unions*, the section headed “Dialectics and Eclecticism.”

Lenin deals with the communist attitude to morality in *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues*.

¹ See also Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, *Ludwig Feuerbach*.

STALIN: Concerning Marxism in Linguistics

Stalin's articles on linguistics—the science of language, its origin, nature and laws of development—were written and published in 1950, in reply to questions addressed to him by rank and file Soviet people in connection with current controversies concerning linguistics.

In these articles Stalin exposes the false theory that language is a part of the social superstructure which arises on the economic basis, and that all language has a class character. He shows that language is a means of communication serving society as a whole, and that it changes and develops slowly, without violent revolutions or leaps.

These articles are, moreover, of very great importance as demonstrating (a) how Marxism understands the relation between basis and superstructure in society, (b) how it understands the unity of the nation, (c) how it is opposed to dogmatism and demands continual criticism and the testing of all conclusions.

Marx-Engels Correspondence

A number of important letters by Marx and Engels dealing with the principles and methods of historical materialism are contained in Volume II of *Marx-Engels Selected Works*. These comprise:

- (a) Marx to Annenkov, explaining the general principles of historical materialism as against Proudhon, who thought that society was a manifestation of “eternal reason”;
- (b) Marx to Kugelmann, about the Paris Commune;
- (c) and a series of letters by Engels to Schmidt, Bloch, Mehring and Danielson, explaining how to understand and operate the method of historical materialism and exposing vulgar over-simplification of the method.

These letters, especially the series by Engels, are most important reading for an understanding of historical materialism.

A comprehensive selection of the Marx-Engels correspondence edited by Dona Torr has been published in English. These letters range over the whole field of theoretical and practical activity covered by Marx and Engels during the whole course of their lives. They contain material and explanations on many points of principle and of detail of the very greatest value to students of Marxism. The volume is provided with an excellent index, and the student should consult the index in order to find where the topics he is interested in are dealt with in the correspondence.

In an unfinished article on the Marx-Engels Correspondence (included in *Marx, Engel, Marxism*) Lenin pointed out that “the epoch covered by the correspondence was just the epoch when the working class became demarcated from bourgeois democracy, the epoch of the rise of an independent labour movement, the epoch when the basic principles of proletarian tactics and policy were being determined.”

He therefore points out how valuable to-day is the great wealth of material contained in the correspondence for the fight against opportunist policies in the Labour Movement.

“If one were to attempt to define in one word the focus of the whole correspondence,” Lenin concludes, “that word would be: *dialectics*. The application of materialist dialectics to the elaboration of all political economy, from its foundations, to history, natural science, philosophy and the policy and tactics of the working class—that is what interested Marx and Engels above all.”

Books by Marx and Engels Prior to the Communist Manifesto

In the three years before the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels

jointly wrote two books: *The Holy Family, or a Criticism of All Critical Criticism*, and *The German Ideology*, Marx himself wrote *The Poverty of Philosophy* and Engels *The Condition of the Working Class in England* 1844.

They also wrote a number of articles, which appeared in such journals as *The Rhineland Gazette*, *The German-French Yearbook*, *Forward*. These include Marx's *Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* and *The Jewish Question*.¹

In *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels registered their break with the "Young Hegelian" school to which they formerly belonged, and their adoption of the standpoint of historical materialism. Both books are polemical in form and style.

The Holy Family has never been translated into English. Of *The German Ideology*, Parts I and III have been translated, but not Part II.

In Part I of *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels work out, in a preliminary way, the basic conceptions of historical materialism. Carrying on social production, men institute social relations and forms of property. On this basis are produced definite modes of consciousness. In every epoch the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class, and these are challenged by the new revolutionary ideas of the rising revolutionary class.

Part III deals with contemporary writers—Max Stirner and the so-called "True-Socialists."

Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* was written against Proudhon, who had just published his *Philosophy of Poverty*. In this book the ideas of historical materialism and scientific socialism are sharply formulated for the first time. Marx deals with the economic nature of the capitalist exploitation of the worker (he had not yet, however, formulated the distinction between labour and labour-power), shows that economic relations are historically constituted and are not expressions of "eternal economic categories," and formulates the doctrine of the class struggle.

Dealing with the role of the trade union struggle and of the strike movement, Marx shows that scientific socialism must be united with the mass working class movement.

Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, deals, on the basis of Engels' own observations, with the exploitation suffered by the British working class in the period of the rise of large-scale modern industry. The conditions of the birth and development of the proletariat as a class are described, the competition between workers and their ever-growing combination, the housing and other social conditions, the conditions in particular industries and in agriculture.

Engels deals with the development of the class struggle in Britain, the growth of an independent working class movement, and concludes that "the union of Socialism with Chartism.... will be the next step." And he foretells the inevitability of a proletarian revolution in Britain.

¹ A collection of manuscripts by Marx, belonging to this period, has been published in German under the title *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*. An English translation is being prepared.

4. POLITICAL ECONOMY

INTRODUCTION

Political economy is the science of the laws governing the production and exchange of the material means of subsistence in human society. And it is the development of the mode of production and exchange, i.e. the economic development of society, which is the basis of the whole of social development.

From this historical materialist standpoint, Marxism investigates the laws of development of capitalist society, and discovers in the production of surplus value the key to understanding the capitalist economic system.

Marxism thus exposes the essential nature of the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class, and by so doing it arms the working class with an economic theory which enables us to understand the laws of development of capitalism, to see where capitalism comes from and where it is leading, to realise the nature of the class struggle of the working class against the capitalist class, and the historic mission of the working class to take power, expropriate the capitalists and build socialism.

The essential work here is Marx's *Capital*, to the completion of which he devoted the greater part of his working life.

But *Capital* is not a book for the beginner to take up. Before attempting to tackle it, the reader should have made himself familiar with *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and *The Communist Manifesto*, which will prepare him to understand the meaning of Marx's fundamental discovery of surplus value.

In addition, there are several short works in which the basic idea of surplus value is explained in a popular form, and these need to be read before *Capital*. Two pamphlets by Marx are at this point essential reading: *Wages, Price and Profit* and *Wage-Labour and Capital*. Along with these, Lenin's *Karl Marx* will be found very helpful and so will Engels' *Karl Marx* and *Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx* (see above Part I), together with Engels' reviews of *Capital* and of *Critique of Political Economy*.

Having read the above, which are all comparatively short, the reader will be equipped with an elementary working understanding of the leading ideas of the Marxist science of political economy, and of the nature of surplus value in particular.

If he wishes to go further from this point in the study of political economy, then he will be in a position to tackle *Capital*.

To study *Capital* is a major undertaking. Marx himself in a letter to the editor of the first French translation, warned about the difficulties. "Science has no royal road, and only those who are not afraid of tiring themselves by climbing its steep pathways have a chance of attaining the clear light of its summits."

For those who have not time to read right through the first volume of *Capital*, however, Marx himself gave some excellent advice in a letter to Dr. Kugelmann (November 30th, 1867). This was to read the chapters on The Working Day, Co-operation, The Division of Labour and Manufacture, Machinery, and finally Primitive Accumulation. The reading of the short introductory works mentioned above can, if necessary, be followed not at once by reading the whole of *Capital*, but by reading these particular chapters.

But for the student who wishes to master the content and method of *Capital*, it is necessary to read it right through from the beginning, despite the difficulty of the early chapters. Only thus can he grasp the logical and scientific development of Marx's exposition, which on the

basis of the analysis of commodity production and then of the formation of capital and surplus value goes on to reveal the economic law of motion of capitalist society.

There are three volumes of *Capital*, and it is the first volume which is most essential. Engels pointed out in a letter to Victor Adler (March 16th, 1895), that the most important chapters in Volume II were Chapters 1, 4, 7, 8, 9 and in Volume III, 1, 4, 8, 9, 13-27, 37, 38, 44-47.

Marx originally intended to publish a fourth volume, parts of which are now available in English under the title *Theories of Surplus Value*. In it will be found a very useful exposition of the basic economic ideas of Marxism. Here also will be found Marx's fullest treatment of the nature of the cyclical economic crises of capitalism, concerning which there is a brief treatment in Volume I, Chapter 25 and in Volume III, Chapter 15, Section 3, and Chapter 30.

A word must be added about the English translations of *Capital*. The standard translation of Vol. I is that by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, edited by Engels himself. This is at present available in the edition published by Allen & Unwin, edited by Dona Torr. The Everyman edition, with an Introduction by G. D. H. Cole, cannot be recommended, as the translation is less reliable. The only translation of Volumes II and III is that by Ernest Untermann.

As guide and companion to the study of *Capital*, the student should use Engels' *Synopsis of Capital*. He can also refer to Lenin's *What the Friends of the People Are* (see above Part III), in which there is important material about *Capital* and its significance.

A very important exposition of Marxist political economy is contained in Part II of Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (see above Part 2). The later chapters of this part of *Anti-Dühring* expound some of the fundamental concepts of political economy, while the earlier chapters explain how the mode of distribution of products depends on the mode of production.

Of the other works on political economy listed in this part, Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* is not essential reading, since the ground it covers was worked over again by Marx in the first part of *Capital*, and it is no easier to read.

There remains Engels' important articles on *The Housing Question*, Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, *Characterization of Economic Romanticism*, and Lenin's articles *On the Agrarian Question*. The latter are essential reading for understanding the development of capitalism in agriculture. And on this special problem the reader can also refer to *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 15, Section 10, Chapter 25, Section 5e, Chapters 27-30 and Volume III, Part VI.

MARX: Capital

The aim of Marx's *Capital* is "to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society."

"As long as there are capitalists and workers on earth, no book has appeared which is of as much importance for the workers," wrote Engels in reviewing *Capital*.

"The relation between capital and labour, the hinge on which our entire present system of society turns, is here treated scientifically for the first time."

In *Capital* are embodied and worked out Marx's two great discoveries—the laws of development of human society (historical materialism) and surplus value, which is the key to the special law of motion governing the capitalist mode of production. By means of these discoveries, Marx in *Capital* shows the origins of capitalism, its development and how on that basis arise and develop the institutions and ideas of capitalist society.

He exposes the innermost nature of the exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class, of the class struggle in capitalist society, and consequently the historical mission of the

working class, which is to take power, to expropriate the capitalists, and to build socialism.

It is a vast work, uncompleted by Marx at the time of his death. He completed and finished for the press only the first volume, which was published in 1867. After Marx's death, Engels devoted himself to the editing of the second and third volumes, which appeared in 1885 and 1894 respectively.

Volume I.

The first volume explains the nature of capitalist production and its laws of development.

Part I.

Since capitalist production is *commodity* production, in which the wealth of society presents itself as "an immense accumulation of commodities," the exposition opens with an analysis of the nature of commodities. This analysis, which occupies the long first chapter, constitutes the most difficult part of the whole book.

A commodity is essentially a product of labour, which has a use and which is produced for purposes of exchange. A commodity, therefore, has a twofold nature—a *use-value* and an *exchange-value*. Its use-value is determined by its satisfying some human need. But what determines its exchange-value? In other words, what have commodities in common by virtue of which they can be equated one to another as exchange-values?

Every commodity, Marx answers, is produced by expenditure of human labour, and so embodies a certain quantity of socially necessary labour time. The *value* of a commodity is determined by the quantity of socially necessary labour time embodied in it.

On the basis of his analysis of the nature of commodities and their value, Marx goes on to deal with the nature of *money*. A particular commodity, e.g. gold, becomes money when the values of all other commodities are expressed in terms of this money commodity. Money then functions as a universal measure of value and as the medium for the circulation of commodities.

Part II.

The *transformation of money into capital* depends on the capitalist, as owner of money, being able to buy the labour power of the worker. *Labour power* becomes a commodity which is bought and sold. As with all commodities, its value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour embodied in it, i.e. by the amount of socially necessary labour required to maintain the worker. When this commodity—labour power—is used, i.e. when the worker is set to work, it is able to produce a new value greater than its own. If, for example, the worker works six hours to reproduce the value of his own labour power, then in all the time he works over six hours he produces a *surplus value*. This is appropriated by the capitalist.

Part III.

Marx then deals in detail with the production of surplus value, which provides the key to understanding the whole process of capitalist production.

The *labour process*, he shows, involves three factors: (1) the personal activity of man, i.e. work itself; (2) the subject of work; and (3) the instruments. In the labour process man's activity with the help of instruments of labour effects an alteration designed from the commencement in the material worked upon.

The capitalist buys labour power in order to use it for the production of commodities—of values and of surplus value. His capital is divided into *constant capital*, which is expended on raw materials and instruments of labour (machinery, etc.), and *variable capital*, which is

expended on buying labour power. The values of the raw material and instruments consumed in the labour process pass unchanged into the value of the product. The surplus value accrues solely from the expenditure of labour power, i.e. from the worker working longer than the time necessary to reproduce the value of his own labour power. The *rate of surplus value*, which measures the degree of exploitation of the worker, is defined, therefore, as the ratio of the total surplus value produced to the variable capital expended.

In capitalist production there is a constant drive to increase the rate as well as the mass of surplus value, i.e. to increase the exploitation of the worker. Therefore in the beginning of the capitalist epoch there occurred a drive to lengthen the working day to its utmost limits. In the chapter on *the working day*, Marx brings forward evidence of this, especially from Britain.

Part IV.

The rate of surplus value can also be increased by increase in the productivity of labour due to use of machinery. For such increase in the productivity of labour reduces the amount of labour time socially necessary to maintain the labourer, and so has the effect of reducing the time which the worker works for himself in relation to the time he works for the production of surplus value for the capitalist.

While surplus value produced by prolongation of the working day is called *absolute surplus value*, that arising from curtailment of necessary labour time is called *relative surplus value*.

Capitalist production has passed through three phases—*simple co-operation*, where a number of individual workpeople are brought together, each producing a finished article; *manufacture*, where numbers co-operate to produce the finished article by division of labour, each performing a partial operation; and *modern industry* using power-driven machinery. In the chapter on *machinery and modern industry*, Marx explains the nature of machinery and deals with its development and its effects upon the workers.

Part V.

Marx then deals with some problems of the production of both absolute and relative surplus value, showing the effects of changes in the length of the working day and of change in both the productiveness and intensity of labour.

Part VI.

The next part deals with the question of *wages*. Wages are wrongly regarded as the price of labour, since labour has itself no value. What is bought and sold for wages is the worker's labour power. Piece wages are a converted form of time wages, just as time wage are a converted form of the price of labour power.

Part VII.

In the process of the *circulation* of capital, three phases are involved. (1) A sum of money is converted into means of production and labour power. (2) By the application of labour the means of production are converted into commodities, whose value contains the capital originally advanced plus a surplus value. (3) By the sale of the commodities produced, the value is again realised in money.

Marx shows that the process of capitalist production is at the same time a process of *accumulation of capital*. A given capital does not merely reproduce itself, but by *the conversion of surplus value into capital* multiplies itself many times over.

As capital accumulates, the proportion of constant to variable capital increases. There

takes place a centralisation of capital into the hands of bigger capitalist concerns, and an “industrial reserve army” is continuously formed. This is composed of workers who have become temporarily redundant, due to the relative diminution of the variable constituent of capital (i.e. that part used to buy labour power), while the total capital increases. It serves as a reservoir of labour for capitalist exploitation.

This is the general law of capitalist accumulation. As a result, there is an accumulation of social misery corresponding with the accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth for the capitalist class is at the same time accumulation of misery for the working class.

Part VIII.

In order that capitalist production should become possible, there must first be an initial accumulation of wealth available for conversion into means of production and labour power, and a supply of “free labourers,” i.e. the creation of a propertyless proletariat with nothing to sell but labour power. The process whereby these conditions were first realised is the process of *primitive accumulation*. Drawing particularly from English sources, Marx shows that it involved (1) colonial plunder, and (2) the expropriation of the peasantry from the land.

The forcible conversion of former small peasant cultivators into wage labourers, compelling them to sell their labour power and to buy the means of subsistence they formerly produced for themselves, was a major factor in creating the *home market* for capitalist production.

Lastly, in the chapter entitled *The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation*, Marx shows how the laws of development of capitalism inevitably lead to the end of capitalism.

Volume II.

A number of problems are left over for solution from the first volume of *Capital*, though the first volume contains all the essential ideas for their solution. These problems occupy the second and third volumes.

In Volume I Marx had dealt with the essential process underlying capitalist production—the production of surplus value. In Volumes II and III he studies how the production of surplus value is expressed in the familiar capitalist terms—in profit and the rate of profit, in the processes of capitalist circulation, in interest and the credit system, etc. Thus while Volume I deals with the underlying *essence* of capitalist production, Volumes II and III show how this essence is manifested in, gives rise to, all the surface *appearances* of capitalist economy, with which alone the capitalist economists concern themselves.

The second volume deals with *the circulation of capital*. It is divided into three parts.

The first part analyses the series of transformations through which a given capital has to pass—from money to commodities and back to more money. Money capital, having been advanced to buy means of production and labour power, becomes *productive capital*. Then follows the process of production itself, as a result of which a mass of commodities is produced, in which capital appears as *commodity capital*. Lastly, there comes the reconversion into money as a result of the sale of these commodities. Capital must continually rotate through this entire cycle, and Marx analyses the conditions required for the realisation of each stage and the expenses involved at each stage.

This leads to the analysis of *turnover*, which occupies the second part. In this connection the distinction is made between *fixed* and *circulating capital*—the fixed capital being that part (machinery, buildings, etc.) which only partly transfers its value to the product during each separate turnover, while the circulating capital (raw materials and capital expended in wages)

has to be renewed after each turnover. The period of turnover has two sections, the time of production and the time of circulation; and the shorter the period of turnover in each of these two sections, the larger the appropriated surplus value, other conditions remaining the same.

The third part deals with the *reproduction and circulation of the aggregate social capital*. Here Marx divides the total product, and therefore the total production, of society into two great departments: (I) *Means of Production*, (II) *Means of Consumption*. He shows how in the total process of circulation of the aggregate social capital both the constant and variable capital employed in each of these departments is reproduced.

Volume III.

The third volume, entitled *Capitalist Production as a Whole*, is concerned with rent, interest and profit.

In Volume I Marx explained the nature of surplus value, making it clear that the profit comes from surplus value. The rate of surplus value was defined as the ratio of the total surplus value produced to the variable capital expended. Marx now shows that, as distinct from the rate of surplus value, the *rate of profit* is defined by the ratio of the total surplus value produced to the total capital advanced, including the constant as well as the variable capital.

Marx then explains the formation of *an average rate of profit*. It is clear that the rate of surplus value being given, the rate of profit must be higher according as the proportion of variable to constant capital is greater. But due to competition and the flow of capital from one branch of production to another, the products of one branch are sold above their value and those of another below their value, resulting in the formation of an average rate of profit over capitalist industry as a whole.

From this follows the determination of the *price of production* which is equal to constant and variable capital expended plus the average profit. Deviations of market prices from price of production are explained by variations of supply and demand.

Marx then demonstrates the very important *law of the falling rate of profit*. Since, given the rate of surplus value, the rate of profit must be less where the proportion of constant to variable capital is greater, it follows that as the proportion of constant capital increases over industry as a whole, as a result of increasing mechanisation and higher productivity of labour, the rate of profit for industry as a whole must fall. This tendency of a falling rate of profit can only be counteracted by a corresponding increase in the rate of surplus value, i.e. by increasing the exploitation of the worker.

Marx analyses in detail the nature of *commercial* and *financial capital* and of *interest* and the *credit system*. Commercial or merchant's capital plays a special part in the process of circulation, facilitating the sale of products of capitalist industry and claiming in return a share of surplus value amounting to at least the average rate of profit. Money capitalists also play a special role in lending out money at interest, the interest being paid out of a portion of the profit. As the credit system develops, a new "aristocracy of finance" emerges. The operative direction of production then begins to be separated from the ownership of capital. The development of the credit system accelerates the accumulation of wealth into a few hands and reduces the process to "a colossal form of gambling and swindling"; and it creates all the prerequisites for the conversion of capitalist property into social property.

Marx shows that the merchant and the usurer are older than the system of capitalist production, and existed in pre-capitalist conditions. Merchants and usurers flourished in both slave and feudal society, and Marx indicates the role they played in slave and in feudal production. The existence of a numerous and powerful class of merchants and usurers did not

by itself tend to promote a change in the mode of production.

Marx then analyses the nature of *ground rent*, making the important distinction between *differential* and *absolute ground rent*. *Absolute rent* arises from the generally higher proportion of variable to constant capital in agriculture. This means that a higher rate of profit is realised in agriculture, which is not levelled down to the average rate where private ownership of land prevents the free flow of capital into agriculture. The difference constitutes the absolute rent. *Differential rent* arises from the greater profitability of the cultivation of better as compared with worse land. The additional profit accruing from working the better land as compared with the worst land under cultivation constitutes differential rent.

The whole analysis in Vol. III of *Capital* makes it clear that the working class as a whole is exploited by the capitalist class as a whole, the total surplus value produced being shared out in a variety of ways and in a variety of forms among a number of different capitalist interests.

The last part of Volume III on the revenues and their sources was never finished. In it Marx formulates criticisms of the assumptions of bourgeois political economy, and provides a brilliant summary of the basic features of the scientific analysis of capitalist production as a whole.

MARX: Critique of Political Economy

Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* was published in 1859. It consists of only two chapters, on commodities and money, and covers the same ground as Part I of *Capital*. It was in fact Marx's first formulation of the theory of commodities and money, from which follows the discovery of surplus value and the whole analysis of the nature and laws of development of capitalism contained in *Capital*. Marx originally intended it to be the first part of a complete treatise on political economy. He modified his plans, however, and eight years later published Volume I of *Capital*.

There is nothing in *Critique of Political Economy* which is not worked out more fully in *Capital*, except that the *Critique* contains polemics against bourgeois political economists omitted in Volume I of *Capital*. These polemics are more fully developed in *Theories of Surplus Value*, and in the chapter "From the Critical History" which Marx contributed to Engels' *Anti-Dühring* (Part II, Chapter X).

The Preface to *Critique of Political Economy* contains Marx's classic formulation of the principles of historical materialism, dealt with above in connection with Stalin's *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*.

Engels on "Capital"

Reviews written by Engels of *Critique of Political Economy* and of *Capital* contain an invaluable introduction to the study of *Capital* itself.

In reviewing the *Critique of Political Economy* for a German paper *The People*, Engels points out that scientific political economy arose in Germany with the rise of the working class party. It is grounded on the materialist conception of history. Engels deals with Marx's relation to Hegel, and then shows how Marx's dialectic was applied in explaining the nature of commodities.

Two reviews of *Capital* by Engels, written for the *Leipzig Democratic Weekly* and for the *London Fortnightly Review*, give a simple account of Marx's discovery of surplus value.

Engels began the writing of a *Synopsis of Capital*, which he carried on as far as Part IV. This synopsis is a most valuable guide and companion to the study of *Capital* itself.

MARX: Theories of Surplus Value

Theories of Surplus Value is taken from manuscripts which Marx left for the last volume of *Capital* and which Engels intended to edit and publish as Volume IV of *Capital*. Engels did not live to accomplish this task, which was undertaken by Karl Kautsky who published the manuscripts under the separate title, *Theories of Surplus Value*. Kautsky's editorial work has since been sharply criticised in the Soviet Union, where a new complete edition of *Theories of Surplus Value* is at present under preparation.

Theories of Surplus Value consists of a series of studies of economists who preceded Marx, and was arranged by Kautsky in three books:

1. Early theories of surplus value up to Adam Smith;
2. David Ricardo;
3. From Ricardo to the vulgar economists.

None was translated into English until a translation of selections from Parts 1 and 2 appeared in 1952.

Marx had the highest regard for the "classical English political economists" who preceded him, and Lenin in his *Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism* refers to "classical English political economy" as one of the main sources of Marxism. Hence, Marx's study and criticism of this classical political economy is of the greatest interest and helps to clarify many aspects of his own work.

Theories of Surplus Value is likewise of very great importance for the understanding and criticism of bourgeois economic theory, since many of the still current arguments which seek to justify capitalist profits are merely refurbished versions of old views critically examined by Marx in this work.

Of special importance in the sections published in English translation will be found:

1. Marx's re-explanation of his own analysis of surplus value in the light of a critique of the discoveries and errors of the "Physiocrats"—together with the whole analysis of this school of political economy, which corresponded to the period when capitalism was arising within decaying feudal society.
2. Marx's examination of the inconsistencies of Adam Smith, who realised that profit comes from unpaid labour, but who fell into confusion over the question of "the value of labour."
3. Marx's explanation of the question of price of production, the rate of profit, and the process of accumulation of capital, in connection with the critique of Ricardo, who, as he shows, failed to distinguish surplus value from profit, and mixed up price of production with value.
4. Marx's analysis of the causes of the cyclical crises of capitalism.

MARX: Wage Labour and Capital

In 1847 Marx gave a series of lectures at the German Workers' Society in Brussels, aimed at making clear to a working class audience the key concepts of political economy. These lectures were subsequently (1849) published as a pamphlet, *Wage Labour and Capital*.

Their main aim is to help the worker to understand his own economic position in capitalist society.

Marx explains that the worker sells his labour power to the capitalist and that the wages he receives are the price of his labour power. He explains how prices are determined and consequently how wages are determined. He proves that there is no "community of interests" between workers and capitalists, but that their interests are diametrically opposed.

Explaining the distinction between real wages and money wages, Marx shows that there exists an inverse ratio between real wages and profits. The constant drive of the capitalist is to rationalise production, cheapen goods, increase competition amongst the workers and keep wages down.

MARX: Wages, Price and Profit

This pamphlet by Marx (which is also known as *Value, Price and Profit*) contains a simple explanation of the basic ideas of political economy—value and surplus value.

This explanation begins with the sixth chapter. Marx explains what is the value of commodities, the relation of value and market prices, the value of labour power, the origin and nature of surplus value, the rate of surplus value and the rate of profit, how surplus value is decomposed into rent, interest and profit.

Thus all the most important conceptions worked out in *Capital* are here introduced to the reader in an easy and popular way.

The pamphlet is based on two speeches made by Marx to the General Council of the International Working Men's Association in 1865. The First International was considering its attitude to the contemporary strike movement and to demands for raising wages: an English delegate, John Weston, put forward the idea that higher wages could not improve the conditions of the workers, since if wages went up, so would prices.

In answering him, Marx shows that wages can rise at the expense of profits. He cuts through all Weston's confusions about "currency circulation," "supply and demand," the "regulation of prices," and proves that a general increase in wages would not mean a rise in prices but a fall in profits.

Marx here demonstrates how the science of political economy is an instrument for showing the workers the way forward, and for clearing up such confusions as those of John Weston. Though spoken nearly a hundred years ago, his words remain very contemporary—the same argument continues in the working class movement.

In concluding his address, Marx shows that there is no "economic law" which fixes the level of wages and profits. How much shall be paid in wages, how much shall go for profits, is determined in the last analysis by the relative strength of the contending classes, by the class struggle.

He states in conclusion that instead of the conservative motto "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," the working class should inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wages system."

ENGELS: The Housing Question

In this book Engels deals with a secondary consequence of the economic law of development of capitalism—the housing question. He shows how not only bad and unhealthy housing, but a housing shortage and high rents, affecting not only the working class but large sections of the middle class also, result from the rapid development of industrial capitalism. He discusses various schemes proposed for solving the housing problem, and concludes that this problem is integrally connected with capitalism and that only by the ending of capitalism will the housing question be finally solved.

It first appeared in the form of three articles in the German socialist press in 1872—when the industrial boom following the end of the Franco-Prussian War, and the rapid growth of the cities, had made the housing problem loom large in Germany. The articles are strongly polemical in character—directed against petty-bourgeois socialists (revivers of the discredited

ideas of Proudhon) who were pushing the housing question into the forefront and pretending that their quack remedies for it would transform society.

What are the principal questions dealt with in the articles?

1. Engels exposes the fallacy of those socialists who fancy they can transform capitalism by a few legal reforms.

2. Engels deals with the proposal to solve the housing problem by ensuring that every worker shall own "his own little house." He shows that this is a utopia, and moreover not a socialist proposal but a thoroughly reactionary proposal. And in this connection he explains the true economic relation between landlord and tenant and the nature of house-rent. The landlord-tenant relation is not like the relation between capitalist and worker, but is based on an ordinary sale and purchase transaction between two citizens. The landlord sells the use of the house to the tenant.

3. Engels proves that the capitalists, while forced to agree to various steps to alleviate the housing problem, do not want to solve it; and that housing schemes initiated by the capitalist state do not solve it either. He enters in some detail into questions of building societies, state aid for housing, factory housing schemes, town planning.

4. Engels shows how, with the seizure of power by the proletariat, existing housing can be utilised for the benefit of the working class; and he shows how the eventual solution of the housing question will be bound up with the abolition of the antithesis between town and countryside.

LENIN: The Development of Capitalism in Russia

This book, which should be read in conjunction with the first three chapters of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, is an unexcelled example of the application of the Marxist method in the investigation of the development of the economy and class relations in a particular country.

Lenin worked on it during his imprisonment in 1896, and it was finished in exile in Siberia. Its analysis of the social and economic development in Russia provided the basis for the Bolshevik programme and strategy in the 1905-7 Revolution.

Lenin shows how the development of capitalism in Russia was increasing the social division of labour, dividing the producers into capitalists and workers, and creating a home market. Parts of the book only have been translated into English. These are the parts specially concerned with the development of capitalism in Russian agriculture—the growth of capitalist farming amid numerous survivals of serfdom, and the consequent disintegration of the peasantry, with the appearance of a rural bourgeoisie on the one hand and of rural wage-workers on the other.

LENIN: A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism

This was written in 1897 and is directed against the economic theories of the Populists (Narodniks), whose standpoint was based on a utopian desire to halt the development of capitalism and return to small-scale production. In it Lenin criticises the theories of the Swiss economist Sismondi, whose views were highly prized by the Narodniks. This criticism contains illuminating explanations of Marxist economic analysis, and of its relation to the classical bourgeois political economy.

Lenin demonstrates that the progressive character of capitalism consists in the development of the forces of production, and that by bringing to a head the contradiction between social production and private appropriation capitalism prepares the ground for socialism. He contrasts the scientific analysis of Marxism with the romantic views of

Sismondi, who recognised the contradictions of capitalism but failed to analyse them scientifically or to understand the laws of capitalist development. Lenin deals especially with the question of the formation of the home market, the connection of production and consumption, the accumulation of capital, and the causes of capitalist crises.

Lenin on the Agrarian Question

In his writings on the agrarian question, Lenin provides, in the first place, an analysis of the laws of development of capitalism in agriculture, based on a wealth of statistical information from European countries and from the U.S.A.

This analysis is to be found in his writings:

Capitalism in Agriculture.

The Agrarian Question and the "Critics" of Marx.

New Data on the Laws of Development of Capitalism in Agriculture.

The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution.

These writings are difficult to follow unless the reader has previous acquaintance with the main ideas of Marxist economics. They are an important continuation and application of the principles of Marx's *Capital*. They constitute an indispensable part of Marxist studies particularly for those concerned with agricultural questions. They are all polemical in style, being directed against writers who either denied the capitalist development of agriculture altogether or misrepresented its laws of development.

In *Capitalism and Agriculture*, Lenin deals with a Narodnik writer who had criticised Kautsky's book on the Agrarian question (written at a time when Kautsky was still a Marxist). Lenin makes clear a number of fundamental characteristics of the development of capitalism in agriculture—the proportion of constant to variable capital increases in agriculture, as in industry; there takes place a concentration of land-ownership in the hands of landlords and mortgage corporations; large-scale production supplants small-scale, not merely by increase in the area of farms but also by increase of intensity of production on a small area: there is growth of wage labour and of the utilisation of machinery. He then shows further how the development of capitalist agriculture is hampered by various difficulties and contradictions, particularly ground rent, the growth of the urban at the expense of rural population, and competition of cheap grain from newly developed areas overseas where the producers are not burdened by ground rent.

The same questions are again taken up in *The Agrarian Question and the 'Critics' of Marx*. Here, after a fundamental explanation of the fallacy of the so-called "law" of diminishing returns, and an exposition of the Marxist theory of ground rent, Lenin deals especially with the question of large-scale versus small-scale farming, exposing the error of those who imagine that small farming is more "progressive."¹

New Data on the Laws of Development of Capitalism in Agriculture brings out further the points already explained by means of a profound analysis of the development of agriculture in the United States. Amongst other points emphasised both in this and the previous articles is the essentially capitalist character of agricultural co-operation, in a capitalist state, through farmers' co-operative associations.²

In *The Agrarian Programme of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution*,

¹ See Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*.

² But see also Lenin *On Co-operation*.

1905-7, Lenin gives a detailed analysis of the existing system of land ownership in Russia and of the tasks of the agrarian revolution in Russia.

The key issues are confiscation of the estates of the landlords and nationalisation of the land. Lenin proves that the nationalisation of the land, in a capitalist state, does not destroy capitalism in agriculture but, on the contrary, by removing the main obstacles to the free investment of capital in agriculture, furthers its development. This point is developed in Chapter III, which also contains a simple exposition of the Marxist theory of ground rent. (Chapter III of this book is published separately in the 12-volume edition of *Lenin Selected Works*, Vol. XII; the other chapters, I, II, IV and Conclusion, are included in *Lenin Selected Works*, Vol. III.)

Two writings by Lenin dealing with the agrarian question in pre-revolutionary Russia must be noted here, in addition to the treatment of the development of capitalism in Russian agriculture contained in the relevant chapters of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

In *The Agrarian Question in Russia at the end of the Nineteenth Century*, Lenin gives a detailed analysis of the types of farming in Russia and of their development, of the classes, of the process of division of the peasants, and concludes that two alternative paths of development were open to Russian agriculture—the “Russian” path, through the growth of kulak farming, or the “American” path, through the nationalisation of the land. This analysis provided the basis for the agrarian programme of Russian Social-Democracy, including its demand, voiced later, for the nationalisation of the land.

In the booklet *To the Rural Poor* published in 1903 for illegal distribution amongst the peasants, we find a model of the simple, popular and forceful presentation of the party's whole economic and class analysts and programme of action.

5. THE WORKING CLASS PARTY

INTRODUCTION

Marxism teaches that without its own political party the working class cannot defeat capitalism, cannot win power and cannot build socialism.

Marx and Engels stressed above all the need for an independent working class political party. “The working class can act as a class only by establishing a distinct political party, opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes”— so said the rules of the First International, founded by Marx.

Marx and Engels were writing in a period when the working class movement was still in process of formation, and their attitude was summed up in the *Communist Manifesto*: “The Communists do not form a separate party opposed to other working class parties.” They strove to unite the working class behind a common political programme, its basic aim the conquest of political power.

Marx and Engels resolutely fought all attempts to introduce bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas and policies into the party, and to turn it into a party of class collaboration. They sought to base the party on the revolutionary principles of Marxism and to win over to these principles the main organisations of the working class. Such was their entire political activity. And they paid the closest attention to defining the attitude of the working class to all other classes, particularly to the peasantry, whom they regarded as most important *allies* of the working class.

Lenin founded the Bolshevik Party at the beginning of the epoch of imperialism. After decades of relatively “peaceful” development, opportunist tendencies had become rife in the West European socialist parties. An overhaul of the entire activity of the International, and a decisive break with opportunism, had become urgently necessary. In the Bolshevik Party he created a working class party *of a new type*, able to unite and lead the working class in the decisive battles against capitalism—a party embodying strong democratic centralisation and voluntary discipline, firmly based on the revolutionary principles of Marxism, able to apply them and to carry them forward.

Such a party, equipped with revolutionary theory, acts as the vanguard of the working class. It is an organised detachment of the working class, and the highest form of organisation of the working class, influencing, leading and directing all the various organisations of the workers towards the great aim of conquering power and building socialism. It acts as the instrument for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It preserves strict unity and discipline, allowing no factional activity to disrupt it. It purges itself of opportunists. It bases its policy at each stage of the struggle on the principle of determining against what enemy the main blow is to be directed, and of drawing all possible allies into that struggle against the enemy.

The Bolshevik Party was built in the struggle for revolutionary Marxism against opportunism in the working class movement. Its policy and organisational principles were established in the fight against “economism,” which believed that the workers should concentrate on fighting only for economic demands; against the Mensheviks, who strove to weaken the organisation and unity of the party as a step to introducing policies of class collaboration; and likewise against “leftists,” who isolated the party from the masses, rejected allies, and substituted “revolutionary” phrases for mass work and a policy founded on a realistic estimate of the stage of development of the struggle.

Lenin exposed and fought the opportunism of the leaders of the Second International,

which culminated in betrayal by those leaders in the imperialist war, 1914-18. He made clear the difference between just and unjust wars, and the policy of the working class on war.

Lenin's teachings on the party of a new type have been carried forward by the Communist Parties and they have been further developed by Stalin.

In this part we call attention to writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin which deal *specially* with the Party, with its role, its organisation and its policy. But *the whole* of Marxism-Leninism constitutes the guiding theory and the definition of the strategy and tactics of the working class party.

Fundamental reading on the question of the party has already been dealt with in Part 2. On this question the student should turn first of all to the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B); Foundations of Leninism*, Chapters 7 and 8; and the *Communist Manifesto*.

After that, the most essential reading is Lenin's two books, *What is to be Done?* and *Left-Wing Communism-*, to which may be added *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

The student should also turn to the sections on the party in Stalin's *Reports to the 17th and 18th Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B)* (dealt with below, Part 8).

Next, the student should take up Lenin's writings which deal specially with the opportunism of the Second International (these are to be found in the booklet *Lenin and Britain*, and in the collection *Marx, Engels, Marxism*, as well as in the editions of *Lenin's Selected Works*); and with the attitude of the working class to imperialist war—*Socialism and War* and *War and the Workers*. Lastly come Lenin's contributions in connection with the foundation and work of the Communist International.

The beginner may well find it best to turn to the works by Marx and Engels on the party after, and not before, studying the works by Lenin and Stalin: their historical significance will then be better appreciated. These works are all short and (except for Engels' articles on Britain) are all contained in the two volumes of *Marx-Engels Selected Works*. These writings on the party are here presented under four headings:

- A. Marx and Engels on the party,
- B. Lenin and the Party of a New Type,
- C. The Fight against the Opportunism of the Second International,
- D. The Communist International.

A. AN INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS PARTY

Marx and Engels on the Party

MARX: Inaugural Address to the International Working Men's Association

This address lays down the general policy around which Marx sought in 1864 to consolidate the First International. He stresses that the increasing prosperity of the capitalists means increasing misery for the workers.¹

Capitalism can be finally defeated only by political struggle. The workers possess "one element of success—numbers; but numbers weigh only in the balance if united by combination and led by knowledge."

The workers must unite in every country and internationally for the emancipation of labour. And their strength must be exerted also to oppose the warlike and predatory foreign policies of the capitalist governments.

¹ See *Capital*, Vol. I.

The *General Rules* of the International Working Men's Association, drafted by Marx, embody the principles on which the working class party must be built:—

The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself; the emancipation of the working class from capitalism must be the great end to which every political movement should subordinate itself;

This end can only be achieved by the union of workers of all countries;

The working class can act as a class only by establishing a distinct political party, opposed to all the old parties formed by the possessing classes;

Such a party is the indispensable instrument for the socialist revolution and for the abolition of classes;

The union of the working class achieved in economic struggle must serve as a lever for struggle against the political power of the capitalists, and the conquest of political power by the working class.¹

Marx's *Inaugural Address* and the *General Rules* of the I.W.M.A. constituted a platform on which it was possible to unite the many different sections of the international working class movement—for the inaugural conference was supported by representatives of many organisations, ranging from illegal revolutionary groups to the already "respectable" British trade unions. Through the unity and common programme achieved in the I.W.M.A. Marx sought to lay the foundations of a party capable of welding the working class into a single political army.

ENGELS: On Authority

This short article was written for an Italian journal in 1874, against the Anarchists. It shows the need for a centralised and disciplined working class party which will lead the way to the establishment of a workers' state.

Along with this article can usefully be read the letters by Marx and Engels about the fight against the Anarchists² published in Vol. II of the Moscow edition of *Marx-Engels Selected Works*. These letters consist of: Marx to Bolte, 1871, and Engels to Kuno, 1872.

ENGELS: Marx and the New Rhenish Gazette

This article, written in 1884, supplies a model of how to run a working class newspaper³ in a revolutionary period. It deals with the experience of the *New Rhenish Gazette*, the daily newspaper of which Marx was the editor in the years 1848-9.

The *New Rhenish Gazette* was set up because Marx realised the need for a daily newspaper. "Its banner," says Engels, "was that of democracy." It sought to lead the contemporary revolutionary struggle for democracy, taking up the movement at its most advanced point and seeking to push it further. The alternative to this policy, says Engels, would have been to produce the "little provincial sheet" of a "tiny sect," instead of the "great newspaper of a great party in action."

MARX AND ENGELS: Circular Letter

This "Circular Letter" addressed by Marx and Engels in 1879 to leading members of the

¹ See Marx, *Address of Central Committee to the Communist League*.

² See also Stalin, *Anarchism or Socialism*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*; Marx, *The Revolution in Spain*.

³ See also Lenin, *What is to be Done*; *History of C.P.S.U.(B)* Ch. 5, Section 2.

German Social Democratic Party contains Marx and Engels' protest at that time against the petty bourgeois elements who were trying to divert the working class on to the path of class collaboration.

Three leading members of the party, whom Marx and Engels call "the three censors of Zurich," had demanded that, instead of being a "one-sided workers' party," the party should be made "an all-sided party"; that "educated members of the propertied classes" should assume prominent places in its leadership and as its parliamentary representatives: that the bourgeoisie should not be scared or antagonised by "exaggerated attacks"; that the bourgeoisie should not be fought but "won over."

Marx and Engels denounced all this as a programme of representatives of the petty bourgeoisie who had insinuated themselves into the working class movement.¹ They declared that it was impossible to co-operate in the same party with people who repudiated the class struggle, and that they must adhere to the old battle cry of the First International—"The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself." While the party welcomed bourgeois converts, it welcomed them on condition that they whole-heartedly adopted the proletarian outlook and did not bring with them into the party all manner of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideas.

ENGELS: Articles in "The Labour Standard"

In 1881 Engels wrote ten short articles for *The Labour Standard*, journal of the London Trades Council, which have been republished under the title *The British Labour Movement*.

In these articles he insists that the task of the working class is not merely to defend its position and seek for reforms under capitalism, but to fight for power and to end capitalism. He urges the formation of an independent working class party in Britain, and that the trade unions should use their organised power for the setting up of such a party.²

ENGELS: Prefatory Note to "The Peasant War in Germany"

This note, written in 1874, is of very great importance, because:

1. It discusses the attitude of the working class to other classes—the urban petty bourgeoisie, the lumpen-proletariat, the small peasants and agricultural labourers; and
2. In the advice given to the German working class movement at the end, Engels formulates universal tasks of the working class movement, stressing the need for
 - (a) clear theoretical insight, free from the influence of the old world outlook. "Since Socialism has become a science, it must be studied";
 - (b) the strengthening of both political and trade union organisation;
 - (c) to carry on the fight inside as well as outside Parliament;
 - (d) to safeguard the international spirit.

ENGELS: The Peasant Question in France and Germany

This article, written in 1894, deals in detail with the relationship of the working class to the peasants and proves the necessity of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry.³

¹ See Lenin, *Historical Destiny of the Teachings of Karl Marx, Marxism and Revisionism, Differences in the European Labour Movement*.

² See also *Lenin and Britain*.

³ See Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are, Two Tactics of Social Democracy, Theses of Report on Tactics of R.C.P. at 3rd Congress of C.I., Theses on Agrarian Question*; Stalin,

Engels proves that the development of capitalism inevitably spells the ruin of small peasant production; but despite this, peasant “apathy” is one of the great supports of reaction. In order to conquer political power, says Engels, the working class “must first go from the towns to the country, must become a power in the countryside.” It cannot afford to “leave the doomed peasant in the hands of his false protectors, until he has been transformed from a passive to an active opponent of the industrial workers.”

Engels stresses that the working class should not try to win over the peasants by making them promises which cannot be fulfilled. He strongly criticises the policy of the French party, which promised to preserve small peasant property. Not only is such a promise contrary to the aims of socialism, but it cannot be fulfilled, since it is impossible to “save” doomed small property.

The main point is to make the peasants understand that they can save their houses and fields only by transforming them into co-operative property, operated co-operatively. But the working class must never attempt to impose such co-operation by force.

Engels attached considerable importance to the division of the peasantry into different sections. The small peasants, he explains, are the principal allies; but he considers that sections of the big and medium peasants can also be won, or at least neutralised. As for the big estates, the policy of the working class should be to expropriate the landowners (if necessary buying them out), and to turn the land over to the rural workers to be cultivated co-operatively.

B. THE PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

Lenin on the Organisational Principles, Strategy and Tactics of the Party

LENIN: What is to be Done?

What is to be Done is a book of key importance for the Marxist conception of the tasks of the working class party. To understand the circumstances in which it was written, and as an aid to grasping its principal points, the reader should consult the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter I, Section 5 and Chapter II, Section 2.

What is to be Done was directed against those who in the early days after the establishment of a working class party in Russia taught that the workers should engage in economic struggle only, concentrating on bread-and-butter problems rather than political issues. Lenin saw in this trend the nucleus of opportunism in the working class movement, of class collaboration.

The “Economists,” as they were called, began their campaign by demanding “freedom of criticism” in the party, attacking what they called the “narrow political views” of Lenin. The first chapter of *What is to be Done* is accordingly devoted to the question of “Freedom of criticism.” Lenin shows that the “freedom of criticism” demanded by the Economists means freedom to embrace bourgeois ideas instead of Marxism, and that this opens the way to collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Of course, he says, the Economists are “free” to take the path of class collaboration, but not to drag the party with them.

Lenin shows that to confine the working class movement to economic struggle alone means to give up the political struggle and so to condemn the workers to eternal wage slavery.

Foundations of Leninism, The October Revolution, Reports to 14th and 15th Congresses C.P.S.U.(B), The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Problem, Dizzy with Success, Speech to Collective Farm Shock Workers, On the U.S.S.R. Draft Constitution, History of C.P.S.U.(B).

The Economists relied on the spontaneous movement of the workers protesting against bad economic conditions. Lenin shows that to rely in this way on spontaneity is “tailism” (*kvostism*), i.e. it is to tail behind events, instead of giving leadership. Political knowledge cannot arise in the working class movement spontaneously, as a result of spontaneous economic struggle alone. Political knowledge, revolutionary theory, must be introduced into the working class movement. The Economists belittled the role of theory. But “without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.”¹

Lenin shows that the roots of opportunist ideas and of opportunist policies in the labour movement lie in the attitude of relying on the spontaneous movement and belittling the role of theory.

In *What is to be Done* Lenin shows concretely how to combine political and economic struggle. Working class political struggle must be something much broader than mere “trade union politics.” The workers must be concerned with “the inter-relations between all the various classes,” and must fight against every manifestation of reaction. In advocating economic struggle alone, the Economists sank into reformism, opportunism. But the struggle for reforms must be subordinated to the struggle for liberty and socialism.

In *What is to be Done* Lenin also deals with questions of party organisation. He stresses the need for a centralised disciplined organisation, for the practical and theoretical training of revolutionaries, for a firm Marxist theoretical basis.

LENIN: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

This book is of key importance in establishing the principles of organisation of the Communist Party. It was written in 1904 following the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party—the Congress at which the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks first showed itself.

In order to understand this book and its background, the reader should consult the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Chapter II, Sections 3 and 4. At the 2nd Congress in 1903, two opposed groups became apparent in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, revolutionary and opportunist. After the adoption of the Party Programme there took place a dispute over the Party Rules. Lenin and his followers held that there should be three conditions for party membership:

- (1) Acceptance of the programme,
- (2) Payment of dues,
- (3) Belonging to a party organisation.

His opponents held that condition (3) was not necessary.

At the end of this Congress the followers of Lenin gained a majority on the Central Committee and on the Editorial Board of the party newspaper *Iskra*. They therefore became known as the Bolsheviks—from the Russian word meaning “Majority”—while the others were known as Mensheviks—from the Russian word for “Minority.” But afterwards, the Mensheviks managed to capture *Iskra* and began an attack on the party organisation, which they declared was too “rigid.” They wanted “liberty” for individuals not to obey party decisions. The opportunists thus began their operations by an attack on the principles of party organisation.

Lenin recognised that this attempt to weaken the party organisation was a prelude to

¹ See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

imposing opportunist policies on the party concerning the major political issues. In *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, after analysing the proceedings and the votes at the 2nd Congress, and demonstrating the existence of two wings—a revolutionary and an opportunist wing—Lenin shows the need for a disciplined centralised party of the working class.¹

LENIN: “Left Wing” Communism, an Infantile Disorder

Left Wing Communism is a handbook of Communist Party strategy and tactics, of Communist leadership, and the building of a mass party. It was written in 1920, at the time of the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, in order to correct the “leftist” mistakes being made by Communists in a number of countries.

Lenin draws on the experiences of the Russian Bolsheviks as a guide for the world Communist movement.

The Bolshevik Party, he points out, grew strong and became steeled not only in the fight against opportunism, but also in the fight against “petty-bourgeois leftism.”

What are the principal teachings of *Left Wing Communism*?

Lenin shows the need for a centralised and disciplined party and for maintaining proper relationships between leaders, party, class and masses. He shows the need for a firm party leadership and the danger of leftist talk which seeks to oppose “masses against leaders.” Such leftist talk, he shows, amounts to repudiation of the party and of party discipline, that is, disarming the proletariat for the benefit of the bourgeoisie. Such an attitude does not spring from the working class, which understands the need for organisation, but from the petty bourgeoisie.² Our task is not only to defeat the big capitalists, but also (what is even more difficult), to remould and re-educate the small producers. This requires a long and arduous struggle against the forces and traditions of the old system, which can only be carried out by a centralised and disciplined party.³

Lenin further shows how leftist moods play into the hands of *agents provocateurs*.

2. Lenin shows the need for a “mass party.” He shows that the task is to lead the masses, not just to lead the party—to bring millions of people into action.⁴ It is necessary for the party to work wherever the masses are to be found, to penetrate everywhere, to rouse the masses and draw them into the struggle.

In this connection he stresses how important it is to work in the trade unions; to refuse to do so on the pretext that the trade unions are “reactionary” would mean to leave the mass of the workers under the influence of a handful of reactionary leaders. We must work wherever the masses are to be found, taking into account their level of development, not fence ourselves off from them by artificial “left-wing” slogans.

3. Lenin shows that the party must master all forms of working class struggle. In conditions of illegality it must learn to combine legal with illegal struggle. He particularly stresses the need for the party to master the methods of parliamentary struggle, of participation in elections and in bourgeois parliaments for the purpose of educating,

¹ See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

² See Lenin, *What is to be Done?, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*.

³ See Lenin, *Deception of the People*.

⁴ See Lenin, *Theses on Fundamental Tasks of C.I., In Support of Tactics of C.I., Letter to German Communists*.

awakening and enlightening the masses.¹

He stresses that the party must be ready quickly to pass from one form of struggle to another, and must practise self-criticism and learn from its own mistakes.² Otherwise it is not a mass party but a group of intellectuals.

4. Lenin ridicules the leftists who put forward the slogan “no compromise.” We must know how to reach compromise agreements with other parties and to apply these tactics to raise and not lower the workers’ ability to fight and conquer. It is necessary to win every possible ally and to utilise every division in the ranks of the enemy.³

It is necessary, moreover, to learn not to fall into enemy traps—not to accept battle at a time advantageous to the enemy and to avoid an obviously disadvantageous battle.

In Chapter 9 Lenin deals with Britain and expounds the tactics of building unity with Labour against the Tories. This, he says, will enable the British communists to gain the ear of the masses, to educate them and to hasten the end of right-wing influence.⁴

5. Lenin shows that the communists must find the correct form of approach, the correct road to the proletarian revolution in each country. The struggle has features peculiar to each country. We cannot lay down general rules applicable to all cases, but it is necessary that the fundamental principles of communism shall be correctly adapted to national and national-state differences. Attention must be concentrated, says Lenin, on finding forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution.⁵ This means to find the right path to bring the masses up to the decisive revolutionary struggle.

In this connection he deals with the conditions necessary for the successful carrying through of the proletarian socialist revolution.

C. THE FIGHT AGAINST THE OPPORTUNISM OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL.

Lenin on Opportunism and its Roots in the Labour Movement

Lenin’s fundamental analysis of the nature and causes of opportunism in the labour movement, which is summed up in his book *Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism*, is worked out in a number of comparatively short articles.

In *The Historical Destiny of the Teaching of Karl Marx* (1913) Lenin showed that up to that time the working class movement had passed through three main stages. The first was the period of revolutionary storm, from the 1848 revolutions to the Paris Commune of 1871, in the course of which independent working class parties were first organised. The next phase, up to the Russian Revolution of 1905, was a phase of comparatively “peaceful” development. The working class parties grew stronger, established their own daily press and learned to use bourgeois parliamentarism. But in this phase opportunism crept into the movement, preaching “social peace” and renunciation of class struggle. Lastly, since the 1905 Revolution, new revolutionary crises were on the way, and it was absolutely essential to drive opportunism out of the movement and secure the victory of revolutionary Marxism.

In an earlier article, *Marxism and Revisionism* (1908), Lenin analysed revisionism—the “theory” of the opportunists who continued to call themselves Marxists while revising all the

¹ See Lenin, *Tasks of 3rd International*.

² See *History of C.P.S.U.(B)*, Conclusion; Stalin, *Report to 15th Congress C.P.S.U.(B)*.

³ See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

⁴ See *Lenin and Britain*; Lenin, *The Role of the Communist Party*.

⁵ See Lenin, *State and Revolution*.

fundamental principles of Marxism. He showed that the revisionists relied on the “latest thing” in bourgeois philosophy, giving up materialist dialectics; that they took up with the latest theories of bourgeois political economy, in particular “correcting” Marx’s theory of value and denying the inevitability of capitalist crises; and that they affirmed that democracy and universal suffrage had removed the grounds of the class struggle.¹

Revisionism led to giving up the aim of socialism and “sacrificing the basic interests of the working class for real or assumed momentary advantages.” It represented the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in the working class movement.

In *Differences in the European Labour Movement* (1910) Lenin points out that the appearance of such anti-Marxist trends in the Labour movement could not be accidental, but arose from the character of economic development in all capitalist countries. And in *Reformism in the Russian Social-Democratic Movement* (1911) he relates reformist ideas directly to the influence of capitalist propaganda. Instead of fighting openly against socialism, the capitalists were learning to advocate the gradual, piecemeal reform of capitalism—the patching up of capitalism; and they were utilising such propaganda in order to divide and weaken the working class and maintain capitalist class rule. This propaganda was reflected in reformist ideology inside the working class movement itself—the advocacy of reforms versus revolution. (This article contains a wealth of detail argument against the reformist socialists who said that the Russian workers must on no account turn again to the path of revolution.)

In *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism* (1916) Lenin sums up the fundamental cause of the prevalence and strength of opportunism in the labour movement. It arises from the fact that the super-profits of imperialism could be used to bribe and corrupt an upper stratum of the working class. As a result of this, “a bourgeois Labour Party” inevitably made its appearance in all imperialist countries.

Dealing with Britain in particular, Lenin shows that opportunism had prevailed for decades, beginning before the birth of imperialism proper in Britain. The industrial monopoly and rich colonies possessed by the British capitalists in the pre-imperialist phase of development was already bringing them super-profits, thus already producing certain of the features of imperialism.

Lenin had also dealt with this theme in his book *The Collapse of the Second International* (1915). Here he defines the meaning of the term “opportunism.” It means “sacrificing to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers the fundamental interests of the masses;” or, in other words, “an alliance of a part of the workers with the bourgeoisie against the mass of the proletariat.”

Opportunism could arise and grow strong because the capitalists were able to make concessions to a section of the workers in imperialist countries, thus creating a “layer” of privileged workers. Opportunism is strengthened, Lenin adds, by “the power of habit, the routine of comparatively peaceful evolution, national prejudices, fear of acute breaks and disbelief in them.”

The opportunism of the leaders of the Second International culminated in their going over to the side of their own imperialists in 1914. Lenin tears to pieces their arguments justifying their support of the imperialist war. We find on the part of the opportunist leaders, Lenin concludes, “socialism in words,” but in practice “joining the bourgeoisie in every serious

¹ See Lenin, *Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*.

crisis.” They must be expelled from the working class parties.¹

Lenin on War

The fundamental teachings concerning the attitude of the working class party towards war were hammered out by Lenin during the First World War. They are summed up in *History of C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter 6, Section 3.

In *Socialism and War* (1915) Lenin establishes the distinction between just and unjust wars,² and sums up the essential teachings of Marxism on the policy of the working class in an unjust, imperialist war.

He shows that the war which broke out in 1914 was an unjust imperialist war waged between two rival blocs of imperialist powers. In such a war the working class on each side must oppose its own imperialism, and strive to “turn the imperialist war into civil war.”

Lenin showed that when imperialist war had broken out it was impossible to establish a just peace without overthrowing the imperialist governments. Hence the abstract slogan of “peace” put forward during the war by certain liberals and pacifists was a deceptive slogan. He shows that the support of the war by the “socialists” of the Second International was a direct betrayal of socialism. He coins the phrase “social-chauvinism” to denote their policy. Social-chauvinism is defence of the fatherland in an unjust war undertaken by people calling themselves socialists. Lenin calls for a break with opportunism and social-chauvinism on an international scale, and the setting up of a new Third International on a revolutionary basis.

Lenin again expounds the Marxist attitude to imperialist war in a *Lecture on War* delivered in May, 1917. He again stresses the distinction of just and unjust wars, explaining that we must always ask what class conducts the war and for what aims.

In other articles Lenin deals with certain special problems arising out of the world war. In *The United States of Europe Slogan* (1915) he shows that the workers could not support such a slogan. For so long as imperialist powers remain in being, a “united states of Europe” could mean nothing else than an agreement to divide up colonies and booty and jointly to suppress socialism.

Socialism will eventually make possible “the United States of the World.” But this is not a practical objective at the present time. For as a result of the uneven development of capitalism,³ “the victory of socialism is possible in several or even in one capitalist country taken singly”; and such a country or countries may for a long period remain centres of socialism around which there are still ringed hostile capitalist states.⁴

In *Pacifism and the Workers* Lenin deals with the pacifist slogan of complete disarmament. He shows that it is unrealisable in capitalist conditions, and that to campaign for it is therefore to avoid the real issues of revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

The oppressed peoples cannot be pacifists, but must learn the use of arms and be prepared to turn them against their oppressors. Oppressed people who cannot use arms deserve to be treated like slaves. We cannot be pacifists, because we recognise the existence of just wars, of

¹ See Lenin, *Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution, 'The 3rd International and its Place in History, Tasks of the 3rd International, Conditions of Affiliation to the C.I., False Speeches about Freedom.*

² See Marx, *The Civil War in France.*

³ See Lenin, *Imperialism.*

⁴ See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism, Interview with First American Labour Delegation.*

wars of the oppressed against the oppressors.

The same theme recurs in *The War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution* (1916). In the first part of this article Lenin shows that socialists are not and cannot be opposed to all wars. For there are wars of oppressed peoples fighting for their liberation; civil wars; and when socialism is established, there may be wars to defend socialist countries from imperialist attack. Oppressed peoples must be ready to wage wars of liberation. And socialist peoples must be ready to defend their socialist fatherland.¹

In the remaining parts of this article Lenin deals further with the working class attitude to military training, arms and the use of arms.

Lenin on the British Labour Movement

In a number of observations on the British Labour Movement, included in the volume *Lenin and Britain*, Lenin shows:

1. How Marx and Engels stressed the paramount importance of building an independent working class movement in Britain.² Their attitude provided a vivid illustration of the principle that Marxism is the union of socialism with the mass working class movement. Marx and Engels condemned the sectarianism of the old Social Democratic Federation in Britain, which preached a dogmatic “orthodoxy” while holding itself aloof from the working class movement. They insisted that the socialists should “throw off their narrow sectarianism at all costs and affiliate to the Labour Movement.” On the other hand, they insisted on the fight against opportunism in the Labour Movement, and to equip the movement with revolutionary theory.

2. Dealing with the British Labour Party, Lenin shows how important was the fight for a socialist policy in the Labour Party, and appraises the Labour Party as “the first step on the part of the really conscious proletarian organisations of Britain towards a conscious class policy and towards a socialist Labour Party.” But he wrote of the Labour Party in 1918 that “although it consists of workers it is led by reactionaries.”

3. He demonstrates the need for building the Communist Party in Britain, and for the Communist Party to seek to affiliate to the Labour Party.³

D. THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Lenin and the Communist International

In his pamphlet, *Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, which he published in April 1917 on his return to Russia after the February Revolution of that year, Lenin distinguished three trends in the international movement: the social chauvinists, who were lined up openly with their own imperialists; the centrists, who conciliated with them; and the genuine internationalists, who opposed the imperialist war. Lenin proclaimed that it was urgently necessary for the latter to set up a new Communist International, which would break completely with opportunism and unite the working class on the basis of the revolutionary principles of Marxism.

The First Congress of the Communist International was held in the spring of 1919.

Immediately afterwards, in his article *The Third International and its Place in History*,

¹ See Lenin, *Tasks of Proletariat in Our Revolution, The April Conference*.

² See Engels, *The British Labour Movement*, and *Marx-Engels Correspondence*.

³ See Lenin, *Role of the Communist Party*.

Lenin pointed out that while the 1st International had laid the foundation of the international working class struggle for socialism, and the 2nd International had broadened the movement in a number of countries, the 3rd International was purging the movement of opportunism and had begun to realise the dictatorship of the proletariat, opening up a new epoch in world history.

Throughout Lenin's contributions to the Communist International runs the theme of the fight against opportunism, and also against petty-bourgeois "leftism" which isolates the Communists from the mass of the workers. (See *Left Wing Communism*.)

In the pamphlet, *The Tasks of the Third International* (July, 1919), Lenin underlined the necessity to:

1. Systematically explain the difference between reform and revolution, while not rejecting reforms nor work in bourgeois parliaments.
2. Combine legal and illegal work.
3. Work for the expulsion of the opportunists from the labour movement.
4. Assist the revolutionary struggle for colonial liberation.
5. Expose those who used revolutionary phrases as a cover for reactionary deeds.

At the Second Congress of the C.I., in the summer of 1920, Lenin drafted the *Theses on the Fundamental Tasks of the 2nd Congress of the C.I.* These laid it down that the victory of socialism requires:

1. the overthrow and suppression of the exploiters;
2. the winning of the working masses behind the leadership of the Communist Parties, which must become inseparably linked with the whole life of the working class;
3. the neutralising of wavering sections.

The Theses go on to deal with what the communists must do to realise these conditions and to stress that opportunism in the working class movement is the principal enemy.

In a report delivered to the Second Congress on *The International Situation and the Fundamental Tasks of the C.I.* Lenin exhaustively analysed the post-war economic and political situation.

At the Second Congress he drafted *The Conditions of Affiliation to the C.I.* And in his speech on this subject he dealt especially with the difference between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the reformist conception of winning power."

Lenin likewise drafted the *Theses on the Agrarian Question*, which deal with the tasks of building the alliance with the peasants; and the *Theses on the National and Colonial Question*.

In a speech on *The Role of the Communist Party* Lenin replied to the British delegates Tanner and McLaine, showing that the conscious revolutionary minority of the working class must form a party in order to lead the masses, and dealing also with the problem of the affiliation of the British Communist Party to the Labour Party.

An article written at the same time on *False Speeches About Freedom* explains the necessity of a break with opportunism. In a speech *In Support of the Tactics of the C.I.*, at the Third Congress in the summer of 1921, Lenin stresses that the party must win leadership of the masses, i.e. of the majority of the working people. Unless this majority is won to follow the lead of the party, victory of socialism is impossible.

The same theme recurs in a *Letter to the German Communists*.

6. THE BOURGEOIS-DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION AND THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

The Marxist theory of class struggle distinguishes between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist (or proletarian) revolution.

The bourgeois and socialist revolutions are distinguished by the different *tasks or aims* which are undertaken in each.

The task of the *bourgeois revolution* is, in the economic sphere, to abolish all remnants of feudalism and to establish conditions for the free development of capitalism; and in the political sphere, to abolish all remnants of absolutism and autocracy and to establish universal suffrage, parliamentary democracy, equality of rights for all citizens.

In view of this political task, the bourgeois revolution is often called the *bourgeois-democratic revolution*, or simply the *democratic revolution*.

The task of the *socialist revolution* is, in the economic sphere, to abolish capitalist ownership and establish public socialist ownership of the means of production; and in the political sphere, to establish proletarian democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx taught that the task of advancing to the socialist revolution was inseparable from the task of carrying through the bourgeois revolution. For the socialist revolution could not be victorious except on condition that the fight was waged for democracy and against survivals of feudalism and absolutism. Hence Marx always set before the working class the task of waging the battles of the bourgeois democratic revolution as a necessary step towards beginning the socialist revolution. And he warned that when confronted with the democratic demands of the working people, sections of the bourgeoisie would seek to desert and betray the democratic revolution.

Marx taught, moreover, that the victory of the bourgeois revolution did not necessarily mean that the bourgeoisie must be firmly installed in power and that capitalism must remain and continue to develop over a long period. On the contrary, from the battles of the bourgeois revolution the working class must march straight on to the socialist revolution, not allowing the bourgeoisie to consolidate itself in power and to carry on the capitalist system. This doctrine of Marx is sometimes known as the theory of *permanent, uninterrupted or continuous revolution*.

In the revolutionary period of 1848-50, Marx taught that the working class must support and push on the bourgeoisie in the fight for a democratic republic. The successful outcome of the revolution would place the bourgeoisie in power. But the working class must establish its own independent class organisations, its own party; must advance its own demands; and carry on the revolution until working class power was achieved.

Developing Marx's teachings in a new historical situation in the era of imperialism, a new line on the task of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution was advanced by Lenin in the Russian Revolution of 1905.

Lenin taught that *the working class must itself take the lead in the bourgeois-democratic revolution*, mobilising the peasants as its chief ally. The victory of the democratic revolution would not place the bourgeoisie in power, but would place power in the hands of the workers and peasants: such a power was called by Lenin "the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants."

Thus Lenin established the principle of the leading role (hegemony) of the working class

in carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Having marched with the whole peasantry to abolish all remnants of feudalism and autocracy and establish a democratic republic, the working class would go forward with the poorer peasants to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, eradicate capitalism and build socialism.

Thus the revolution would go forward in a series of stages, the leadership and driving force the working class, mobilising all possible allies at each stage, striking blow after blow—first against the remnants of feudalism and feudal autocracy, then against capitalism and the economic and political positions of the capitalist class. The revolution would be crowned by the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin further showed that the working class, which takes the lead in the struggle for democracy, establishes in the dictatorship of the proletariat a higher form of democracy than bourgeois democracy.

The first and most essential reading required for study of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the tasks of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and on the relationship between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions is:—*The Communist Manifesto*; Lenin's *State and Revolution*; Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*, the latter part of Chapter 3; Stalin's *On the Problems of Leninism*; and *The History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapters 3 and 7. All of these were dealt with above, in Part II. And unless the reader has made some study of these works, he will not get very far with the works dealt with below.

Marx and Engels' main strategical line in the revolutionary period 1848-50 was set forth in their *Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League*, in 1850.

As to what happened during the whole revolutionary period from 1848 to 1871 (the Paris Commune), and the conclusions which Marx and Engels drew from these events, the reader should turn to three works, *The Class Struggles in France*, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and *The Civil War in France*. In these books, which deal particularly with France, Marx and Engels analyse the whole movement of classes in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, culminating in the seizure of power by the working class in the Paris Commune, when the dictatorship of the proletariat was established for the first time and where was discovered the new state form of working class power.

Supplementary to these works are Marx and Engels' *Germany, Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, *The Peasant War in Germany*, *The Revolution in Spain* and *The Civil War in the United States*.

Lenin's new line in the Russian Revolution of 1905 is set forth in his *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, as a supplement to which should be read his *Lecture on 1905*.

Lenin's *Two Tactics* is of very great importance for the student to-day, since it embodied the new line on the tasks of the working class in the democratic revolution, which was carried forward in the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and, to-day, in the Chinese Revolution. Hence the student may well turn to this first.

In the next part, on the Great October Socialist Revolution, we shall see that Lenin showed how the task of completing the bourgeois revolution was finally solved as a by-product of the socialist revolution. In Part 9, on the National and Colonial Question, we shall see how the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the bourgeois-democratic revolution are carried forward in the theory of the national revolution in colonial countries, and in China in particular.

After the triumph of the October Socialist Revolution, Lenin made a trenchant reply to those who raised an outcry that the socialist revolution violated democracy. This reply is

contained above all in two works—*The Deception of the People by Slogans of Freedom and Equality*, and *The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade*. These two books constitute the most essential reading on proletarian as against bourgeois democracy.

The writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the democratic revolution are here presented under three headings:

- A. The Revolutionary Period 1848-71;
- B. The Russian Revolution of 1905;
- C. Proletarian versus Bourgeois Democracy.

It may perhaps be thought that the theory of the bourgeois revolution and of its relation to the socialist revolution is of no more than historical interest to British workers, since the bourgeois revolution took place in Britain a long time ago. It is therefore worth observing that this aspect of Marxism-Leninism is of very immediate importance for us, for at least three reasons.

1. In the period of the general crisis of capitalism, the monopoly capitalists seek to destroy the bourgeois-democratic rights established in the past. We have therefore to understand the necessity of uniting all forces to extend, defend or restore those bourgeois-democratic rights as a condition for the fight for socialism.

2. The dictatorship of the proletariat involves establishing proletarian, socialist democracy, as a higher form of democracy than bourgeois democracy. We have therefore to understand the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy, in order to be able to defend and build socialist democracy; and to understand how the fight for democracy, led by the working class, is crowned by the establishment of socialist democracy, of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

3. The vast revolution which has been victorious in China and is under way in the entire colonial world is in essence a *bourgeois-democratic* revolution, which has the special character of a national revolution directed against foreign imperialism. The immediate revolutionary task in the colonial countries is not immediately to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism, but is to get rid of imperialism and establish national sovereignty and peoples' democratic rule. Without an understanding of the nature and tasks of this revolution we cannot properly render it support or fulfil our own tasks in the fight against imperialism.

A. THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD 1848-71

MARX AND ENGELS s Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League

This address, written in March, 1850, deals with working class strategy and tactics in the revolutionary period 1848 to 1850. It stresses that the task of the working class is:

1. To build independent working class organisation,
2. To fight against all relics of feudalism,
3. To put no trust in the new bourgeois governments,
4. To advance independent working class demands
5. And to arm the workers.

Having advanced together with the bourgeoisie to overthrow the old feudal reaction, the working class must go on to fight against the bourgeoisie for working class power. The aim is to carry on the revolution “until the proletariat has conquered state power.”

Marx and Engels stress in this address the need for an independent working class party with its own firm centralised organisation and carrying on bold public activity; without such

organisation the working class movement must lose its independence and come under bourgeois influence.

The address defines the attitude of the working class to the petty-bourgeois democrats: "It must march together with them against the faction it aims at overthrowing, oppose them in everything whereby they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests."

MARX: The Class Struggles in France 1848-50; The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte; The Civil War in France

These three works by Marx, each of which consists of a collection of articles or addresses, form a series in which he analyses the revolutionary events in France from the Revolution of 1848 to the Paris Commune in 1871.

In his introduction to both *The Eighteenth Brumaire* and *The Civil War in France*, Engels points out that thanks to historical materialism Marx could grasp the character and consequences of great historical events at the time they were still in progress. These works are classical models of how Marxism analyses complicated class relations and class battles at the very time of their occurrence, so as to show the working class the correct policy.

They make not only very instructive, but very exciting reading. Each can be read separately, but they are best read as a series. Thus, *The Eighteenth Brumaire* opens with a summary of the meaning of previous events dealt with in *Class Struggles in France*.

Engels' Introductions to the *Class Struggles in France* and *The Civil War in France* contain a masterly summary of the whole series of events from 1848 to 1871. What were these events?

In February, 1848, the regime of Louis Philippe, the "Bourgeois King," set up when the Bourbons were overthrown in July 1830, was itself overthrown by a mass uprising. The regime of Louis Philippe had represented the "rule of the bankers," of the "aristocracy of finance."¹ After its overthrow, as a result of mass pressure from the workers, a Republic was declared and, to begin with, all the propertied classes shared power. It was the workers who made the February 1848 Revolution, but the first act of the bourgeoisie was to disarm them. The workers resisted and were defeated in the June uprising of 1848. One by one, the classes which had made the revolution lost power: first the industrialists beat the petty-bourgeoisie in June 1849, then they themselves lost to the "aristocracy of finance" who came back in power again.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of these dissensions among the "propertied classes," an adventurer, Louis Bonaparte, a descendent of the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, relying on the support of the masses of the oppressed peasantry, had got himself elected President of the Republic, and by a *coup d'état* in 1851 (known as the "Eighteenth Brumaire") made himself absolute ruler. Shortly afterwards, he established himself as the Emperor Napoleon III. Thus, after disarming the workers who made the 1848 revolution, the bourgeoisie, torn by dissensions, proved unable to rule. Louis Bonaparte and a gang of adventurers seized power. But with Bonaparte's regime, a big industrial development took place in France.

The Bonapartist "Second Empire" lasted until the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. This war was provoked by the territorial ambitions of Bonaparte, who wanted to establish the French frontiers on the Rhine. He was defeated by the Prussians in 1870, his Empire fell, and a "Government of National Defence" was set up.

¹ See Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Part 5, especially chapters 27 and 36.

Meanwhile, the Parisian workers were armed for the defence of Paris. But the Government of “National Defence” was primarily concerned not to defend Paris but to disarm the workers. In January 1871, it capitulated to the Prussians. The Government retired to Versailles. Thereafter, war ensued between the Parisian workers and the Government at Versailles. In March 1871, the Paris workers set up the Paris Commune. It was eventually crushed and the workers massacred by the bourgeois government in Versailles, aided and abetted by the foreign invaders, the Prussians.

Such was the sequence of events analysed by Marx in these writings.

Of particular importance in these three books are:—

1. The analysis of the progress of the revolution from 1848. The driving force of the revolution was the working class, but the revolution put the bourgeoisie in power. The bourgeoisie then turned against the workers, who were isolated and defeated. But in this action the bourgeoisie turned against the revolution itself, deserted the revolution, and themselves proved unable to rule.

2. The biting exposure of petty-bourgeois “social democracy” contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. Marx shows that these “democrats” were under the illusion that their own speeches and declamations in parliament decided events, ignoring the realities of the class struggle. This he called “parliamentary imbecility” or “parliamentary cretinism.” Marx shows concretely how the outlooks and ideas current in society reflect the position of different classes.

3. The exposure in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* of the nature of the bourgeois state, as the organ of capitalist class rule. The triumph of the bourgeois republic, said Marx, led in fact to “unlimited despotism.” He shows that all revolutions had “perfected the state power,” but that the task of the proletarian revolution must be to break it up.¹

4. The analysis of the position of the French peasantry. The peasantry, he shows in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, provided the chief social support on which Louis Bonaparte founded his personal dictatorship. Nevertheless he points out in *The Civil War in France* that the only hope for the mass of the peasantry lay through a workers’ government. Thus Marx and Engels began to deduce the key importance of the workers winning the masses of peasants as allies.²

5. Marx’s treatment of the Franco-Prussian War in *The Civil War in France*. He shows that, to begin with, it was a just war on the side of the Prussians. But he gives a lead to the German workers to oppose the war as soon as Bismarck turned it into a war of aggression.³

6. The analysis of the Paris Commune as “the political form at last discovered to work out the economic emancipation of labour.”

The Commune was the dictatorship of the proletariat. “Do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune, that was the dictatorship of the proletariat.” So wrote Engels in his Introduction.

The Commune proved that the working class cannot “lay hold of the existing state machinery,” but must “smash it” and set up its own power.⁴

¹ See Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*.

² See Engels. *Prefatory Note to Peasant War in Germany, Peasant Question in France and Germany*.

³ Lenin, *Socialism and War, Lecture on War*.

⁴ See Marx, *Letters to Kugelmann* (April 1871); Lenin, *State and Revolution, In Memory of*

Marx and Engels analysed the measures taken by the Commune, and at the same time pointed out its weaknesses and mistakes.

Marx and Engels on Revolutionary Struggles in Germany, Spain and the United States

Besides the three great works in which Marx analysed the revolutionary developments in France, 1848-71, Marx and Engels published a number of works in which the historical materialist method was applied to the study of and leadership of the struggles in the democratic revolution in other countries. Many of these studies were written in the course of Marx's journalistic activities, especially in the course of his regular contributions to the *New York Tribune*. Of these, the following are available in book form in English.

Germany, Revolution and Counter-Revolution, by Marx and Engels

This book, which covers the revolutionary events in Germany in 1851-2, consists of articles contributed at the time to the *New York Tribune*. The revolution was a democratic revolution against feudalism in Germany. The workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie were the classes ranged at the start against the Prussian Monarchy and the rulers of the other German States. In the course of the revolution the bourgeoisie, together with large sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie, went over to reaction; the peasantry became indifferent or hostile; and the working class, left almost alone to fight counterrevolution, was defeated.

The Peasant War in Germany, by Engels

Written in 1850, this book deals with the great German peasant uprising of 1525. Engels' study of the class struggles in the 16th century was designed, however, to shed light on the tasks of the class struggles in the mid-19th century, when the job of finally destroying feudalism in Europe still remained to be completed. We have already referred (Part 5) to Engels' *Prefatory Note* to this book, in which he stressed the importance of building an independent working class party and of rousing the peasants as allies of the working class. "Everything in Germany will depend on whether it will be possible to support the proletarian revolution by something like a second edition of the Peasant War. Only then will everything proceed well," Marx wrote to Engels in 1856.

The Revolution in Spain, by Marx and Engels

This book covers the revolutionary events in Spain, 1854-6, and consists mainly of articles contributed at the time to the *New York Tribune*. An uprising against feudal autocracy in Spain was started in the army and was supported by the workers. The bourgeoisie and army officers deserted the revolution, and the workers were isolated and defeated. This book also contains material concerning Anarchism.

The Civil War in the United States, by Marx and Engels

This book deals with the American Civil War, 1861-5, and consists of articles from the *New York Tribune* and the *Vienna Press*, together with extracts from Marx and Engels' personal correspondence. The Civil War was essentially a further stage of the democratic revolution in the United States, begun in the War of Independence fought against England. For, as Marx and Engels show, the slave-holders and the slave power of the Southern States

the Commune, Lessons of the Commune, Introduction to Russian edition of Marx's letters to Kugelmann.

played a role in the United States equivalent to that of the remnants of feudalism and feudal autocracy in Europe. The revolutionary task in America was to abolish the slave power of the South. Marx and Engels therefore urged the waging of a revolutionary war, the arming of the Negroes and the freeing of the slaves. Lincoln's government at first held back from such measures, while the reactionary powers in Europe, and the British bourgeoisie in particular, sought to aid the Southern States. But the pressure of the American working class proved of decisive importance in securing the introduction of compulsory military service, the edict freeing the slaves, and turning the war into a revolutionary war; while the actions of the British workers prevented capitalist Britain from aiding the slave-holders. The war ended in the defeat of the Southern Slave States.

B. THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1905

LENIN: Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution

This book, which appeared in July 1905, lays down the tactical line of the Bolsheviks in the 1905 Revolution in opposition to the line of the Mensheviks. It deals with the role of the working class in taking the lead in the bourgeois revolution and passing from the bourgeois revolution to the socialist revolution.

In order to understand this book and the tactical line of the Bolsheviks in the 1905 Revolution, the reader should consult the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter III, Section, 3, where the tactical differences between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and the revolutionary policy of the Bolsheviks are fully explained.

The Revolution of 1905 in Russia was essentially a bourgeois democratic revolution. Its task was not to overthrow capitalist rule and establish socialism, but to smash Tsarist absolutism and establish the fullest democracy. The fulfilment of this democratic task was a necessary stage in the advance to the socialist revolution.

On the eve of the 1905 Revolution two opposed lines were put forward in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party:—

The Bolsheviks held that the revolution must be led by the workers in alliance with the peasants. They called for an armed rising to overthrow the Tsarist Government and set up a provisional revolutionary government in which the workers would participate. The liberal bourgeoisie, said the Bolsheviks, aimed at a compromise with the Tsar at the expense of the people, and it was necessary to isolate them.

The Mensheviks, on the other hand, held that the liberal bourgeoisie must be the leader of the bourgeois revolution; that the workers should establish close relations, not with the peasantry, but with the liberal bourgeoisie; and that if it proved possible to set up a provisional revolutionary government, this must be a government of the Liberals, and the workers should not participate in it.

The fundamental tactical principles expounded by Lenin in *Two Tactics of Social Democracy* are as follows:

1. The main tactical principle which runs through the whole book is that the working class must win the leadership of the bourgeois democratic revolution. In order to carry through the revolution, the working class must find an ally, namely, the peasants, and must isolate the liberal bourgeoisie who did not aim at the overthrow of Tsarism but at a compromise.

Here Lenin advanced a new conception of the role of the working class in the bourgeois democratic revolution. In the previous history of bourgeois revolutions, it had been the bourgeoisie which played the leading part; in the new historical situation, Lenin showed that

the working class must become the leading and guiding force of the bourgeois revolution

2. Lenin showed that the most effective means of overthrowing Tsarism and achieving a democratic republic was a people's uprising. The aim must be an uprising which would overthrow Tsarism and set up a provisional revolutionary government. This government would be the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. It would not yet be a socialist government, but the workers should not hesitate to participate in it. Its task would be to crush the counter-revolution and to institute in a revolutionary way such democratic measures as the eight-hour day in the towns and the re-distribution of the land in the countryside.

3. Having achieved the democratic republic, the revolutionary movement would not come to a stop but the workers must then carry the revolution forward to the socialist revolution. Having overthrown autocracy and established a democratic republic in alliance with the whole of the peasantry, the working class would go forward with the mass of the poor peasantry¹ to defeat the bourgeoisie and establish the proletarian dictatorship and socialism.

LENIN: Lecture on the 1905 Revolution

This lecture was delivered by Lenin to an audience of young workers at the People's House, Zurich, Switzerland, in January, 1917. In it he briefly recounts the history of the revolutionary development in Russia from 1905-1907.

He stresses the role of the mass political strike in the 1905 revolution—it was marked by the greatest strike movement ever known, in which strikes beginning on economic issues turned into political strikes against the Tsarist Government—and the formation of Soviets in the course of the mass struggle, which in some cities deposed the local authorities for a period and themselves functioned as organs of workers' power.

He goes on to point out the world significance of the 1905 Revolution as arousing a movement throughout the whole of Asia.

C. PROLETARIAN VERSUS BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

LENIN: The Deception of the People by Slogans of Freedom and Equality

This book, written in 1919, answers those who say that the soviet system violates the principles of democracy, freedom and equality. This argument was used against the soviet system at its very inception, just as it is used to-day.

Dealing with some particular questions arising from the conditions prevailing immediately after the establishment of soviet power in Russia, Lenin sums up the answer to all the arguments which claim that the soviets violate freedom and equality.²

"Freedom" and "democracy" are a fraud unless subordinated to the interests of the emancipation of labour from capital, he declares.

For instance, freedom of meeting is proclaimed in the capitalist democratic countries; but there is no real freedom of meeting for the workers until they have taken away from the capitalists ownership of the halls in which meetings must be held. In a socialist country, there is freedom of meeting for the workers but not for the counter-revolutionaries. To allow freedom of meeting to counter-revolutionaries in a socialist country would be a crime against the working people.

¹ See Stalin, *The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Question*.

² See Stalin, *On the Draft U.S.S.R. Constitution*.

After the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established, Lenin explains, the class struggle continues and assumes sharper forms, so the working class cannot allow freedom to the capitalists and their agents to carry out their struggle to restore capitalism. On the contrary, they abolish such “freedom.”

Similarly, “equality” is a fraud if it is in contradiction to the emancipation of labour from oppression by capital. Real equality means the abolition of classes.¹ To pretend that we should make everyone “equal” in any other sense than abolishing classes is a stupid phrase. In the struggle for socialism, for example, there cannot be equality of rights between the workers and the capitalists.

Talk of freedom and equality “in general” is used as a cover for the fight against socialism. Lenin therefore put stress on the need for discipline and organisation on the part of the working class in the fight for socialism. It is harder to overcome petty-bourgeois looseness and petty-bourgeois ideas, he says, than it is to beat the big capitalists. But without overcoming this, the working class cannot win.²

LENIN: The Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade

This book deals with the central theme of proletarian versus bourgeois democracy and can be read as a supplement to *The State and Revolution*. It was written in 1918 in reply to Karl Kautsky who had denounced the Soviet Government as a “dictatorship.”

Kautsky’s catch-phrase of “democracy versus dictatorship” set the keynote for all subsequent anti-Soviet propaganda, and has been faithfully repeated ever since by all the Right-wing Social Democrats.

Kautsky pretended that the difference between the Social Democrats and the Bolsheviks was the difference of two “methods,” the democratic and the dictatorial. The Social Democrats stood for the “democratic” method, the Bolsheviks for the “dictatorial” method.

Replying to Kautsky, Lenin shows how false it is to speak of democracy “in general.” We must always ask: “democracy for whom?” The question at issue is not between dictatorship and democracy but between proletarian democracy and bourgeois democracy, between the rule of the working class and the rule of the bourgeoisie.

So long as classes exist, Lenin shows, there can be no “pure” democracy. Lenin exposes in detail how bourgeois democracy is in reality the rule of the capitalists and how the soviets represent the rule of the working class, that is, of the vast majority. “Proletarian democracy,” he says, “is many times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy.” He proves this by detailed references to the political system in the Soviet Union³ and in the bourgeois democratic countries.

Answering Kautsky’s charge about dictatorial methods, Lenin shows that the rule of the working class, i.e. of the vast majority, demands the suppression of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin showed that the attempt to confine the political action of the working class within the framework of the bourgeois democratic state means betraying the cause of the working class.⁴

¹ See Engels, *Anti-Dühring*.

² See Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism*.

³ See Lenin, *Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution, Can the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?; Stalin, Report to the 15th Congress C.P.S.U.(B), On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.*

⁴ See Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

The latter chapters of this book deal with: the first Soviet Constitution and the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly; the tactics of the working class in imperialist war; the development of the Russian Revolution from the bourgeois democratic to the proletarian revolution, analysing the policy of the Bolsheviks and the development of the alliance between the workers and peasants.

7. THE GREAT OCTOBER¹ SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia marked a turning-point in world history. The working people came to power, and began to end exploitation of man by man.

The first breach was made in the chain of world imperialism. The era of proletarian revolution began. At the same time the October Revolution, liberating the oppressed nations throughout a vast state, gave a gigantic impetus to the national revolution throughout the colonial world.

The Great October Socialist Revolution was carried out under the undivided leadership of the Communist Party, which was able to rally the masses of all the exploited people behind the working class, and to isolate the compromising parties.

It marked the victory of revolutionary Marxism over reformism. It showed that the right-wing social democrats belong to the camp of defenders of capitalism, and that it is impossible to end capitalism without ending opportunism in the working class movement.

The Revolution proved that in carrying out a socialist revolution and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the working class must win as allies, and lead, all the exploited people, and in particular the working peasants. The dictatorship of the proletariat is therefore a class alliance between the proletariat and the working peasantry, led by the proletariat.

The victory of the October Revolution proved moreover that socialism can be built in a single country.

The Great October Socialist Revolution marked the rise of proletarian democracy, an entirely new type of state in which the working people themselves directly participate in building up their own state life from top to bottom.

It showed, finally, that when the big capitalists and landlords are routed, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is established, elements of capitalism will still remain. A fully socialist economy cannot be created at a single blow. There must follow a more or less lengthy period during which the remaining elements of capitalism are eliminated, and the victory of socialism is organised throughout the entire economy.

The works dealt with here are presented under three heads:—

A. The character and world significance of the October Revolution.

B. The preparation for October.

C. After the conquest of power—War Communism, and the New Economic Policy.

The basic reading consists of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)* Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

For the explanation of the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat the student should also refer to *Foundations of Leninism* (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), *On the Problems of Leninism, State and Revolution*, *Left Wing Communism* and *Two Tactics of Socialist Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*.

On the character and world significance of the October Revolution the student should first refer to Stalin's *The International Character of the October Revolution* and the *October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*.

¹ The Soviet Government carried out a reform of the old Russian calendar. The revolution took place in October according to the old style. This is why the revolution celebrated on November 7th is called the October Revolution. Similarly the overthrow of the Tsar took place in February old style, March new style.

On the nature of proletarian democracy and the mass character of the new state the most important reading consists of Lenin's *Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution* and *Can the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?* which should be read in conjunction with Lenin's *Deception of the People by Slogans of Freedom and Equality*, and *Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade*, dealt with above in Part 6 (C) and Stalin's *Report to 15th Congress of C.P.S.U.(B)*, dealt with in Part 8 below.

On the nature of socialist state industry and the economic tasks in the transition period, the most important reading is *The Impending Catastrophe*, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, and *The Tax in Kind*.

These should be studied in conjunction with *The Communist Manifesto*, Chapter 2; Engels' *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, Chapter 3; and the section on the internal situation of the U.S.S.R. in Stalin's *Report to the 14th Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B)*.

The lessons of the Great October Socialist Revolution have been verified and carried forward in the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe which arose after World War II. On the nature of People's Democracy the reader should consult the booklet *Peoples Democracy* containing reports by Hilary Minc, G. Dimitrov and others.

The People's Democratic States in Eastern Europe fulfil the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the same time they have verified Lenin's statement that "the transition from capitalism to socialism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms."

A. THE CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

STALIN: The International Character of the October Revolution

In this statement, made on the Tenth Anniversary of October, Stalin points out that the October Revolution signified a radical turn in world history from the old capitalist world to the new socialist world. Past revolutions had only replaced one exploiting class by another, but the aim of the October Revolution was not to substitute one form of exploitation by another, but to abolish all exploitation of man by man.¹ Therefore, the October Revolution was a revolution of an international world order.

1. It made a breach in the system of imperialism. For the first time the class of the oppressed and exploited rose to the position of ruling class. The revolution converted the instruments and means of production into public property, destroyed the old state apparatus, established the power of the working class and began to build the new socialist system. Thus it began a new era, the era of proletarian revolutions.

2. The October Revolution emancipated all the oppressed nations of a vast state. For the first time oppressed nations rose to the position of nations really free and really equal. Hence the October Revolution also began the era of colonial revolutions being conducted in the oppressed countries of the world in alliance with the proletariat and under the leadership of the proletariat.

3. Having sowed the seed of revolution both in the centres of imperialism and in its colonial rear, the October Revolution jeopardised the very existence of world capitalism as a whole. With the October Revolution the era of the collapse of capitalism began.

4. The October Revolution was also a revolution in the minds, in the ideology of the working class. It marked a victory of Marxism over reformism, of Leninism over social

¹ See *The Communist Manifesto*.

democratism. It proved that “it is impossible to bring an end to capitalism without bringing an end to social democratism in the Labour Movement.”

STALIN: The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists

The edge of Stalin’s argument in this book, written in 1925 as the preface to a collection of articles entitled *The Road, to October*, is directed against Trotsky. It contains not only a summary of the principal lessons of October but also a devastating polemic against the Trotskyists.¹

What are the principal lessons which Stalin brings out in this book?

1. The dictatorship of the proletariat was established on the basis of an alliance between the working class and the masses of the working peasantry, led by the working class. The dictatorship is therefore a class alliance between the proletariat and the working peasantry, led by the proletariat.

Its victory was made possible because the peasants were won to the side of the workers.²

2. The dictatorship of the proletariat was established in the October Revolution as a result of the victory of the proletariat in one country alone, while capitalism was preserved in other countries.³

3. The revolution was carried through under the undivided leadership of one party, the Bolshevik Party.

4. In leading the revolution, the party succeeded in isolating the compromising parties.⁴

5. In leading the revolution, the party was able to transform its slogans into slogans of the masses themselves. The masses became convinced that these slogans were right through their own experience.

6. The October Revolution was the first breach in the system of imperialism, and therefore a first stage in the world revolution.

LENIN: The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution

In this article Lenin deals with the character and tasks of the October Revolution considered from the point of view of the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution and the passage from the bourgeois democratic revolution to the socialist revolution. This article therefore ties up with his analysis of the tasks of the Russian Revolution in *The Two Tactics of Social Democracy*.

Lenin shows that the October Revolution, carried through under the leadership of the working class, had consummated completely and fully the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia, i.e. it had eliminated completely and at one blow all remnants of medievalism, serfdom, feudalism. But this task of carrying through and completing the bourgeois democratic revolution was solved as a by-product of the proletarian socialist revolution.

The soviet system, he concludes, marks the rise of a new type of democracy, i.e. proletarian democracy or the dictatorship of the proletariat, and it ushers in a new era in world history, the rule of a new class.

The important task which remained after the victory of the October Revolution was that of economic construction, to lay the economic foundations of a new socialist edifice. This meant

¹ See Stalin, *Reports to 15th and 16th Congresses of C.P.S.U.(B)*.

² See Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

³ See Lenin, *United States of Europe Slogan*.

⁴ See Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism*; Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

advancing from small peasant production to socialism.

LENIN: Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

This article deals with the problems of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transition period between capitalism and communism. It was written in 1919, and explains that between capitalism and communism there lies a transition period which is a period of struggle between communism, which is rising and growing, and capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed. This is the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹

Remnants of capitalism survive throughout this whole period. There are present in it, therefore, three quite distinct and basic forms of social economy:

1. Capitalism;
2. Petty commodity production which continually breeds capitalism; and
3. Socialism.

And the basic class forces in operation are therefore the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie including the peasants, and the working class.

Lenin points out that the October Revolution in Russia achieved at one blow the expropriation of the big landowners and capitalists. At one blow, therefore, the working people were emancipated from age-old oppression. But when the big landowners and capitalists were defeated, petty commodity production and remnants of capitalism still remained.²

This ties up with a point which Lenin had already stressed in his report *On the Party Programme* at the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in March 1919. He there pointed out that monopoly capitalism and imperialism is not an entirely new social organisation which supplants the old capitalism, but that the monopolies grow up from and impose themselves upon the system of commodity production and exchange and free competition. If the big capitalists and bankers are eliminated, the old capitalism rooted in the system of: commodity production and exchange still remains. Such was the position in Russia after the defeat of the big capitalists and bankers by the October Revolution.

Having defeated the big bourgeoisie and the landowners, therefore, the task still remained to advance to the abolition of classes.

This could only be a long process involving the reconstruction of the whole national economy and the transition from individual petty commodity production to large-scale socialist enterprise.

Classes remain and will remain in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The class struggle does not die away under the dictatorship of the proletariat, but assumes different forms.

B. THE PREPARATION FOR OCTOBER:

March—November, 1917

Lenin made many speeches and wrote many articles and pamphlets in the period of preparation and carrying out of the Great October Socialist Revolution. A selection of these is published in the two-volume edition of *Lenin's Selected Works (The Essentials of Lenin)* Vol. II, and in the 12-volume edition, Vol. VI. We cannot deal with all these writings here, but only

¹ See Marx, *Critique of Gotha Programme*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*.

² See Lenin, *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government, Left-Wing Communism*.

with a few of the most important. For an explanation of this whole period the reader should consult the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter VI, Section 5 and Chapter VII, Sections 1– 6.

LENIN: Letters from Afar

These letters were written from abroad immediately after the March Revolution of 1917. In that revolution the Tsarist Autocracy was overthrown by a mass uprising, and soviets were set up. In the soviets the compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, obtained a majority and approved the formation of a provisional government of representatives of the capitalists and landowners.

In *Letters from Afar* Lenin shows that three fundamental political forces were operating in the March Revolution:

1. The Tsarist monarchy,
2. The capitalists and landowners, with the petty-bourgeoisie following in their wake,
3. The soviets of workers' and soldiers' deputies.

After the fall of the Tsarist monarchy the capitalist landowners and bourgeoisie rose to power; but alongside their power was another, that of the workers and poor peasants represented by the soviets. The soviets, said Lenin, were a workers' government in embryo. A condition of dual power existed.

The working people wanted peace, land, bread and freedom, but the capitalist government could never give them this. The workers' path was to wrest power from the landowners and capitalists. For this they had two allies: (a) the small peasants and semi-proletarian masses generally, (b) the working classes in the warring countries. Hand in hand with these allies they must win a democratic republic and the victory of the peasants over the landowners, and then go on to win socialism.¹

LENIN: Two Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution; The April Theses;

The April Conference

On arrival in Russia on April 5, 1917, Lenin presented his famous April Theses, in which he summed up the tasks of the revolution. The April Theses were ten in number and may be summarised as follows:

1. It is impossible to end the war by a just democratic peace without the overthrow of capitalism.
2. There is taking place a transition from the first stage of the revolution, which placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to the second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and poor peasants.
3. No support for the Provisional Government.
4. The Bolsheviks must work for a majority in the soviets and to transfer state power to the soviets.
5. Not a parliamentary, but a soviet republic.
6. Confiscation of landed estates and nationalisation of the land.
7. A single national bank controlled by the soviets.
8. Control of all production and distribution by the soviets.
9. A party congress.
10. A new International.

In his pamphlet *The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution*, published in April 1917,

¹ See Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*.

Lenin explained in a popular form the fundamental ideas of the April Theses. The bourgeoisie, he says, has developed in history two methods of rule, (a) by violence and (b) by deception. The Provisional Government is at present using the second method, and the immediate task is to develop a campaign of patient explanation of the real situation to the people.

In discussing the future transfer of power to the soviets and the soviet republic, Lenin declares that what is required is a new type of state, "a state of the Paris Commune type," in which the masses directly participate in the "democratic up-building of their own state life from top to bottom."

Lenin calls for an agrarian programme in the interest of the peasants, the nationalisation of the land and the confiscation of estates. The peasants, he says, must be urged to confiscate the landlords' lands on their own initiative. All the banks must be amalgamated into one national bank under the control of the soviets, and the capitalist trusts and combines must be nationalised.

In his speeches at the April Conference of the Bolsheviks, which took place at the end of April (or beginning of May new style) and which are published in the volume *The April Conference*, Lenin again works over the line of the April Theses.

LENIN: The Impending Catastrophe

This pamphlet (which is sometimes called *The Threatening Catastrophe*) was written in September 1917, at a time when the military and economic situation of Russia had already rapidly worsened under the rule of the Provisional Government, which had turned to a policy of open repression. It is of fundamental importance in that it deals with nationalisation measures as a means of combating economic chaos and as a step to socialism.

To meet the catastrophic economic situation Lenin calls for the nationalisation of the banks and of big industrial concerns.

Such nationalisation, he declares, will only be effective if it is carried out by a workers' government. And nationalisation measures, carried out by a workers' government, are *socialist* measures.

State monopoly capitalism, such as is created by capitalist nationalisation, is the fullest material preparation for socialism. There is no intermediate stage. If the workers take over, then nationalised banks and industries are socialist banks and industries.¹

Calling for these steps to be taken by a workers' government, Lenin declares that Russia must in the future either overtake and surpass the advanced capitalist countries or perish.

LENIN: Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?

This pamphlet was written on the eve of October, when the Bolsheviks had already won a majority in the soviets. It answers those who said that the Bolsheviks could not form a government.

It is of great importance in bringing out what workers' power really is, on what it is based and how it has to act.²

¹ See Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; Lenin, *Left-Wing Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*; Stalin, *Report to 14th Congress C.P.S.U.(B)*.

² See Marx, *Critique of Gotha Programme, Civil War in France*; Lenin, *State and Revolution, Proletarian Revolution and Kautsky the Renegade, Deception of the People, Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism, On the Problems of Leninism, Report to 15th Congress C.P.S.U.(B)*.

Lenin stresses that the workers must destroy everything oppressive in the old state apparatus. Millions of working people must be drawn into the administration of the state.

The main immediate tasks would be to give land to the peasants, liberate the oppressed nations, propose a just peace to end the imperialist war, and establish workers' control over the whole of production and distribution as well as to take over the entire banking system.¹

LENIN: Marxism and Insurrection

In a letter to the Central Committee at the end of September 1917, Lenin deals with the problems of organising an insurrection. He lays down three necessary conditions:

1. An insurrection must depend, not on a conspiracy nor yet on a party, but on the advanced class;
2. It must constitute a revolutionary rising of the people;
3. It must be timed to occur when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is greatest, and when the wavering among the enemy and among weak and indecisive friends of the revolution is also greatest.

In conjunction with this letter should be read Lenin's article *The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising*, written in 1906 and dealing with the lessons of the defeat of the uprising in Moscow in December 1905. Lenin concludes that for a successful uprising it is necessary:

1. To carry on the widest agitation among the masses;
2. To conduct a real fight to win over the troops;
3. To take the offensive;
4. To employ tactics of guerrilla warfare.

On the latter point should be read Lenin's article *Partisan Warfare*, also written in 1906.

C. AFTER THE CONQUEST OF POWER—WAR COMMUNISM AND THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

A selection of Lenin's articles and speeches in this period (which included *Kautsky the Renegade* and *Left-Wing Communism*), is contained in Vol. II of the two-volume edition of *Lenin's Selected Works*, and in Vols. VIII and IX of the twelve-volume edition. For an explanation of this whole period the student should consult *The History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter VII, Sections 7 and 8, and Chapters VIII and IX.

LENIN: Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government

This was written in April 1918, soon after the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace. Lenin points out that having expropriated the big capitalists, the workers must learn how to organise socialist production and administer society.

Socialism could not be introduced at a single blow, and many elements of the old society remained. It was necessary to introduce state regulation of them. The immediate task was to raise labour productivity, secure the better organisation of labour, introduce strict and universal accounting and control of the whole of production and distribution.

This point was taken up a month later in "Left-Wing" *Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*, where, after stressing how much the Russian workers needed the "respite" of the Brest peace, Lenin calls for the development of state capitalism as a means of combating the profiteering of private capitalism. When state power is in the workers' hands, state capitalism,

¹ See *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.

i.e. state regulation of capitalist production and trade, leads straight to socialism ¹

Dealing with the question of “personal dictatorship,” Lenin says that discipline and unity of will can only be realised by vesting authority in individuals. At the same time, the democratic organisations of the soviets must be strengthened. The soviets are organisations of the people, who must participate more and more in their work.

Lenin concludes by condemning all petty-bourgeois moods of panic and alarm. “Fits of hysteria are of no use to us. What we need is the steady march of the iron battalions of the proletariat.”

The Civil War and Intervention

The respite gained by the Brest peace did not last long. The Soviet Government had soon to face the civil war and war of intervention. In his writings of this period Lenin stressed above all the following:

1. The carrying through of the slogan “Everything for the front!”;
2. Building an alliance of the working class with the middle peasants;
3. Mobilising millions of workers and peasants against profiteers and speculators;
4. Strict revolutionary discipline;
5. Selfless work of socialist construction.

In this connection, Lenin’s article *A Great Beginning* dealt with the tasks of the organisation of “subotniks,” i.e. the voluntary organisation of spare-time work. He saw in the subotniks the beginnings of the new communist attitude to labour. This article contains Lenin’s scientific definition of classes:

“Classes are large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and consequently by the dimensions of and method of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose.”

After the military defeat of the White Guards and Interventionists, counter-revolution did not give up the struggle. Defeated in open warfare, they began to seek means to overthrow the working people’s power from within. Here Lenin’s *Draft Resolutions for the 10th Party Congress* (March, 1921) are of very great importance.² He points out that the defeated bourgeoisie inevitably takes advantage of factions within the working-class party, by supporting “left” factions and trying to secure the transfer of power to such groups, as a means towards the subsequent complete victory of the counter-revolution.

These formulations by Lenin need to be studied in the light of the subsequent tactics of the reactionaries on an international scale, especially their support of Titoism to-day.

The New Economic Policy

For a general account of the New Economic Policy the reader should consult the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter 9.

Lenin summed up the nature and significance of the N.E.P. in his *Report on the Tactics of the Russian Communist Party* presented to the 3rd Congress of the Communist International in June 1921. After dealing with the international position of the new soviet republic, he points to the crucial importance of establishing a firm alliance between the workers and the

¹ See Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe*; Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

² See *History of C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapter 9.

peasants of Russia. It was urgently necessary to improve the conditions of the peasants and increase their productive forces, and for this purpose the former surplus appropriations system was replaced by a tax in kind. This would give the peasant an economic incentive, but it meant freedom to trade and so freedom for a certain development of capitalism. There was no need to be afraid of this, however, so long as banks, transport and large-scale industry remained in the hands of the workers' state. A certain development of capitalism, regulated and controlled by the workers' state, was advantageous, since it would hasten the immediate revival of peasant farming. This task was to develop socialist industry, as a result of which it would become possible to supply the peasants with the requirements necessary to advance by gradual stages to large-scale collectivised and mechanised agriculture.

Lenin's article *The Tax in Kind*, published in May 1921, is likewise of fundamental importance in presenting the New Economic Policy. (This article is given the title *The Food Tax* in Vol. 9 of the 12-volume *Selected Works*.) After explaining the foundations of N.E.P., Lenin stressed that it was impossible to create socialism all at one blow. Small commodity production and private trade must remain in being and even be encouraged to grow for a time. But with state power in the hands of the workers, the task was to regulate and direct such capitalist production and trade. State control, supervision and accounting were of paramount importance.¹

The principles of N.E.P. were further explained by Lenin in two speeches in October 1921.

In his speech on *The New Economic Policy and the Tasks of the Political Education Departments* Lenin described N.E.P. as a strategic retreat, allowing individual peasant production to develop together with a certain revival of capitalism. It posed the fundamental question—Who will win, capitalism or the Soviet State? The task was to win the mass of the peasantry to follow the working class, and to “keep the bridle on the capitalists,” making their activities subordinate to the state and of service to the state.

In his speech on *The New Economic Policy* to a Moscow District Party Conference, Lenin said that while in the period of war communism the attempt was made to take the fortress of capitalism by assault, it was necessary to retire a little so as to gather strength to resume the offensive.

A year later, in the *Political Report of the Central Committee to the 11th Party Congress* in March 1922, Lenin stressed that the retreat had already ended and that the task was to regroup the forces for a new offensive against capitalism. The main task of N.E.P. was to establish a bond between the individual economy of the peasants and the socialist economy of the nationalised industries. To strengthen this bond it was above all necessary for communists to learn how to conduct business and trade.

In the opening sections of this report he dealt with relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist countries, stressing that they wanted to develop peaceful trade relations with the capitalist world, and would succeed in doing so.

LENIN: On Co-operation

This article, published in *Pravda*, 1923, deals with co-operation as a vital factor for organising millions of small producers to take part in building socialism.

The schemes of early co-operators for building the “Co-operative Commonwealth” were

¹ See Lenin, *Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.

utopian, because they dreamed of transforming capitalism into socialism simply by expanding the co-operatives. Socialism cannot be established without class struggle and the conquest of power. But when power is in the hands of the workers, then the cooperatives do become a vital factor in building socialism.

LENIN: The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions under N.E.P.

This article, published in January 1922, sums up Lenin's teachings about the role of the trade unions in the period of the New Economic Policy.

The trade unions are mass organisations of the working class, uniting party and non-party workers, whose task is to protect the interests of the working people and to help raise their standard of living.

Trade union membership must be voluntary and members must not be required to subscribe to any political views. All that is required is that members should understand comradely discipline and the necessity of uniting the workers' forces to protect the interests of the working people and to assist the working people's government.

The trade unions do not participate in management, but they do train and nominate workers for managerial positions, assist the planning organisations, and negotiate wage scales.

In socialist enterprises the trade unions must work to secure agreed settlement of any disputes between workers and management, effectively protecting the interests of the masses of the workers in all respects.

The student should also consult Lenin's speeches *The Trade Unions* and *Once Again on the Trade Unions* published in Vol. IX of the 12-volume Selected Works. It may be noted that *Once Again on the Trade Unions* contains most valuable material about the Marxist dialectical method.

LENIN: The Tasks of the Youth Leagues

This speech, delivered at the Young Communist League Congress in 1920, contains Lenin's account of communist ethics. Communist ethics is entirely subordinate to the working-class struggle, and it serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour.¹

Lenin stressed that the task of building communism belonged to the new generation, and that the job of the young Communists was to learn how to build communism.

This means much more than simply "learning communism" out of books. Learning must be combined with practical tasks.

But it also means that the youth must learn to assimilate the knowledge established in past society. Communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge. Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of knowledge acquired in capitalist and pre-capitalist society, fully assimilated all that earlier science had produced and critically reshaped it. Only by knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind, and by reshaping this culture, can we build communist culture.

¹ See Engels, *Anti-Dühring*.

8. THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN THE U.S.S.R.

INTRODUCTION

The building of a socialist society in the U.S.S.R. was in the main completed by 1936, when this achievement was given legislative form in the Stalin Constitution of the U.S.S.R.

All exploitation of man by man was abolished.

The last exploiting class was eliminated, and there remained two friendly classes of Soviet society, the workers and peasants.

A great socialist industry had been built, and the U.S.S.R. transformed from a backward agrarian country into an advanced industrial country.

Socialist large-scale collective farms had been established, making use of modern agricultural machinery and science.

The material and cultural standards of the workers and peasants had risen and continued to rise. New people had come into being, a new working class which had never known exploitation, a new collective farm peasantry, a new socialist intelligentsia.

With the completion of the edifice of socialist society there began the transition from socialism to communism in the U.S.S.R.

The U.S.S.R. became a great world power, having defeated the efforts of both external and internal enemies to prevent the building of socialism. The U.S.S.R. adopted and adopts a consistent policy of peace.

The basic reading on the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is *The History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapters 9, 10, 11 and 12. And next the student should turn to Stalin's *Report on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.*

In this part there are presented some of the principal works of Stalin on the building of socialism:

A. His reports to Party Congresses,

B. His various articles and speeches included in the volume *Problems of Leninism*.

The latter are here classified according as they deal with:—

1. The alliance of the workers and peasants.
2. The Right danger and Trotskyism.
3. The Socialist offensive.
4. Socialist labour.

Out of all this material the new reader is advised to turn *first* to the following:—

Speech at the First All Union Conference of Collective Farm Shock Workers, Address to Graduates from the Red Army Academy, Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites, and the Reports to the 17th and 18th Party Congresses.

On the Soviet peace policy the student should turn to the sections on international relations in Stalin's Congress Reports. And in this connection reference should be made also to Lenin's *Report to the 11th Congress*.

Of fundamental importance in all these writings of Stalin is the application of the dialectical method:—taking into account the given stage of development and determining policy accordingly, and insistence on the role of criticism and self-criticism.

A. STALIN'S REPORTS TO PARTY CONGRESSES

STALIN: **Report to 14th Congress, C.P.S.U.(B) (1925)**

Report to 15th Congress, C.P.S.U.(B) (1927)

Report to 16th Congress, C.P.S.U.(B) (1930)**Report to 17th Congress, C.P.S.U.(B) (1934)****Report to 18th Congress, C.P.S.U.(B) (1939)**

Tremendous material for study is contained in these Reports, which should be read in conjunction with Chapters 9 – 12 of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*. In them we can follow right through the whole Stalinist policy of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. Besides this, the Reports unfold the development of the general crisis of capitalism in the period up to the second World War. They expound Soviet foreign policy. And they contain material of fundamental importance developing Marxist-Leninist teachings about the Party.

Each of the five Reports is divided into three parts: (1) The International Situation; (2) The Internal Affairs of the U.S.S.R.; (3) The Party.

What are the chief contents of the reports, under each of these headings?

1. *The International Situation*

The period 1925-39, covered by the five Congresses, opened with the dying down of the revolutionary wave which followed the 1914-18 war and with the partial stabilisation of capitalism. It saw the beginning of the world economic crisis in 1929, Japan's attack on Manchuria, Italian fascism's aggression in Abyssinia, Hitler's rise to power, the fascist aggression in Spain, the great intensification of the danger of war and fascism.

In the Reports, Stalin follows closely the development of international relations and elaborates the firm peace policy of the Soviet Union.

The General Crisis of Capitalism

In the *14th Congress Report* he gives a detailed analysis of what was meant by the "stabilisation of capitalism," and he shows that this "stabilisation" was insecure and was bound to lead in the near future to renewed crisis, fraught with the danger of new wars.

In this Report, and again at the *15th Congress*, Stalin demonstrates that the capitalist world was torn by insoluble contradictions—between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; between the imperialists and the colonial peoples; between the imperialists themselves; and between the capitalist world and the land of the Soviets.

At the *15th Congress*, and more explicitly at the *16th Congress* he explains that with the First World War and the Russian Revolution capitalism had entered into a phase of *general crisis*. The general crisis of capitalism, which began during the period of the imperialist war, is, he says, undermining the very foundations of capitalism. The principal features of the *general crisis* are:

(a) Capitalism no longer represents the sole and all-embracing system of world economy; side by side with capitalism there exists the socialist system.

(b) The authority of imperialism has been undermined in the colonial and dependent countries, and it is no longer able to order affairs as of old in these countries.

(c) In the colonial and dependent countries there has appeared their own young capitalism, which competes in the markets with the old capitalist countries, sharpening and complicating the struggle for markets.

(d) In the capitalist countries there exists chronic under-employment of productive resources and permanent unemployment.

Peaceful Coexistence of Socialism and Capitalism

He affirms that the basis of Soviet foreign policy is *to preserve peace and establish friendly diplomatic and trade relations with all countries.*

At both the 14th and 15th Congresses he emphatically asserts that Soviet policy is based on the maintenance of peaceful coexistence between capitalist and socialist countries.

“Our relations with the capitalist countries are based on the assumption that the coexistence of two opposite systems is possible. Practice has fully confirmed this.”

(15th Congress)

Nature and Causes of Capitalist Crisis

At the 16th Congress, meeting in 1930, when the capitalist world was already plunged into new world economic crisis, Stalin lays bare the character of the crisis as a crisis of over-production, and clearly states its nature and causes. In this Congress Report the reader will find a definition, classic in its depth and simplicity, of the nature and causes of capitalist economic crisis.¹

Stalin then goes on to analyse in detail the special circumstances which made the capitalist crisis which broke out in 1929 a world crisis of exceptional depth and severity. He shows how it intensified all the contradictions of capitalism, and inevitably led to the attempt to solve the contradictions by organising new armed assaults against the U.S.S.R.

Soviet Union's Consistent Peace Policy

In face of this situation, Stalin reaffirms the consistent peace policy of the Soviet Union.

“Our policy is a policy of peace and of strengthening trading relations with all countries.... We do not want a single foot of foreign territory, but we shall not give up a single inch of our own territory either to anyone. That is our foreign policy.”

Four years later, at the 17th Congress, he analysed the further development of the economic crisis and of the war danger, and again concluded:

“Our foreign policy is clear. It is a policy of preserving peace and strengthening commercial relations with all countries. The U.S.S.R. does not think of threatening anybody, let alone attacking anybody. We stand for peace and champion the cause of peace. But we are not afraid of threats and are prepared to answer blow for blow against the instigators of war. Those who want peace and are striving for peaceful intercourse with us will always receive our support, and those who try to attack our country will receive a stunning rebuff to teach them not to poke their pig's snout into our Soviet garden.”

With regard to the relations of the Soviet Union with particular capitalist countries, Stalin declares:

“Our orientation in the past and our orientation at the present time is towards the U.S.S.R. and towards the U.S.S.R. alone, and if the interests of the U.S.S.R. demand rapprochement with this or that country which is not interested in disturbing peace, we shall take this step without hesitation.”

Early in 1939, at the 18th Congress, Stalin showed that a bloc of three aggressor states, Germany, Italy and Japan, had been formed, and that a new imperialist war for the re-division of the world had already begun. Yet in face of fascist aggression, the non-aggressor states, headed by Britain, France and the U.S.A., were adopting a policy of non-intervention and making concession after concession to the aggressors. Their aim was to try to turn the aggressors against the U.S.S.R. But Stalin warned that this “big and dangerous political game” would “end in a serious fiasco for them.”

¹ See Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*.

As we know, this “fiasco” came to pass soon afterwards. The study of the sections of these Reports dealing with international affairs is essential for understanding the nature of the general crisis of capitalism and of the peace policy of the Soviet Union.

2. Internal Affairs of the U.S.S.R.

The period covered by the five Congress Reports was the period of the successful construction of socialism in the U.S.S.R. While the capitalist world plunged into crisis, miracles of peaceful socialist construction were carried out in the Soviet Union.

Socialist Industrialisation

The 14th Congress, held in 1925, takes us back to the period when the Soviet people had only barely restored the immense damage done by the war of intervention, when agricultural production was still organised on a backward individual peasant basis, and when the Soviet Union still possessed very little heavy industry.

The task which Stalin posed was the task of socialist industrialisation—to expand socialist industry and to build adequate reserves so as to make the U.S.S.R. a self-reliant, independent socialist country.¹

In the Congress Reports we can see how, in posing this task, Stalin and the Party fought against and routed the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin opposition.

In presenting the task of socialist industrialisation, Stalin shows how the share of state socialist industry in the national economy must be made to grow from year to year. At the same time, at both the 14th and 15th Congresses, he deals at length with the task of strengthening the alliance of the workers and peasants, and at the 15th Congress he already outlines the task of building collective farm agriculture.²

The task of building socialist industry and agriculture entails, he says, the effort continually to improve the material conditions of the working people, and to strengthen the Soviet State, as the state of the working people.

“Wherein lies the strength of our State apparatus?... In that it links the State power with the millions of workers and peasants through the Soviets.... In that the State apparatus does not set up a barrier between itself and the vast masses of the people but merges with them through an incredible number of mass organisations....”

In the 14th Congress Report we should also note a very important passage in which Stalin points out the difference between state *socialist* industry and *state capitalism*.

In state capitalist enterprises, he says, “there are two classes” and “production is carried on for the profit of the capitalist.” But Soviet state enterprises, on the other hand, are socialist enterprises. “Why? Because in them are represented not two classes but one class, the working class, which through its state owns the instruments and means of production and is not exploited.”

This passage sums up the difference between socialist and capitalist nationalisation of industry.³

¹ See Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe, Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government*; Stalin, *Address to Graduates of Red Army Academies*.

² See Engels, *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*. Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*.

³ See Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe, Left-Wing Childishness and Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*.

The Victory of Socialism

At the 16th Congress in 1930, when the First Five Year Plan was already in its third year, Stalin called for a “socialist offensive along the whole front,” in order once and for all to eliminate the remains of capitalism in the U.S.S.R.¹ Just as the Reports at the 14th and 15th Congresses dealt devastating blows against the Trotskyists, so the 16th Congress dealt a devastating blow against the Rights.

By 1934, at the 17th Congress, Stalin could point out that a radical transformation of the U.S.S.R. had been achieved:² from an agrarian into an industrial country; from small-scale individual agriculture to collective large-scale mechanised agriculture; from an uncultured country into a cultured country. Capitalist economy had been liquidated. Individual peasant economy occupied a secondary position as compared with socialist collective farming. Socialism had achieved unchallenged predominance and had become the sole commanding force of the national economy. All exploitation of man by man had ended. Unemployment was a thing of the past. Socialist trade was expanding and standards of life were rising.

In 1939, at the 18th Congress, Stalin could say that the socialist reconstruction of the whole of industry and agriculture on the basis of modern technique was completed.³ The U.S.S.R. had become technically the most advanced country in the world. Stalin pointed to the new rise in the material and cultural standards of the people, the abolition of all antagonistic classes, and the strengthening of the moral and political unity of the Soviet people.

Dealing with the future tasks of socialist construction, he pointed out, however, that the U.S.S.R. still lagged behind the advanced capitalist countries economically, i.e. in output per head of population. The long-term task was to outstrip the capitalist countries also in this respect.

3. *The Party*

A number of questions concerning the strengthening of the party, its policy and organisation, the struggle against right and “left” deviations, and fundamental questions of Marxist theory are dealt with in the sections of the Congress Reports devoted to the party.

The Party and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

At the 14th Congress Stalin emphasised the role of the party in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The party, he says, is not the state, but is the *guiding* force in the state. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not exercised by the party, but is exercised under the party’s guidance and is not possible without the party. The party does not dictate, but it leads.

Defects in Party Work

At the 15th Congress he sharply called attention to certain defects in party work. (a) “Family methods” of settling questions, in place of open criticism and self-criticism. (b) Administrative methods in party work instead of methods of persuasion. (c) Working without political perspective.

The Rout of Trotskyism

The 15th Congress was a Congress of sharp struggle against the Trotskyist opposition, and

¹ See Stalin, *A Year of Great Change, Problems of Agrarian Policy, The Policy of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class*.

² See Stalin, *The Results of the First Five-Year Plan*.

³ See Stalin, *On the Draft Constitution of U.S.S.R.*

in his Report Stalin summarised in detail the main questions on which Trotskyism opposed the party.¹

After the utter rout of the Trotskyists which followed, Stalin very concisely summed up at the 16th Congress the essence of the Trotskyist "platform." The Trotskyists denied the possibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union, they denied that the peasants could be drawn into socialist construction, and they demanded freedom for factional anti-party groupings within the Communist Party.²

The Rout of the Right Deviation

The 16th Congress was a Congress of struggle against the right deviation. Bukharin and the other right oppositionists, said Stalin, were putting forward the theory that the class struggle was peacefully dying out, and that it was not necessary to take the offensive against the remaining capitalist elements in order to build socialism.³

Both the right and the "left" deviations, Stalin emphasised, represented the pressure of hostile classes. He likewise dealt with hostile influences which were manifesting themselves on the national question.⁴ What was not known at that time, but was revealed in the trials which subsequently took place, was that the leaders of all these right, "left" and nationalist tendencies were working in close and secret concert with foreign imperialists, for the purpose of securing the destruction of the soviet system and the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. Their various "platforms" were not platforms of principle, not genuine expressions of policy, but were put forward by an unprincipled gang of spies and adventurers, agents of foreign imperialism.⁵ In a report to the Central Committee in 1937 Stalin therefore emphasised that the Rights and Trotskyists in no sense represented any political tendency within the working class and socialist movement, but were a gang of enemy agents and criminals. And he called for the greatest vigilance in combating such agencies.

Party Leadership

At the 16th Congress Stalin laid down conditions for correct party leadership, namely: (a) a correct line, understood by and supported by the masses, (b) a day-to-day check up on the carrying out of the line and day-to-day direction of its application, (c) consistent struggle against deviations from the general line, and against any conciliatory attitude towards such deviations.

At the 17th Congress in 1934 Stalin could point out that the fight against both "left" and right opposition groupings was ended, although traces of their influence still remained. Asked which was the "main danger," the right or the "left" danger, he replied that the main danger is always the one which we are not fighting against.

Organisation and Cadres Policy

At the 17th and 18th Congresses, Stalin devoted particular attention to questions of strengthening the party organisation and the party cadres.

¹ See Stalin, *On the Problems of Leninism*.

² See Stalin, *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*.

³ See Lenin, *On the Party Programme*, Report to 18th Congress of R.C.P.; Stalin, *The Right Danger in the C.P.S.U.*, *The Right Deviation in the C.P.S.U.*

⁴ See Stalin, *Theses and Report on National Factors*, *Foundations of Leninism*.

⁵ See Lenin, *Draft Resolutions for 10th Party Congress*.

At the 17th Congress he underlined the need for organising the work, securing the fulfilment of decisions. "After the correct political line has been given, the organisational work decides everything. The main thing in organisational work is the selection of people and supervision of the fulfilment of decisions."

Following up these points at the 18th Congress, Stalin stressed the importance of the selection of cadres, of fostering and helping them in every way, of promoting them, of attending to their Marxist education.¹ It was necessary, he stressed, to help cadres in all branches of work without exception to become versed in the Marxist-Leninist science of society.

Theory of the Socialist State

In the concluding section of his *Report to the 18th Congress*, Stalin made a contribution of fundamental importance to the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state.

Whereas Marx and Engels had stated that when exploiting classes were abolished and socialism was established the state would begin to "wither away,"² the experience of building socialism in the U.S.S.R. proved that this conclusion must be modified. The socialist state must remain so long as socialist countries are surrounded by a capitalist world. The state would wither away only after the victory of socialism on a world scale. But while the punitive organs of the old state had been directed against the people inside the country, the task of the socialist state inside the socialist country was one of "peaceful economic organisation and cultural education," and its punitive organs were directed "to the outside against external enemies."

The New Soviet Intelligentsia

Stalin also dealt with the question of the Soviet intelligentsia, pointing out that whereas in the past the intelligentsia had been regarded with a certain amount of mistrust, in Soviet conditions there had arisen "a new Soviet intelligentsia intimately bound up with the people and for the most part ready to serve them faithfully and loyally."³

Lessons of the Victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

Stalin concluded his 18th Congress Report by pointing out that the U.S.S.R. had proved that the working class was fully capable of building socialism.

B. REPORTS AND ARTICLES FROM STALIN'S "PROBLEMS OF LENINISM"

STALIN: Problems of Leninism

This book, the earlier editions of which were entitled simply *Leninism*, is a collection of important articles and speeches by Stalin in the period 1924 to 1939. Part of its contents have been dealt with elsewhere. Here we deal in chronological order and under various headings with the remaining material. Much of it overlaps with the Party Congress Reports, and all should be read in the light of the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B)*, Chapters 10, 11 and 12.

1. *The Alliance with the Peasants*

The Party's Three Fundamental Slogans on the Peasant Problem (1927)

¹ See Stalin, *Address to Graduates of Red Army Academies*.

² See Engels, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*.

³ See Stalin, *On the U.S.S.R. Draft Constitution*.

The Slogan of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Poor Peasantry (1927)

These two articles, which take the form of replies to comrades' questions, elaborate and explain the three distinct stages of the alliance of the working class and peasants during the course of the Russian Revolution.¹

On the Grain Front (1928)*Lenin and the Question of the Middle Peasant* (1928)

These further develop the principles of the alliance with the middle peasants.

2. *The Right Danger and Trotskyism*

The Right Danger in the C.P.S.U.(B), (1928)

In this speech at a meeting of the Central Committee, Stalin defines the essence of the right deviation. In capitalist conditions it is a tendency to depart from the revolutionary line of Marxism in the direction of social democracy. In soviet conditions it is a tendency towards bourgeois ideology. Stalin demonstrates that the right danger was rooted in the existing social and economic conditions of the country at the time when small-scale commodity production still flourished and provided the soil for a revival of capitalism.²

The Right Deviation in the C.P.S.U.(B), (1929)

In this further Report to the Central Committee Stalin exposed the essence of the right policy of Bukharin and his group. The rights said that the remaining capitalist elements in the U.S.S.R. would peacefully "grow into socialism." Hence they said the class struggle was dying out and denied the necessity for an offensive against remaining capitalist elements. This policy would have meant demoralising socialist construction and surrendering socialist positions to the capitalists.

Concerning the History of Bolshevism, (1931)

This is a letter from Stalin to the editors of a Soviet journal protesting against their having printed a "discussion article" by a certain Slutsky, falsifying the attitude of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to German Social Democracy. It is a classic formulation of the Bolshevik attitude towards "liberalism," especially liberalism in relation to Trotskyism.

Stalin declares that it is "rotten liberalism" to enter into theoretical "discussions" of enemy ideas, in a way that allowed the question to be raised of altering the "axioms of Bolshevism" as a result of such discussion.

3. *The Socialist Offensive*

A Year of Great Change, (1929)

This article, published in *Pravda* on the 12th Anniversary of the October Revolution, summarises the decisive advances made in the first year of the First Five-Year Plan. Stalin summarises the achievements under three headings:

1. Achievements in raising the productivity of labour. He notes the great rise in labour enthusiasm and creative initiative made possible thanks to self-criticism and socialist emulation.

2. Achievements in industrial construction, where the problem of accumulation of funds

¹ See Lenin, *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*; Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism, Report to 14th Congress*.

² See Stalin: *Report to 16th Congress*; Lenin, *On the Party Programme*.

for capital construction had been solved and new socialist cadres were being trained.

3. Achievements in agricultural construction, where the mass of the middle peasants were already turning to the collective farm movement.

Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R. (1929)

In this speech Stalin deals with a series of theoretical questions concerning which there existed confusion of ideas which could endanger the practical success of socialist construction. Theoretical work, says Stalin, was lagging behind practice, whereas it ought to keep ahead of practical work. The following problems are dealt with:

1. The problem of accumulating funds for socialist construction—"expanded socialist reproduction."

2. The need for the working class in the towns to give leadership to socialist construction in the countryside.

3. The superiority of large-scale over small-scale enterprise not only in industry but also in agriculture.

4. The material assistance rendered to the peasants by the socialist workers.

5. The socialist character of collective farming.

6. The turn from the policy of restriction of the kulaks to the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class.

This latter point is further explained in the short article: *The Policy of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class*. Stalin points out that so long as the material conditions did not yet exist for large-scale socialist farming, there could be no question of eliminating the capitalist kulak farms but only of limiting them and restricting the activity of the kulaks. But when the material conditions were ripe for the mass turn to large-scale collective farming, then the question on the agenda was not that of restricting the kulaks but eliminating the kulak farms altogether.

Dizzy with Success (1930)

In this article, which was of tremendous importance in the collective farm movement, Stalin exposes certain "leftist" mistakes which threatened to disrupt the collective farm movement, namely, violations of the voluntary character of the collective farms, failure to allow for the diversity of conditions in different districts and attempts to socialise not only the principal means of production but also household land, dwellings, etc.

The same points are further amplified and explained in the article: *Reply to Collective Farm Comrades*. Having read this article, the reader should turn to Stalin's speech at the Central Committee three years later, entitled *Work in the Rural Districts*, in which he analyses in a self-critical tone defects still remaining in the work of the party in building and leading the collective farm movement. Like *Dizzy with Success*, this speech is an outstanding example of Stalin's emphasis on Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism.

The Tasks of Business Executives (1931)

New Conditions, New Tasks (1931)

In these speeches to conferences of Soviet business executives, Stalin stresses the need to master technique. He further deals with questions of the recruiting of labour power, wages, the organisation of work, the training of personnel, etc.

The Results of the First Five-Year Plan (1933)

Reporting to the Central Committee on the results of the First Five-Year Plan, successfully

completed in four years, Stalin first emphasises its international significance. "The successes of the Five-Year Plan are mobilising the revolutionary forces of the working class of all countries against capitalism."

Analysing the results in detail, he shows that the fundamental task of the Five-Year Plan had been achieved, namely, to convert the U.S.S.R. into a land of powerful socialist industry and large-scale collective farming, and to achieve this without outside aid, by means of the internal resources of the country alone. This achievement was leading to a rapid rise in the material and cultural standards of the working people, and to elimination of the last remnants of hostile classes.

4. *Socialist Labour*

Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Collective Farm Shock Workers (1933)

Stalin shows that the collective farm path is the path to socialism, and to a prosperous life for the peasants. Dealing with the position and work of communists in the collective farms, he stresses that they must not grow conceited and isolate themselves from non-party people, and that "modesty is the adornment of the Bolshevik." It is the workers and peasants who are now "the real heroes and the creators of the new life."

Address to Graduates from Red Army Academies (1935)

This speech should be read as following up the speech to Business Executives four years earlier.

Stalin points out that when the U.S.S.R. lacked its own machines and machine-building industry, it had to be said that "technique decides everything," but now they must say that "cadres decide everything." He therefore emphasised the need to value cadres and to help them in every way.

In the opening section of this speech Stalin sums up the reason why it was above all necessary in order to achieve socialism in the U.S.S.R. to make the fundamental tasks of the First Five-Year Plan the construction of socialist heavy industry, rather than concentrating on the production of consumer goods.

Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites (1935)

Stalin explains that the Stakhanovite movement, which arose in the period of the Second Five-Year Plan, is a higher stage of socialist emulation arising on the basis of modern technique which sets itself the aims of greatly increasing the productivity of socialist labour. Just as capitalism defeated feudalism because it created higher standards of productivity of labour, and made society richer, so will socialism beat capitalism. "Socialism can succeed only on the basis of a high productivity of labour."

But the Stakhanovite movement, says Stalin, also prepares the way for the transition from socialism to communism, to the creation of "an absolute abundance of articles of consumption," and to "raising the cultural and technical level of the working class to the level of engineers and technicians."

The Stakhanovite movement was a movement from below which quickly spread throughout the whole Soviet Union. This was made possible, says Stalin, for four reasons:

1. Because of the radical improvement in the material standards of the workers. "Life has improved, comrades, life has become more joyous and when life is joyous work goes well."

2. Because of the abolition of exploitation, as a result of which "labour in our country has a social significance and is a matter of honour and glory."

3. Because the U.S.S.R. is fully equipped with modern technique.

4. Because the people have come forward able to use that technique. As a result of the Stakhanovite movement the old technical standards were being smashed and new technical standards created.

In conclusion he stresses the tasks of the party and the government to help forward the Stakhanovite movement, and declares that “only such leaders can be real Bolshevik leaders as know not only how to teach the workers and peasants but also how to learn from them.”

5. *The U.S.S.R. Constitution*

On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. (1936)

The U.S.S.R. Constitution, adopted in 1936 and known as the Stalin Constitution, sums up and gives legislative form to the achievements of socialist society.

introducing the Draft Constitution at the 8th Congress of Soviets on November 25, 1936, after a nationwide discussion of the draft, Stalin proclaimed the complete victory of the socialist system in all spheres of the national economy. Exploitation of man by man was abolished, while socialist ownership of the implements and means of production was established as the basis of Soviet society. A new socialist economy had come into being which provided everyone with every opportunity to lead a prosperous and cultured life.

All the old exploiting classes were eliminated. There remain, Stalin says, the working class, the peasant class and the intelligentsia, but these themselves have changed with the victory of socialism. There is an entirely new working class, emancipated from exploitation. Similarly, there is an entirely new collective farm peasantry, and a new intelligentsia recruited from the working class and the peasant class and serving the people and not the exploiting classes.

At the same time, relations of full equality, fraternal co-operation and mutual aid had been established between the sixty nations, national groups and nationalities of the multinational Soviet State.

The Constitution, says Stalin, is the registration and legislative embodiment of these achievements. It proceeds from the fact that the working people are in power, and that “the guidance of society by the state (the dictatorship) is in the hands of the working class.”

Further specific features of the Constitution are that it proceeds from the proposition that all nations and races have equal rights, that it is thoroughly democratic, and that while proclaiming rights (the right to work, the right to leisure, etc.), it also guarantees the conditions required to exercise those rights.

Stalin goes on to deal with bourgeois criticisms of the Draft Constitution and the various amendments that had been proposed.

Especially important points arising in these sections are:

1. The explanation of the reason for the existence of only one party, the Communist Party, in the U.S.S.R.

2. The explanation that there exist two classes in Soviet society, the workers and peasants.

3. The explanation of the principle of the right of secession of Union Republics.

4. The explanation of the grounds for introducing the two-chamber system in the Supreme Soviet (the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of the Nationalities).

5. The explanation of the constitutional position of the president of the U.S.S.R.

6. The explanation of the reasons for establishing universal suffrage without any restrictions.

Concluding his speech, Stalin declares that the Constitution is “a document testifying to the fact that what millions of honest people in capitalist countries have dreamed of and still dream of, has already been realised in the U.S.S.R.,” and “that what has already been realised in the U.S.S.R. is fully possible of realisation in other countries also.”

9. NATIONAL LIBERATION

INTRODUCTION

Capitalism breeds nationalism, national hostility, the oppression of one nation by another, imperialist oppression of colonial countries. The solution of the national question, i.e. of the series of problems arising from national and colonial oppression under capitalism and imperialism, constitutes an important part of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism.

Marx and Engels stressed the subordination of the national question to the fundamental interests of the international working class. "In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, the communists point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality," proclaimed the *Communist Manifesto*.

Hence they adopted varying attitudes to the various bourgeois nationalist movements of their time. They called on the workers to support the national unification of Austria, Italy and Germany as a revolutionary aim, and to support the national liberation struggles of the Poles and Hungarians. At the same time they recognised the reactionary character of, and therefore opposed, the nationalist movement of Pan-Slavism among the Czechs and Croats, since this was in fact serving as an instrument for the expansion of arch-reactionary Tsarism.

A selection of Marx and Engels' writings on the national movement in Europe from 1848 to 1871, edited and with an introduction and full explanatory notes by Dona Torr is contained in the volume *Marxism, Nationality and War*, Part II.

In *Capital* Marx exposed the nature of the colonial policy of capitalism, and he always taught that the emancipation of the working class was inseparable from that of the enslaved colonial peoples. "A people which enslaves others forges its own chains," said a resolution of the 1st International, drafted by Marx in 1869. Marx and Engels consistently urged the working class to oppose every form of colonial expansion and colonial oppression. They devoted the closest attention to the Irish question (see the *Correspondence*), holding that the liberation of Ireland was a condition for the victory of the English working class. They followed closely British policy and the national struggle in India and China (see *Marx on China*, edited by Dona Torr).

The national Question occupied from the start a prominent place in the programme of the Bolshevik Party, since Tsarist Russia was "a prison house of nations."

The essentials of the working class approach to the national question in the period up to the Great October Socialist Revolution was summed up in Lenin's *Right of Nations to Self Determination* and Stalin's *Marxism and the National Question*. These are the two basic works with which the student should begin study of this question.

The Marxist-Leninist policy on the national question was put into practice in the Great October Revolution, and the lines of the solution of the national question were established in the building of the multi-national Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The most profound creative development of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism in the national question was undertaken by Stalin.

The Great October Socialist Revolution opened up a new stage of the development of the national question by liberating the formerly backward and oppressed nations of a vast state. It gave a tremendous impetus and a new perspective to the struggle for national liberation and national revolution throughout the East and the entire colonial world, which had already been awakened by the 1905 Revolution in Russia.

On the development of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the national question after the

Great October Socialist Revolution, the reader should turn first to Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*, Chapter 6, *The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists*, *The National Question Presented*, and the *Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East* (all included in the volume *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*) and Stalin's booklet *The National Question and Leninism*.

Stalin's writings and speeches on *China*, in 1926-7, are of fundamental importance in the theory and practice of the Chinese Revolution, out of which has been developed the complete body of teachings concerning the national revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries embodied in the works of Mao Tse-tung. These works are a further development of Marxism-Leninism in the national, democratic revolution in colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal countries at the present period. The teachings of Mao grew and developed in the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people; they unite the theories of Marxism-Leninism with the actual practice of the Chinese Revolution.

According to these teachings, the national revolution is neither a bourgeois-democratic revolution of the old type, nor a proletarian socialist revolution. It is a bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type, directed against imperialism and against feudal survivals within the country fostered and upheld by imperialism. While a section of the bourgeoisie goes over to the side of imperialism and opposes the revolution, the basic motive forces of the revolution are the working class, the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie, and it is led by the working class. Its aim is the complete elimination of the oppression of both foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism and to establish a democracy in which the ruling, guiding power is the working class in alliance with the mass of working people. Immediate objectives are national independence, land reform, development of national industry and trade, protection of the standards and rights of the working people. This does not exclude that capitalist enterprise plays a role in building up the national economy, under the control of the People's Government. Only on the basis of carrying through these national, democratic tasks can the revolution advance the next step to the stage of socialism.

On this further creative development of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the national revolution in the present period, the reader should consult especially *People's Democratic Dictatorship*, by Mao Tse-tung; *Thirty Years of the Communist Party of China*, by Hu Chiao-mu; *On the Party*, by Liu Shao-chi.

LENIN: The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

The Programme of the R.S.D.L.P. adopted at the Second Congress in 1903 included on Lenin's insistence a point recognising the right of all nations to self-determination. This has always remained an integral part of the programme of the Communist Party.

Lenin's book *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* was published in 1914, mainly in reply to misunderstandings about the question on the part of Rosa Luxemburg.

The following are the chief points stressed by Lenin.

1. The rise of nations and national movements is linked up with the victory of capitalism over feudalism. Its economic basis lies in the fact that the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, have politically united territories, and develop a national language, the most important means of human intercourse. It follows that the right of nations to self-determination primarily means the right of political separation of these nations from alien national bodies, the right to the formation of independent national states.

2. The working class must oppose all national oppression and support every national striving against oppression. No nation can be free if it oppresses another nation. Hence the

working class party must resolutely defend the right of all nations to self-determination. To deny this right is tantamount to defending national oppression and supporting the privileges of dominating nations.

3. As against bourgeois nationalism, which always seeks special advantages for its own nation, the working class is opposed to all national privileges without exception, and fights against all national exceptionalism, hostility and oppression. Hence, while always supporting the right to self-determination and every national striving against national oppression, the working class opposes every striving for national exceptionalism, and repudiates the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie.

4. The national question must in every case be approached and solved in the light of the particular circumstances of the case. In this connection, Lenin specially examines the National Question in Norway, Sweden, Poland and Ireland.

5. As regards the question of secession, to uphold the right to secede does not mean advocating secessions in all cases. Hence what the working class must stand for is “the recognition of the right to secession for all; the appraisal of each concrete question of secession from the point of view of removing all inequality, all privileges, all exceptionalism.”

6. For the working class, national demands are subordinate to the interests of the class struggle. The recognition of the right of nations to self-determination entails for the working class the establishment of the strongest international unity and solidarity between the working class of different nations.

LENIN: The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up

Two sections of this article, which was published in 1916, appear in English translation in the collection, *Marx, Engels, Marxism*. In them Lenin shows how Marx always judged national movements in their relation to the international struggle for socialism. The national demands of small nations were subordinate to the interests of the liberation of a number of big nations, and had to be considered, not in isolation, but on a European or on a world scale. The advent of imperialism meant that a handful of great powers were oppressing other nations, and the task then became to develop all national movements against imperialism in order to hasten the defeat of imperialism.

Internationalism has different implications in great oppressing nations and in small oppressed nations. In the former it demands emphasis upon the right of the oppressed nations to freedom of secession; in the latter, emphasis upon “voluntary union,” together with the fight against “small nation narrow-mindedness, isolationism and aloofness.”

A third section, dealing with the Easter Rebellion in Ireland, is translated in Vol. V of the 12-volume *Lenin Selected Works*. Here Lenin shows that the national liberation struggles of small nations are an important link in the world revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Social revolution is inconceivable without revolts by small nations—revolts which may not themselves bear a socialist character, but which objectively attack capital.

It can never happen that “in one place an army will line up and say ‘we are for socialism,’ and in another place another army will say ‘we are for imperialism.’” To expect “a ‘pure’ social revolution” is to “pay lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.”

LENIN: The National Pride of the Great-Russians

This article was written soon after the outbreak of war in 1914, when the reactionaries

were shouting about nationality and fatherland.

Lenin shows that love of country, national pride, is not alien to socialists. The fight to end class oppression within the country, and to end the shameful oppression of other nations, is a fight dictated by love of country, which demands struggle to overthrow the reactionaries who are ruining and disgracing the nation.

STALIN: Marxism and the National Question

Stalin's article *Marxism and the National Question*, published in 1913, develops the Marxist teachings on the national question on the basis of the entire experience of national movements to that date, and constituted the point of departure for the solution of the national question in the Russian Revolution.

The fundamental ideas contained in this article may be summed up under four headings:

1. *The Definition of a Nation*

Stalin gives a basic definition of a nation and demonstrates the Marxist method of arriving at a definition by considering the subject in all its aspects and in its actual development. His definition is as follows: "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.... It is only when all these characteristics are present that we have a nation."

2. *Bourgeois Nationalism and Working-class Internationalism*

Stalin demonstrates that the formation of nations and independent national states took place with the development of capitalism. The bourgeoisie played the leading role in the formation of nations, and gave a bourgeois character to the national movement.¹

While the stronger nations obtained national independence, others did not advance far enough in national development before they fell under the domination of the stronger nations. Hence the occurrence of the oppression of one nation by another.

Bourgeois nationalism always bears a character of exclusiveness, of national enmity and of national oppression. And in the conditions of rising capitalism the national struggle necessarily took the form of a struggle between different national bourgeois classes.

The working class fights against all national oppression and for the self-determination of all nations, but does not allow itself to be diverted by bourgeois nationalism into solidarity with its own national bourgeoisie and into international enmity.

What distinguishes the policy of the working class on the national question from bourgeois nationalism is that the working class seeks to end all national oppression and hostility and to establish the fraternal unity between the working classes and working people of all nations.

3. *For National Self-Determination and Against Separatist Tendencies*

Stalin stresses that the working class supports the right of every nation to self-determination. This does not mean, however, that the working class supports every national demand and every national institution. The right to self-determination is one thing; what national policy will actually be adopted, what national institutions will be established and whether the nation will separate itself from another nation, or unite with it, is another thing. Particular national demands are or are not to be supported according to the

¹ But see Stalin, *The National Question and Leninism*, on socialist nations.

circumstances of the case. The correct policy in each case can be decided only on the basis of considering the specific economic, political and cultural conditions of the given nation.

Stalin strongly opposes nationalist separatist tendencies among the working class organisations. In countries where several nationalities are represented among the working class, such tendencies can lead to the destruction of the unity of the working class movement.

Stalin therefore declares that the working class could not support the demand for so-called “national cultural autonomy,” because it was an artificial proposal which bolstered up reactionary nationalist trends and divided the workers.

4. *The Conditions for the Solution of the National Problem*

Stalin concludes that there were five conditions for the solution of the national problem:

1. Recognition of the right of all nations to self-determination.
 2. Regional autonomy for national groupings occupying their own territory within a multi-national state.
 3. The establishment of the conditions of the fullest democracy.
 4. National equality, i.e. no special privileges for any one nation, and no restriction of the rights of national minorities.
 5. United working-class organisations and international solidarity of the working class.
- These latter points were further explained and elaborated by Stalin in his *Report on the National Question* to the 7th Party Conference in April 1917.

The Great October Socialist Revolution and the National Question

In articles and speeches on the National Question in the period following the October Revolution 1917, contained in the volume *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Stalin develops the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the national question further, in the light of the new conditions arising after the Russian Revolution.

What are these principal further developments of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the national question?

1. The national question has become bound up with the question of the liberation of the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial peoples from imperialism. From being a question bound up with the bourgeois democratic revolution, the national question had become bound up with the destiny of the socialist revolution. From being a movement dominated by the bourgeoisie, the national movement became a revolutionary movement led by the working class and peasants in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

2. The solution of the national question is therefore inseparable from the anti-imperialist struggle and the liberation of nations from the power of capital.

3. The struggle for national liberation must be led by the working class in alliance with the peasants, and demands the isolation of those sections of the bourgeoisie of the given nation which collaborate with imperialism.

4. The working class must help and support the colonial liberation movements both to struggle against imperialism and, after liberation, to develop economy and culture in the direction of socialism.

5. The right of nations to self-determination is defined as the right to political secession and to form independent states. Where unions of nations are formed, the union must be voluntary and based on mutual confidence.

6. It is necessary to fight on the one hand against “great power chauvinism,” the tendency of nationals of the stronger nations to believe themselves superior to other nations and to seek

to dominate them; and on the other hand against local nationalist and separatist tendencies, which breed hostility between peoples. The working class must always stand for the fraternal union of peoples, mutual aid, and aid from the more advanced to the less advanced nations.

The following are the principal speeches and articles contained in *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* in which the above points are elaborated.

The October Revolution and the National Question. 1918

Here Stalin deals with the position of the border regions of the old Tsarist Empire in the Russian Revolution. He shows how, with the overthrow of the Tsar, the national bourgeoisie in the border regions tried to form their own national states, but were powerless against the oppressive policy of the Provisional Government on the one hand, and the hostility of their own workers and peasants on the other hand.

After October, they fought against the socialist revolution and began to sell out to foreign imperialism.

It became obvious that national liberation could come only by struggle of the workers and peasants of the border regions in alliance with the Russian workers and peasants, against both the foreign imperialists and their own bourgeoisie.

The October Revolution, Stalin concludes, widened the whole scope of the national question by striking the first blows for the emancipation of all oppressed nations, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism.

The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia. 1920

In this article Stalin shows that imperialism could only be defeated by a union of the border peoples with the workers and peasants of Central Russia. Either they must join forces with the Russian workers and peasants, or else they must join forces with the foreign imperialists, and come under the yoke of imperialism.

Therefore, Stalin concludes, it is necessary to oppose tendencies for the secession of the border regions from the Russian Soviet Republic.

He stresses the duty of the Russian workers to help the peoples of the border regions to enter into the general stream of Soviet development.

Theses and Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Connection with the National Problem. 1921

In the Theses and Report on the National Problem to the 10th Party Congress, Stalin shows how capitalism inevitably creates national hostility and national oppression, and how the final solution of the national question is possible on the basis of socialism.

The National Question Presented. 1921

In this article Stalin says that there were four principal features of the presentation of the national question by the Bolshevik Party.¹

1. The central issue is the emancipation of the colonial peoples from imperialism, and solidarity between the working class in the imperialist countries and the colonial peoples against imperialism.

2. The right of nations to self-determination must be defined as the right to political secession and to form independent states. (Such a definition unmask all hypocritical

¹ See Stalin, *Report to 16th Congress C.P.S.U.(B), Foundations of Leninism.*

imperialist talk about self-determination).

3. The liberation of nations is inseparable from their emancipation from the power of capital.

4. The workers of the more advanced countries have the duty of rendering aid to the people of the less advanced countries.

The Amalgamation of the Soviet Republics. 1922

Stalin's two Reports at the 10th All-Russian Congress of Soviets in 1922 deal with the historic decision to set up the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

Theses and Report on National Factors in Party and State. 1923

Stalin's Theses and Report at the 12th Party Congress deal with three obstructions hindering the solution of the National Question in the U.S.S.R., namely: (1) tendencies to Great Russian chauvinism; (2) mistaken proposals concerning economic and cultural autonomy for particular national groupings; (3) survivals of local nationalism in the border regions.

He stresses that it is particularly the duty of the Russian workers to combat Great Russian chauvinism, while it is the duty of the peoples of the border republics to combat their own nationalist survivals.¹

The October Revolution and the National Policy of the Russian Communists. 1921

The October Revolution and the Middle Strata. 1923

These two articles, both written on the respective anniversaries of the October Revolution, stress the role of the oppressed nationalities as allies of the working class in the struggle against imperialism and for socialism.

The October Revolution, Stalin concludes, has brought the ideas of socialism to the peoples of all the oppressed nations.²

Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East. 1925

In this speech to students at the University of the Peoples of the East, Stalin deals with the problems of both the peoples of Soviet Republics and of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries.

In the Soviet Republics their fundamental task is to achieve an economic development towards socialism and to develop a national culture, proletarian in content and national in form.

As regards the colonial and dependent countries, no liberation from imperialism is possible without a victorious national revolution, in which the working class takes the lead of the whole people and isolates the compromising sections of the bourgeoisie.

The bond between the colonial peoples and the working class in the imperialist countries must be constantly strengthened.

STALIN: The National Question and Leninism

Stalin's booklet *The National Question and Leninism*, published in 1929, deals with several questions raised in letters received from comrades.

¹ See Stalin, *Report to 16th Congress C.P.S.U.(B), Foundations of Leninism*, Lenin, *The Discussion of Self-Determination Summed Up*.

² See Stalin, *The International Character of the October Revolution*.

1. Must a nation also possess its own national state? Stalin answers, No.
2. Stalin distinguishes between bourgeois nations and socialist nations. Nations were first formed in the epoch of capitalism and were shaped and consolidated by the bourgeoisie. But on the basis of the overthrow of capitalism arise the new socialist nations, which are shaped and consolidated by the working class in alliance with the peasants.
3. Stalin deals with the question of the dying away of national differences and national languages. These will continue to exist and to develop after the victory of socialism in particular countries, and will begin to die away only in the period of the victory of socialism on a world scale.
4. Stalin deals with the differences between the Marxist-Leninist presentation of the national question before and after the Russian Revolution, and with the way in which the solution of the national and colonial question has become bound up with the struggle against imperialism, and with the world socialist revolution.

Stalin on China

Stalin's speeches and articles on China in the years 1926-7 are of profound significance as providing the theoretical foundations of the policy of Communism in relation to China, and thereby of understanding the revolutionary tasks throughout the whole of the colonial and semi-colonial world.

They should be read in association with the study of Lenin's policy in the 1905 Revolution in Russia, as set forth in *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. Stalin applies and develops Lenin's ideas in considering the tasks of the revolution in China.

In the period 1926-7, with which Stalin was dealing, the revolutionary national armies of the Kuomintang were overcoming the armies of the reactionary war-lords and generals backed by the imperialists. There was a great rise in the united anti-imperialist struggle of the bloc of workers, peasants and national bourgeoisie. But precisely in this period of the victory of the Kuomintang armies, the right wing leaders of the Kuomintang turned against the revolution and entered into a compact with imperialism against the revolution.

Stalin's whole approach is based on the recognition of the need (1) to take into account the special national peculiarities of China; (2) to win all possible allies at each stage of the revolution; (3) to adapt slogans to the changing situation in order to lead the masses and enable them to learn from their own experience at each stage.

What are the principal questions which Stalin clarifies in these speeches and articles?

1. He defines the general character of the Chinese revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution, which has the special character of a revolution for national liberation directed against foreign imperialism.
2. He shows that the revolution must be led by the working class and its party, which must arouse and win to the revolution the millions of the peasants, as well as allying itself at definite stages of the revolution with sections of the national bourgeoisie.
3. He shows that the future power to be established as a result of the victory of the revolution will be a power of the type of the democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry. This power will be directed first and foremost against imperialism. It will have the task of leading the peasants to carry through agrarian reform by confiscating the landlords' land and so uprooting feudalism in China, and of initiating a new non-capitalist development of Chinese economy which will lead in the direction of socialism.
4. Stalin lays special stress on the military aspects of the Chinese Revolution, pointing out the key role of the revolutionary armies in China.

As regards the policy of the imperialists in China, he stresses that imperialist intervention takes the form not only of foreign invasion, but also of the use of home-bred reactionaries, “intervention by means of catspaws.”

REFERENCE INDEX

This index makes no pretensions to completeness, but refers the reader only to principle references for each subject. Chapter references are given where necessary for works containing several chapters.

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