

Kuusinen

The
*Communist
Manifesto*

A
Programmatic Document
of the
Dictatorship of the Proletariat

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K U U S I N E N

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The *Communist Manifesto* is the great charter of the international Communist movement. Eighty-five years ago, the *Communist Manifesto* enunciated for the first time in the form of a complete theoretical and practical program, the Marxian world outlook — dialectic materialism, the teaching on the class struggle, on the world-wide historical role of the proletariat and of its Communist vanguard. It pointed the way to the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the transition from capitalism to a Communist society. It charted the basic programmatic demands and the main lines of strategy and tactics of the Communist Party.

This was a mighty revolutionary call to struggle, which has lost none of its compelling revolutionary force even today. Millions of workers of all countries derived from this *Manifesto* the very force, which awakened in them the revolutionary class-consciousness. New millions will read it and study it in order that they may unite, pursuant to its call, for revolutionary class struggle.

History from the time of the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto* has brilliantly confirmed the firm theses of Marx. And even now this Manifesto stands immutably, like an unfailing beacon, as a living, and in its main lines actual, program of the international Communist movement. *Its historical sequel is the program of the Communist International.*

The Birth of Scientific Communism

Wherein lies the inexhaustible revolutionary strength of the Communist Manifesto?

We quote from the Manifesto itself:

“The theories of the Communists are not in any way based upon ideas or principles discovered or established by this or that universal reformer.

“They serve merely to express in general terms the concrete circumstances of an actually existing class struggle, of a historical movement that is going on under our very eyes. The abolition of pre-existent property relations is not a process exclusively characteristic of Communism.”

We quote further:

“It is customary to speak of ideas which revolutionize a whole society. This is only another way of saying that the elements of a new society have formed within the old one; that the break-up of the old ideas has kept pace with the break-up of the old social relations.”

These words reveal the secret of the birth and vitality of the *Communist Manifesto* itself. The teaching of Marx, already revealed in the Manifesto in its main lines, was itself a product of the antagonistic productive relations of capitalist society; was a realization of the position of the proletariat and its historic mission and “a general expression of actual relations within the existing class struggle”.

The flaming words of each and every line of the *Communist Manifesto* clearly indicate that the system of ideas contained in the *Manifesto* was born in the fire of revolutionary struggle. It was growing up, in the first place, in the incandescent atmosphere of the European revolutionary class battles of the forties of last century

and, in the second place, directly out of the ideological and practical struggle which Marx and Engels led in the years 1843-1847.

In their ideological struggle Marx and Engels based themselves on the best that the nineteenth century had created. As Lenin and Engels pointed out, the three sources and component parts of Marxism were: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism along with the French revolutionary teachings in general.

The greatest exponents of these three ideological currents were Hegel, Ricardo and the great Utopians. In his own realm, each of them built up a complete theoretical system, which was not capable of further development along the lines of its original basic principles. Meanwhile Marx actually continued, completed and merged into one solid system these ideological currents. That was possible only by means of a critical recreation of their underlying principles. Marx carried further Hegel's dialectics, first having turned it upside down, that is, formulating the dialectic development of material reality in place of the eternal self-propulsion of a mystical "idea", Marx carried further Adam Smith's and Ricardo's theory of value, revealing at the same time the fetishism of economic categories, and thus bringing them down from the realm of "eternal laws of nature", as they were pictured by the bourgeois economists, to a mere expression of social production relations, which are historically conditioned and transitory. In the same manner Marx carried further the socialism of St. Simon, Fourier, and Robert Owen, first taking it down from the sphere of utopian ideas and "brain

product” projects of a new society, to the solid ground of ‘historic reality as an expression and program of the class struggle of the proletariat.

Thus were demolished the “eternal ideas” of all these three basic domains of ideology, behind which were incarcerated as behind bars, the living elements of a new world outlook.

Along with this struggle it was necessary to carry on *another* ideological struggle in all the three domains. That was a “criticism of criticism”, i.e., in the first place a criticism of the left Hegelians, who were the critics of Hegel, such as Bruno Bauer, Max Stirner, etc., and also a criticism of the major shortcomings of Feuerbachian materialism; in the second place it was a criticism of the petty bourgeois critics of classic political economy, of the economic theories of Proudhon, Sismondi, and others; and in the third place it was a criticism of the petty socialist critics of the great Utopians, the English and the German (“true”) socialists.

Only now are we in a position to restore the full picture of that fierce ideological struggle, which Marx and Engels waged during the decisive period of the formation of the Marxian system. This became possible after such precious manuscripts as the *Philosophical Economic Essays* by Marx and the full edition of the *German Ideology* by Marx and Engels, hitherto concealed by the leaders of the German Social-Democracy, became public property once again. What were the results of the ideological struggle of Marx and Engels?

The Marxian critique of philosophy and of historiography gave rise to *dialectical materialism* and

particularly to the materialist conception of the history of mankind.

The critique of political economy gave rise to the *Marxian theory of surplus value* and to all the ensuing laws of the development of contradictions within capitalism and of its resulting breakdown. All these laws are treated systematically and in detail in *Capital*.

The critique of Utopian socialism gave rise to *Marxian Communism*, which firmly links up the scientific conception of the dialectic transition from capitalism to socialism and Communism with the class struggle and with the consequent revolutionary practice of “changing the face of the world”. From Utopian socialism there emerged Marxian Communism, which changes science into revolutionary politics, and that politics into science.

Lenin, who understood the theory of Marx more deeply than any one else, emphasized with particular vigor that that theory combines strict scientific properties of the highest type (it being the culmination of social science) with revolutionary properties; that their synthesis is not accidental; that it is not a result of the author’s combining in his personality the qualities of a scientist and a revolutionary; but that this synthesis is contained within the theory innately and indivisibly.

In a concise form the *Communist Manifesto* dwells upon many vast domains of the teachings of Marx. First of all the *Manifesto* affords a brilliantly clear understanding of the materialistic conception of history. The entire history of mankind from the inception of class society till the appearance of the socialist society unfolds before the reader from a uniform scientific point of view, as a history

of the struggle of classes which develops on the basis of changing modes of production and of inner contradictions inherent in the production relations which are based on exploitation.

Two important component parts of the Marxian teachings find little expression in the *Communist Manifesto*:

First — his philosophical theory of cognition (gnoseology). Of course, the materialistic-philosophical conception of the sources and principles of knowledge forms the very base of all the theses of the *Manifesto*, but that conception is not treated in the Manifesto in a direct manner. It is formulated in part in the earlier philosophical works of Marx and Engels (*The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology*) partly in the later works of Engels (*Anti-Duehring*, *The Dialectics of Nature*, and *Ludwig Feuerbach*) and also in Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

Second — the mature form of the Marxian theory of surplus value is not yet contained in the *Communist Manifesto*. However, the most important postulates which he used in subsequently developing his theory of surplus value are already to be found in there. They are:

1. That the capitalist system is a system of wage slavery; the workers “are the slaves of the bourgeois class”, “who can exist only as long as they find work, and who can find work only as long as their labor increases capital”.

2. “... These laborers, who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of

commerce...” is stated in the *Communist Manifesto*. According to a later formulation of Marx, workers sell their labor power as a commodity, but it also means that they sell “their own skin”. For the commodity labor power exists only “in the person of the laborer”, “only as the faculty of a living individual” (*Capital*).

3. According to the *Communist Manifesto* “the cost of production of a worker amounts to little more than the cost of the means of subsistence he requires for his upkeep and for the propagation of his race”.

4. The situation of the workers under capitalism is becoming increasingly worse, as the productivity of their labor increases; this ‘worsening manifests itself partly in a lowered wage or a lengthened working day, partly in an increased intensification of labor, oppression at work, etc.

Marx, it is true, still employs in the *Communist Manifesto* the old and incorrect term, “the price of labor” (in place of, “value and price of labor power”) not at all, however, in the bourgeois meaning, according to which the term implies that the worker receives full payment (is fully compensated) for the labor he performs. No, according to the *Communist Manifesto*, the workers selling themselves piecemeal, get in the form of wages much less than the sum total of values which their labor creates. The growth of capital is accomplished in no other way than by *exploitation*. But the *Manifesto* does not contain the clear explanation, subsequently developed by Marx, of this exploitation, by way of distinction between necessary “labor” and “surplus labor” (or “unpaid labor”), which creates surplus value. Only these theoretically highly important definitions made possible a clear and

consistent analysis of the capitalist process of production, but they changed in no way the basic conception formulated in the *Communist Manifesto*. On the contrary, that conception was only strengthened and deepened in all its essential parts.

Afterwards, in a number of other basic questions, Marx fundamentally completed and developed the theses expounded in the *Communist Manifesto*, particularly the problem of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. Aside from that, the remarks contained in Section IV of the *Communist Manifesto* about the position of the Communists in relation to the various existing opposition parties, as it was pointed out by Marx and Engels themselves already in 1872, are, of course, historically antiquated in their concrete form, although “fundamentally they are correct to this day”.

The subsequent development of the ideas proclaimed for the first time in the *Communist Manifesto* and the evolution of Marxism into *Marxism-Leninism* cannot be understood without taking into consideration the basic character of the new epoch in particular and especially the greatest triumph of these ideas: their *accomplishment* in practice, the building of socialism on one-sixth of the face of the earth.

A new edition of the *Communist Manifesto* entitles the reader to expect at least a most elementary characterization of the main phases of this development and of the actual realization of Marxism in our own time. Therefore, we will discuss the matter briefly in the following lines, starting with the basic postulates of the

Communist Manifesto and, alongside with it, subjecting to a critical analysis the main principles of social-democracy.

The Epoch of Imperialism and the Beginning of the Struggle of Bolshevism Against the Opportunism of the Second International

The *Communist Manifesto* states that “the bourgeoisie has centralized the means of production and has concentrated property in few hands”. However, this capitalist centralization and concentration, as well as the “constant changes of modes of production” were destined to attain truly gigantic proportions. Subsequently Marx gave in his main work a thorough analysis of the accumulation of capital and of the general law governing the same.

But neither Marx nor Engels lived to the time of the last phase of capitalism, during which the concentration of production and the centralization of capital assumed the form of cartels and of trustification of entire major branches of production; when the sway of free competition and of industrial capital turned into the *domination of the monopolistic finance capital*, which domination, however, is unable to eliminate free competition.

In the past, according to the *Communist Manifesto*, “the cheap prices of commodities were the heavy artillery with which the bourgeoisie battered down all Chinese walls”. At present, however, monopoly prices are becoming the heavy artillery of the large scale bourgeoisie in its fight for surplus value the world over.

In the past “the need of a constantly expanding market for its products drove the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe”. At present, the decisive role in this chase is relegated to finance capital. There has begun the division of the world among the international trusts into spheres of influence.

While in the past the bourgeoisie of the most developed countries already exploited many a “barbarian nation”, pushing them on at the same time along the path of “so-called civilization”, now, however, the entire territory of the globe is divided up among the great powers and the practice of pitiless exploitation and enslavement of colonial and semi-colonial peoples has assumed the form of a system. There has been launched a fierce struggle for the redivision of the already divided world.

This very division of the whole world, which ended on the threshold of the new century, is, along with the stormy development of monopolistic capital, a turning point to a new epoch — *the epoch of imperialism*.

As a whole, capitalism, which developed until then along an ascending line of progress, began to show signs of decay. Lenin defined this last phase of capitalism as the phase of *decaying and dying capitalism*: not, however, in the sense that capitalism is dying off automatically but in the sense of “a transition of capitalism into socialism”. “Monopoly, growing out of capitalism, already represents the dying of capitalism — the beginning of its transition into socialism. In the first place — the gigantic *socialization* of labor by imperialism... denotes the very same thing. In the second place — imperialism intensifies the contradictions of capitalism to the highest degree and

carries them to a limit beyond which revolution begins”
(Stalin)

But the Second International did not see the matter in this light. It embarked in theory, as well as in practice, on the path of opportunistic adaptation to the conditions and requirements of decaying capitalism, of imperialism.

Marx and Engels waged a constant struggle against opportunism, which already began to raise its head during their lifetime not only among the socialists of the Anglo-Saxon countries, but even among the leaders of the German Social-Democracy. The latter were “farsighted” enough to conceal from the public (up till 1932!) the letters of Marx and Engels, in which their opportunistic tendencies were subjected to criticism. (*Two volumes of these letters, hitherto concealed by the social-democratic leaders, are now published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.*)

Engels, full of indignation at the opportunism of the German Social-Democracy, wrote to Wilhelm Liebknecht the following, as early as 1885:

“Is it possible that the chapter [in the Communist Manifesto — K.] on German or true socialism is destined to become the burning question again now after 40 years?”

And that is exactly what happened. To the extent that the development of a privileged aristocracy of labor in the epoch of imperialism tended to create a considerable social base for opportunism, to that extent the process of social democracy turning bourgeois continued in full swing.

Then began the reckless revision of Marxism, and of the basic theses of the Communist Manifesto in particular.

“The theory of pauperization is not true”, was the cry of the social-democrats identifying the position of the broad masses of proletarians with that of its privileged strata. The *Communist Manifesto* is wrong when it states that the worker is only “an appendage of the machine”, who is “daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the overseer, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself”. No, the worker of today is rather a free partner of the industrialist. It is not true that “the worker has nothing to lose but his chains”, for the contemporary worker may even acquire a few shares of stock, etc.

The imperialist bourgeoisie was interested in concocting petty-bourgeois illusions to befuddle the workers and the social-democratic criers from the top of the labor aristocracy were zealously carrying out the order. At first a frontal attack against the Marxian theory was launched by the Bernsteinians and by other revisionists; then Kautsky and other “opponents of revisionism” continued the attack in roundabout hidden ways by means of distorting, weakening and emasculating Marxism in the name of its “orthodox interpretation”.

The aristocracy of labor, bribed and corrupted by the imperialistic bourgeoisie, was interested, not in preparing for the revolution, but in the prosperity of capitalist production.

That is why the social-democratic theoreticians got busy first of all to undermine the Marxian theory of the collapse of capitalism, and in particular the basic thesis, as

stated in the *Communist Manifesto* about “the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule”.

The revolutionary theory of the unavoidable sharpening of the basic contradiction of capitalism was transformed into its direct antithesis, into an apology for capitalism and for every step of the bourgeoisie, as long as it could be interpreted as promoting the development of productive forces.

To impede the development of productive forces is, according to social-democratic sophists, a reactionary step from the Marxian point of view, therefore, the labor movement must refrain from any form of struggle which would be likely to hamper the capitalistic industrial development. The fact that production in certain industries is still capable of development within the framework of capitalism, is supposed to prove according to Marx, that the time for socialism is still far off, etc. There was systematically spread the fatalistic viewpoint, that the development of productive forces will bring about socialism of itself some time in the distant future, not, of course, as a result of the breakdown of capitalism, and of a violent revolution, but as a result of a gradual and peaceful “growing into” socialism.

Thus was Marxism turned into labor liberalism under cover of pseudo-Marxian phraseology. The upper crust of the Second International remained socialist in words, bourgeois in deeds.

The practice of social-democracy was adapting itself even more fully and more rapidly than its theory to the requirements of the imperialistic bourgeoisie. The dominant political line of class collaboration of the pre-war social-democracy in the leading capitalist countries manifested itself in the dullest parliamentary cretinism and trade-union reformism (mainly in negotiations with employers regarding wage scales). Parliament was to them the center of the universe. Legal parliamentary democracy—their road to bliss. Parliamentary diplomacy—their wisdom and virtue.

Everything said in the *Communist Manifesto* about the “conservative or bourgeois socialism” and most of what is said there about the “German or ‘true’ socialism”—all that strikes squarely in the face of the leading spirits of the Second International, particularly during the period immediately preceding the World War.

A consistent struggle against this opportunism and bourgeois socialism became now the burning issue for all true Marxists within the international labor movement and in every individual country. The task of solving this problem was undertaken by Lenin — by Bolshevism. The struggle of Bolshevism against Menshevism and against the Second International was from its very beginning a struggle for the restoration of the true revolutionary Marxism both in theory and in practice. It was a constant battle against various and sundry falsifiers of Marxism. At the same time it signified a further development of Marxism in accordance with the conditions of the new epoch.

While the ringleaders of the Second International were covering up the contradictions of imperialism, Lenin was exposing those contradictions. He proved the inevitable sharpening of the three basic contradictions of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism, namely: (a) between capital and labor, (b) between a handful of exploiting nations and an overwhelming majority of exploited populations of colonial and dependent countries, (c) between various imperialist powers and financial groups.

While the ringleaders of the Second International were busy painting the perspective of a uniform evolution of capitalism, Lenin demonstrated the acceleration of its uneven development in the epoch of imperialism.

This uneven development is not an increase of differences in the level of development of various capitalist countries, No, this inequality tends to diminish on the basis of such an equalization, as was shown by Comrade Stalin, and the intensification of the action of such an unevenness of development in the period of imperialism is quite possible. This unevenness does not consist in “some countries overtaking others and then surpassing them economically *in due course, in an evolutionary way, so to say*” as was the rule in the period of pre-monopoly capital. No,

“... the law of the unevenness of development in the period of imperialism denotes a spasmodic development of some countries with relation to others; a rapid displacement from the world markets of some countries by others; periodic redivisions of the already divided world by means of military clashes and military catastrophies; a deepening and sharpening of conflicts in the camp of

imperialism; a weakening of the front of the world capitalism with a consequent possibility of breaking through that front by proletarians of individual countries and the possibility of the victory of socialism in individual countries.” (Stalin)

The problem of the attitude to imperialism, with the steadily growing tenseness of the international situation, forced itself with ever greater persistence as the burning question of the day before every workers’ party. Lenin gave a very clear diagnosis of the positions of the social classes in relation to this question:

“The proletariat is struggling for the revolutionary overthrow of the imperialist bourgeoisie, while the petty bourgeoisie is struggling for a reformistic ‘perfection’ of imperialism, for adapting itself to it, while being subservient to it.”

The *right* social-democrats, such as Cunow, acted as open social-imperialists, but, of course, they too made use of pseudo-Marxian sophistry to justify their policy. “Cunow”, writes Lenin, “argues clumsily and cynically: Imperialism is contemporary capitalism; but the development of capitalism is both inevitable and progressive; hence imperialism is progressive; hence, we must cringe before imperialism and glorify it.”

Centrists, such as Kautsky, strove particularly to cover up the contradictions of imperialism. Imperialism, generally speaking, is not a new phase of capitalism, according to Kautsky, but an unreasonable policy of expansion on the part of industrial nations. Instead of this imperialistic policy the bourgeoisie could carry through with equal and even greater success a different and much

wiser policy of expansion, “The tendencies of capital to expand,” wrote Kautsky literally, “can be realized best of all not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy.”

And he was deceiving the workers with illusions of permanently peaceful “ultra-imperialism”.

“*There will be no more crises!*”, announced the professors of economics, themselves hirelings of the cartels; and the chorus of social-democratic theoreticians would joyously take up the refrain: “Yes, no more; the cartels are in a position to eliminate crises”. And only the crises themselves were rudely destroying the harmony of the soloists and the chorus: the crisis of 1900 in Germany and in Russia; the crisis of 1903 in the United States; the crisis of 1907 again in the United States, and in some other countries.

Each crisis confirmed the theory of crises of Marx and Lenin. Each crisis was a reminder of what had been foretold in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“How does the bourgeoisie overcome these crises? On the one hand by the compulsory annihilation of a quantity of the productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets and the more thorough exploitation of old ones. With what results? The results are that the way is paved for more wide-spread and more disastrous crises and that the capacity for averting such crises is lessened.”

“There will be no more wars!”, proclaimed the cabinet ministers who managed the affairs of the financial oligarchy; and a chorus of petty bourgeois Kautskyists would take up the tune: “Yes, no more! Finance capital

together with the wise governments will somehow eliminate the war danger through the 'Peaceful Democracy' of a perfected imperialism."

But wars themselves were destroying without any ceremony this delightful harmony: the Spanish-American war of 1898; the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902; the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905; the Balkan wars of 1912-1913; and finally the imperialist World War of 1914-1918.

Each war loudly proclaimed that Kautsky's theory of harmony is nothing more than a delusion of the masses, that Lenin is perfectly correct in insisting that imperialism leads unavoidably to bandit wars for the purpose of a new redivision of colonies and of other spheres of exploitation, to violent clashes among the biggest imperialist powers for world hegemony; and that peace agreements between imperialist powers are merely respites between wars and preparations for new ones.

The struggle of Bolshevism against international Menshevism was concentrated primarily around three great problems of the international movement, which remain to this day in the center of daily struggles: 1. The question of the party. 2. The attitude towards imperialist war. 3. The dictatorship of the proletariat. In the solution of each of these problems Lenin was able to find much direct support in the *Communist Manifesto*.

The Problem of the Communist Party

The epoch of imperialism is an epoch of open clashes between classes, of direct preparations by the working class for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and of

proletarian revolutions. Such an epoch places the working class face to face with historic problems of great importance, with problems which it cannot solve without the leadership of a truly revolutionary Communist party.

The *Communist Manifesto* came to life in a period already fraught with revolutionary class struggles. Already at that time Marx and Engels understood the urgent need for a highly class-conscious party, in order that “the proletariat may be sufficiently strong to win during the decisive days”. They wrote the *Communist Manifesto* as a theoretical and practical “party program”. It was actually named *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (*Communist Manifesto* is merely an abbreviation). At the same time, Marx and Engels were busy organizing the Communist Party. For several years, they were busy recruiting adherents in France, Belgium, Germany, and England, uniting them into party groups, educating and instructing them in accordance with the unfolding of events. In 1847, they reorganized the international “League of the Just”, originally founded by German emigrés, into the “League of Communists”, and took upon themselves the task of its political leadership.

The conscious Communists of that time constituted a small group, while major revolutionary battles were in the offing. Could the Communists then hope to be able to organize the working class in that short period and to rally them around their program to such an extent that the Communist Party should be able to supplant major proletarian mass organizations, such as the Chartist movement in England? No. The political development of the masses of workers was inadequate for such a task. Had

the Communists taken such a course, they would have merely isolated themselves without having aided the development of the revolutionary movement.

Marx and Engels were absolutely against such a sectarian approach. Their line of action consisted of the following: To start by building a unified Communist Party, led by a single Central Committee, out of these Communist groups already organized by them in a few countries, and out of the local organizations of the "Union". The reorganized "League of Communists" was to become that Communist Party, which was to be an international party. Each country was to be divided into a certain number of districts and all districts of a given country were to be subordinated to its national center. This party, which under the prevailing conditions could everywhere maintain but an illegal existence, and which was as yet numerically very weak, was not to endeavor artificially to shape in accordance with academically worked out "special principles" these labor mass organizations which were being formed in different countries. This was the way Marx and Engels approached the problem in 1847: the "League of Communists" will not put itself in opposition to other working class parties, which may arise in various forms depending upon the concrete circumstances, but will rather direct them forward along the road of revolutionary class struggle through the work of its members within these parties.

This first bold attempt to build a Communist Party failed as a result of the defeat of the revolutionary movement of 1848-9 and of the ensuing reaction, and was pushed to the background for a long time. With the

founding of the First International (1864) the task was not to organize actual Communist parties, but rather “to unite into one great army all the fighting forces of Europe and America”. ‘This International, therefore, could not base itself upon the principles expounded in the *Manifesto*. It had “to adopt a program that would leave the door open to the English trade-unionists; to the French, Belgian, Italian, Spanish Proudhonists; and the German Lassalleans” (Engels). But during the period of the First International, as well as later, Marx and Engels were doing everything possible to educate the socialist parties of the various countries in the spirit of uncompromising class struggle as well. as in the spirit of the Communist program. Thus, the First International was organizationally the great forerunner and prototype of the Communist International.

However, the objective conditions immediately after the collapse of the First International did not favor the building of Communist parties. On the contrary, there followed a prolonged period of more or less peaceful development, when the immediate task called for rather slow organizational and propaganda efforts. It is well known that during all these stages of the labor movement, Marx and Engels conducted a systematic struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois influences upon the labor movement, both against the so-called “conservative socialism” and anarchism. But the development of the Western European movement, particularly since the founding of the Second International, while growing broadly, was directed ever more one-sidedly along the path of social-democratic parliamentarism.

With the advent of the epoch of imperialism, problems quite different from parliamentary ones began pressing for solution. Large-scale revolutionary struggles were looming once again, the same as at the end of the forties, hence again the possibility and necessity of a genuine *Communist Party*.

The new epoch placed before the proletariat new tasks, namely:

“The rebuilding of the entire Party work along new revolutionary lines; the education of the workers in the spirit of revolutionary struggle for power; preparation and consolidation of reserves; union with proletarians of neighboring countries; establishing of solid and enduring contacts with the movements for liberation in the colonies and dependent countries; etc., etc. To think that the forces of the old social-democratic parties, trained in the peaceful ways of parliamentarism, will be able to solve all these problems is to doom oneself to hopeless despair and to an unavoidable defeat”. (Stalin)

The typical parties of the Second International, of the character of which we have already spoken, were poles apart from that type of party which would correspond to the revolutionary workers’ party conceived by Marx.

In the first place, they were not the conscious vanguard of the working class. The Communist Manifesto, speaking of Communists, presents them as the actual vanguard of the proletariat:

“Thus, in actual practice, Communists form the most resolute and persistently progressive section of the working class parties of all lands whilst, as far as theory is

concerned, being in advance of the general mass of the proletariat, they have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement and how to foresee its course and its general results.”

But the social-democratic parties enjoyed neither of these two advantages. There were no lines of demarcation between the party and the class and frequently not even between the party and the mass movement of the petty bourgeoisie. In general, it was not even considered necessary to raise the question about these dividing lines, until Lenin raised that issue in the Russian movement.

The attitude of social-democratic parties to the masses at that time was one of “tailism”. Even the left social-democrats were completely off the track in this respect with their theory of spontaneity, by failing to understand the leading role of the party. The entire structure of the *Communist Manifesto* cannot be reconciled with either tailism or sectarianism. Communists must not isolate themselves from the masses, neither must they reduce themselves to the level of the non-class-conscious masses; they must rather educate the masses and lift them to the level of the vanguard. They must not place themselves in opposition to mass movements of the workers; on the contrary, they must participate in all these movements, they must fight in the front line and must guide the movement towards the historical aims of the working class.

“Communists fight on behalf of the immediate aims and interests of the working class, but in the present movement they are also defending the future of the movement.”

Such is the setting of the *Communist Manifesto*.

In the second place, social-democratic parties were not the *organized* vanguard of the working class. Many of these parties were a conglomerate, based not on an individual membership, but on a collective one. Instead of a constant centralized leadership of the party organization by its higher and lower organs, there appeared in these parties, just as in a bourgeois state, a deep-seated duality; a rift between the bureaucracy and a passive membership. Their main political organization was not the party but its parliamentary fraction. Party discipline counted for nothing.

The “League of Communists”, after its reorganization by Marx and Engels, was a totally different type of party. In accordance with the statutes of the “League of Communists”, signed by Engels in the capacity of secretary, each member of the League had to subscribe to the following conditions: “faith in the tenets of Communism”; adherence to the rules and regulations of the “League”; admission by unanimous vote to a lower party unit; and, aside from that, “a revolutionary energy and zeal in propaganda work”. And it was underscored that, “He who ceases to conform to these conditions is to be expelled”. In general, on the one hand, these statutes are a prototype of the statutes of a present-day underground Communist Party, and, on the other hand, the prototype of the Statutes of the Communist International.

In the third place, a typical social-democratic party was not a *leading* organization with respect to trade unions and other proletarian mass organizations. Even where the trade unions were collectively affiliated with the party, they

were considered independent of it. Neither the party nor the trade unions entertained any desire that the party members inside the trade unions should make an effort, under the direction of the party, to insure unity of political line in the decisions of the trade unions. On the contrary, there prevailed the conception of “independence” and “neutrality” of the non-partisan organizations, a conception—“breeding *independent* parliamentarians and activists of the press, *torn away* from the party; breeding narrow-minded professionals and petty-bourgeoisified co-operators” (Stalin).

The *Communist Manifesto* contains no directives that might be applied straight to the problem of the relationship between the party and the trade unions, which, as mass organizations, were as yet non-existent at that time. There was, however, a mass labor party in England, the Chartist movement, and Marx assumed, then, that similar revolutionary movements of parties may appear in other countries, too. To such labor parties are applied the following words of the *Communist Manifesto*:

“The Communists do not form a separate party conflicting with other working-class parties.”

This, however, did not mean that in general the Communists must not form their own party. No, this phrase may be correctly understood taking in consideration the conditions under which the “League of Communists” was working, and of which we already spoke at the beginning of this article. This phrase meant that, in individual countries, the Communists were not supposed to put their party *in opposition* to such revolutionary working-class parties as the Chartist

movement, but to enter such mass organizations and to work in their ranks as “the most resolute section of the working-class parties, that section which pushes forward all others”.

In 1920, Lenin recommended similar tactics, though in different circumstances, to the English Communists with regard to the Labor Party of England, at the time when the latter did not yet forbid the Communists to conduct unrestrained agitational work in its ranks. It is, however, much more important that Lenin insisted from the very beginning of the imperialist epoch upon the work of Party members in the ranks of non-Party mass organizations along directives from Party organizations in order to bring about the realization of a political guidance by the Party of all other forms of organizations of the proletariat. Lenin taught that the Party is the highest form of class unity of ‘proletarians.

In the fourth place, the social-democratic parties were not the means for attaining the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*.

It is stated in the *Manifesto* that the “immediate objective” of a Communist, as well as of “all other proletarian parties” (*i.e.*, parties similar to the Chartist organization in England) is:

“Organization of the proletariat on a class basis; destruction of bourgeois supremacy; conquest of political power by the proletariat.”

The epoch of imperialism made this basic problem a burning issue of the day. It was necessary to proceed immediately with the task of training the working class for

struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the social-democratic parties had turned into a tool for the preservation of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

“Hence the urgent need for a new party, a fighting party, a revolutionary party; a party sufficiently daring to lead the proletarians into struggle for power; a party experienced enough to orientate itself, under the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation and flexible enough to avoid all and sundry pitfalls on the road to its goal”. (Stalin)

Marx took into consideration the lessons of the Paris Commune in dealing with the problems of the Party. This found a clear expression in the resolution of the London Conference of delegates of the First International (September, 1871) where it was emphasized that it was necessary “*to form the proletariat into a political party in order to insure the victory of the social revolution and of its highest goal — the abolition of classes*”. Here the idea is already given for the teachings of Lenin on the Party as a weapon in the hands of the proletariat for consolidating and broadening the dictatorship after having wrested power.

In the fifth place, the parties of the Second International of that period did not represent a *unity of will*. Their doors were wide open for all sorts of ideological quacks, priests and political careerists. The very name of the party (“Social-Democratic”) was utilized for that purpose, a name first adopted in Germany despite Marx’s strongest objections to it. The program of the party and the resolutions of congresses were looked upon as mere propaganda literature implying no obligations upon either

the leadership or the membership of the party. The example afforded by the “League of Communists” was wholly forgotten. In line with the traditions of bourgeois liberalism, there prevailed in the ranks of the social-democratic party a free competition of the most diversified currents of thought, of groups, and of factions. And they never even imagined that it ought to be otherwise until Lenin demanded something entirely different — a monolithic party, which “knows how to conduct its affairs and is not afraid of difficulties” (Stalin); which sets a firm line of action in accordance with the changes of the situation and then actually carries out that line; which fights everywhere as an entity. for an identical platform; which is capable of mass struggles, is trained for such struggles and can, therefore, maintain an iron discipline within its ranks.

Was there a practical possibility of creating such a truly revolutionary Marxian party under the conditions of the labor movement of those (the pre-war) days? Yes, there was, but only along one road. Engels expressed it back in 1885, when he wrote to Wilhelm Liebknecht about the social-democratic party of Germany:

“The petty-bourgeois element within the party is gaining the upper hand ever more and more, If this will continue, you may rest assured that there will be a split in the ranks of the party.”

A split of the social-democracy — such is the road. There was actually no other way ahead under the conditions of those days. The *Bolsheviks*, under the leadership of Lenin, were not afraid to proceed along that road (in 1903). Without its struggle against Menshevism,

the Party could not have been trained for the solution of the impending historical tasks. And that became possible only because Lenin put the question of that struggle *squarely* without retreating even before an imminent split.

In many countries there were left elements in the ranks of the social-democratic parties. Almost nowhere did they follow the example of the Bolsheviks during the pre-war days. Their struggles against opportunism were half-hearted. They themselves were partly infected with opportunism which blossomed out luxuriantly within the Second International. The German Lefts were also guilty of the same fault.

The Centrists were the main champions of unity within the old social-democratic parties, resolutely fighting against tendencies toward a split. Therein lies one of the greatest evils of centrism.

Even the lefts failed to understand that “*the party is strengthened by cleansing itself from opportunistic elements*” (Stalin). This premise is also one of the very basic features of the Leninist Party. The Centrists viewed the strengthening of the Party exclusively from the point of view of electoral chances. Nor were the lefts free from that one-sidedness.

We have formulated the problem of the Party in the above discussion from the viewpoint of Comrade Stalin’s six basic points, which he formulated, in his lectures on the foundations of Leninism, as features peculiar to the Party of Lenin; and with respect to almost every one of those points we were able to establish the presence, both in the Communist Manifesto as well as in the “League of Communists”, of definite roots of Lenin’s teachings on the

Party. Exactly because of its loyalty to the principles of Marxism did the party of Lenin, the CPSU, become not merely a model for the revolutionary labor parties of all countries, but also the *leading vanguard of the international labor movement*.

The Bolsheviks are true internationalists. Theirs has always been the policy of true Communists, as expressed in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“On the one hand, in the various national struggles of the proletarians, they emphasize and champion the interests of the proletariat as a whole, those proletarian interests that are independent of nationality; and, on the other hand, in the various phases of evolution through which the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie passes, they always advocate the interests of the movement as a whole.”

Russian Bolshevism, thanks to its correct tactics and organization, which were justified by the greatest successes and victories

“became a *world-wide* Bolshevism; it brought forth the idea, the theory, the program and the tactics which distinguish it concretely and practically from social-chauvinism and social-pacifism. Bolshevism killed the old, rotten International of the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, of the Renaudels and the Longuets, of the Hendersons and the MacDonalds... Bolshevism created the ideological and tactical bases of the Third International — the truly proletarian and Communist International, which takes into consideration both the conquests of the peaceful epoch and the experiences of the revolutionary epoch into which we are entering.”

Lenin wrote those words a few months before the constituent Congress of the Communist International. Ever since then the Communist International, under the guidance of the CPSU, grew up into a sturdy world Party of the revolutionary proletariat. There is no country in the world without an organization of the Communist International. The Comintern has already been tried and tempered in countless fierce battles, To it belongs the future.

The Imperialist War and the Struggle for Turning it into a Proletarian Revolution

When the imperialist war broke out in August, 1914, all social-democratic parties betrayed socialism openly. The Second International suffered an ignominious crash. The majority of social-democratic leaders, parliamentarists, and newspapers went over openly to the side of their respective governments. “The Fatherland is in danger — all out to protect the Fatherland!” — such was the slogan of the Russian, German, French, English and other social-chauvinists. Such was the slogan in numerous fatherlands.

And what was proclaimed in the *Communist Manifesto*?

“The workers have no country. No one can take from them what they have not got.”

The socialists have been repeating this truth from the *Communist Manifesto* thousands of times as their principle. And now? Today, when the social-democratic parties find themselves face to face with the acid test of

history to determine whether or not they will practice what they preach, today—a complete betrayal.

Only one party — the party of Lenin — fully passed this historic test. In other countries only left-wing groups conducted struggles against their respective imperialist governments. The heroic struggle of Karl Liebknecht in Germany was particularly outstanding.

The Kautskyists in Germany, the Longuetists in France, the “Independents” in England, the Mensheviks — “internationalists” — in Russia, and other centrists were playing the role of pacifists. In words they were not for war, and, just like the right social-democrats, they were for universal peace. But in fact this meant only one thing: the maintenance of peace with one’s own government engaged in war and with the openly chauvinistic social-democrats.

It is important even in these days not to forget the particular *pacifistic sophistry of the wartime centrists* (because history is sure to repeat itself in one form or another). They were swearing and vowing, as Lenin said, that they are Marxists and Internationalists, that they are for exerting every possible “pressure” upon their governments for the cause of peace. They “condemned” the attack on Belgium by Germany, the war Russia was waging upon German soil, the tendencies for annexation of territory exhibited by this or that government, the “start” of the war by this or that government, but they would not hear or know of one thing: *the class character of the imperialist war*.

They knew perfectly well that, according to the Communist Manifesto, the abolition of “exploitation of

one nation by the other” is connected with the abolition of “exploitation of one individual by the other”; but they were loth to derive therefrom the conclusion that is given in the *Communist Manifesto*:

“In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another comes to an end, the exploitation of one nation by another will come to an end.

“The ending of class oppositions within the nations will end the mutual hostility of the nations.”

The centrist sophists turned the question upside down: first, remove the hostility between nations and then it will be possible to start thinking what is to be done to remove class antagonisms.

Lenin explained to the workers that: “the character of a war (be it a revolutionary or a reactionary one) does not depend upon who was the aggressor nor upon the question of whose territory is occupied by the ‘enemy’, but it depends upon the class of society which wages that war and what policy is being promulgated by that war. If that war is a reactionary, imperialistic one, waged by two sets of imperialistic, oppressing, predatory and reactionary bourgeoisie then every bourgeoisie (even of a small country) is turned into a participant in this looting and it is my task, the task of a representative of the revolutionary proletariat, to prepare the world proletarian revolution, as the only . salvation from the horrors of the world war.”

And that was the true internationalism with respect to the war.

The Leninist party did not forget in this case what was so strongly emphasized by Marx in the *Communist*

Manifesto: “The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.”

The Bolsheviks were not afraid to come out for the defeat of their own governments in the war. That is true of Karl Liebknecht. “The main enemy is within one’s own country”, such is the correct principle for action by a revolutionary workers’ party. “*Turning the imperialist war into a civil war*”, such is the correct slogan. “Imperialism is the epoch of wars, but at the same time it is also *the epoch of proletarian revolutions*,” declared Lenin. The imperialist war showed that the world bourgeoisie in this epoch can only hasten its downfall even with its own monstrous crimes. Millions upon millions of men were sent by the imperialist bourgeoisie to the front to fight for its piratical policy, to fight, to shed their blood and to die. And what was the outcome? Was it merely senseless destruction, as the pacifists claim? . No. Was it merely rich spoils and conquest for which the imperialists hoped? No. Only a few of the imperialists have amassed a booty of other peoples’ goods and lands. Russian Czarism broke its neck, Austria-Hungary followed suit, and German imperialism came out of the war very much crippled. Such results were of doubtful benefit for the cause of the world bourgeoisie, Rather the contrary — it was an acceleration of the world proletarian revolution.

The war gathered all the contradictions of imperialism into one knot, writes Comrade Stalin, and “threw them unto the scales, thus hastening and facilitating the revolutionary battles of the proletariat. In other words, imperialism brought about a situation which: made the revolution not only a practical necessity, but also created

favorable conditions for a frontal attack upon the very strongholds of capitalism.”

A revolutionary situation was created on a European scale. The Bolsheviks drew from it the true Marxian conclusion: since we are faced with a revolutionary situation, we have to take up the question of revolution as a practical problem. And they did. They did not wait for the revolution to break out everywhere. Lenin said:

“To wait until the working class will accomplish the revolution on a world scale implies that we all congeal while waiting.”

Russia was the focal point of imperialist contradictions.

“... not only because these contradictions were particularly apparent in Russia due to their particularly stupid and unbearable character; not only because Russia was the most important mainstay of Western imperialism, serving as the connecting link between the finance capital of the West and the colonies of the East, but also due to the fact that only in Russia there existed that particular and real power, which was able to solve the contradictions of capitalism in a revolutionary way.” (Stalin)

That power was the most revolutionary proletariat in the world, headed by the party of Lenin, and having at its disposal such an important ally as the revolutionary peasantry of Russia.

Objective conditions for a proletarian revolution were ripe and favorable in many other European countries at the end of the imperialist war. But the Centrist “also-Marxists” did not want a revolution against their governments. They were afraid of a revolution. That is *the crux* of the matter. And because of that did they embark upon inventing all sorts of “Marxist” sounding excuses to justify their evasion of the revolution.

The Bolsheviks, however, with an eye to the final objective, were busily preparing the proletariat of Russia for the revolution, and they led the proletariat to victory and to power.

The great October Revolution has given the working class a fatherland, for the first time in the history of mankind. It freed the workers and all the oppressed nations of the former Russian Empire. It started a new era in the world history — the era of world proletarian revolution.

Soon after that, proletarian revolutions broke out in a number of countries, where the proletariat seized power temporarily, but was unable to retain it. And why? Because the labor parties at the head of the revolution were not Bolshevik parties. This was the main reason for the defeat of the revolution in Finland, for instance, and, some time later, in Bavaria and Hungary. Another reason was that in 1918 the German bourgeoisie sent troops into Finland, into the Baltic countries and into the Ukraine in order to strangle the revolution. Not without reason did Karl Liebknecht and the Spartacides accuse the German Social-Democracy of betrayal. In full agreement with this accusation, Lenin wrote:

“This accusation expresses a clear cognizance of the fact that the German proletariat betrayed the Russian (and the international) revolution in strangling Finland, the Ukraine, Latvia and Estonia. But this accusation is directed first and foremost not against the *masses*, which are downtrodden everywhere, but against those *leaders*, who, like Scheidemann and Kautsky, failed in their duty of revolutionary agitation, revolutionary propaganda, and revolutionary work among the masses to counteract their backwardness; who, as a matter of fact, acted contrary to the revolutionary instincts and aspirations which are ever smoldering in the depths of the masses of an oppressed class.”

The revolution broke out in Germany in November, 1918. The German bourgeoisie admitted the social-democratic parties to power. And it knew what it was doing. The “Socialist” rulers — Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, Haase, and Company — saved their bourgeoisie.

Very skillfully they deceived, disorganized, and broke up the revolutionary movement of the German working class. At that time the Communist Party of Germany was only in the process of formation. In the same manner and in many other countries, the social-democracy was busy saving its bourgeoisie from ruin.

Is it possible that those exploits of the social-democratic leaders are merely a record of days gone by? He is mistaken who thinks so. Is it possible that the social-democratic politicians have given up befogging the minds with their pacifist sophistry? Not at all. As recently as February, 1932, the Second International burst forth again into one of its typical appeals for peace. In what respect is this any worse than the Basel Manifesto of 1912? What is to hinder the Second International from declaring itself as an “instrument of peace” in case of war, true to its sharp practices?

Or did the social-democratic leaders perchance turn left? Oh, no! They were very much “left” in 1919-1920 when it was necessary to charm the masses with radical phrases. At that time the French Socialist Party, the German National Socialist Party, the English independents and others were even passing resolutions in favor of joining the Comintern! Many leaders of these parties, including Ramsay MacDonald, suddenly declared themselves adherents of the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat! In Germany, however, Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, Haase, and Company first played the role of “people’s plenipotentiaries”, elected by the councils of workers’ and soldiers’ deputies (in November 1918), and nine months later — that of the happy fathers

of the Weimar Constitution. In the meantime Noske succeeded, in the course of six days, in shooting down workers on the streets of Berlin and in organizing the treacherous murder of the best leaders of the German proletariat —Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Do you realize now, you social-democratic workers, why Lenin demanded a change in the name of the Russian labor party, which up to 1917 also was called “social-democratic”? And why he uttered the words, which we, Communists, repeat to you today:

“It is high time to cast off the dirty shirt, it is time to put on clean clothes”.

It is high time to throw the social-democratic party off your shoulders!

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