

35

BUILDING UP SOCIALISM

By N. Bukharin

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CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Old Problems Again -	1
II. The Maturity of Capitalism - - -	5
III. Must Capitalism be Rebuilt? - - -	11
IV. Capitalism in Russia -	19
V. The Degenerate Bolsheviks - - -	29
VI. Trotsky, Zinoviev and Co. - - -	34
VII. Can we Build up Socialism? - - -	49
VIII. International Revolution - - -	57

BUILDING UP SOCIALISM BY NIKOLAI BUKHARIN

CHAPTER I.

OLD PROBLEMS AGAIN.

A NUMBER of cardinal and fundamental questions concerning our revolution have been raised again in an acute manner. It is not possible here to explain in detail the causes of this, but one cannot refrain from pointing out that the fundamental reason lies in the fact that we are living in a period of transition from the so-called process of restoration to the process of building up.

This terminology, in our opinion, is not quite exact and correct; for to define the past phase of development of our economics as a process of restoration is to assume—if we accept the strict meaning of the word—that the revival of our industry and our economic revival generally are proceeding along the same lines as those along which they proceeded prior to the revolution. Only if we assume this can we speak of a process of restoration in the strict sense of the word.

As a matter of fact, after the October Revolution, our economy, particularly and primarily its State sector, revived in such a manner that parallel with the restoration of economy there proceeded an uninterrupted alteration in the relations of production. Our development proceeded upon quite another basis compared with that upon which the economy of the country developed prior to the October victory of the working class. For that reason, when we speak of the process of restoration we must bear

in mind that this expression is used conventionally. By it we mean to say that our output has reached the pre-war level, that the material basis of production has been restored to pre-war dimensions. Only in this sense can we speak of the process of restoration; only in this way can we speak of the transition from the period of restoration to the period of building up.

Thus, beyond a doubt there now arises before us in all its breadth the task of the reconstruction of our economy, the task of transferring it to a new technical basis.

This depends primarily upon our success in acquiring and applying capital, resources to be employed for the expansion of the basis of production, for the construction or the laying down of new enterprises, to a considerable extent upon a new technical basis. It is not hard to realise that this is a task of the greatest difficulty, and the difficulty does not lie merely in the sphere of practice. No, even taken in its theoretical aspect it represents a "hard nut to crack." The difficulty of the task gives rise to wavering in our ranks. It compels us to take up again the fundamental questions of the revolution.

It will not be superfluous to mention that the question of basic capital was raised before, comparatively a long time ago (for example the question of electrification raised by Lenin); and it has been raised before by certain of our opponents. In this connection one may mention a work by P. P. Maslov, namely the book he published in 1918 entitled "A Summary of the War and Revolution." Maslov at that time stood entirely on the Menshevik position and in the book referred to he advocated the Menshevik point of view. Of course, he denied the possibility of a Socialist revolution in Russia

and this denial in a large measure was based on the alleged impossibility of solving the problems of the new technique owing to the general backwardness of the technico-economic basis of our country. This is what he wrote:

“It is sufficient to know what is the prevailing type of enterprise in agriculture and in home handicraft industry, which employs the largest number of workers in industry, to come to the conclusion that the workers cannot bring into being the Socialist system until capitalist production creates for it the material conditions. In the first few years the Great Russian Revolution will only split off industry from agriculture, will split it off by means of capitalism and only ‘in the more or less remote future’ will Socialism again unite them in a harmonious whole. Unless it breaks away from agriculture and petty production, industry can never become transformed technically into social production, for the primitive technique of the handicraftsman cannot be preserved, while the change in technique will break up the semi-agricultural economy. Even the revolution, in spite of the tremendous creative power it commands, cannot create new enterprises on a new technical basis out of nothing.”

The most characteristic and curious thing in this quotation is the last sentence in which the writer combines the idea of the impossibility of a Socialist revolution in Russia with the idea that there are no sources from which we can obtain the means to establish a new technical basis for our economy.

By what means can we establish the new technical basis? That is the problem. This problem, i.e., the “problem of basic capital,” to use a modern

expression, is precisely the problem which P. Maslov puts in the forefront, and as, in the opinion of the Menshevik Maslov, it is idle to think of new methods, this serves him as the decisive argument generally to deny the Socialist character of our revolution.

From this it follows that the problem of transferring our economy to new lines, the problem of basic capital, brings us right up against the question of the character of our revolution, the question of the possibility of establishing Socialism in a single country; in a word, it brings us up against the series of questions which at the present time are the subject of controversy in our Party. For this reason it will be useful to glance back and to recall what has been said before as to the Socialist revolution generally and what has been said concerning the possibility of a Socialist revolution in our country. Such an historical reference will bring to light a whole series of arguments which will help to explain the present controversy and will make it possible to trace the intellectual sources of the ideas of the respective sides in the controversy. Here it is necessary, if only briefly, to deal with the question of the "maturity" of modern and primarily of world capitalism in the manner in which that question is presented by the Bolsheviks.

CHAPTER II.

THE MATURITY OF CAPITALISM

It is a fact that is fairly well known that the historical prognoses and tactics of the Bolsheviks always rest upon a definite and absolutely objective analysis of the given state of affairs. Three kinds of phenomena, connected with each other and determined by each other, were taken into consideration by the Bolsheviks in determining the question of the maturity of world capitalism. Firstly, its technico-economic basis and its organisational forms. Secondly, the inter-relations of classes: the relative strength of the working class, the petty bourgeoisie and the big capitalist bourgeoisie. Thirdly, the cultural-ideological maturity of the proletariat. It goes without saying that orthodox Marxists presented the question of the cultural-ideological maturity of the proletariat not from the point of view that the proletariat can seize power only when it has developed its own culture and has produced the necessary administrative forces required to manage the State. This is the manner in which A. A. Bogdanov presented the question. According to his theory the proletariat cannot seize power unless it has learned the principles of the "science of general organisation" and has become thoroughly imbued with the all-embracing doctrines of proletarian culture. Of course, Bogdanov's manner of approach would never result in a positive solution to the question of the maturity of capitalism being found. However, the approach of the Bolsheviks to the question was quite different and from the point of view of their approach the general maturity of capitalist relations for their transforma-

tion into Socialist relations was not doubted in the least. The Bolsheviks advanced the postulate of the last, imperialist phase of capitalism, of the centralisation and concentration of capital having reached a sufficient stage, of the special organisational forms of capitalism (finance capital, capitalist monopoly, banking consortiums, etc.), and regard the very fact of the world imperialist war as evidence of the ripeness of capitalist relations—for the imperialist war in itself was nothing more or less than an expression of the gigantic conflict between the growth of the forces of production and their capitalist shell which has already become too tight to permit the further normal development of these forces of production.

Of course, in appraising world capitalism, the Bolsheviks did not start out with the assertion that capitalism was wholly and thoroughly ripe and they did not assume that at every point of the globe the degree of concentration and centralisation of capitalism and the concentration of the working class, etc., was the same and equally adequate for the transition to Socialism. On the contrary, in the person of Lenin the Bolsheviks advanced the postulate of the so-called "law of unequal capitalist development." The law has its foundation in the differences in the structure of capitalism in the various countries. This law draws a strict distinction between the centres of capitalist economy and the colonial periphery of capitalist economy. It lays down that the maturity of capitalism as a whole, as world capitalism, by no means pre-supposes an absolutely equal degree of capitalist development or an equal rate of development in all countries. Lenin's law of unequal capitalist development was the theoretical basis of the Bolshevik approach to the question of the maturity of world capitalist

economy, of the degree of its readiness for transition to Socialist economy, for their approach to the question of world revolution as a complex and prolonged process, which may commence even in a single country.

This is how the Bolsheviks presented the question. The opponents of the Bolsheviks approached the question quite differently. In this connection it should be mentioned that the arguments advanced by the opponents of the Bolsheviks to "prove" the immaturity of capitalist relations had quite a number of variations. There are a number of critical positions directed against the Bolsheviks which claim to refute the Bolshevik thesis on the maturity of capitalist relations in modern world economy. Some say that capitalism has not matured economically; others say that capitalism has matured economically, but that owing to the world war and the impoverishment that has spread during the war it has ceased to serve as a sufficient basis for the transition to the Socialist revolution. Others again put forward a number of quite "original" arguments concerning the cultural immaturity of the proletariat, which as a consequence cannot solve the problem of world revolution.

The first type of criticism of Bolshevism, the criticism from the point of view of the economic immaturity of capitalist relations, is most clearly expressed in the work of Heinrich Cunow. In one of his pamphlets, written in defence of the voting in the German Reichstag on August 4th, 1914, he developed approximately the following positions: He said that to think about the transition to a Socialist system at the present time means merely to harbour empty illusions and utopias. Marx said that not a single economic form ceases to exist until it has

utilised all its possibilities and exhausted itself to the very bottom. Take those countries, said Cunow, where capitalism is not yet sufficiently developed; take the markets which are not yet completely capitalist commodity markets; take those countries where capitalism is only at the beginning of its development and it will be perfectly clear that capitalism still has an enormous scope for development. And after the war—so asserted Cunow—owing to the partial destruction of forces of production further scope for development of capitalist relations was created for the reason that to the extent that forces of capitalist production were destroyed during the war to that extent the markets which even prior to the destruction caused by the war were too big to absorb capitalist output will now have become relatively larger; for that reason it is absurd and utopian, anti-Marxian to think that society in the near future will transfer to Socialist lines.

The argument here is so clear and unambiguous that it would be superfluous to refer to other critics who follow the same line of reasoning. It will be sufficient to refer to another critic, a Russian this time, the Marxian or semi-Marxian writer, A. A. Bogdanov. In one of his works, "Questions of Socialism," he says:

"In confirmation of this [the necessity and possibility of the transition to Socialism—N.B.] reference is made to the gigantic growth of those branches of industry in which means of production are produced. And yet, if we take the world output of these two fundamental materials of industry, namely, cast iron and coal and on the basis of their prices, the payment for labour power and the approximate rate of its exploitation calculate what propor-

tion of the labour energy at the disposal of humanity is crystallised in the enormous annual output of these products it will be found that it amounts to about two to two and a half, certainly not more than three per cent.; a result which is not at all impressive."

By quoting the figures two to two and a half per cent. of the production of cast iron and coal, A. A. Bogdanov thinks he has proved his postulate that the present phase of development of capitalist relations makes it futile even to think of raising the question of transition to the lines of Socialist revolution and to the lines of direct Socialist construction.

Such criticism can hardly be taken for serious Marxian criticism; it is nothing more than a caricature of Marxism.*

For the "critics" start out on an extremely vulgarised and certainly undialectical presentation of the pre-requisites for the collapse of capitalism. In their opinion the capitalist form of production

* As a curiosity we may mention also the "Marxian" criticism of the Bolsheviks by a certain Rudolph Schneider, the secretary of the Imperial Union of German Industry, who, in his pamphlet, "The Soviet System, Socialisation and Compulsory Economy," refutes, not only the Bolsheviks, but Socialists generally by references to Marx. "Fifty years ago," says this learned counsel for the German capitalist industrialists, "the great theoretician of Socialism, Karl Marx, brilliantly refuted all these Utopians and reformers of the world by a single remark" (p. 20). When people speak of practical realisation of Socialism they drop into "Utopianism: 'Socialism has gone back from science to Utopia'" (p. 20), (Rudolph Schneider: "Geschäftsführer des Reichsverbandes der deutschen Industrie: Ratesystem Sozialisierung und Zwangswirtschaft," Dresden, 1919).

will be destroyed only when it has been completely supplanted (or almost completely supplanted) by other forms of production. As a matter of fact the capitalist system of production will be destroyed very much earlier than that, for long before that stage is reached it develops its inherent contradictions, making its further existence intolerable and objectively impossible (cf. for example world wars, "The Epoch of Wars and Revolutions"). Similarly the "critics" start out from the postulate that the material ripeness of capitalism must be such that after the conquest of power Socialism must be already established embracing wholly and immediately the whole of society. As a matter of fact there can only be talk of the starting points of the movement, of the possibilities of further construction. From the arguments of the "critics" there disappears almost the whole of the transition period which is the period of development of Socialist economic forms among the non-Socialistic forms. Their (the "critics") seeming radicalism is but the reverse side of their profound opportunism. It is hardly necessary to dwell further upon this kind of critic. Enough has been said already, and we can now take up another group of objections.

CHAPTER III.

MUST CAPITALISM BE REBUILT?

THIS latter group in general may be described as follows : Socialism, of course, has matured ; capitalism has already produced within itself the forces of production which make the question of the Socialist revolution practical politics for to-day ; but the war has destroyed everything and now we must adopt a new tone, we cannot now speak of the tasks of the Socialist revolution. The question is presented in this manner by none other than Karl Kautsky who has spoken about the enormous damage caused by the war and about the impossibility of establishing Socialism on the basis of post-war capitalism. Russian Social-Democrats also have presented the question in this manner, for example the well-known Menshevik Lieber. In the preface to his pamphlet "Social Revolution or Social Collapse," published in Kharkov in 1919, after carefully explaining that "unfortunately" he had lost the original manuscript of this pamphlet when he had to flee from the "Communist Okhrana" (Secret Service), he put forward the following arguments :

"I advanced the fundamental 'pessimistic' postulates developed in this lecture already in the period of the 'honeymoon' of our revolution. From the very first days of the Russian Revolution the features of its collapse from decay caused by the war were clearly revealed to me and the flitting will o' the wisps did not for a moment appear to me like revolutionary beacons."

This, which no doubt was intended to serve as a poetic description, contains the following idea: Why do you Bolsheviks talk about Socialism, international revolution and such like things? Why do you bring these questions to the front now? What is taking place now is not a process of the revolutionary advancement of society, but a process of collapse from decay caused by the war.

In the third chapter of this pamphlet entitled, "Future Prospects and Tasks" in which is described the "anarchy" resulting of the war, the writer openly states that his point of view applies not only to Russia but may be applied to the whole world: "From what I have said it is clear that Socialism at the present time is impossible of realisation."

It is not difficult to see that this argument follows from the opportunist premise of the "painless" transition of capitalism to Socialism. In complete contradiction to the revolution theory of Marx, which forecasted the birth of Socialism in the midst of catastrophe ("Zusammenbruchstheorie") inevitably accompanied by the destruction of forces of production, the "critics" start out with the possibility of a truly idyllic progress of events. On the other hand the argument we are examining is linked up with the arithmetical conception of the pre-requisites of Socialist construction: it assumes that any deviation from definite phases in the development of the material basis of production immediately renders the transition to Socialism impossible. The changing relation of class forces, the education and self-education of the proletariat in the course of its battles, etc., all these things are ignored. It is superfluous to mention that an empirical test of this postulate, i.e., the whole of the subsequent course of events completely refutes

the arguments of the opportunists who have simply fled from the solution of the problem in the same way as they fled from the revolution itself.

The third group of objections, which appeared to be the most popular, was presented in the form of a theory which was intended to prove that the proletariat cannot capture power at all, for the reason that it represents an arithmetical minority of the population. The capture of power, dictatorship of the proletariat, capture of power by the political party of the working class, construction of Socialism, transition from capitalist society to Socialist society, all this, according to the Social-Democratic critics, absolutely pre-supposes that the proletariat is in the majority. This question has been discussed in detail in Bolshevik literature and so there is hardly any need to dwell upon it here. Particularly well-known is the argument used against Kautsky on this question by comrade Lenin:

“The principal cause of the failure of the ‘Socialists’ [read, petty bourgeois democrats] of the Second International” wrote comrade Lenin, “is their failure to understand that political power in the hands of one class, the proletariat, can and must become an instrument for attracting to its side the non-political toiling masses, an instrument for winning over these masses away from the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties.”*

A concrete combination of social forces is conceivable in which the proletariat while being in the minority of the population may lead the mass of the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand it is

* Lenin: “The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” Collected Works, vol. 16, p. 447, Russian edition.

possible to have an aristocratic degeneration of certain sections of the proletariat, while being in the majority in the country, which would extremely embarrass the proletarian revolution.† Hence, only a stereotyped, vulgar, abstract, undialectical attitude towards the question can lead to the Social-Democratic view that a revolution with the proletariat in the minority is impossible.

A curious variation of the theory of the immaturity of the proletariat is represented by the point of view of A. Bogdanov. As is well-known Bogdanov has a special theory of the ripening of Socialist elements in the womb of capitalist society. According to this theory the working class can take up the task of capturing power for the purpose of Socialist construction only when it has at its command a sufficient number of trained men and is able to solve the most complex tasks of Socialist construction. Bogdanov's argument is fairly simple. He takes up a question like that of the "Plan,"* for example, and says: To draw up a plan of Socialist economy is an extremely complicated task, and if the task is one of organising Socialist society on a world scale, then the difficulties will increase immeasurably. To overcome these difficulties without possessing the necessary cultural-organisational pre-requisites is impossible. In so far as these pre-requisites do not yet exist, it stands to reason that it is impossible to bring forward the question of Socialist construction.

† In this connection see Lenin's remarkable and interesting argument in his "Collected Works," vol. 3, pp. 494-5.

* The author is referring here to the scheme of the State Economic Planning Commission for a "single plan of production" worked out for the whole of the industry of the country.

In view of the particularly original position taken up by A. A. Bogdanov we will quote the more characteristic passages in full. On page 38 of his pamphlet "Questions of Socialism," the author writes:

"The systematic organisation of human society pre-supposes the generalisation and socialisation of organisational experience and its crystallisation into scientific form. If that is not obtained it follows that the historic conditions for the fulfilment of this task have not yet ripened. It is as impossible as the system of machine production was impossible without the natural and technical sciences generalising and socialising technical experience."

And further, on p. 68 he says:

"The cultural independence of the proletariat at the present time is a fundamental and undoubted fact which must be honestly admitted and from which the programme for the immediate future must start out. The culture of a class is the combination of its organisational forms and methods. If that is the case, then what malicious irony or childish nonsense are those schemes for immediately imposing upon the proletariat the most radical, most complex and most difficult organisational world transformation in history! And this at a time when before our very eyes the proletariat's own organisations crumble and fall to pieces, frequently not as a result of blows from without."

In a certain sense, not less interesting is the point of view developed at one time by V. Bazarov

which is quite close to the position taken by A. Bogdanov. Bazarov starts out from approximately the same premises as does Bogdanov, but he formulates his conclusions much more concretely and distinctly. It is worth while dealing with these conclusions while avoiding the argumentation, the general character of which has just been referred to. This is how they are formulated by the author. Analysing the Western European forms of State capitalism, V. Bazarov draws the following conclusion:

“In view of what has been said above it seems to us absolutely incredible that the Labour Party in the fairly near future will be able to utilise this new form of the bourgeois system as an instrument for the establishment of a genuinely Socialistic planned economy. The only task accessible to it under present conditions is that formulated by the German opportunists, namely, the conversion of the profit-making system of economy ‘into a State economic organisation for supplying the needs of the consumer’ (Bedarfsdeckungswirtschaft) as is the clumsy designation of this new invention.”*

Modifying the ideas of the opportunists in the direction of the necessity for this organisation of State capitalism having an international character the author makes the following summary of his views:

“We are dealing here with a very extensive and complex organisation, but as this organisa-

* V. Bazarov (Rudnev): “On the Path to Socialism,” Kharkov, 1919, pp. 21-22.

tion does not break with the principles of coercive bourgeois-democratic politics; as, on the other hand, the general contours of this organisation are already beginning to take shape in the spontaneous processes taking place at the present time, a problem arises before contemporary democracy which, in principle, cannot be regarded as insoluble. On the question as to whether the proletariat will be able to show the required initiative and rally around itself the other democratic elements interested in the solution of the problem mentioned depends the progress of world history in the course of the next few decades or even the next centuries."†

In a word, according to this Bazarov's argument about the lack of culture of the worker, we shall thank God if we, following the footsteps of the German opportunists, succeed in maintaining State capitalist organisations dominated by the bourgeois; as for constructing Socialism, it is idle to dream of it! For decades and perhaps for centuries, the proletariat will have to be satisfied with the entertaining occupation of supporting the capitalist system in its most concentrated form.

The Bogdanov-Bazarov "theory" of the cultural-organisational ripening of the proletariat in the lap of capitalist relations is utterly wrong; it contradicts the fundamental facts of the development of the working class and is utterly idealistic. It is wrong because it pre-supposes the possibility of the proletariat—the exploited and economically, politically and culturally oppressed class—"ripening" within the capitalist system sufficiently to be able immediately to undertake the management of

† Ibid, p. 22.

the whole of society and to have within its ranks forces able to solve the most complex problems of the period of construction. Bogdanov and Bazarov fail to understand the difference in principle between proletarian and bourgeois revolutions, between the ripening of capitalism within the feudal system and the ripening of Socialism within the capitalist system. In this connection we have written :

“ Within the capitalist system the proletariat reveals remarkable symptoms of future culture, remarkable possibilities of the future cultural development of humanity : but within this system the proletariat—the culturally oppressed class—cannot develop these symptoms sufficiently to prepare itself for the organisation of the whole of society.

“ It will manage to prepare itself for the ‘ destruction of the old world.’ It will ‘ change its nature and ripen as the organiser of industry’ only in the period of its dictatorship.”*

Consequently, the Bogdanov-Bazarov theory is wrong also, because it calls for far too much before the capture of power and because it fails to understand that the period of transition is a period of the cultural ripening of the proletariat. If the principles of Bogdanov’s theory were correct, the problem of the proletarian revolution would be as insoluble as the problem of squaring the circle or of “ perpetual motion.”

* N. Bukharin : “ Bourgeois Revolution and Proletarian Revolution,” in Collection of Essays “ Ataka,” p. 232, first edition.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

THE criticism of Bolshevism expressed itself in similar forms on the question of the maturity of international capitalism, on the maturity of world economy. Bolshevism itself on this question was united and monolithic: on this question, on the question of immaturity of the capitalist relations, of world economy there have never been any differences in our Party. None of the shades of opinion, none of the tendencies within our Party expressed any scepticism on this question, not a single Bolshevik ever disputed the postulate of the ripeness of capitalism for the Socialist revolution on an international scale, primarily in the so-called advanced countries of Europe.

The situation is quite different, however, if we take up another question, namely, the question of the ripeness of capitalist relations in Russia: the answers to this question sound differently not only when we take the differences between the Bolsheviks and the Social-Democrats, the Socialist Revolutionaries and other compromising parties; this question was presented in various ways and received various solutions even within our own Party. Even now it is being presented in different ways; for the question of the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country is nothing more or less than the question of the character of our revolution. It has been formulated in this way more than once.

Here, too, it will not be without interest and not without utility to hear the opinion of the opponents in the Social-Democratic camp.

The pioneer in the fight against Bolshevism,

around the question of the character of our revolution, was the well-known high priest of Social-Democracy, Karl Kautsky, who at first came out mildly, then as a renegade and finally as an out and out counter-revolutionary. In his earlier pamphlets he wrote relatively mildly. In the pamphlet to which Lenin replied, Kautsky still kept within the bounds of decency, but even then he objectively served in the role of the subservient ideological hack of the bourgeoisie.* In his works Kautsky presented the question of the character of our revolution fairly precisely, clearly and definitely. In a bulky book bearing the title "The Proletarian Revolution and its Programme," he states directly that our revolution has the typical features of a bourgeois revolution. It could not be otherwise, he argues, because the revolution is taking place in a country, the capitalistic immaturity of which is

* In this connection it is extremely interesting to quote the opinion of the well-known Dr. Paul Scheimann expressed in a pamphlet published by the General Secretariat for Studying and Combatting Bolshevism, and which bears the very specific title of "Asianising Europe." In this pamphlet, Dr. Paul Scheimann, commenting on Kautsky's pronouncements, says literally the following: "By far the best (in German he says: "das weitaus Beste") and most convincing of what has been written about Bolshevism from the social-political point of view, is the pamphlet by Kautsky 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat'."

On Bolshevism he writes: "The spiritual death, the internal ossification of humanity which was peculiar to the peoples of Asia during the course of thousands of years stands now like a spectre before the gates of Europe clothed in a mantle of rags of European ideas. These rags deceive those who have become blind in the cultured world. Bolshevism brings with it the Asianising of Europe." (Paul Scheimann, "Die Asiatisierung Europas, 1919, pp. 8-9.)

generally admitted. Marx long ago said, stated this old bookman, that no new society can arise until the old society has exhausted all its productive possibilities. Consequently, Socialism is impossible if the previous stage of social development has not been completed, if the old society has not utterly exhausted itself. Thus armed, he commences a bold attack against the Bolsheviks who, from his point of view, have become absorbed in the role of midwife, but are performing it very clumsily, for they are trying to stimulate the mother to give birth long before she is supposed to, according to the laws of Nature. As a matter of fact, he argues, the Bolsheviks are not accoucheurs at all, but simply charlatan-quacks who advertised themselves as having undergone a course of training in the school of revolutionary midwifery, in the school of Marx. As a matter of fact they have no connection with the school of Marx, he cries. Mother Russia is not giving birth to Socialism at all; she is simply being experimented on by Bolshevik scoundrels.

In a word, capitalism in Russia is backward, immature and therefore it is no place to construct Socialism, is the precept contained in one of the works of the Pope of Social Compromise.*

Simultaneously with that of Pope Kautsky we must examine the point of view held on this question by Otto Bauer who, to be fair, should be revered as a prelate of social-compromise. It must be said that this prelate has proved far more able and subtle than the Pope. The point of view of Otto Bauer is more cunning and clever than that of Kautsky.

He presents the question in the following manner.

* Karl Kautsky: "Die Proletarische Revolution und ihr Programm." Verlag Dietz. 2. Aufl. pp. 78-90.

He does not in the least deny that the dictatorship of the working class exists in Russia. He does not in the least deny that our Party took power as the Party of the urban working class. He says that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia exists, it is true in different forms than it would in Western Europe, but it is necessary and it exists. In Western Europe it would take the form of democracy, while in Russia it has acquired an altogether different form, the form of "proletarian despotism." Ours is a "Despotism" but it is proletarian for all that. But it cannot last long. Its historical task is by every possible means to rouse to cultural life the majority of the population in our country: and the majority of the population is represented by the moujik (peasant). In rousing the millions of the peasantry to cultural life the "Proletarian Despotism" (the proletarian dictatorship) by its own hands will rouse the political power which will overthrow it. As soon as the dictatorship of the proletarian minority has sufficiently roused the peasantry, the latter will immediately say to the former: "Get out!" By that the historical mission of the proletarian despotism will have been fulfilled and our nation will have ripened into real democracy.

The two following quotations describe sufficiently the position held by Bauer. He writes: "In Russia, the proletariat represents only an insignificant minority of the nation and can establish its domination only temporarily. It must inevitably lose power again as soon as the peasant masses of the nation become sufficiently mature culturally to take power into their own hands.* "The temporary

* Otto Bauer: "Bolschewismus oder Sozialdemokratie." 3 Aufl. Wien. 1921. p. 7.

domination of industrial Socialism in agrarian Russia is only a beacon calling to the proletariat of the industrial West to the fight. Only the capture of political power by the proletariat in the industrial West can guarantee the prolonged domination of industrial Socialism."†

In addition to Kautsky and Bauer there is a certain interest in the position held by Parvus and Ströbel. The former's pamphlet "Labour Socialism and the World Revolution—a Letter to German Workers" contains so much slander about our revolution that it is difficult to conceive of a more contemptible production. The pearls of lies of Kautsky are nothing compared with the machinations of the agile Parvus. He even explains the position he held in 1905 in such a manner as to make it appear that he never spoke about the social-revolution, but merely about Labour democracy, after the style of—Australian democracy! It will be clear to everyone, of course, that this is but an attempt to crave the forgiveness of the public opinion of Europe for the sins he committed in his remote youth and for that purpose Parvus required the Australian cloak of repentance.

From the point of view of this contemptible renegade our revolution is nothing more or less than the "occupation of the country by a mob of soldier deserters."

"For the realisation of Socialism a definite stage of development of industry and maturity of the working class are required."*

† Ibid. Here it is not difficult to observe the remarkable similarity between the position of Bauer and the views of comrade Trotsky. But about that later.

* Parvus: "Der Arbeitersozialismus und die Weltrevolution—Briefe an die deutschen Arbeiter," Berlin, 1919, p. 15.

There is no trace of either one or the other in Russia and, therefore, the realisation of the Socialist Revolution and Socialist construction are impossible. The historical mission of the Bolsheviks is to serve as a bridge by which a Cæsar, a Bonaparte, or someone similar will come to power. This is the slanderous summary of our revolution made by the wily carpet-bagger, Parvus, who more than once thought he would try his luck and dispose of his soiled goods on our political bazaar.

The second author we have mentioned, Ströbel, has attempted to develop his views on our revolution into a complete theoretical "system."

In a pamphlet bearing the characteristic title: "Not Violence but Organisation," Ströbel, arguing about the "quintessence of the Russian Revolution," declares that it is absolute nonsense to talk about the Communist proletarian revolution, for a fundamental fact of our revolution is the strengthening of peasant private property and the strengthening of peasant private property is the very thing that determines the character of the revolution. He who does not understand this is not a Marxist, is a "Komnarodnik,"* to use a modern expression, etc. Finally, Ströbel reduces Bolshevism to a Bakuninism. "If the Bolsheviks imagined," writes Ströbel, "that the Russian peasants can by means of propaganda (Zureden) and coercion be won over to the side of real Communism and the Communist method of production they have only proved again that they are held in captivity by the typical ideas of the old Russian Revolutionaries which represent the specific features of Bakuninism."†

* Communist-narodnik. A reference to the Narodniki, the early pre-Marxian Revolutionaries in Russia.

† Heinrich Ströbel: "Nicht Gewalt, sondern Organisation," Berlin, 1921, Verlag "Der Firm," p. 12.

"The peasantry . . . represented at least seven-eighths of the total population of Soviet Russia. Their number and their economic importance, in the final analysis, decides the fate of the revolution! How much fantasy, and what fantastic faith in miracles must one have under such conditions to believe that the Russian Revolution is a Communist revolution in its inherent character and its ultimate results?"‡

The Russian Bolsheviks are not building Socialism, but are preparing the ground for the rise of a new capitalist system—this is the summary of the analysis of our revolution made by international Social-Democracy. In Russia capitalist relations are unripe. Russia is a semi-Asiatic country in which class relations find their expression in the overwhelming numerical preponderance of the peasantry: the proletariat floats like a fly in the peasants' milk, and this proletarian fly confronted by the peasant elephant is totally incapable of making a Communist revolution. The weight of the peasantry is pulling us down with increasing force; this weight is deciding the question of the character of the Russian Revolution, and no matter what costumes the active men of the Russian Revolution may masquerade in, no matter what slogans they may put forward, in spite of all their inventions, in the end it will all amount to the same thing: the question will be decided by the peasantry. The sole idea of the whole revolution is the strengthening of peasant private property. The objective idea of the peasant revolution is nothing more or less than the emancipation of the peasantry from feudalism. This precisely determines

‡ Ibid: p. 13.

the bourgeois character of the Russian Revolution. This is the "opinion" of international Social-Democracy.

Now it will not be superfluous to glance at our fellow countrymen, the Russian Mensheviks. They too argued approximately like their Western-European colleagues. We will take, for example, a classic Russian Menshevik like George Plekhanov, who was most consistent in his theories. Analysing the character of our revolution in his peculiar style, with his "bookish simplicity," he wrote:

"Marx directly stated that a given method of production cannot leave the historical stage of a given country as long as it does not serve as an obstacle and facilitates the development of its forces of production. The question now arises, how does it stand with capitalism in Russia? Have we grounds for asserting that its day is done, i.e., that it has reached that high stage of development at which it no longer facilitates the development of the forces of production of the country, but on the contrary hampers it? Russia suffers not only from the fact that capitalism exists here, but also from the fact that the capitalist method of production is insufficiently developed, and this indisputable truth has never been challenged by any Russians calling themselves Marxists."*

And in an open letter to the Petrograd workers written on October 28th, 1917, Plekhanov brought forward other arguments. He wrote:

"In the population of our State the prole-

* G. Plekhanov: "A Year at Home." Complete Collection of Essays and Speeches, 1917-18. 2 vols., published by Povolodsky and Co., Paris, 1921. Vol. 1, p. 26.

tariat represents not the majority, but the minority. And yet it can practise its dictatorship only in the event of its representing the majority. No serious Socialist will dispute this."†

Or take the opinion on this question of the already mentioned P. P. Maslov, who at the time was an orthodox Menshevik. He wrote :

"The working class of Russia cannot undertake the organisation of production because it represents a minority of the population of the country. Other classes predominate over it even numerically." (Maslov, *op. cit.* p. 143.)

Here is another passage :

"The revolution now taking place, being a bourgeois revolution, i.e., preserving all the principles of the capitalist system at the same time, may be—and inevitably will be—a Social Revolution, which will bring about a considerable change in economic relations, not in the sphere of the organisation of production but in the sphere of the distribution of the national income among the various classes" (i.e., the workers will receive a little more than they have been receiving and the peasants will be subject to a little less taxation, etc.). (*Ibid* : vol. 2, p. 246.)

This is what the pillars of Menshevism, the best Menshevik ideologists, wrote at the beginning of the revolution in describing that revolution as being necessarily and inevitably a bourgeois revolution.

From this it is clear that as events developed

† *Ibid* : vol. 2, p. 346.

more and more to a climax, as the power of the Bolsheviks became more and more stable, as the vanguard of the proletarian dictatorship felt itself more and more firm, it was inevitable that at last the note should be heard—and indeed it began more and more persistently to be heard—of the inevitable degeneration of Bolshevism.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEGENERATE BOLSHEVIKS

At first they shouted about the inevitable failure and doom of the Bolsheviks; later, to the extent that the Bolsheviks consolidated their power, more and more loudly was heard another note: the Bolsheviks are holding on, but they are not the same Bolsheviks; the Bolsheviks are strengthening their position, but they are degenerating under the influence of the seething peasant tide. Nor could it be otherwise: those who regard our revolution as a bourgeois revolution, naturally, prior to the consolidation of the Soviets, would howl about the inevitable failure of a proletarian revolution and after the consolidation they would inevitably talk about degeneration.

This note was extraordinarily well expressed by Dalin, one of the prominent Mensheviks in general, and one of the theoreticians of moribund Menshevism in particular. In his book, "After Wars and Revolutions," he wrote:

"One must understand the sense of events, one must tear off the masquerade clothing, one must wash off the paint and judge not by words, but by deeds, not by intentions, but by results. One must understand the objective meaning of the revolution."*

And this objective meaning of the revolution is as follows:

"The revolution which has been proceeding

* D. Dalin: "After Wars and Revolutions," published by Grani, Berlin, 1922, p. 10.

in Russia during the last five years [written in 1922, N.B.] from the very beginning was, and has remained to the end a bourgeois revolution." (Ibid: p. 7).

The question arises why is such a summary given of a Communist revolution?

And the answer is:

"Because the interests of the peasantry determined the fate of the whole policy." (Ibid: p. 13).

In this connection the position taken up by Lieber, that diehard, Right Wing Menshevik, whom we have already quoted, is interesting. Generalising his ideas on the possibility of Socialism in Russia, Lieber in his pamphlet, wrote as follows:

"For us—Socialists who have not re-learned their Socialism—there is not the slightest doubt that Socialism first of all can be brought about in those countries which stand at the highest stage of economic development—Germany, England, America—in those countries in which, first of all, there are grounds for very important victories for the Socialist movement. [Just imagine, America is the country where "first of all" there are "grounds for very important victories for the Socialist movement"!—N.B.]. And yet for some time a theory of quite an opposite character has developed among us. This theory does not represent anything new to us old Russian Social-Democrats; this theory was developed by the Russian Narodniki in their fight against the early Marxists." (op. cit. p. 16.)

Consequently, Bolshevism is a Narodnist theory in the fight against which Russian Marxism developed. He could not resist this "modern" reproach of "Komnarodism"! But even this did not satisfy our "thinker"; a still more incriminating label had to be found for Bolshevism. Narodnism was not nearly severe enough for Lieber. Consequently he makes the presentation of the question more "profound" and writes: "This theory [the Bolshevik theory—N.B.], is a very old one, it has its roots in Slavophilism."*

A. A. Bogdanov decided the question of the character of our revolution in a peculiar manner, but in the main in the same style. The Bolsheviks seized power by taking advantage of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, who became bankrupt after the war. The capture of power with the aid of soldiery

* M. E. Lieber, *op. cit.* p. 17: The reader will see that Lieber distorts the Bolshevik presentation of the question by confusing the question of who "began" with that of the level of the type of revolution. The imperialist front in Russia was broken before that of other countries and the Russian proletariat seized power before that of other countries, which to a considerable degree was determined by the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie. On the other hand to construct is much more difficult for us owing to the technical and economic backwardness of the country. All this has been explained over and over again, in Bolshevik literature. We will observe also that the "modern" reasoning about "national limitations" had its glorious predecessor in the reasoning of Ströbel, Lieber and Co. To charge the Bolsheviks with Slavophilism, sounds awfully strong. While Lieber includes the Bolsheviks among the Slavophiles, Tchernov charges us with plagiarising the ideas of the so-called "Maximalists." "The Russian Narodniki-Maximalists prophetically foretold in their phantasies nearly all the greatest of the Bolshevik experiments." (V. Tchernov: "Constructive Socialism," vol. Prague, 1.162),

cannot be regarded as the beginning of a Socialist revolution; the proletariat has not ripened for Socialism while the peasantry are in the majority. Consequently, the State which the Bolsheviks are establishing is not a proletarian State. It is the State of the technical-organising class, the intelligentsia, which has now assumed the character of a class. Even if the subjective intentions of the Bolsheviks did not include the establishment of such a State, the objective role they are playing is reducing itself to the construction of a peculiar State, at the head of which is a new class, which became finally consolidated in the flames of the revolution. Having undergone a process of bureaucratic degeneration, the men who have come from the proletariat are becoming a component part of the new class. The objective possibility of Socialism here, too, had its decisive effect, in spite of the subjective illusions of the agents of the revolutionary process themselves.

It deserves to be mentioned that Bazarov, who more than once came out as the literary twin of Bogdanov, could not agree to recognise the Socialist character of our revolution. According to him, our revolution is a Socialist revolution only in the declarations issued by the Bolsheviks. As a matter of fact, he argues, a deep chasm separates these declarations from reality; a chasm, to fill which the proletariat will have to spend more than one century.

This then is the general estimation of our revolution in the form in which it is presented by Russian opportunist Socialism and particularly by the Mensheviks. This estimation amounts to this, that capitalist relations in Russia have not matured; that the relation of forces is to a high degree unfavourable for the proletariat; that the character

of the Russian revolution is determined by the peasantry; that in one way or another, through the medium of a Bolshevik Party or without it, through its initiative or against its will, by its remaining in power or by its degeneration or overthrow, a new capitalism will arise resting upon the peasantry—the majority of the population. Such is the Social-Democratic theory on the question of the character of our revolution, or, what amounts to the same thing, on the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country.

This exhausts the list of the critics of Bolshevism on this question outside the Bolshevik ranks. Now it is the turn of the critics comprising those groups and tendencies within our Party.

CHAPTER VI.

TROTSKY, ZINOVIEV AND CO.

It would be most expedient to commence the review of the latter category of critics with comrade Trotsky, the more so that Trotsky's criticism is so importunate and clamorous that it is literally impossible to avoid it. Here it would be sufficient to refer to two passages frequently reproduced in literature in order to compare them with the criticism we have just examined. The following are two passages from the works of comrade Trotsky :

"In order to make its victory secure the proletarian vanguard must in the very first days of its domination make deep inroads, not only into feudal but also into bourgeois property. In doing so it will come into hostile conflict, not only with all the groups of the bourgeoisie but also with the wide masses of the peasantry, with whose aid it came into power. The contradictions in the position of the Workers' Government in a backward country, in which the peasantry represent the overwhelming majority of the population, can find a solution only on an international scale, in the arena of the world proletarian revolution. Compelled by historic forces to break down the bourgeois democratic limitations of the Russian Revolution, the victorious proletariat will be compelled to break down its national State limitations, i.e., it must strive consciously to make the Russian Revolution become the prologue

to world revolution." (Introduction to "1905," Moscow, 1922.)

This is the first passage from the works of Trotsky written in 1922.

Here is the second passage:

"Without the direct State aid of the European proletariat, the working class of Russia cannot retain power and convert its temporary domination into prolonged Socialistic dictatorship. Of this there cannot be any doubt for a single moment."*

If we take the trouble to compare what comrade Trotsky says here with what was said by the Social-Democrat, Otto Bauer, we cannot but observe the close similarity, if not coincidence, of the two points of view. Trotsky in 1922 did not deny the existence of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, but the cunning Bauer also accepted that dictatorship as a fact. On the other hand, while the clever prelate of the Social-Democratic church cautiously introduces a slight modification, i.e., the dictatorship is proletarian, but very short-lived, and its existence depends directly upon the State aid of the Western proletariat—the tribune of the revolution, Trotsky, does not concede one iota to Bauer: he too (apparently out of fear of falling into the sin of national limitations) cannot conceive that the Russian proletariat can guarantee the transition of

* L. Trotsky: "Our Revolution," quoted from Bukharin's book, "The Question of Trotskyism," State Publishing Department, 1925, p. 114.

its temporary domination into prolonged Socialist dictatorship without direct State aid.

However much they may wriggle and turn the similarity—speaking mildly—is positively striking. The position of Trotsky on the question of the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country (or, what amounts to the same thing, on the question of the character of our revolution) is nothing more or less than the Russian translation of the Bauer Social-Democratic variation. That is why the fact became possible in the fight against the Leninist Central Committee of the Russian Bolsheviks, that Trotsky found himself in the same company with a man who recently acquired the deplorable reputation of renegade, Korsch and his friends. This honourable gentleman, who has been expiating his Communist sins by preaching a holy crusade against the Russian Revolution, has now also perceived, through the blessing of Kautsky, the bourgeois-peasant character of our revolution and is now announcing that the Russian Bolsheviks are cultivating the off-shoots of a new American type of capitalism. What is there surprising about this? Since no proletarian State aid from the West is forthcoming, it is not surprising that the proletarian dictatorship is changing into something “far from proletarian”; it is not surprising that it is “running off” class rails. This is the elementary conclusion to be drawn from the Bauer-Trotsky premises. . . .

Having finished with Trotsky, we must examine the extremely peculiar variation of the “friendly” criticism of the Leninist point of view of the character of our revolution: we have in mind the criticism of Lenin on the part of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others in the period of the October Revolution; the peculiarity of this criticism was evidenced in that

the comrades mentioned opposed to Lenin not only their theoretical "line," but put forward "in a friendly manner" also their political counter-platform.

First of all, however, we must deal with the criticism of the Leninist point of view advanced by Kamenev at the Conference of April, 1917. This is absolutely necessary because the position occupied by Kamenev in April, 1917, which was revealed with particular distinctness in his speech in opposition to the Central Committee's report at the All-Russian Conference, is the intellectual source and the theoretical basis of the desertion from the October line of policy on the part of the comrades mentioned.

At the April Conference, Lenin's report and Kamenev's opposition report dealt with the character of the revolution which was then commencing and with the classes which might be and were its driving forces. The conference, in determining the line of policy to be carried on by the Party for the period immediately ahead—and that was the period when the revolution was unfolding itself—could not avoid answering the question: "What kind of revolution was unfolding itself, merely bourgeois revolution or a revolution growing into a Socialist revolution?" Both the reporter, comrade Lenin and the counter-reporter, comrade Kamenev, raised this question and answered it. Lenin saw the task of the immediate future, of the next few months ahead, to be "to take the first concrete steps towards this transition," i.e., transition to lines of Socialist revolution. To Kamenev, however, to think as Lenin did, that "this revolution is not a bourgeois democratic revolution, that it is approaching towards a Socialist revolution," implied "falling into great error." Thus:

“If the bourgeois democratic revolution is finished then this bloc [between the working class and the petty bourgeoisie—N.B.] cannot exist and no definite tasks will confront them, the proletariat will carry on a revolutionary struggle against the petty bourgeois bloc. Joint work from that moment is absolutely impossible. However, we recognise the Soviets as the centres of the organisation of forces; consequently, we recognise that there are tasks which can be fulfilled by the alliance between the workers and peasants. Consequently, the bourgeois revolution is not finished, has not yet outlived itself, and I think that all of you must admit that if this revolution was completely finished, power would really pass into the hands of the proletariat. Then the moment would have arrived for a break in the alliance between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie and for the independent fulfilment of proletarian aims by the proletariat itself. I think we must adopt one of two tactics: either the proletariat is confronted by tasks which can be fulfilled only by the proletariat and no other social group can aid it in that—and then we must break the alliance and proceed to the fulfilment of these ideas which must be fulfilled by the proletariat; or we consider that by virtue of the conditions of the moment the bloc is practical and has a future before it—then we take part in the bloc and formulate our tactics so that the alliance shall not be broken. Hence, I say that the proletarian Party must stand out separately in this bloc and clearly and precisely define its own purely Socialist international aims. We will march with the bloc and can still do several paces jointly with

it. I hope the proletarian Party will really act in this manner."*

Here, in passing, another question is raised (or more correctly another phase of the same problem), viz., the question of the role of the peasantry in the proletarian revolution, the question as to whether the peasantry can still be utilised as a force capable of helping the revolution. The point of view of Kamenev is quite clear on this also: there can be no talk of a proletarian dictatorship marching side by side with the peasantry; there can be no dictatorship of the working class under which the proletariat could construct Socialism in conjunction with the peasantry and guide the peasantry in this work. For Kamenev, on the contrary, the capture of power by the proletariat, the point at which the proletariat commences the work of constructing Socialism, is precisely the point at which the proletariat breaks with the peasantry. Not alliance with the peasantry, but irreconcilable antagonism and struggle with the peasantry, is what Kamenev dreamed of at the beginning of the revolution.

Of course, this theoretical analysis of our revolution, this estimation of its driving forces and of the relations between the working class and the peasantry, the assertion that a bloc between the working class and the peasantry is impossible under the proletarian dictatorship, etc., wholly and completely determined the position of Kamenev and his friends at the outbreak of the October revolu-

* Speech by Kamenev at the Petrograd and All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik Section) 9th April, 1917, State Publishing Department, 1925, p. 52.

tion. In those October days, Kamenev found himself in opposition to Lenin and the majority of the Central Committee and, as a consistent man, he drew the practical conclusions from the theories he developed at the April conference in opposition to the theories of Lenin. Others who followed Kamenev, consistently or inconsistently, also did nothing else but take the consequences of the first "friendly" attempt at the theoretical revision of Leninism. Indeed, if the capture of power by the proletariat signifies inevitable conflict with the peasantry, then it is impossible to participate in a government of the proletarian dictatorship; it is impossible to call upon the proletariat to revolt; for its defeat can be foretold with astronomical precision. From this follows also the letter published against calling the workers to revolt and from this follows also the resignations from the Central Committee and from the Council of People's Commissaries.

Observe the leitmotif that runs through all these documents which are supposed to "elucidate" and "explain" these disgusting desertions and resignations, this violation of Party discipline, this flight from the field of battle. The following, for example, is an extract from a document signed, among others, by comrade Shliapnikov:

"We hold the point of view, that it is necessary to establish a Socialist Government comprising all the Soviet Parties." (At that time the term 'Soviet Party' applied to all those parties which adopted the 'Soviet platform' and which were represented in the Soviets, i.e., the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries.—N.B.). "We are of the opinion that only the formation of such a

government can secure for us the fruits of the heroic struggle of the working class and the revolutionary army in the October-November days. We believe that outside of this there is only one alternative: the preservation of a clearly Bolshevik Government by means of political terror. This alternative has been adopted by the Council of People's Commissaries. We cannot and do not desire to join this government. We foresee that this must lead to the removal of the proletarian mass organisations from the leadership of political life, the establishment of an irresponsible regime, and the suppression of the revolution in the country. We cannot accept responsibility for such a policy, and for that reason we submit to the Central Executive Committee our resignation as People's Commissaries."*

Here is a short but eloquent extract from a long letter written by Zinoviev, Kamenev and others:

"We are resigning from the Central Committee at a moment of victory, at the moment when our Party has assumed power. We are resigning because we cannot look on calmly while the policy of the leading group of the Central Committee is leading to the loss of the fruits of victory of the workers' party and to the defeat of the proletariat." (Archives of the Revolution, 1917, p. 409.)

These political views did not just drop from the skies; they quite consistently and "correctly" fol-

* Archives of the Revolution, 1917. The October Revolution, Facts and Documents. Compiled by Popov, edited by Roshkov. Leningrad, 1918, "Novaya Epokha," p. 408.

low from the definite point of view held by these comrades concerning our revolution. Of course, if our revolution is a bourgeois revolution and far from being completed at that, if it is not merging into a Socialist revolution (because the proletariat is weak and the majority of the population of the country, the peasantry, cannot be utilised as a force to help the proletarian revolution), it follows that the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat under the given conditions is a task impossible of fulfilment, a dangerous and impracticable undertaking. The Party may be compelled blindfolded to rush into this adventure, but nothing will come of it, as nothing comes from any adventure: the Party will meet inevitable destruction, either immediately or some little time after it has taken power. There can be no other result, for even if it manages to consolidate its power it can hold on only by naked violence, by the bayonet of dictatorship; and to sit on a bayonet is uncomfortable and unstable. In such a position the Party will not be able to avoid its isolation from the proletariat, nor prevent the circle of the revolutionary forces being narrowed down to its own ranks; and, in spite of its own desires, it must reveal the absurdity and impracticability of its actions and surrender the revolution to the flood and destruction.

It will not be superfluous to observe here that among these first conclusions drawn from the theory of disbelief in the possibility of a Socialist revolution in Russia, the theory of lack of faith in the strength of our proletariat and under-estimation of the peasantry, there was already heard the note which later was to be repeated again and again in every outbreak of opposition temper. "The proletariat is weak, we can expect no aid from anywhere—not even from the countryside! What is the

use of dreaming about constructing Socialism? Attempts in this direction are doomed to failure; they must inevitably develop into their very opposite. Obstinacy in this direction will merely lead to the degeneration of the new regime into a regime of irresponsible bureaucracy, official pressure, political terror, isolation from the masses and finally to the decay of the Party itself. In a word nothing good will come of the Bolshevik attempt to construct Socialism 'in a single country,' but any amount of bad may result: perhaps it may even result in the 'Asiatication and ossification' mentioned by the German bourgeois, Scheimann, to whom we have already referred!"

Now it will not be out of place to draw certain conclusions.

First of all the comparison made between all the points of view examined above, of the European Social-Democrats, Bogdanov-Bazarov, the Russian Mensheviks, Trotsky and Kamenev-Zinoviev, reveals that in principle they completely coincide; on the question of the relation of the inherent forces of the Russian Revolution, on the question of the maturity of the economic structure of Russia from the point of view of the possibility of definite Socialist achievements, without the slightest exaggeration we may speak on the close similarity and identity in principle of all the positions enumerated. Of course, in pointing out the similarity in the position from which the various groups start out, we do not suggest that the conclusions which each of them draws from these positions are the same. On the contrary, the conclusions drawn vary; some of these groups became heroes of the revolution, others fought against the revolution, while others shamefully dragged at its tail. Fairness demands that it should be stated that con-

clusions did not coincide even within the limits of a single group, for example, Plekhanov abandoned his friends, and (as is now known) was opposed to the attempt to smash the proletarian revolution, the "premature," but for all that proletarian revolution. Conclusions differed in other groups also: Trotsky in the October days drew certain conclusions, taking his place in the front ranks of the fighters; Kamenev and Zinoviev drew other conclusions. Trotsky reasoned this way: although due to inherent causes doom is inevitable, perhaps the State aid of the Western proletariat will come to our aid after all. Therefore, "Forward!" Kamenev and Zinoviev argued in this way: Precisely because doom is inevitable, owing to the inherent combination of forces, it is useless to hurry forward so quickly: therefore, "Retire!"

The conclusions, we repeat, were different, but the theoretical underlying principle (the estimation of the driving forces of the revolution, the approach to the estimation of the worker and peasant bloc, the estimation of the question of a combination of forces and of the possibility of a numerically small working class leading the enormous ponderous mass of the peasantry, the solution of the question of the inevitable conflicts between these two forces, the solution of the question of the character of the Russian revolution, i.e., of the possibility of Socialism in our country)—the underlying principle of this theory was the same among them all. And this "underlying principle" is so far removed from the Leninist presentation of the question, that even if it recalls the latter, it does so as its opposite and not as something similar to it. The Leninist presentation of the question of the maturity of capitalism in Russia is not so crudely simple as many of the wise critics of Lenin pretend.

Lenin never disputed the assertion that the material premises for the construction of Socialism in Russia were far, far fewer than those in Western Europe or in America. But on the other hand, he held the opinion that in no country was the position such that Socialism would arise in all its completeness immediately after the Communists captured power. In every country, even in the most developed, even in the United States, the situation will be that a fairly long historical stage will be passed before the organisation of economy will totally embrace the whole of the national-economic complex. However, Lenin held that in the backward economy of Russia there was an island which could serve as a base for Socialist operations. The more so that in the country we had a peculiar combination of "proletarian revolution and peasant wars," a combination which Marx regarded as a most favourable condition for the victory of the proletariat. The special condition of the rise of revolution out of the imperialist war, the peculiar combination of forces within the country, the existence of a certain material basis serving as a starting point for the movement, all these taken together create the ground for a systematic advance along the lines of Socialist revolution. It is only necessary to strengthen carefully the Socialist sector of economy, to convert it into a base for our operations and then, using this as a commanding height, systematically and without undue haste proceed to round-up the seething, unorganised economy under Socialist influence.

After what has been stated above, it will not be superfluous to raise the question as to what would have been the logical conclusion of the application of the point of view of disbelief in the possibility of constructing Socialism under the conditions pre-

vailing in Russia, the point of view of general and European Social-Democracy, plus Bogdanov-Bazarov plus Trotsky plus Kamenev-Zinoviev. We have already dealt with this in passing, but now it is necessary to emphasise it more strongly. It turns out that if consistently applied, this point of view would lead to one of the following two possible situations: if no victorious international working class revolution takes place, then the Bolsheviks are doomed, either because they will be overthrown, or as a result of their own degeneration. There is no other alternative, because if no objective premises for the Socialist revolution exist, if the proletarian dictatorship, as a proletarian dictatorship, cannot exist for any length of time, it may at best preserve its form by changing its content, i.e. the proletarian State must become something "far from a proletarian State." If in the social class sphere the peasantry overwhelmingly predominate and if conflict with the peasantry is inevitable, then equally inevitably must our State degenerate (if we "preserve ourselves") because, owing to the increasing pressure of the peasantry led by the wealthy peasants, it must make more and more concessions to the peasantry. In this manner the degeneration of our State will develop in a concrete form: it will become a "kulak State."* In other words, the opportunistic premises laid down already in the summer of 1917 wholly contain the ideology of the present-day opposition which, starting out from the fact that we exist, argues about the tendencies of our degeneration. The structure of the theory of the opposition inevitably leads to such conclusions. It is true that the Social-Democrats drew these conclusions before the oppo-

* Kulak—wealthy peasant, "gentleman farmer."

sition Communists; in this connection the words of Kautsky may be termed the "vade mecum" for the All-Russian Communist opposition. This circumstance, however, merely emphasised the ideological deviation of our opposition from Leninism. Our opposition speaks about the Soviet State becoming a "kulak State," but Otto Bauer said that long before them. He even now says that there are many elements of Socialism in our economy: he even now considers that our Party is not quite a workers' party; he "only" assumes that we are beginning to breathe the peasant spirit and that such, apparently, is our inevitable fate. Paul Levi, in a preface to an anti-Leninist pamphlet written by Rosa Luxemburg (which Levi published against the will of the deceased revolutionary), writes the same thing. Dalin, in the book we have already quoted, says that "subjectively" our revolution is a proletarian revolution, but that objectively it is nothing more or less than a bourgeois revolution, for it is inevitably a peasant revolution, etc. As for the other theoretical stream—Bogdanov and Bazarov—is not the theory of our inevitable bureaucratic degeneration the theory now held by the combined opposition? While the Social-Democrats place most emphasis upon the peasant aspect, Bogdanov lays more emphasis upon the second half of the process of our "degeneration," namely bureaucratic degeneration (the technico-intellectual bureaucracy, the "organising" caste). In the speeches of several of the opposition delivered in the Communist Academy, reference was made to "Cavaignacs." But even this piece of stupidity is not original: it was long ago "discovered" by Parvus, Kautsky and other gentlemen, for this company does not believe in the possibility of victorious revolution in Russia; and as these "confounded Bolsheviks" will not

leave the stage, only one possibility is left, only one bright star of hope, namely, degeneration, Bonapartism, Tsarism and other "Thermidors." The theory of degeneration stands entirely upon the shoulders of Social-Democratic, Bogdanovist, Trotskyist, Kamenev-Zinoviev-Octoberist premises.

CHAPTER VII.

CAN WE BUILD UP SOCIALISM?

AFTER this historical introduction, we may now take up the question in the special circumstances which arose in connection with the controversy with the opposition. We now take up the question of "the construction of Socialism in a single country." It will be more expedient to start with the formula advanced by comrade Zinoviev, for that formula may be regarded as the official formula of the opposition.

Comrade Zinoviev presents the question in the following manner. He says that a distinction must be made between two things, namely: (1) the guaranteed possibility of constructing Socialism—the possibility of constructing Socialism can (!) be conceived (!! in a single country: (2) the final construction and consolidation of Socialism.*

That is how the question is presented. Comrade Zinoviev hastened to refer to comrade Lenin. For example he mentions that at the Tenth Party Congress, Lenin said that we can speak of the ultimate success of the Socialist revolution in Russia "only on two conditions": (1) on the condition that we obtain aid from revolutions in the advanced countries, and (2) on the condition that we come to an agreement with the majority of the peasantry.

Comrade Zinoviev quotes several other extracts from Lenin in which Lenin asserts that "the ultimate victory of Socialism in a single country is impossible."

* G. Zinoviev: "Leninism," State Publishing Dept., Leningrad, 1926, p. 265.

There is not the slightest doubt that many passages in the works of Lenin may be found which deal in general terms with the impossibility of the ultimate victory of Socialism in a single country, and in Russia in particular. This formula as we understand it, and which we oppose to the Zinoviev understanding of it (of which we shall speak lower down), is absolutely correct.

Before proceeding to this interpretation, however, it must be stated that the quotations made by Zinoviev can be met by other quotations which Zinoviev himself has included in his book. We quote the three following extracts which, from the strictly logical point of view, would appear to contradict the theses upon which Zinoviev's case mainly rests. In Zinoviev's own book, page 269, there is a quotation from Lenin on the law of unequal capitalist development, containing the following argument :

“The victorious proletariat of this country [the country that has taken the path of revolution—N.B.] having expropriated the capitalists and organised Socialist production in its own country, would rise against the rest of the capitalist world, attract to its side the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolt against the capitalists of those countries, and, if necessary, take up arms against the exploiting classes in those States.”

The most interesting part of this quotation is Lenin's idea that the proletariat will not only be victorious, but that it will organise Socialist production in its own country. Hence, Lenin here speaks of the possibility of organising Socialist production; speaking concretely, of the possibility of constructing Socialism in a single country.

We will quote another extract from Lenin's article "On Co-operation." Here Lenin says that we possess "all that is necessary for the construction of complete Socialist society."*

Further on he says:

"This is not the construction of Socialism, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this construction."†

Hence, there is not the slightest doubt that Lenin considered the construction of complete Socialist society quite possible, i.e., he considered possible not only the attempt to construct Socialism, but the construction itself. We are building Socialism and can complete the construction because we possess "all that is necessary and sufficient" for this purpose.

Now let us compare all that is said in these quotations. On the one hand it is said that the final victory of Socialism in Russia alone is impossible; on the other hand it is stated that we can organise Socialist production and that all the necessary conditions exist for the complete achievement of the new Socialist system of society. How can these two seemingly contradictory assertions be reconciled? But does Lenin contradict himself? Did he hold one point of view at one time and another point of view at another? Or perhaps something is concealed here which our opposition has failed to observe? If one follows the speeches and writings of our comrades of the opposition, it will be observed that they strive to emphasise the first series

* Lenin: "Collected Works," Vol. XVIII., Part II., p. 140.

† Ibid.

of quotations, which are alleged to support the "theory" of the opposition. But the opposition conceal and do not subject to analysis the other series of quotations, which the adherents of the Central Committee put forward against it. Where can we find the key to the solution of all this? This key must be sought for in the works of Lenin himself, and it can be found easily if his statements, especially those contained in his later works, are carefully examined. We think that the key for the solution of this problem can be found in the following quotation taken from Lenin's article "On Co-operation." In this article Lenin wrote:

"I am prepared to say that our centre of gravity would be transferred to cultural development, were it not for international relations, were it not for our obligation to fight for our position on an international scale."*

This quotation teaches us how the various postulates of Lenin concerning the impossibility of the final victory of Socialism in a single country (in our country) should be interpreted. Lenin's idea is as follows: If we start out from the combination of forces within our country, then in spite of the backwardness of our country, in spite of the enormous difficulties created by this backwardness, we have all that is necessary and what is sufficient for the construction of Socialism. We may build and complete the construction of Socialist society.

This Leninist position is the very opposite of the position of the Social-Democrats; it is completely distinct from the position of Trotsky; it is radically different from the position of those "shades,"

* Lenin: "Collected Works," Vol. XVIII., Part II., pp. 144-45.

"tendencies" and "groups" who consider that (as the peasantry represents the overwhelming majority of the population) with such a combination of social forces we are inevitably doomed to destruction or to degeneration. The Leninist position is a denial of that position along the whole front. Lenin's thesis concerning the possibility of constructing complete Socialism is at the same time a reply to the question of the character of the Russian Revolution. It is a reply to the question of whether it is possible or impossible, for internal reasons, to build and complete the construction of Socialism, and that reply is a reply in the affirmative. But that is not the whole reply. Simultaneously, Lenin reminds us that we do not live alone in the wide world. In addition to the internal combination of forces in our country, there is also an international situation; this situation is fraught with various dangers: war, intervention, blockades, etc. It is bound up with our international unity to further the international revolution. Therefore, we have no guarantee in our pockets that we shall succeed in completing the construction of Socialism, that we shall conduct the revolution to the end, i.e., achieve complete Socialist society, without the aid of the Western European proletariat.

Hence, when Lenin says that the final victory of Socialism is impossible in a single country, he wishes to say: Do not forget that we are in an international environment; there is no need to worry about our being unable to construct Socialism owing to our technico-economic backwardness, for we possess all that is necessary for the construction of Socialism; but do not forget that we do not live alone in the world, do not forget that we live in an international environment and that from that side the enormous forces of international

capitalism are arrayed against us. Precisely this idea is expressed in the extract we have quoted, an idea which Zinoviev has quoted an infinite number of times with different variations. If one examines all the extracts from Lenin's works (including those quoted by Zinoviev in his book on "Leninism") against "the final victory of Socialism in a single country," it will be seen without difficulty that reference is made precisely to dangers from without. Comrade Zinoviev confuses the question by piling into one heap internal and external dangers. In this connection the following is extremely curious. On page 278 of his book, Zinoviev writes :

"No one, we hope, would charge a book like the 'ABC of Communism' with being pessimistic. That book was written at a time when our revolution was marching triumphantly from victory to victory. In that book we read : 'The Communist Revolution can be victorious only as world revolution. . . In a situation where the workers have been victorious in a single country, economic construction, the organisation of economy is extremely difficult. . . If for the victory of Communism, the victory of world revolution and the mutual support of the workers are necessary, it follows that a necessary condition of victory is the international solidarity of the working class.' "

This is not "pessimism," this is simply the abc of Communism (without quotation marks).

Comrade Zinoviev, in the simplicity of his soul, thinks that he can cover his nakedness with the "ABC of Communism." Alas ! The abc of Communism (as well as the "ABC of Communism") is totally against him.

First of all let us see where comrade Zinoviev placed his omission marks. He employed them twice. Let us see what the "ABC of Communism" says in those passages which Zinoviev left out. Following the postulate that the Communist revolution can be victorious only as a world revolution, we get the following passage which Zinoviev did not quote:

"If in a certain country the working class took power while the working class in other countries was conscientiously loyal to the capitalist class, then in the last resort the former country would be crushed by the great predatory Powers. In 1917, 1918 and 1919, all the Powers were engaged in the effort to crush Soviet Russia. In 1919 they crushed Soviet Hungary. They failed to crush Soviet Russia because the internal situation in the great States was such as to make the rulers fear the possibility of themselves falling under the pressure of their own workers, who demanded the withdrawal of their troops from Russia."

Thus, in the first place, the very existence of the proletarian dictatorship in a single country is threatened unless it receives aid from the workers of other countries. Secondly—then follows the passage quoted by Zinoviev about the difficulties—but not impossibility, comrade Zinoviev!—of economic construction.

Now let us restore the second passage left out by Zinoviev. This passage explains the cause of the difficulties: "Such a country"—we read in the "ABC of Communism"—"obtains nothing or almost nothing from abroad. It is blockaded on all sides."

Comrade Zinoviev does not quote badly, does he?

He has the knack of placing his omission marks precisely where he requires them and where they would be useful for the opposition! We will add another quotation to the rest. In §45 of the "ABC of Communism" reference is made to the petty bourgeois character of the country, of the private property instincts of the peasantry and of relics of these instincts still be found amongst certain sections of the workers. What conclusions are drawn from this in the book? First, that the task of constructing Socialism in Russia "is an extremely difficult one"; secondly, that various defects of an internal character "hamper the fulfilment of our tasks, but by no means make this fulfilment impossible." This is far from being according to Zinoviev; it is according to Lenin.

CHAPTER VIII.

INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION.

THUS, comrade Zinoviev gives Lenin a completely upside-down interpretation and in vain does he refer to the abc of Communism. In vain does Zinoviev confuse the question. It would be absurd to commence an argument about the question as to whether we have guarantees for the construction of Socialism under any international situation in the event, say, of intervention on the part of the capitalist countries. It is clear that the sole guarantee against dangers from without is international revolution.

On this question, there is no dispute whatever. The argument is not about this at all. It is not here that the line runs which marks off the system of views of our Central Committee from the system of views advocated by the opposition. The argument is: can we construct Socialism and complete the construction apart from the question of international affairs; i.e., the argument is about the character of our revolution. Can we say with Lenin that our centre of gravity would be transferred to cultural development were it not for our international obligations, etc.? Or, will our backwardness inevitably drag us to the ground? That is the question. That this is so is proved by the history of the differences with the present opposition. The first differences on this question were observed at the meeting of the Polit-Bureau where comrade Kamenev and to a certain extent also comrade Zinoviev stated that we cannot cope with the

task of constructing Socialism, because our technico-economic base is backward.*

This was discussed at the XIV Congress. Consequently the question is not as simple as it may seem at first sight: we must make a distinction between its correct presentation and the incorrect. Of course, it may be asked: Why is such subtlety necessary? Why must we on the one hand raise the question of combatting the capitalist world, capitalist intervention, wars, etc., and on the other hand separate from this question the question of the internal combination of forces, when in real life the two things march together and are really inseparable? To reply to this, arguments of a weighty and convincing character must be advanced. If we can anticipate a certain period of peaceful development, for the next few years, say, then, according to the presentation of the question in which it is argued that we cannot construct Socialism in our country because of our technical economic backwardness, because the peasantry in our country are too numerous, we must inevitably, throughout the whole of this period, turn towards degeneration. A reply in the negative to the question to which Lenin replied in the affirmative, when he

* Now comrade Smilga follows at the heels of comrade Kamenev and considers that the postulate, "it is impossible to construct Socialism in a single technically backward country," is "the central point of Marxism and Leninism." Smilga lays emphasis on the backwardness of the country, and from this backwardness draws the conclusion that it is impossible to construct Socialism. The argument is not about the difficulties, but of the impossibility. Leninism, forsooth! (See the shorthand Report of the Discussion at the Communist Academy; see also an article by comrade Slipkov "Contradictions in the Economic Platform of the Opposition." "Pravda," No. 232.)

analysed the internal forces of our development, throws doubt upon everything else: the Socialist character of our State enterprises, the Socialist character of our dictatorship, the Socialist character of the driving forces of our economic development and the Socialist character of the driving forces of our State. For if we reply in the negative to the question of constructing Socialism on the ground of the internal state of class forces in our country, then the development of the forces of production in our country must inevitably coincide with such a development as will, in a more or less degree, result in the predominance of capitalist elements. This will "guarantee" such a character of development as will inevitably transfer the centre of gravity to the peasantry against the working class. This will inevitably be accompanied by such a regrouping in the system of our State apparatus as would justify one proclaiming from the tribune that on top we are becoming converted into a bureaucracy, isolating ourselves from the masses of the workers, while the lower floors of our State apparatus are being filled with kulak elements. In other words, the whole "position of the opposition," which is now clearly becoming a position of opposition to the Party on the ground that we are degenerating, emerges from the fact that our comrades have thrown doubt on that passage from Lenin in which he says directly that we possess all that is necessary and sufficient for the construction of Socialist society.

By separating the two sections of the question, we obtain a genuinely revolutionary-Marxian, a genuinely international presentation of the question.

To speak of international revolution on every possible occasion does not necessarily express the maximum of revolutionary spirit. The question of

the international character of revolution may be presented in such a manner as to contradict the revolutionary point of view. For example, in the work of Lieber, which we have already mentioned, there is a subtle passage in which the author tries to explain the difference between proletarian revolution and bourgeois revolution. Enumerating the special features of proletarian revolution, Lieber writes :

“Finally, there is another characteristic feature of Socialist revolution, that is its international character. [Just fancy, ‘international character’!—N.B.].

“The Socialist system takes the place of capitalism. The distinguishing feature of the capitalist system is that it creates world economy. . . . Therefore it is impossible to conceive the introduction of Socialism in a single section of this economy without the whole world economy becoming affected. Socialist revolution is conceivable only as world revolution and consequently it pre-supposes a certain state not only in one, two, three, four or five countries, but in the majority of the industrially developed countries; otherwise an inevitable conflict would arise between the countries which are not yet prepared for Socialism and those which are fully ripe for it.”

The kind of internationalism here expressed and on what it is based are perfectly clear. This position may be expressed as follows : “Don’t make revolution, don’t build Socialism, because you will come into conflict with other countries.” International revolution is here presented as a single act, as if the proletariat of all countries would come simultaneously into the historical arena and shout :

"Long live revolution!" And, hey presto! Socialism will float in all ready on a plate!

In actual fact, the political sense of this juggling with revolution is contained in the following moral: "Don't go forward, don't make revolution in a single country because you will fail anyhow"; or, translating this into the language of Schedrin:

"What is the use of you alone trying to build Socialism in a single street in Stupid-town?"

This is a narrow, national point of view.

"If you start a revolution in a single country, you will cease to be an internationalist," moralises Lieber.

This sort of "internationalism" is the reverse side of the social-treachery medal.

We repeat, the argument is about internal forces and not about the dangers coming from abroad. Consequently, the argument is about the character of our revolution.

When we speak about the construction of Socialism in a single country, by "single country" we have in mind our country (Russia). We cannot say that Socialism can be constructed in any country. If, for example, we were dealing with an absolutely backward country which did not possess the minimum of material pre-requisites for the construction of Socialism that we have, then we could not draw the conclusions that we draw in this case. Hence, the argument is about our country, with all its characteristic features, with its technique, its economy, its social-class relations, its proletariat, its peasantry and with the definite relations existing between the proletariat and the peasantry. This is how the question should be presented; the question of the possibility of constructing Social-

ism in our country so presented is the question of the character of our revolution. Since our revolution pre-supposes a state of affairs in which the construction of Socialism is possible and since we possess "all that is necessary and sufficient" for the construction of Socialism, it follows that there can be no point in the process of this Socialist construction at which this construction can become impossible. If within our country we have such a combination of forces that each year we make progress in the direction of preponderance of the Socialistic sector of our economy and that the socialised sectors of our economy grew more rapidly than the private capitalist sectors, then it follows that each succeeding year we operate with an increasing superiority of strength. Taking the "average," leaving out for the time being possible zigzags and accidents which mutually eliminate each other, our progress would be marked by a rising curve. Whence such forces could emerge inside the country as would make further Socialistic construction impossible, it is impossible to conceive. As, however, real life proceeds not only in the territory of the Soviet Union, as the dictatorship of the proletariat operates not on an isolated island, but on territory comprising one-sixth of the globe and is surrounded by the remaining capitalistic five-sixths of the globe, then a whole series of dangers of an international character arises. If it were asked: have we absolute guarantees against possible intervention, we should have to reply, we have not. And as in real life everything is mutually connected and each thing influences the other, Lenin was right when he said that the final victory of Socialism in a single country, in a capitalist environment, is impossible. But the attempt of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Smilga and others try to reduce this

idea to the one that it is impossible completely to construct Socialism in Russia because of our technical backwardness is absolutely wrong and must be combatted. Such an interpretation must be combatted because otherwise it will be impossible to advocate the line of policy outlined by Lenin.

All the silly jokes about building Socialism "in a single street in Stupidtown," or in "Gotham," should cause a feeling of revulsion among real revolutionaries. Some people think these jokes are extremely witty. They fail to see that they are merely pitiful, because they simply repeat the doubtful wit of Kautsky about "Socialism in Turkestan" and Hilferding's clumsy jest on the "Socialism of Bokharan mullahs." It is positively nonsensical to pretend that these bits of Social-Democratic humour stand for revolutionary internationalism. They simply conceal desertion from the front at the most difficult moment of the struggle.

At the present time fresh difficulties have hurled themselves against us, difficulties arising from our technico-economic backwardness, from the fact that we must seek means for capital expenditure and from the fact that the rate of development is much slower than it would be in the event of a victorious proletarian revolution in Europe. Of course, a victorious revolution would radically alter the whole state of things; the rate of industrialisation of our country after a certain interval of time would become greatly accelerated. We should have to reorganise our forces of production differently, we would have to "plan" and "group into regions" on different lines; the relations between town and village would be different; we would be able much more rapidly to draw our backward agriculture into the orbit of industry. At the present time we are proceeding far too slowly. But this relatively

slow progress (compared with the rate of progress of combined European economy) is not the negation of the possibility of constructing Socialism in our country. This slow rate of progress merely expresses the enormous difficulties of our work of construction.

This is how the question of the possibility of constructing Socialism in a single country should be decided. In order to link up this question with certain other more general questions, we take the liberty to recall the following. During the controversy of 1923, we said: If comrade Trotsky is right and our country should be unable to maintain the proletarian dictatorship without the State aid of the Western proletariat, owing to our conflicts with the peasantry, then some very important conclusions follow. If we spread the proletarian revolution over the whole world we shall obtain approximately the same proportion between the proletariat and the peasantry as we have in the Soviet Union. For, when the proletariat takes power in England, it will have to deal with India and the other British colonies; if the proletariat takes power in France it will have to deal with Africa; if the proletariat takes power in all countries it will have to deal with all the other peasant countries. The world proletariat will have to solve the problem of how to live in harmony with the world peasantry. And if the proportion is approximately the same as that in the Soviet Union, then, drawing the corresponding conclusion from the theory of inevitable doom unless aid comes from without, willy-nilly we come to the Cunow presentation, according to which the world is "not yet mature" for the social revolution.

There is an enormous number of peasants in the world who according to Trotsky will "inevitably"

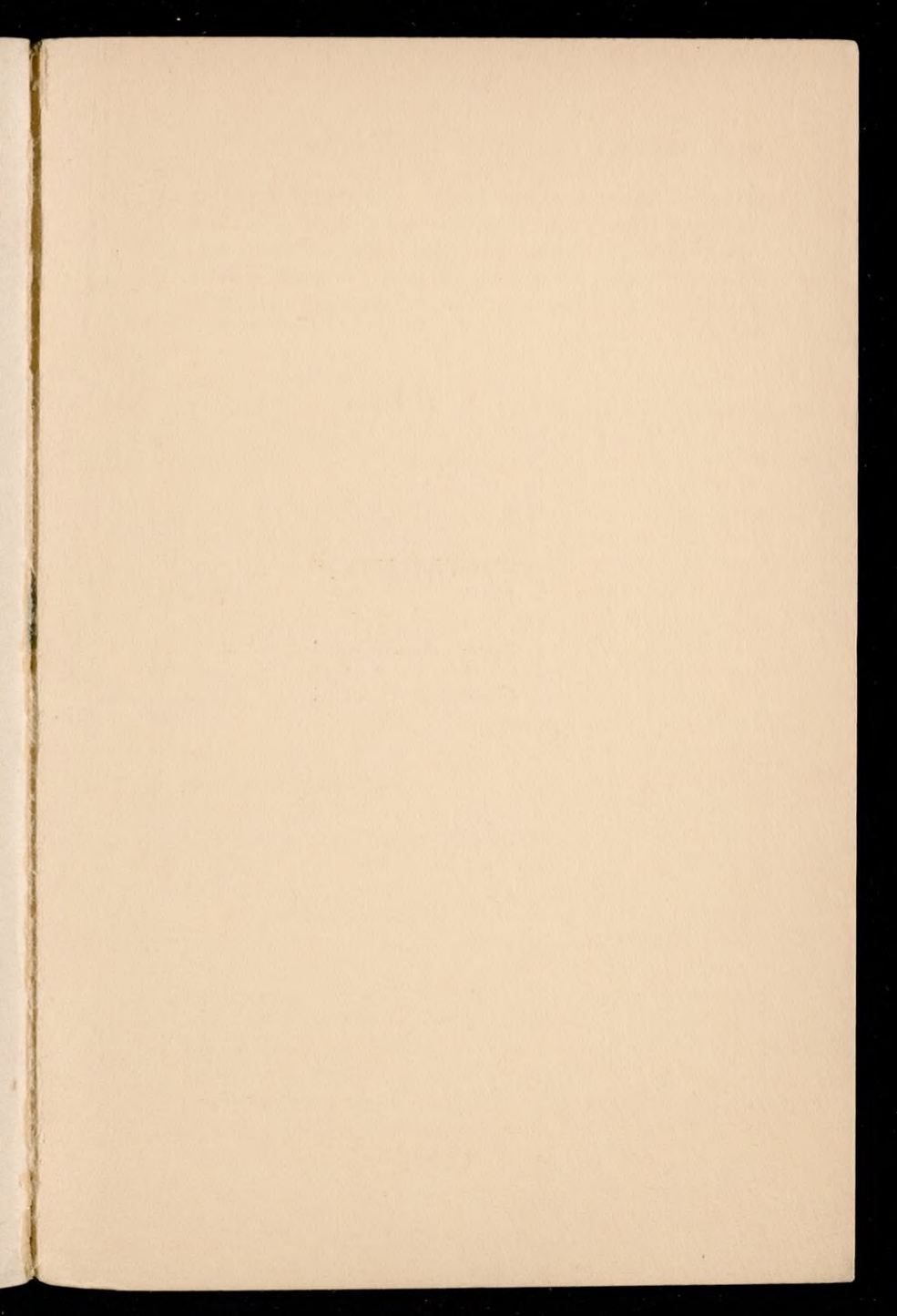
come into conflict with the proletariat. As in China alone there are 400,000,000 peasants, then the revolution is "inevitably doomed." Where is the "State aid" from without to come from? This is where the theory of the opposition leads us. If such conclusions are not drawn, it is because the question is not argued to its logical conclusion, but is left unfinished: when they speak of England they have in mind only London and Manchester and forget about all the other parts of the world which at the present time are bound to England; they contemptuously ignore the enormous number of colonial and semi-colonial peoples and by that reveal their refined "European" "Marxism."

In the same manner we learn that the question of the character of our revolution, of its driving forces, etc., is of profound practical world significance.

What has been said above may be summarised as follows:

The ideological sources of the opposition undoubtedly are Social-Democratic tendencies. This should not be understood, in a crude and vulgar sense. The leaders of the opposition are not Mensheviks, of course. But they do reveal tendencies in the direction of Menshevism. They "give their finger" to the Menshevik devil; of this there is not the slightest doubt. Their intellectual make-up gives rise to an irrepressible desire to prophesy our doom. As is known, this doom was prophesied in the October days by the Kamenev-Zinoviev-Shliapnikov group, which now represents a section of the opposition bloc. Comrade Lenin described their attitude as "wailing pessimism." This doom was prophesied in the spring of 1921 (particularly by Trotsky). It was prophesied in the spring of 1923 (the famous Declaration of the "46."). This

doom is being foretold now by the opposition in their combined attack upon the Party. All these "prophecies," which failed one after another, rest upon an incorrect theory, which is essentially a theory denying the objectively Socialist character of our revolution.



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