

**THE COLLAPSE  
OF THE SECOND  
INTERNATIONAL**

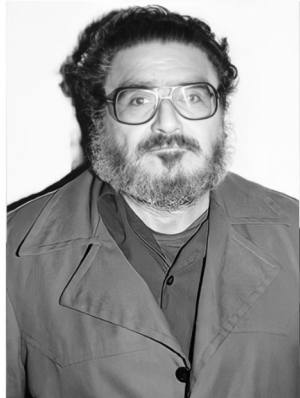
**IMPERIALISM  
AND THE SPLIT IN  
SOCIALISM**

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“The Collapse of the Second International” by V.I. Lenin  
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# The Collapse of the Second International<sup>1</sup>

The collapse of the International is sometimes taken to mean simply the formal aspect of the matter, namely, the interruption in international communication between the socialist parties of the belligerent countries, the impossibility of converting either an international conference or the International Socialist Bureau, etc. This is the point of view held by certain socialists in the small neutral countries, probably even by the majority of the official parties in those countries, and also by the opportunists and their defenders. With a frankness that deserves profound gratitude, this position was defended in the Russian press by Mr. V. Kosovsky, in No. 8 of the Bund's *Information Bulletin*, whose editors said nothing to indicate that they disagreed with the author. Let us hope that Mr. Kosovsky's defense of nationalism, in which he went so far as to justify the German Social-Democrats who voted for war credits, will help many a worker at last to realize the bourgeois-nationalist-character of the Bund.

To the class-conscious workers, socialism is a serious conviction, not a convenient screen to conceal petty-bourgeois conciliatory and nationalist-oppositional strivings. By the collapse of the International they understand the disgraceful treachery to their convictions which was displayed by most of the official Social-Democratic parties, treachery to the most solemn declarations in their speeches at the Stuttgart and Basle international congresses, and in the resolu-

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1 *The Collapse of the Second International*, written by Lenin in May-June 1915 during the imperialist World War I, was published in the Bolshevik journal *Kommunist*.

tions of these congresses, etc. Only those can fail to see this treachery who *do not wish* to do so or do not find it to their advantage to see it. If we would formulate the question in a scientific fashion, *i.e.*, from the standpoint of class relations in modern society, we will have to state that most of the Social Democratic parties, and at their head the German Party first and foremost—the biggest and most influential party in the Second International—have taken sides with their General Staffs, their governments, and their bourgeoisie, against the proletariat. This is an event of historic importance, one that calls for a most comprehensive analysis. It has long been conceded that, for all the horror and misery they entail, wars bring at least the following more or less important benefit—they ruthlessly reveal, unmask and destroy much that is corrupt, outworn and dead in human institutions. The European war of 1914-15 is doubtlessly beginning to do some good by revealing to the advanced class of the civilized countries what a foul and festering abscess has developed within its parties, and what an unbearably putrid stench comes from some source.

## I

Is it a fact that the principal socialist parties of Europe have forsaken all their convictions and tasks? This, of course, is something that is readily discussed neither by the traitors nor those who are fully aware—or surmise—that they will have to be friendly and tolerant towards them. However unpleasant that may be to various “authorities” in the Second International or to their fellow-thinkers among the Russian Social-Democrats, we must face the facts and call things by their right names; we must tell the workers the truth.

Do any facts exist that show how the socialist parties regarded their tasks and their tactics before the present war and in anticipation of it? They undoubtedly do. There was the resolution adopted at the Basle International Socialist Congress of 1912, which we are reprinting together with the resolution adopted at the Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party held in the same year,<sup>2</sup> as a reminder of socialism's forgotten ideals. This resolution, which summarizes the vast anti-war propagandist and agitational literature in all countries, is a most complete and precise, a most solemn and formal exposition of socialist views on war and tactics towards war. One cannot but qualify as treachery the fact that none of the authorities of yesterday's International and of today's social-chauvinism—neither Hyndman and Guesde, nor Kautsky and Plekhanov—dare remind their readers of that resolution. They are either silent about it, or (like Kautsky) quote excerpts of secondary importance and evade everything that is really of significance. On the one hand, the most “Left” and arch-revolutionary resolutions, and on the other, the most shameless forgetfulness or renunciation of these resolutions—this is one of the most striking manifestations of the International's collapse, and at the same time a most convincing proof that at present only those whose rare simplicity borders

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2 The Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party, held on September 15-21, 1912, passed a resolution “On Imperialism”, which said that the imperialist states were pursuing “a policy of shameless plunder and annexations” and called upon the party “to fight imperialism with greater energy”. During World War I leaders of the Second International treacherously violated the decisions of the international socialist congresses, in particular, those adopted in Chemnitz.



on a cunning desire to perpetuate the former hypocrisy can believe that socialism can be “rectified” and “its line straightened out” by means of resolutions alone.

Only yesterday, one might say, when, before the war, Hyndman turned towards a defense of imperialism, all “respectable” socialists considered him an unbalanced crank, of whom nobody spoke otherwise than in a tone of disdain. Today the most prominent Social-Democratic leaders of all countries have sunk entirely to Hyndman’s position, differing from one another only in shades of opinion and in temperament. We are quite unable to find some more or less suitable parliamentary expression in appraising or characterizing the civic courage of such persons as, for instance, the *Nashe Slovo* authors, who write of “Mr.” Hyndman with contempt, while speaking—or saying nothing—of “Comrade” Kautsky with deference (or obsequiousness?). Can such an attitude be reconciled with a respect for socialism, and for one’s convictions in general? If you are convinced that Hyndman’s chauvinism is false and destructive, does it not follow that you should direct your criticism and attacks against Kautsky, the more influential and more dangerous defender of such views?

In perhaps greater detail than anywhere else, Guesde’s views have recently been expressed by the Guesdist Charles Dumas, in a pamphlet entitled *The Peace That We Desire*. This “Chef du Cabinet de Jules Guesde”, as he styles himself on the title-page of the pamphlet, naturally “quotes” the former patriotic declarations of the socialists (David, the German social-chauvinist, does the same in his latest pamphlet on defence of the fatherland), but he fails to refer to the Basle Manifesto! Plekhanov, who utters chauvinist banalities with an extraordinarily smug air, is likewise silent on the Manifesto. Kautsky behaves just like Plekhanov: in quoting from the Basle Manifesto, he *omits* all the revolutionary passages (*i.e.*, all the vital

content!), probably on the pretext of the censorship regulations... The police and the military authorities, whose censorship regulations forbid any mention of the class struggle or revolution, have rendered timely aid to the traitors to socialism!

Perhaps the Basle Manifesto is just an empty appeal, which is devoid of any definite content, either historical or tactical, with a direct bearing on the concrete war of today?

The reverse is true. The Basle resolution has less idle declamation and more definite content than other resolutions have. The Basle resolution speaks of the very same war that has now broken out, of the *imperialist* conflicts that have flared up in 1914-15. The conflicts between Austria and Serbia over the Balkans, between Austria and Italy over Albania, etc., between Britain and Germany over markets and colonies in general, between Russia and Turkey, etc., over Armenia and Constantinople—all this is what the Basle resolution speaks of in anticipation of the present war. It follows from that resolution that the *present* war between “the Great Powers of Europe” *“cannot be justified on the slightest pretext of being in the least in the interests of the people”*.

And if Plekhanov and Kautsky—to take two of the most typical and authoritative socialists, who are well known to us, one of whom writes in Russian while the other is translated into Russian by the liquidators are now (with the aid of Axelrod) seeking all sorts of “popular justifications” for the war (or, rather, vulgar ones taken from the bourgeois gutter press) if, with a learned mien and with a stock of false quotations from Marx, they refer to “precedents”, to the wars of 1813 and 1870 (Plekhanov), or of 1854-71, 1876-77, 1897 (Kautsky), then, in truth, only those without a shadow of socialist conviction, without a shred of socialist conscience, can take such arguments in earnest, can *fail* to call them

otherwise than unparalleled Jesuitism, hypocrisy and the prostitution of socialism! Let the Executive (*Vorstand*) of the German Party anathematize Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg's new magazine (*Die Internationale*) for its honest criticism of Kautsky; let Vandervelde, Plekhanov, Hyndman and Co. treat their opponents in the same manner, with the aid of the police of the Allied Powers. We shall reply by simply reprinting the Basle Manifesto, which will show that the leaders have chosen a course that can only be called treachery.

The Basle resolution does not speak of a national or a people's war—examples of which have occurred in Europe, wars that were even typical of the period of 1789-1871—or of a revolutionary war, which Social-Democrats have never renounced, but of the present war, which is the outcome of “capitalist imperialism” and “dynastic interests”, the outcome of “the policy of conquest” pursued by both groups of belligerent powers—the Austro-German and the Anglo Franco-Russian. Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. are flagrantly deceiving the workers by repeating the selfish lie of the bourgeoisie of all countries, which is striving with all its might to depict this imperialist and predatory war for colonies as a people's war, a war of defense (for any side); when they seek to justify this war by citing historical examples of *non*-imperialist wars.

The question as to the imperialist, predatory and anti-proletarian character of the present war has long outgrown the purely theoretical stage. All the main features of imperialism have been theoretically assessed, as a struggle being waged by the senile and moribund bourgeoisie for the partition of the world and the enslavement of “small” nations; these conclusions have been repeated thousands of times in the vast socialist press in all countries; in his pamphlet *The Impending War* (1911!), for example, the Frenchman Delaisi, a representative of one of our “Allied” nations, has explained

in simple terms the predatory character of the present war, with reference to the French bourgeoisie as well. But that is far from all. At Basle, representatives of the proletarian parties of all countries gave unanimous and formal expression to their unshakable conviction that a war of an imperialist character was impending, and drew tactical conclusions therefrom. For this reason, among others, we must flatly reject, as sophistry, all references to an inadequate discussion on the difference between national and international tactics see Axelrod's latest interview in *Nashe Slovo* Nos. 87 and 90), etc., etc. This is sophistry, because a comprehensive scientific analysis of imperialism is one thing—that analysis is only under way and, in essence, is as infinite as science itself. The principles of socialist tactics against capitalist imperialism, which have been set forth in millions of copies of Social-Democratic newspapers and in the decision of the International, are a quite different thing. Socialist parties are not debating clubs, but organizations of the fighting proletariat; when a number of battalions have gone over to the enemy, they must be named and branded as traitors; we must not allow ourselves to be taken in by hypocritical assertions that “not everybody understands imperialism in the same way”, or that the chauvinist Kautsky and the chauvinist Cunow can write volumes about it, or that the question has not been “adequately discussed”, etc., etc. Capitalism will *never* be completely and *exhaustively* studied in *all* the manifestations of its predatory nature, and in all the most minute ramifications of its historical development and national features. Scholars (and especially the pedants) will never stop arguing over-details. It would be ridiculous to give up the socialist struggle against capitalism and to desist from opposing, on such grounds, those who have betrayed that struggle. But what else are Kautsky, Cunow, Axelrod and their like inviting us to do?

Now, when war has broken out, no one has even attempted to examine the Basle resolution and prove that it is erroneous.

## II

But perhaps sincere socialists supported the Basle resolution in the anticipation that war would create a revolutionary situation, the events rebutting them, as revolution has proved impossible?

It is by means of sophistry like this that Cunow (in a pamphlet *Collapse of the Party?* and a series of articles) has tried to justify his desertion to the camp of the bourgeoisie. The writings of nearly all the other social-chauvinists, headed by Kautsky, hint at similar "arguments". Hopes for a revolution have proved illusory, and it is not the business of a Marxist to fight for illusions, Cunow argues. This Struvist, however, does not say a word about "illusions" that were shared by all signatories to the Basle Manifesto. Like a most upright man, he would put the blame on the extreme Leftists, such as Pannekoek and Radek!

Let us consider the substance of the argument that the authors of the Basle Manifesto sincerely expected the advent of a revolution, but were rebutted by the events. The Basle Manifesto says: (1) that war will create an economic and political crisis; (2) that the workers will regard their participation in war as a crime, and as criminal any "shooting each other down for the profit of the capitalists, for the sake of dynastic honour and of diplomatic secret treaties", and that war evokes "indignation and revolt" in the workers; (3) that it is the duty of socialists to take advantage of this crisis and of the workers' temper so as to "rouse the people and hasten the downfall of capitalism"; (4) that all "governments" without exception can start a war only at "their own peril"; (5) that governments "are afraid of a proletarian

revolution”; (6) that governments “should remember” the Paris Commune (*i.e.*, civil war), the 1905 Revolution in Russia, etc. All these are perfectly clear ideas; they do not *guarantee* that revolution will take place, but lay stress on a precise characterization of *facts* and *trends*. Whoever declares, with regard to these ideas and arguments, that the anticipated revolution has proved illusory, is displaying not a Marxist but a Struvist and police-renegade attitude towards revolution.

To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the “upper classes”, a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for “the lower classes not to want” to live in the old way; it is also necessary that “the upper classes should be unable” to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in “peace time”, but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis *and by the “upper classes” themselves* into independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these

objective changes is called a revolutionary situation. Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West; it also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century, and in Russia in 1859-61 and 1879-80, although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary class to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, “falls”, if it is not toppled over.

Such are the Marxist views on revolution, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxists, and for us, Russians, were corroborated in a particularly striking fashion by the experience of 1905. What, then, did the Basle Manifesto assume in this respect in 1912, and what took place in 1914-15?

It assumed that a revolutionary situation, which it briefly described as “an economic and political crisis”, would arise. Has such a situation arisen? Undoubtedly, it has. The social-chauvinist Lensch, who defends chauvinism more candidly, publicly and honestly than the hypocrites Cunow, Kautsky, Plekhanov and Co. do, has gone so far as to say: “What we are passing through is a kind of *revolution*” (p. 6 of his pamphlet, *German Social-Democracy and the War*; Berlin, 1915). A political crisis exists; no government is sure of the morrow, not one is secure against the danger of financial collapse, loss of territory, expulsion from its country (in the way the Belgian Government was expelled). All governments are sleeping on a volcano; all are *themselves* calling for the masses to display initiative and heroism. The entire political regime of Europe has been shaken, and

hardly anybody will deny that we have entered (and are entering ever deeper—I write this on the day of Italy’s declaration of war) a period of immense political upheavals. When, two months after the declaration of war, Kautsky wrote (October 2, 1914, in *Die Neue Zeit*) that “never is government so strong, never are parties so weak as at the outbreak of a war”, this was a sample of the falsification of historical science which Kautsky has perpetrated to please the Südekums and other opportunists. In the first place, never do governments stand in such need of agreement with all the parties of the ruling classes, or of the “peaceful” submission of the oppressed classes to that rule, as in the time of war. Secondly, even though “at the beginning of a war”, and especially in a country that expects a speedy victory, the government *seems* all powerful, nobody in the world has ever linked expectations of a revolutionary situation exclusively with the “beginning” of a war, and still less has anybody ever identified the “seeming” with the *actual*.

It was generally known, seen and admitted that a European war would be more severe than any war in the past. This is being borne out in ever greater measure by the experience of the war. The conflagration is spreading; the political foundations of Europe are being shaken more and more; the sufferings of the masses are appalling, the efforts of governments, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to hush up these sufferings proving ever more futile. The war profits being obtained by certain groups of capitalists are monstrously high, and contradictions are growing extremely acute. The smoldering indignation of the masses, the vague yearning of society’s downtrodden and ignorant strata for a kindly (“democratic”) peace, the beginning of discontent among the “lower classes”—all these are facts. The longer the war drags on and the more acute it becomes, the more the governments themselves foster—and must



foster—the activity of the masses, whom they call upon to make extraordinary effort and self-sacrifice. The experience of the war, like the experience of any crisis in history, of any great calamity and any sudden turn in human life, stuns and breaks some people, *but enlightens and tempers others*. Taken by and large, and considering the history of the world as a whole, the number and strength of the second kind of people have—with the exception of individual cases of the decline and fall of one state or another—proved greater than those of the former kind.

Far from “immediately” ending all these sufferings and all this enhancement of contradictions, the conclusion of peace will, in many respects, make those sufferings more keenly and immediately felt by the most backward masses of the population.

In a word, a revolutionary situation obtains in most of the advanced countries and the Great Powers of Europe. In this respect, the prediction of the Basle Manifesto has been *fully* confirmed. To deny this truth, directly or indirectly, or to ignore it, as Cunow, Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. have done, means telling a big lie, deceiving the working class, and serving the bourgeoisie. In *Sotsial-Demokrat* (Nos. 34, 40 and 41) we cited facts which prove that those who fear revolution—petty-bourgeois Christian parsons, the General Staffs and millionaires’ newspapers—are compelled to admit that symptoms of a revolutionary situation exist in Europe.

Will this situation last long; how much more acute will it become? Will it lead to revolution? This is something we do not know, and nobody can know. The answer can be provided only by the *experience* gained during the development of revolutionary sentiment and the transition to revolutionary action by the advanced class, the proletariat. There can be no talk in this connection about “illusions” or their repudiation, since no

socialist has ever guaranteed that this war (and not the next one), that today's revolutionary situation (and not tomorrow's) will produce a revolution. What we are discussing is the indisputable and fundamental duty of all socialists—that of revealing to the masses the existence of a revolutionary situation, explaining its scope and depth, arousing the proletariat's revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary determination, helping it to go over to revolutionary action, and forming, for that purpose, organizations suited to the revolutionary situation.

No influential or responsible socialist has ever dared to feel doubt that this is the duty of the socialist parties. Without spreading or harboring the least "illusions", the Basle Manifesto spoke specifically of this duty of the socialists—to rouse and to stir up the people (and not to lull them with chauvinism, as Plekhanov, Axelrod and Kautsky have done), to take advantage of the crisis so as to *hasten* the downfall of capitalism, and to be guided by the *examples* of the Commune and of October-December 1905. The present parties' failure to perform that duty meant their treachery, political death, renunciation of their own role and desertion to the side of the bourgeoisie.

### III

But how *could* it have happened that the most prominent representatives and leaders of the Second International have betrayed socialism? We shall deal with this question in detail later, after we have examined the attempts being made to give this treachery "theoretical" justification. We shall try to characterise the principal theories of social-chauvinism, of which Plekhanov (who in the main reiterates the arguments of the Anglo-French chauvinists, Hyndman and his new adherents) and Kautsky (who advances much more

“subtle” arguments) with their semblance of far greater theoretical profundity may be regarded as representatives.

Perhaps the most primitive of these is the “who-started it?” theory, which may be worded as follows: we have been attacked and are defending ourselves; the interests of the proletariat demand that the violators of the peace in Europe should be properly dealt with. This is merely a rehash of the declarations made by all governments and of the outcries of the bourgeois and the gutter press all over the world. Plekhanov embellishes even this threadbare piece of vulgarity with his inevitable Jesuitical reference to “dialectics”: to be able to assess the concrete situation, he says, we must first of all find out who started it and punish him; all other problems will have to wait until another situation arises. (See Plekhanov’s pamphlet, *The War*, Paris, 1914, and Axelrod’s repetition of its arguments, in (*Golos* Nos. 86 and 87.) Plekhanov has set a new record in the noble sport of substituting sophistry for dialectics. The sophist grabs at one of many “arguments”; it was Hegel who long ago very properly observed that “arguments” can be found to prove any thing in the world. Dialectics calls for a many-sided investigation into a given social phenomenon in its development, and for the external and the seeming to be reduced to the fundamental motive forces, to the development of the productive forces and to the class struggle. Plekhanov has plucked out a quotation from the German Social-Democratic press: the Germans themselves, before the war, admitted that Austria and Germany had “started it”, he says, and there you are. He does not mention the fact that the Russian socialists repeatedly exposed the tsarist plans of conquest of Galicia, Armenia, etc. He does not make the slightest attempt to study the economic and diplomatic history of at least the past three decades, which history proves conclusively that the conquest of

colonies, the looting of foreign countries, the ousting and ruining of the more successful rivals have been the backbone of the politics of *both* groups of the now belligerent powers.<sup>3</sup>

With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics, which has been so shamelessly distorted by Plekhanov to please the bourgeoisie, is that “*war is simply the continuation of politics by other [i.e., violent] means*”. Such

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3 Very instructive is *The War of Steel and Gold* (London 1914 a book dated March 1914!) by the British pacifist Brailsford, who is not averse to posing as a socialist. The author clearly realises that national problems are now in the background, and have been solved (p. 35), that this is not the issue of the day, that “the typical question of modern diplomacy” (p. 36) is the Baghdad railway, the contracts for rails for it, the Moroccan mines, and the like. The author correctly considers as one of the “most instructive incidents in the recent history of European diplomacy” the fact that French patriots and British imperialists fought against Caillaux’s attempts (in 1911 and 1913) to come to terms with Germany on the basis of an agreement on the division of spheres of colonial influence and the quotation of German securities on the Paris Bourse. The *British* and the *French* bourgeoisie *frustrated* such an agreement (pp. 38-40). The aim of imperialism is the export of capital to the weaker countries (p. 74). In Britain, the profits from such capital totalled between £90,000,000 and £100,000,000 in 1899 (Giffen), and £140,000,000 in 1909 (Paish); we would add that, in a recent speech, Lloyd George calculated it at £200,000,000, which is almost 2,000 million rubles. Unsavory machinations and bribing of high-ranking Turks, and cushy jobs in India and Egypt for the younger sons of the British aristocracy, such are the main features (pp. 85-87). An insignificant minority gains from armaments and wars, he says, but that minority is backed by “society” and the financiers, whereas behind the adherents of peace there is a disunited population (p. 93). A pacifist who today talks about peace and disarmament tomorrow proves to be a member of a party wholly dependent on the war

is the formula of Clausewitz,<sup>4</sup> one of the greatest writers on the history of war, whose thinking was stimulated by Hegel. And it was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded any war as the *continuation* of the politics of the powers concerned—and the *various classes* within these countries—in a definite period.

Plekhanov's crude chauvinism is based on exactly the same theoretical stand as the more subtle and saccharo-conciliatory chauvinism of Kautsky, who uses the following arguments when he gives his blessing to the desertion of the socialists of all countries to the side of their "own" capitalists:

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contractors (p. 161). If the Triple Entente wins, it will grab Morocco and partition Persia; if the Triple Alliance wins, it will take over Tripoli, strengthen its hold on Bosnia and subordinate Turkey (p. 167). In March 1906, London and Paris provided Russia with thousands of millions, and helped tsarism crush the movement for freedom (pp. 225-28); today Britain is helping Russia to throttle Persia (p. 229). Russia instigated the Balkan War (p. 230). There is nothing novel about this, is there? All this is common knowledge and has been reiterated a thousand times in Social-Democratic newspapers all over the world. On the eve of the war, a British bourgeois sees all this as clearly as can be. Against the background of these simple and universally known facts, what drivelling nonsense, what smug hypocrisy, what glib lies are the theories advanced by Plekhanov and Potresov concerning Germany's guilt, or Kautsky's theory concerning the "prospects" of disarmament and a lasting peace under capitalism! —*Lenin*

- 4 Karl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*: "All know that wars are caused only by the political relations of governments and of nations; but ordinarily one pictures the situation as if, with the beginning of the war, these relations cease and a totally new situation is created, which follows its own laws. We assert, on the contrary, that war is nothing but the continuation of political relations, with the intervention of other means." —*Lenin*

It is the right and duty of everyone to defend his fatherland; true internationalism consists in this right being recognized for the socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation... (See *Die Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914, and other works by the same author.)

This matchless reasoning is such an unutterable travesty of socialism that the best answer to it would be to strike a medal with the portraits of Wilhelm II and Nicholas II on one side and of Plekhanov and Kautsky on the other. True internationalism, we are told, means that we must justify German workers firing at French workers, and French workers firing at German workers, in the name of “defense of the fatherland”!!

However, closer examination of the theoretical premises in Kautsky’s reasoning will reveal the selfsame idea that Clausewitz ridiculed about eighty years ago, *viz.*, that when war breaks out, all historically created political relations between nations and classes cease and that a totally new situation arises! There are “simply” those that attack and those that are defending themselves, “simply” the warding off of the “enemies of the fatherland”! The oppression of a number of nations which comprise over half the population of the globe, by the dominant imperialist nations; the rivalry between the bourgeoisie of these countries for a share of the loot; the desire of the capitalists to split and suppress the working-class movement—all these have suddenly disappeared from the pen of Plekhanov and Kautsky, although they themselves were describing these very “politics” for decades before the war.

In this connection, false references to Marx and Engels are the crowning argument of these two chieftains of social chauvinism; Plekhanov recalls Prussia’s national war of 1813 and Germany’s national war of 1870, while Kautsky argues, with a most learned air, that

Marx examined the question of whose success (i.e., the success of which bourgeoisie) was more desirable in the wars of 1854-55, 1859 and 1870-71, and that the Marxists did likewise in the wars of 1876-77 and 1897. In all times the sophists have been in the habit of citing instances that refer to situations that are dissimilar in principle. The wars of the past, to which they make references, were a “continuation of the politics” of the bourgeoisie’s national movements of many years’ standing, movements against an alien yoke and against absolutism (Turkish or Russian). At that time the only question was: the success of which bourgeoisie was to be preferred; for wars of this type, the Marxists could *rouse* the peoples *in advance*, *fostering* national hatred, as Marx did in 1848 and later, when he called for a war against Russia, and as Engels in 1859 fostered German national hatred of their oppressors—Napoleon III and Russian tsarism.<sup>5</sup>

Comparing the “continuation of the politics” of combating feudalism and absolutism—the politics of the bourgeoisie in its struggle for liberty—with the “continuation of the politics” of a decrepit, i.e., imperialist,

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5 Mr. Gardenin in *Zhizn* labels as “revolutionary chauvinism”—but chauvinism—Marx’s stand in 1848 for revolutionary war against the European nations which in fact had shown themselves to be counter-revolutionary, *viz.*, “the Slavs and the Russians in particular”. This reproof of Marx reveals once again the opportunism (or—properly speaking and—the inconsequence) of this “Left” Socialist-Revolutionary. We Marxists have always stood, and still stand, for a *revolutionary* war against *counter-revolutionary* nations. For instance, if socialism is *victorious* in America or in Europe in 1920, and Japan and China, let us say, *then* move their Bismarcks against us—if only diplomatically at first—we certainly would be *in favor* of an offensive revolutionary war against them. It seems strange to you, Mr. Gardenin? But then you are a revolutionary of the Ropshin type! —*Lenin*

bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, of a bourgeoisie which has plundered the entire world, a reactionary bourgeoisie which, in alliance with feudal landlords, attempts to crush the proletariat, means comparing chalk and cheese. It is like comparing the “representatives of the bourgeoisie”, Robespierre, Garibaldi and Zhelyabov, with such “representatives of the bourgeoisie” as Millerand, Salandra and Guchkov. One cannot be a Marxist without feeling the deepest respect for the great bourgeois revolutionaries who had an historic right to speak for their respective bourgeois “fatherlands”, and, in the struggle against feudalism, led tens of millions of people in the new nations towards a civilised life. Neither can one be a Marxist without feeling contempt for the sophistry of Plekhanov and Kautsky, who speak of the “defence of the fatherland” with regard to the throttling of Belgium by the German imperialists, or with regard to the pact between the imperialists of Britain, France, Russia and Italy on the plundering of Austria and Turkey.

There is another “Marxist” theory of social-chauvinism, which runs as follows: socialism is based on the rapid development of capitalism; the development of capitalism in my country, and consequently the advent of socialism there will be speeded up by her victory; my country’s defeat will retard her economic development and consequently the advent of socialism. In Russia this Struvist theory has been developed by Plekhanov, and among the Germans by Lensch and others. Kautsky argues against this crude theory—against Lensch, who defends it overtly, and against Gunow, who defends it covertly; his sole purpose, however, is to reconcile the social-chauvinists of all countries on the basis of a more subtle and more Jesuitical chauvinist theory.

We need not dwell on this crude theory. Struve’s *Critical Notes* appeared in 1894, and during the past twenty years Russian Social-Democrats have become thoroughly familiar with this habit of the enlightened



Russian bourgeois of advancing their ideas and advocating their desires under the cloak of a “Marxism” *purged* of revolutionary content. Struvism is not merely a Russian, but, as recent events clearly prove, an international striving on the part of the bourgeois theoreticians to kill Marxism with “kindness”, to crush it in their embraces, kill it with a feigned acceptance of “all” the “truly scientific” aspects and elements of Marxism except its “agitational”, “demagogic”, “Blanquist-utopian” aspect. In other words, they take from Marxism all that is acceptable to the liberal bourgeoisie, including the struggle for reforms, the class struggle (without the proletarian dictatorship), the “general” recognition of “socialist ideals” and the substitution of a “new order” for capitalism; they cast aside “only” the living soul of Marxism, “only” its revolutionary content.

Marxism is the theory of the proletarian movement for emancipation. It is clear, therefore, that the class-conscious workers must pay the utmost attention to any substitution of Struvism for Marxism. The motive forces in this process are varied and manifold. We shall indicate only the three main forces: (1) the development of science is providing more and more material that proves that Marx was right. This makes it necessary to fight against him hypocritically—not to oppose the principles of Marxism openly, but to pretend to accept Marxism, while emasculating it by sophistry and turning it into a holy “icon” that is harmless to the bourgeoisie. (2) The development of opportunism among the Social-Democratic parties fosters such a re-fashioning of Marxism, and adjusts it for a justification of all kinds of concessions to opportunism. (3) The epoch of imperialism is one in which the world is divided among the “great” privileged nations that oppress all other nations. Morsels of the loot obtained as a result of these privileges and this oppression undoubtedly fall to the share of certain sections of the petty bourgeoisie and to the

working-class aristocracy and bureaucracy. These strata, which form an insignificant minority of the proletariat and of the toiling masses, gravitate towards “Struivism”, because it provides them with a justification of their alliance with their “own” national bourgeoisie, against the oppressed masses of all nations. We shall have occasion to deal with this later, in connection with the causes of the collapse of the International.

#### IV

The most subtle theory of social-chauvinism, one that has been most skilfully touched up to look scientific and international, is the theory of “ultra-imperialism” advanced by Kautsky. Here is the clearest, most precise and most recent exposition of this theory in the words of the author himself:

“The subsiding of the Protectionist movement in Britain, the lowering of tariffs in America; the trend towards disarmament; the rapid decline in the export of capital from France and Germany in the years immediately preceding the war; finally, the growing international interweaving between the various cliques of finance capital—all this has caused me to consider whether the present imperialist policy cannot be supplanted by a new, ultra-imperialist policy, which will introduce the joint exploitation of the world by internationally united finance capital in place of the mutual rivalries of national finance capital. Such a new phase of capitalism is at any rate conceivable. Can it be achieved? Sufficient premises are still lacking to enable us to answer this question...” (*Die Neue Zeit* No. 5, April 30, 1915, p. 144).

“The course and the outcome of the present war may prove decisive in this respect. It may entirely crush the weak beginnings of ultra-imperialism by fanning to the highest degree national hatred also among the finance capitalists, by intensifying the armaments race, and by making a second world war inevitable. Under such conditions, the thing I foresaw and formulated in my pamphlet, *The Road to Power*, would come true in horrifying dimensions; class antagonisms would become sharper and sharper and with it would come the moral decay [literally: “going out of business,” “*Abwirtschaftung*”, bankruptcy] of capitalism... [It must be noted that by this pretentious word Kautsky means simply the “hatred” which the “strata intermediary between the proletariat and finance capital”, namely, “the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeois, even small capitalists”, feel towards capitalism.] But the war may end otherwise. It may lead to the strengthening of the weak beginnings of ultra-imperialism... Its lessons [note this!] may hasten developments for which we would have to wait a long time under peace conditions. If it does lead to this, to an agreement between nations, disarmament and a lasting peace, then the worst of the causes that led to the growing moral decay of capitalism before the war may disappear.” The new phase will, of course, bring the proletariat “new misfortunes”, “perhaps even worse”, but “for a time”, “ultra-imperialism” “could create an era of new hopes and expectations within the framework of capitalism” (p. 145).

How is a justification of social-chauvinism deduced from this “theory”?

In a way rather strange for a “theoretician”, namely as follows:

The Left-wing Social-Democrats in Germany say that imperialism and the wars it engenders are not accidental, but an inevitable product of capitalism, which has brought about the domination of finance capital. It is therefore necessary to go over to the revolutionary mass struggle, as the period of comparatively peaceful development has ended. The “Right”-wing Social-Democrats brazenly declare: since imperialism is “necessary”, we too must be imperialists. Kautsky, in the role of the “Centre”, tries to reconcile these two views.

“The extreme Lefts,” he writes in his pamphlet, *The National State, the Imperialist State and the League of States* (Nuremberg, 1915), wish to contrapose socialism to inevitable imperialism, *i.e.*, not only the propaganda for socialism that we have been carrying on for half a century in contraposition to all forms of capitalist domination, but the immediate achievement of socialism. This seems very radical, but it can only serve *to drive* into the camp of imperialism *anyone* who *does not believe* in the immediate practical achievement of socialism” (p. 17, italics ours).

When he speaks of the immediate achievement of socialism, Kautsky is resorting to a subterfuge, for he takes advantage of the fact that in Germany, especially under the military censorship, revolutionary action cannot be spoken of. Kautsky is well aware that the Left wing is demanding of the Party *immediate* propaganda in favor of and preparation for, revolutionary action, not the “immediate practical achievement of socialism”.

From the necessity of imperialism the Left wing deduces the necessity of revolutionary action. The “theory of ultra-imperialism”, however, serves Kautsky as a means *to justify the opportunists*, to present the situation in such a light as to create the impression that they have not gone over to the bourgeoisie but simply “do not believe” that socialism can arrive immediately, and expect that a new “era” of disarmament and lasting peace “may be” ushered in. This “theory” boils down, and can *only* boil down, to the following: Kautsky is exploiting the *hope* for a *new* peaceful era of capitalisms as to justify the adhesion of the opportunists and the official Social-Democratic parties to the bourgeoisie, and their rejection of revolutionary, *i.e.*, proletarian, tactics in the *present stormy era*, this despite the solemn declarations of the Basle resolution!

At the same time Kautsky does not say that this new phase follows, and necessarily so, from certain definite circumstances and conditions. On the contrary, he states quite outspokenly that he cannot yet even decide whether or not this new phase is “*achievable*”. Indeed, consider the “trends” towards the new era, which have been indicated by Kautsky. Astonishingly enough, the author has included among the economic facts “the trend towards disarmament”! This means that, behind innocent philistine talk and pipe-dreaming, Kautsky is trying to hide from indisputable facts that do not at all fit in with the theory of the mitigation of contradictions. Kautsky’s “ultra-imperialism”—this term, incidentally does not at all express what the author wants to say—implies a tremendous *mitigation* of the contradictions of capitalism. We are told that Protectionism is subsiding in Britain and America. But where is there the least trend towards a new era? Extreme Protectionism is now subsiding in America, but Protectionism remains, just as the privileges, the preferential tariffs favouring Britain, have remained in that country’s colonies. Let us

recall what the passage from the previous and “peaceful” period of capitalism to the present and imperialist period has been based on: free competition has yielded to monopolist capitalist combines, and the world has been partitioned. Both these facts (and factors) are obviously of world-wide significance: Free Trade and peaceful competition were possible and necessary as long as capital was in a position to enlarge its colonies without hindrance, and seize unoccupied land in Africa, etc., and as long as the concentration of capital was still weak and no monopolist concerns existed, *i.e.*, concerns of a magnitude permitting domination in an *entire* branch of industry. The appearance and growth of such monopolist concerns (has this process been stopped in Britain or America? Not even Kautsky will dare deny that the war has accelerated and intensified it) have rendered the free competition of former times *impossible*; they have cut the ground from under its feet, while the partition of the world *compels* the capitalists to go over from peaceful expansion to an armed struggle for the *repartitioning* of colonies and spheres of influence. It is ridiculous to think that the *subsiding* of Protectionism in two countries can change anything in this respect.

Let us further examine the fall in capital exports from two countries in the course of a few years. In 1912 these two countries, France and Germany, each had about 35,000 million marks (about 17,000 million rubles) of foreign investments, this according to Harms’s statistics, while Britain alone had twice that sum.<sup>6</sup> The

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6 See Bernhard Harms, *Probleme der Weltwirtschaft*, Jena, 1912; George Paish, “Great Britain’s Capital Investments in the Colonies, etc.” in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. LXXIV, 1910/11, p. 167. Lloyd George, in a speech early in 1915, estimated British capital invested abroad at £4,000,000,000, *i. e.*, about 80,000,000,000 marks. —*Lenin*

increase in exports of capital has never proceeded evenly under capitalism, nor could that have been so. Kautsky dares not even suggest that the accumulation of capital has decreased, or that the capacity of the home market has undergone any important change, say through a big improvement in the conditions of the masses. In these circumstances, the fall in capital exports from two countries over several years cannot imply the advent of a new era.

“The growing international interweaving between the cliques of finance capital” is the only really general and indubitable tendency, not during the last few years and in two countries, but throughout the whole capitalist world. But why should this trend engender a striving towards disarmament, not armaments, as hitherto? Take any one of the world-famous cannon (and arms) manufacturers, Armstrong, for instance. The British *Economist* (May 1, 1915) published figures showing that this firm’s profits rose from £606,000 (about 6,000,000 rubles) in 1905/6 to £856,000 in 1913, and to £940,000 (9,000,000 rubles) in 1914. Here, the intertwining of finance capital is most pronounced, and is on the increase, German capitalists have “holdings” in British firms; British firms build submarines for Austria, and so on. Interlinked on a world-wide scale, capital is thriving on armaments and wars. To think that the fact of capital in the individual states combining and interlinking on an international scale must of necessity produce an economic trend towards disarmament means, in effect, allowing well-meaning philistine expectations of an easing of class contradictions take the place of the actual intensification of those contradictions.

## V

It is in a wholly philistine spirit that Kautsky speaks of the “lessons” of the war, presenting those lessons in the light of a moral abhorrence at the misery it causes. Here, for instance, is how he argues in the pamphlet entitled *The National State, etc.*:

“It stands beyond doubt and needs no proof that there are strata of the population that are greatly interested in universal peace and disarmament. The petty bourgeoisie and the small peasants, and even many capitalists and intellectuals, are not tied to imperialism by any interests that outweigh the damage suffered by these strata as a result of war and armaments” (p. 21).

This was written in February 1915! The facts show that all the propertied classes, down to the petty bourgeoisie and the “intelligentsia”, have joined the imperialists *en masse*, and yet Kautsky, like Chekhov’s man in a muffler<sup>7</sup> shrugs off the facts with an air of extraordinary smugness and with the aid of saccharine phrases. He judges of the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, not by their *conduct*, but by the *words* of certain petty bourgeois, although at every step such words are refuted by the deeds. It is exactly like judging of the “interests” of the bourgeoisie in general, not by their deeds, but by the benevolent speeches made by bourgeois clergymen who avow that the present-day system is imbued with the ideals of Christianity. Kautsky applies Marxism in a way that voids it of all content, so that what remains is the catchword of “interests”, in a

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7 *The man in a muffler*—a character in Chekhov’s story of the same name, typifying a narrow-minded philistine who is afraid of innovations and any initiative.



kind of supernatural, other worldly meaning, for it implies, not real economics, but pious wishes for the common weal.

Marxism appraises “interests” according to the class antagonisms and the class struggle which find expression in millions of facts of daily life. The petty bourgeoisie prattle and dream of the abatement of antagonisms, whose aggravation, they “argue”, leads to “harmful consequences”. Imperialism means the subjugation of all strata of the propertied classes to finance capital, and the partition of the world among five or six “Great” Powers, most of which are now involved in the war. The partition of the world among the Great Powers means that all their propertied classes *are interested* in possessing colonies and spheres of influence, in oppressing other nations, and in securing the more or less lucrative posts and privileges that stem from belonging to a “Great” Power and an oppressor nation.<sup>8</sup>

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8 E. Schultze states that by 1915 the value of securities in the whole world was calculated at 732,000 million francs, including state and municipal loans, the mortgages and shares of commercial and manufacturing corporations, etc. Of this sum, Britain’s share was 130,000 million francs, that of the United States 115,000 million, France 100,000 million and Germany 75,000 million, i. e., the share of all four Great Powers being 420,000 million francs, over half the total. From this one can realise the advantages and privileges accruing to the leading Great Powers, which have outstripped other nations oppressing and plundering the latter. (Dr. Ernst Schultze *Das französische Kapital in Russland in Finanz-Archiv*, Berlin, 1915, 32nd year of publication, p. 127.) To a Great Power “defense of the fatherland” means defense of the right to share in the plundering of foreign countries. In Russia, as is common knowledge capitalist imperialism is weaker than military-feudal imperialism is. —*Lenin*

Life *cannot* go on in the old way, in the comparatively tranquil, cultured and peaceful conditions of a capitalism that is smoothly developing and gradually spreading to new countries. A new epoch has arrived. Finance capital *ousts*, and will completely oust, a particular country from the ranks of Great Powers, will deprive it of its colonies and spheres of influence (as Germany, which has gone to war with Britain, threatens to do), and it will deprive the petty bourgeoisie of their dominant-nation privileges and additional incomes. This has been proved by the war. It is the *outcome* of that aggravation of antagonisms which has long been admitted by all, including Kautsky, in his pamphlet *The Road to Power*:

Now that the armed conflict for Great-Power privileges has become a fact, Kautsky wants to *persuade* the capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie to believe that war is horrible, while disarmament is beneficial, in exactly the same way and with exactly the same results as the Christian churchman, speaking from the pulpit, would persuade the capitalist to believe that love of one's fellow-men is a Divine commandment, as well as the spiritual yearning and the moral law of civilization. What Kautsky calls an economic trend towards "ultra-imperialism" is just a petty-bourgeois *exhortation* to the financiers that they should refrain from doing evil.

The export of capital? *But* more capital is exported to independent countries such as the United States of America, than to the colonies. The seizure of colonies? *But* they have all been seized, and nearly all of them are striving for liberation. "India may cease to be a British possession, but as an integral empire it will never fall under the sway of another foreign power" (p. 49 in the pamphlet quoted). "Any attempt on the part of any industrial capitalist state to acquire for itself a colonial empire sufficient to make it independent of other countries in regard to raw materials must cause all other

capitalist states to unite against it and involve it in endless and exhausting wars, without bringing it nearer to its goal. Such a policy would be the surest road towards the bankruptcy of the entire economic life of that state” (pp. 72-73).

Is not this a philistine attempt to persuade financiers to renounce imperialism? Any attempt to frighten capitalists with the prospect of bankruptcy is like advising against speculating in shares on the Stock Exchange because many fortunes have been lost in this way. Capital *gains* from the bankruptcy of a rival capitalist or of a rival nation, because in this way capital becomes more concentrated. Hence the keener and “closer” economic competition becomes, *i.e.*, the economic driving of a competitor towards bankruptcy, the more the capitalists strive to add *military* pressure in order to drive the competitor in that direction. The fewer the countries to which capital can still be exported as advantageously as to colonies or to such dependent states as Turkey—since in such cases the financier reaps a triple profit as against capital exports to a free, independent and civilized country like the United States of America—the *fiercer* is the struggle for the subjugation and partition of Turkey, China, etc. That is what economic theory reveals about the period of finance capital and imperialism. That is what the facts reveal. But Kautsky turns everything into a trite petty-bourgeois “moral”: it is not worth while getting worked up and certainly not worth going to war over the partition of Turkey, or the seizure of India, since they cannot be held for long anyway, and, moreover, it would be better to develop capitalism peacefully... It would be better still, of course, to develop capitalism and expand the home market by increasing wages; this is quite “conceivable” and it is a very fitting topic for a churchman to preach on to the financiers... The good Kautsky has almost succeeded in persuading

the German financiers that it is not worth while waging war against Britain for the colonies, because these colonies will soon secure their liberation in any case!

Britain's exports to and imports from Egypt between 1872 and 1912 have not kept pace with the overall growth of British exports and imports, whence the "Marxist" Kautsky draws the following moral: "We have no reason to suppose that British trade with Egypt would have been less developed as a result of the mere operation of economic factors, without military occupation" (p. 72). "Capital's urge to expand... can be *best* promoted, not by the violent methods of imperialism, but by *peaceful democracy*" (p. 70).

What a remarkably serious, scientific and "Marxist" analysis! Kautsky has splendidly "rectified" unreasonable history; he has "proved" that there was no need for the British to have taken Egypt from the French, that it was absolutely not worth the German financiers' while to have started the war, organized the Turkish campaign, and taken other measures to drive the British out of Egypt! All this is merely a misunderstanding—it has not yet dawned upon the British that it would be "best" to give up forcible methods in Egypt, and adopt "peaceful democracy" (so as to increase exports of capital *à la Kautsky!*).

"Of course it was an illusion on the part of the bourgeois Free Traders to think that Free Trade would entirely eliminate the economic antagonisms generated by capitalism. Neither Free Trade nor democracy can eliminate these. We, in all respects are interested in having these antagonisms eliminated by a struggle waged in such forms as will impose the least amount of suffering and sacrifice on the masses" (p. 73)

The Lord help us, the Lord have mercy on us!  
“What is a philistine?” Lassalle used to ask, and answered by quoting the words of the well-known poet: “A philistine is a gut void of everything but fear and hope that God will have mercy on him.”<sup>9</sup>

Kautsky has degraded Marxism to unparalleled prostitution and has turned into a real churchman. The latter tries to *persuade* the capitalists to adopt peaceful democracy—and calls this dialectics: if at first, he argues, there was Free Trade, and then arrived the monopolies and imperialism, why should there not be “ultra-imperialism”, and then Free Trade again? The churchman *consoles* the oppressed masses by depicting the blessings this ultra-imperialism will bring, although he has not even the courage to say whether it can be “achieved”! Feuerbach was right when, in reply to those who defended religion on the ground that it consoles the people, he indicated the reactionary significance of consolation: whoever consoles the slave instead of arousing him to rise up against slavery is aiding the slaveowner.

All oppressing classes stand in need of two social functions to safeguard their rule: the function of the hangman and the function of the priest. The hangman is required to quell the protests and the indignation of the oppressed; the priest is required to console the oppressed, to depict to them the prospects of their sufferings and sacrifices being mitigated (this is particularly easy to do without guaranteeing that these prospects will be “achieved”), while preserving class rule, and thereby to reconcile them to class rule, win them away from revolutionary action, undermine their revolutionary spirit and destroy their revolutionary

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9 The quotation is from Goethe.

determination. Kautsky has turned Marxism into a most hideous and stupid counter-revolutionary theory, into the lowest kind of clericalism.

In 1909, he acknowledged, in his *The Road to Power*, the fact of the unrefuted and irrefutable intensification of antagonisms within capitalism, the approach of a period of wars and revolutions, of a new “revolutionary period”. There can be no “premature” revolution, he said, and branded as “a direct betrayal of our cause” any refusal to count on the possibility of victory in an uprising, even though, before the fighting began, the prospect of defeat could not be denied.

With the advent of war, the antagonisms have become *still* more bitter. The sufferings of the masses have assumed tremendous proportions. The end of the war is not in sight and the hostilities are spreading more and more. Kautsky is writing pamphlet after pamphlet and, meekly submitting to the dictates of the censorship, refrains from quoting the facts on the land-grabbing, the horrors of war, the scandalous profiteering of the war contractors, the high cost of living and the actual slavery of the workers mobilized in the munitions industries; instead, he keeps on consoling the proletariat. He does so by quoting the instance of wars in which the bourgeoisie was revolutionary and progressive, in regard to which “Marx himself” desired victory for one bourgeoisie or the other; he consoles it by quoting rows and columns of figures to prove that capitalism is “possible” without colonies, without the plundering of others, without wars and armaments, and to prove that “peaceful democracy” is preferable. Not daring to deny that the sufferings of the masses are becoming more acute and that a revolutionary situation is arising before our very eyes (one must not talk about this, since it is not permitted by the censor!), Kautsky, in his servility to the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, depicts the “prospect” (he does *not guarantee* that it can be

“achieved”) of forms of struggle in a new phase, which will entail “less sacrifice and suffering”... Franz Mehring and Rosa Luxemburg were quite right when, for this very reason, they called Kautsky a street-walker (*Mädchen für alle*).

In August 1905 a revolutionary situation existed in Russia. The tsar had promised convocation of the Bulygin Duma<sup>10</sup> in order to “console” the masses who were in a state of unrest. If the abandoning of armaments by the financiers and their agreeing to a “lasting peace” can be called “ultra-imperialism”, then the Bulygin regime of consultative parliamentary representation may be described as “ultra-autocracy”. Let us assume for a moment that tomorrow a hundred of the world’s biggest financiers, “interwoven” as they are in hundreds of colossal enterprises, will *promise* the peoples that they will stand for disarmament after the war (we make this assumption only for a moment in order to draw political conclusions from Kautsky’s foolish little theory). Even if that happened, it would be downright treachery to the proletariat to dissuade it from taking revolutionary action, without which all promises and all fine prospects are only a mirage.

The war has not only brought the capitalist class huge profits and splendid prospects of fresh plunder (Turkey, China, etc.), new contracts worth thousands of millions; and new loans at increased rates of interest; it has also brought the capitalist class still greater political advantages in that it has split and corrupted the

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10 *The Bulygin Duma*—a consultative Duma, the laws for the elections and convocation of which were drafted by a commission headed by A. G. Bulygin, Minister of the Interior, and published on August 6 (19), 1905. The Bolsheviks boycotted the Bulygin Duma, and the government failed to convene it. The Duma was swept away by the October general political strike.

proletariat. Kautsky is encouraging this corruption; he sanctifies this international *split* among the militant proletarians *in the name of unity* with the opportunists of their “own” nations, with the Südekums! And yet there are people who fail to understand that the unity slogan of the old parties means the “unity” of the proletariat of a given nation with the bourgeoisie of that nation, and a *split* among the proletariat of the various nations...

## VI

The preceding lines had already been written when *Die Neue Zeit* of May 28 (No. 9) appeared with Kautsky’s concluding arguments on the “collapse of Social-Democracy” (Section 7 of his reply to Cunow). Kautsky sums up all his old sophisms, and a new one, in defence of social-chauvinism as follows:

“It is simply untrue to say that the war is a purely imperialist one that at the outbreak of the war the alternative was either imperialism or socialism, that the socialist parties and the proletarian masses of Germany, France and, in many respects, also of Britain, unthinkingly and at the mere call of a handful of parliamentarians, threw themselves into the arms of imperialism, betrayed socialism and thus caused a collapse unexampled in history.”

A new sophism and a new deception of the workers: the war, if you please, is not a “purely” imperialist one!

Kautsky vacillates amazingly on the question of the character and significance of the present war; this party leader evades the precise and formal declarations of the Basle and Chemnitz congresses, as studiously as a thief keeps away from the place where he has just committed



a theft. In his pamphlet, *The National State, etc.*, written in February 1915, Kautsky asserted that “still, in the final analysis”, the war is an “imperialist one” (p. 64). Now a fresh reservation is introduced: it is not a *purely* imperialist war. What else can it be?

It appears that it is also a national war! Kautsky arrives at this monstrous conclusion by means of the following “Plekhanovist” pseudo-dialectic:

“The present war is not only the child of imperialism, but also of the Russian revolution.” As early as 1904, he, Kautsky, foresaw that the Russian revolution would revive Pan-Slavism in a new form, that “democratic Russia would, inevitably, greatly fan the desire of the Austrian and Turkish Slavs for national independence... Then the Polish question would also become acute... Austria would fall apart because, with the collapse of tsarism, the iron band which at present binds the centrifugal elements together would be destroyed” (Kautsky himself quotes this last phrase from his 1904 article). “The Russian revolution... gave a new and powerful impetus to the national aspirations of the East, adding Asia’s problems to those of Europe. *All these problems* are making themselves very strongly felt in the *present war* and are acquiring very decisive significance for the mood of the masses *of the people*, including the *proletarian* masses, whereas among the ruling classes imperialist tendencies are predominant” (p. 273, italics ours).

This is another sample of the prostitution of Marxism! *Inasmuch* as a “democratic Russia” would foster a striving towards freedom in the nations of Eastern Europe (this is indisputable), the present war, which

will not liberate a single nation, but, whatever the outcome, will enslave many nations, is not a “purely” imperialist war. *Inasmuch* as the “collapse of tsarism” would mean the disintegration of Austria, owing to its undemocratic national structure, a temporarily strengthened, and counter-revolutionary tsarism, which is plundering Austria and is bringing *still greater* oppression to the nations inhabiting Austria, has given “the present war”, not a purely imperialist character but, to a certain degree, a national character. *Inasmuch* as “the ruling classes” are deluding the stupid petty bourgeois and browbeaten peasants with fables about the national aims of the imperialist war, a man of science, an authority on “Marxism”, and representative of the Second International, is entitled to reconcile the masses to this deception by means of a “formula” which claims that the ruling classes reveal imperialist tendencies, while the “people” and the proletarian masses reveal “national” aspirations.

Dialectic is turned into the meanest and basest sophistry!

In the present war the national element is represented *only* by Serbia’s war against Austria (which, by the way, was noted in the resolution of our Party’s Berne Conference). It is only in Serbia and among the Serbs that we can find a national-liberation movement of long standing, embracing millions, “the masses of the people”, a movement of which the present war of Serbia against Austria is a “continuation”. If this war were an isolated one, i.e., if it were not connected with the general European war, with the selfish and predatory aims of Britain, Russia, etc., it would have been the *duty* of all socialists to desire the success of the Serbian *bourgeoisie*, as this is the only correct and absolutely inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the national element in the present war. However it is this conclusion

that the sophist Kautsky, who is now in the service of the Austrian bourgeoisie, clericals and militarists, has failed to draw.

Further, Marxist dialectics, as the last word in the scientific-evolutionary method, excludes any isolated examination of an object, *i.e.*, one that is one-sided and monstrously distorted. The national element in the Serbo-Austrian war is not, and cannot be, of any serious significance in the general European war. If Germany wins, she will throttle Belgium, one more part of Poland, perhaps part of France, etc. If Russia wins, she will throttle Galicia, one more part of Poland, Armenia, etc. If the war ends in a “draw”, the old national oppression will remain. To Serbia, *i.e.*, to perhaps one per cent or so of the participants in the present war, the war is a “continuation of the politics” of the bourgeois-liberation movement. To the other ninety-nine per cent, the war is a continuation of the politics of imperialism, *i.e.*, of the decrepit bourgeoisie, which is capable only of raping nations, not freeing them. The Triple Entente, which is “liberating” Serbia, is *selling* the interests of Serbian liberty to Italian imperialism in return for the latter’s aid in robbing Austria.

All this, which is common knowledge, has been unblushingly distorted by Kautsky to justify the opportunists. There are no “pure” phenomena, nor can there be, either in Nature or in society—that is what Marxist dialectics teaches us, for dialectics shows that the very concept of purity indicates a certain narrowness, a one-sidedness of human cognition, which cannot embrace an object in all its totality and complexity. There is no “pure” capitalism in the world, nor can there be; what we always find is admixtures either of feudalism, philistinism, or of something else. Therefore, if anyone recalls that the war is not “purely” imperialist, when we are discussing the flagrant deception of “the masses of the people” by the imperialists, who are deliberately con-

cealing the aims of undisguised robbery with “national” phraseology, then such a person is either an infinitely stupid pedant, or a pettifogger and deceiver. The whole point is that Kautsky is *supporting* the deception of the people by the imperialists when he asserts that to “the masses of the people, including the proletarian masses”, the problems of national liberation were “of decisive significance” *whereas* to the ruling classes the decisive factors were “imperialist tendencies” (p. 273), and when he “reinforces” this with an alleged dialectical reference to the “infinite variety of reality” (p. 274). Certainly, reality is infinitely varied. That is absolutely true! But it is equally indubitable that amidst this infinite variety there are two main and fundamental strains: the objective content of the war is a “continuation of the politics” of imperialism. *i.e.*, the plunder of other nations by the decrepit bourgeoisie of the “Great Powers” (and their governments), whereas the prevailing “subjective” ideology consists of “national” phraseology which is being spread to fool the masses.

Kautsky’s old sophism, repeated time and again, claiming that “at the outbreak of war” the “Lefts” regarded the situation as presenting an alternative between imperialism or socialism, has already been analysed. This is a shameless subterfuge, for Kautsky knows very well that the Lefts advanced a *different* alternative, *viz.*, either that the party join in the imperialist plunder and deception, or else propagate and prepare for revolutionary action. Kautsky knows also that it is the censorship *alone* that prevents the Lefts in Germany from exposing the stupid fable that his servility to the Südekums makes him spread.

As for the relation between the “proletarian masses” and a “handful of parliamentarians”, Kautsky advances a most threadbare objection:

“Let us disregard the Germans, so as not to plead in our own behalf who would seriously assert that men like Vaillant, Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov became imperialists overnight and betrayed socialism? Let us disregard the parliamentarians and the ‘leading bodies’... [Kautsky is obviously hinting at *Die Internationale*, the journal issued by Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring, in which the policy of the leading bodies, i.e., the official bodies of the German Social-Democratic Party, its Executive, the “*Vorstand*”, its parliamentary group, etc., is treated with deserved contempt]... who would dare assert that an order given by a handful of parliamentarians is sufficient to make four million class-conscious German proletarians turn right-about face within twenty-four hours, in direct opposition to their former aims? If this were true, it would, of course, be evidence of a terrible collapse, not only of our Party, but also of the *masses*. [Kautsky’s italics.] If the masses were such a spineless flock of sheep, we might just as well allow ourselves to be buried” (p. 274).

Politically and scientifically, Karl Kautsky, the great authority, gave himself a burial long ago through his conduct and his collection of pitiful evasions. Those who fail to understand or at least to feel this, are hopeless as far as socialism is concerned; it is for this very reason that the tone adopted, in *Die Internationale*, by Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg and their adherents, in treating Kautsky and Co. as most despicable creatures, was the only correct one in the circumstances.

Consider: the *only people in a position* to express their attitude to the war more or less freely (i.e., without being immediately seized and dragged to the barracks, or the immediate risk of being shot) were a “handful of

parliamentarians” (who were free to vote, with the right to do so; they were quite able to vote in opposition. Even in Russia, no one was beaten up or even arrested for this), a handful of officials, journalists, etc. And now, Kautsky nobly places on the *masses* the blame for the treachery and the spinelessness of that social *stratum* of whose *links* with the tactics and ideology of opportunism Kautsky himself has written scores of times over a number of years! The first and most fundamental demand of scientific research in general and of Marxist dialectic in particular is that a writer should examine the *link* between the present struggle of trends in the socialist movement—between the *trend* that is doing the talking, vociferating, and raising a hullabaloo about treachery, and the trend which sees no treachery—and the struggle that preceded it for *whole decades*. Kautsky, however, does not say a word about this; he does not even wish to raise the question of trends and *tendencies*. Till now there have been tendencies, but now there are none! Today, there are only the resonant names of “authorities”, which the servile spirits always invoke as their trump card. In this connection it is most convenient for one to refer to the other and to cover up one’s “peccadilloes” in a friendly fashion, according to the rule: you roll my log and I’ll roll yours. “How can this be called opportunism,” Martov exclaimed at a lecture in Berne (see No. 36 of *Sotsial-Demokrat*), “when Guesde, Plekhanov and Kautsky...!” “We must be more careful in accusing men like Guesde of opportunism,” Axelrod wrote (*Golos* Nos. 86 and 87). “I will not defend myself,” Kautsky echoed in Berlin, “but Vaillant, Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov...!” What a mutual admiration society!

In his writings, Kautsky has revealed such servile zeal as to fawn upon even Hyndman and to make it appear that it was only yesterday that the latter deserted to the side of imperialism. And yet the self-

same *Neue Zeit* and scores of Social-Democratic papers all over the world have been writing about Hyndman's imperialism *for many years*. Had Kautsky gone to the trouble of thoroughly studying the political biographies of the *persons* he mentions, he would have recalled whether or not those biographies contained traits and events which paved the way for their desertion to imperialism, not "overnight", but over decades; whether Vaillant had been held captive by the Jaurèsists, and Plekhanov by the Mensheviks and liquidators; whether the Guesdist trend had been publicly giving up the ghost in that typically lifeless and insipid Guesdist magazine, *Le Socialisme*, which was incapable of taking an independent stand on any important issue; whether Kautsky himself (we add this for the benefit of those who very properly put him alongside Hyndman and Plekhanov) had been supine in the question of Millerandism, in the early stage of the struggle against Bernsteinism, etc.

But Kautsky does not display the slightest shadow of interest in any scientific examination of these leaders' biographies. He does not even attempt to see whether these leaders are defending themselves with their own arguments or by repeating the arguments of the opportunists and the bourgeoisie; whether the actions of these leaders have acquired serious political significance because of their own extraordinary influence, or because they have adhered to some other really "influential" trend which is supported by a military organization, namely, the bourgeois trend. Kautsky has not even set about examining this question; his only concern is to throw dust in the eyes of the masses, dumbfound them with the sound of authoritative names, prevent them from raising a clear issue and examining it from all sides.<sup>11</sup>

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11 Kautsky's references to Vaillant and Guesde, Hyndman and Plekhanov are characteristic also in another connection. The

“... an order given by a handful of parliamentarians is sufficient to make four million class-conscious proletarians turn right-about-face....”

Every word uttered here is a lie. The German Party organization had a membership of one million, not four million. As is the case with any organization, the united will of this mass organization was expressed *only* through its united political center, the “handful”, who betrayed socialism. It was this handful who were asked to express their opinion; it was this handful who were called upon to vote, they were in a position to vote; they were in a position to write articles, etc. The masses were not consulted. Not only were they not permitted to vote, but they were disunited and coerced “*by orders*”, not from a handful of parliamentarians, but from the military authorities. A military organization existed; there was no treachery among the leaders of *this* organization. It called up the “masses” *one by one*, confronted the individual with the ultimatum: either join the army, as your leaders advise you to, or be shot. The masses could not act in an organized fashion because their previously created organization, an organization embodied in a “handful” of Legiens, Kautskys and Scheidemanns,

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out spoken imperialists of the Lensch and Haenisch variety (to say nothing of the opportunists) refer to Hyndman and Plekhanov so as to justify *their own* policy, and they have a *right* to do so. They are speaking the *truth* when they say it is one and the same policy. Kautsky, however, speaks with disdain of Lensch and Haenisch, radicals who have turned towards imperialism. Kautsky thanks God that he is unlike such sinners, that he disagrees with them, and has remained a revolutionary (*sic!*). As a *matter of fact*, Kautsky’s stand is the same as theirs. Kautsky, the hypocritical chauvinist who employs sentimental phrases, is much more odious than the chauvinist simpletons, David and Heine, Lensch and Haenisch. —*Lenin*



had betrayed them. It takes time to create a new organization, as well as a determination to consign the old, rotten, and obsolete organization to the scrap heap.

Kautsky tries to defeat his opponents, the Lefts, by ascribing to them the nonsensical idea that the “masses”, “in retaliation” to war, should make a revolution “within twenty four hours”, and institute “socialism” as opposed to imperialism, or otherwise the “masses” would be revealing “spinelessness and treachery”. But this is sheer nonsense, which the compilers of illiterate bourgeois and police booklets have hitherto used to “defeat” the revolutionaries, and Kautsky now flaunts in our faces. Kautsky’s Left opponents know perfectly well that a revolution cannot be “made”, that revolutions develop from objectively (*i.e.*, independently of the will of parties and classes) mature crises and turns in history, that without organization the masses lack unity of will, and that the struggle against a centralized state’s powerful terrorist military organization is a difficult and lengthy business. Owing to the treachery of their leaders, the masses *could not* do anything at the crucial moment, whereas this “handful” of leaders *were in an excellent position* and in duty bound to vote against the war credits, take a stand against a “class truce” and justification of the war, express themselves in favor of the defeat of *their own* governments, set up an international apparatus for the purpose of carrying

on propaganda in favor of fraternization in the trenches, organize the publication of illegal literature<sup>12</sup> on the necessity of starting revolutionary activities, etc.

Kautsky knows perfectly well that it is precisely such or rather *similar* actions that the German “Lefts” have in mind and that under a military censorship they cannot talk about these things *directly*, openly. Kautsky’s desire to defend the opportunists at all costs has led him into unparalleled infamy: taking cover behind the military censors, he attributes patent absurdities to the Lefts, in the confidence that the censors will protect him from exposure.

## VII

The serious scientific and political question, which Kautsky has deliberately evaded by means of subterfuges of all kinds, thereby giving enormous pleasure to the opportunists, is this: how was it *possible* for the most prominent representatives of the Second International to betray socialism?

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12 Incidentally, it would not have been at all necessary to close *all* Social-Democratic papers in reply to the government’s ban on writing about class hatred and class struggle. To agree not to write about this, as *Vorwärts* did was mean and cowardly. *Vorwärts* died *politically* when it did this and Martov was right when he said so. It was, however, possible to retain the legal papers by declaring that they were non-Party and *non-Social-Democratic*, and served the technical needs of a section of the workers, *i.e.*, that they were *non-political papers*. Underground Social-Democratic literature containing an *assessment* of the war, and legally published working-class literature *without that assessment*, a literature that does not say what is not true, but keeps silent about the truth—why should this not have been possible? —*Lenin*

This question should not, of course, be considered from the standpoint of the biographies of the individual leaders. Their future biographers will have to analyze the problem from this angle as well, but what interests the socialist movement today is not that, but a study of the historical origins, the conditions, the significance and the strength of the social-chauvinist *trend*. (1) Where did social-chauvinism spring from? (2) What gave it strength? (3) How must it be combated? Only such an approach to the question can be regarded as serious, the “personal” approach being in practice an evasion, a piece of sophistry.

To answer the first question we must see, first, whether the ideological and political content of social-chauvinism is *connected* with some previous trend in socialism; and second, in what relation—from the standpoint of actual political divisions—the present division of socialists into opponents and defenders of social-chauvinism stands to divisions which historically preceded it.

By social-chauvinism we mean acceptance of the idea of the defense of the fatherland in the present imperialist war, justification of an alliance between socialists and the bourgeoisie and the governments of their “own” countries in this war, a refusal to propagate and support proletarian revolutionary action against one’s “own” bourgeoisie, etc. It is perfectly obvious that social-chauvinism’s basic ideological and political content fully coincides with the foundations of opportunism. It is *one and the same* tendency. In the conditions of the war of 1914-15, opportunism leads to social-chauvinism. The idea of class collaboration is opportunism’s main feature. The war has brought this idea to its logical conclusion, and has augmented its usual factors and stimuli with a number of extraordinary ones; through the operation of special threats and coercion it has compelled the philistine and disunited masses to

collaborate with the bourgeoisie. This circumstance has naturally multiplied adherents of opportunism and fully explains why many radicals of yesterday have deserted to that camp.

Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses to the temporary interests of an insignificant minority of the workers or, in other words, an alliance between a section of the workers and the bourgeoisie, directed against the mass of the proletariat. The war has made such an alliance particularly conspicuous and inescapable. Opportunism was engendered in the course of decades by the special features in the period of the development of capitalism, when the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged workingmen “bourgeoisified” them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses. The imperialist war is the direct continuation and culmination of this state of affairs, because this is a war for the *privileges* of the Great-Power nations, for the repartition of colonies, and domination over other nations. To defend and strengthen their privileged position as a petty-bourgeois “upper stratum” or aristocracy (and bureaucracy) of the working class—such is the natural wartime continuation of petty bourgeois opportunist hopes and the corresponding tactics, such is the economic foundation of present-day social imperialism.<sup>13</sup>

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13 Here are several examples showing how highly the imperialists and the bourgeoisie value the importance of “Great-Power” and national privileges as a means of dividing the workers and diverting them from socialism. In a book entitled *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (Oxford, 1912), the British imperialist Lucas acknowledges the legal disabilities of colored people in the present British Empire (pp. 96-97), and remarks that “in our own Empire, where white workers and colored workers are side by side,... they do not work on the same level, and that the white

And, of course, the force of habit, the routine of relatively “peaceful” evolution, national prejudices, a fear of sharp turns and a disbelief in them—all these were additional circumstances which enhanced both opportunism and a hypocritical and a craven reconciliation with opportunism—ostensibly only for a time and only because of extraordinary causes and motives. The war has changed this opportunism, which had been fostered

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man is rather the overseer of... the colored man. In a pamphlet entitled *Social-Democracy after the War* (1915), Erwin Belger, a former secretary of the Imperial Alliance against Social-Democrats, praises the conduct of the Social-Democrats and declares that they must become a “purely labor party” (p. 43) a “national”, a “German labor party” (p. 45), without “internationalist, Utopian”, and “revolutionary” ideas (p. 44). In a book dealing with capital investments abroad (1907), the German imperialist Sartorius von Waltershausen blames the German Social-Democrats for ignoring the “national welfare” (p. 438)—which consists in the seizure of colonies—and praises the British workers’ “realism”, for instance, their struggle against immigration. In a book on the principles of world politics, the German diplomat Ruedorffer stresses the generally known fact that the internationalization of capital by no means eliminates the national capitalists’ intensified struggle for power and influence, for “majority share-holding” (p. 161). The author notes that the workers become involved in this intensified struggle (p. 175). The book is dated October 1913, and the author speaks with perfect clarity of the “interests of capital” (p. 157) as the cause of modern wars. He says that the question of the “national tendency” becomes the kingpin of socialism (p. 176), and that the governments have nothing to fear from the internationalist manifestos of the Social-Democrats (p. 177) who in reality are turning more and more national (pp. 103, 110, 176). International socialism will be victorious, he says, if it extricates the workers from national influence, since nothing can be achieved through violence alone; however, it will suffer defeat if national sentiments gain the upper hand (pp. 173-74).

for decades, raised it to a higher stage, increased the number and the variety of its shades, augmented the ranks of its adherents, enriched their arguments with a multitude of new sophisms, and has merged, so to say, many new streams and rivulets with the mainstream of opportunism. However, the mainstream has not disappeared. Quite the reverse.

`Social-chauvinism is an opportunism which has matured to such a degree that the *continued* existence of this bourgeois abscess within the socialist parties has become impossible.

Those who refuse to see the closest and unbreakable link between social-chauvinism and opportunism clutch at individual instances—this opportunist or another, they say, has turned internationalist; this radical or another has turned chauvinist. But this kind of argument carries no weight as far as the development of *trends* is concerned. Firstly, chauvinism and opportunism in the labor movement have the same economic basis: the alliance between a numerically small upper stratum of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie—who get but morsels of the privileges of their “own” national capital—against the masses of the proletarians, the masses of the toilers and the oppressed in general. Secondly, the two trends have the same ideological and political content. Thirdly, the old division of socialists into an opportunist trend and a revolutionary, which was characteristic of the period of the Second International (1889-1914), *corresponds*, by and large, to the new division into chauvinists and internationalists.

To realize the correctness of the latter statement, one must remember that social science (like science generally) usually deals with mass phenomena, not with individual cases. Let us take ten European countries: Germany, Britain, Russia, Italy, Holland, Sweden, Bulgaria, Switzerland, France and Belgium. In the first

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—Lenin

eight countries, the new division of socialists (according to internationalism) corresponds to the old division (according to opportunism): in Germany the magazine *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which was a stronghold of opportunism, has become a stronghold of chauvinism. The ideas of internationalism have the support of the extreme Lefts. In Britain about three-sevenths of the British Socialist Party are internationalists (66 votes for an internationalist resolution and 84 against it, as shown by the latest counts), while in the opportunist bloc (the Labour Party plus the Fabians, plus the Independent Labour Party) less than one-seventh are internationalists.<sup>14</sup> In Russia, the liquidationist *Nasha Zarya*, the mainstay of the opportunists, has become the mainstay of chauvinism. Plekhanov and Alexinsky are making more noise, but we know from five years' experience (1910-14) that they are incapable of conducting systematic propaganda among the masses in Russia. The nucleus of the internationalists in Russia is made up of "Pravdism"<sup>15</sup> and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour group in the Duma as representing the advanced workers who restored the Party in January 1912.

In Italy, the party of Bissolati and Co., which was purely opportunist, has turned chauvinist. Internationalism is represented by the *workers'* party. The *masses* of the workers are for this party; the opportunists, the parliamentarians and the petty bourgeoisie are for

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14 The Independent Labour Party alone is usually compared with the British Socialist Party. That is wrong. The essentials should be considered, not the forms of organization. Take the daily newspapers: there were two of them—one, the *Daily Herald*, mouthpiece of the British Socialist Party, the other, the *Daily Citizen*, mouthpiece of the opportunist bloc. The dailies do the actual work of propaganda, agitation and organization. —*Lenin*

15 *Pravdism*, i.e., Bolshevism (from the name of the Bolshevik newspaper *Pravda*).

chauvinism. In the course of several months a free choice could be made and indeed was made in Italy, not fortuitously but in conformity with the difference in the class stand of rank-and-file proletarians and the petty-bourgeois groups.

In Holland, Troelstra's opportunist party is reconciled to chauvinism in general (one must not be deceived by the fact that in Holland the petty bourgeoisie, like the big bourgeoisie, have a particular hatred of Germany, because the latter can "swallow" them up easiest of all). It is the Marxist party, led by Gorter and Pannekoek, that has produced consistent, sincere, ardent and convinced internationalists. In Sweden, Branting, the opportunist leader, is indignant at the German socialists being accused of treachery, while Höglund, leader of the Lefts, has declared that this is precisely the opinion of some of his adherents (see *Sotzial-Demokrat* No. 36). In Bulgaria, the "Tesnyaki", who are opposed to opportunism, have, in their press (the paper *Novo Vreme*), accused the German Social-Democrats of having "perpetrated a foul act". In Switzerland, the adherents of the opportunist Greulich are inclined to justify the German Social-Democrats (see their organ, the Zurich *Volksrecht*, whereas those who support the much more radical R. Grimm have turned the Berne paper, *Berner Tagwacht*, into an organ of the German Lefts. Only two countries out of the ten—France and Belgium—are exceptions, but even here, strictly speaking, we see, not an absence of internationalists, but their excessive weakness and dejection (due in part to causes that can be readily understood); let us not forget that Vaillant himself has admitted, in *l'Humanité*, that he has received from his readers letters of an internationalist character, letters which, however, he has not published in full, *not a single one* of them!



By and large, if we take the trends and tendencies, we must admit that it was the opportunist wing of European socialism that betrayed socialism and deserted to chauvinism. What is the source of its strength and its seeming omnipotence within the official parties? Now that he himself is involved, Kautsky, who is well versed in raising questions of history, especially with reference to ancient Rome or similar matters that do not have a direct bearing on problems of our times, hypocritically pretends a lack of understanding. But the whole thing is crystal-clear. The immense strength of the opportunists and the chauvinists stems from *their alliance* with the bourgeoisie, with the governments and the General Staffs. This is often overlooked in Russia, where it is assumed the opportunists are a *section* of the socialist parties, that there always have been and will be two extreme wings within those parties, that “extremes” should be avoided, etc., etc.—and plenty of similar philistine copybook maxims.

In reality, the opportunists’ formal membership in workers’ parties by no means disproves their objectively being a political detachment of the bourgeoisie, conductors of its influence, and its agents in the labor movement. When the opportunist Südekum, whose claim to fame is like that of Herostratus, convincingly demonstrated this social and class truth, many good people gasped with amazement. The French socialists and Plekhanov pointed the finger of scorn at Südekum—although had Vandervelde, Semhat or Plekhanov looked into a mirror they would have seen *nothing but a Südekum*, with slightly different national features. The members of the German Executive (*Vorstand*), who now praise Kautsky and are praised by Kautsky, have made haste to declare—cautiously, modestly and politely (without naming Südekum)—that they “do not agree” with Südekum’s line.

This is ridiculous, because, at the crucial moment, Südekum alone, actually proved stronger in the policies of the German Social-Democratic Party than a hundred Haases and Kautskys (just as *Nasha Zarya* alone is stronger than all the Brussels bloc trends, which are afraid to break away from that paper).

Why is that so? It is because behind Südekum are the bourgeoisie, the government, and the General Staff of a Great Power. These support Südekum's policy in a thousand ways, whereas his opponents' policy is frustrated by every means, including prison and the firing squad. Südekum's voice reaches the public in millions of copies of bourgeois newspapers (as do the voices of Vandervelde, Sembat, and Plekhanov), whereas the voices of his opponents *cannot* be heard in the legal press because of the military censorship!

It is generally agreed that opportunism is no chance occurrence, sin, slip, or treachery on the part of individuals, but a social product of an entire period of history. The significance of this truth is not always given sufficient thought. Opportunism has been nurtured by legalism. The workers' parties of the period between 1889 and 1914 had to take advantage of bourgeois legality. When the crisis came, they should have adopted illegal methods of work (but this could not be done otherwise than with the greatest vigour and determination, combined with a number of stratagems). A *single* Südekum was sufficient to prevent the adoption of illegal methods, because, speaking in a historico-philosophical sense, he had the whole of the "old world" behind him, and because he, Südekum, has always betrayed, and will always betray, to the bourgeoisie all the military plans of its class enemy, speaking in the sense of practical politics.

It is a fact that the entire German Social-Democratic Party (and the same holds for the French and *other* parties) does only that which pleases Südekum or

can be tolerated by Südekum. *Nothing else* can be done legally. Anything honest and really socialist that takes place in the German Social-Democratic Party, is done in *opposition* to its centers, by *circumventing* its Executive and Central Organ, by *violating* organizational discipline, in a *factional* manner, on behalf of new and anonymous centers of a new party, as was the case, for instance, with the German Lefts' manifesto published in *Berner Tagwacht* on May 31 of this year.<sup>16</sup> As a matter of fact, a new party is growing up, gaining strength and being organised, a real workers' party, a genuinely revolutionary Social-Democratic Party, unlike the old and corrupt national-liberal party of Legien, Südekum, Kautsky, Haase, Scheidemann and Co.

It was, therefore, a profound historical truth that the opportunist "Monitor" blurted out in the conservative *Preussische Jahrbücher* when he said it would be bad for the opportunists (*i.e., the bourgeoisie*) if present-day Social-Democracy were to *swing to the right*—because in that case the workers would desert it. The opportunists (and the bourgeoisie) need the party as it is today, a party *combining* the Right and the Left wings and officially represented by Kautsky, who will be able to reconcile everything in the world by means of smooth, "thoroughly Marxist" phrases. In word, socialism and the revolutionary spirit for the people, the masses, the workers; indeed, Südekumism, adhering to the bourgeoisie in any grave crisis. We say: *any* crisis, because in any serious political strike, and not only in time of war, "feudalist" Germany like "free and parliamentary" Britain or France will *immediately* introduce martial law under one name or another. No one of sound mind and judgement can have any doubt about this.

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16 This refers to the manifesto "The Chief Enemy Is in Our Own Country", written by Karl Liebknecht.

Hence logically follows the reply to the question raised above, *viz.*, how is social-chauvinism to be combated? Social-chauvinism is an opportunism which has matured to such a degree, grown so strong and brazen during the long period of comparatively "peaceful" capitalism, so definite in its political ideology, and so closely associated with the bourgeoisie and the governments, that the existence of *such a trend within* the Social-Democratic workers' parties *cannot* be tolerated. Flimsy, thin-soled shoes may be good enough to walk in on the well-paved streets of a small provincial town, but heavy hob-nailed boots are needed for walking in the hills. In Europe socialism has emerged from a comparatively peaceful stage that is confined within narrow and national limits. With the outbreak of the war of 1914-15, it entered the stage of revolutionary action; there can be no doubt that the time has come for a complete break with opportunism, for its expulsion from the workers' parties.

This definition of the tasks the new era of international development confronts socialism with does not, of course, immediately show how rapidly and in what definite forms the process of separation of the workers' revolutionary Social-Democratic parties from the petty-bourgeois opportunist parties will proceed in the various countries. It does, however, reveal the need clearly to realize that such a separation is inevitable, and that the entire policy of the workers' parties must be directed from this standpoint. The war of 1914-15 is such a great turn in history that the attitude towards opportunism cannot remain the same as it has been. What has happened cannot be erased. It is impossible to obliterate from the minds of the workers, or from the experience of the bourgeoisie, or from the political lessons of our epoch in general, the fact that, at a moment of crisis, the opportunists proved to be the nucleus of those elements within the workers' parties

that deserted to the bourgeoisie. Opportunism—to speak on a European scale—was in its adolescent stage, as it were, before the war. With the outbreak of the war it grew to manhood and its “innocence” and youth cannot be restored. An entire social stratum, consisting of parliamentarians, journalists, labor officials, privileged office personnel, and certain strata of the proletariat, has sprung up and has become *amalgamated* with its own national bourgeoisie, which has proved fully capable of appreciating and “adapting” it. The course of history cannot be turned back or checked—we can and must go fearlessly onward, from the preparatory legal working-class organizations, which are in the grip of opportunism, to revolutionary organizations that know how *not* to confine themselves to legality and are capable of safeguarding themselves against opportunist treachery, organizations of a proletariat that is beginning a “struggle for power”, a struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

This, incidentally, proves how wrong are the views of those who befog both their own minds and those of the workers with the question as to what should be done with such outstanding authorities of the Second International as Guesde, Plekhanov, Kautsky, etc. In fact, no such question arises. If these persons fail to understand the new tasks, they will have to stand aside or remain as they are at present, in captivity to the opportunists. If these persons free themselves from “captivity” they are hardly likely to encounter *political* obstacles to their return to the camp of the revolutionaries. At all events, it is absurd to substitute the question of the role of individuals for the question of the struggle between trends and of the new period in the working-class movement.

## VIII

Legal mass organizations of the working class are perhaps the most important feature of the socialist parties in the epoch of the Second International. They were the strongest in the German Party, and it was here that the war of 1914-15 created a most acute crisis and made the issue a most pressing one. The initiation of revolutionary activities would obviously have led to the dissolution of these legal organizations by the police, and the old party—from Legien to Kautsky inclusively—sacrificed the revolutionary aims of the proletariat for the sake of preserving the present legal organizations. No matter how much this may be denied, it is a fact. The proletariat's right to revolution was sold for a mess of pottage—organizations permitted by the present police law.

Take the pamphlet by Karl Legien, leader of the German Social-Democratic trade unions, entitled *Why Trade Union Officials Must Take a More Active Part in the Internal Life of the Party* (Berlin, 1915). This is a paper read by the author to a gathering of trade union officials on January 27, 1915. In the course of this lecture Legien read—and reproduced in his pamphlet—a most interesting document that would not otherwise have been passed by the military censor. This document—the so-called *Notes for Speakers in the District of Niederbarnim* (a suburb of Berlin)—is an exposition of the views of the German Left-wing Social Democrats, of their protest against the Party. The revolutionary Social-Democrats, says the document, did not and could not foresee a certain factor, *viz.*:

“That the whole of the organized power of the German Social-Democratic Party and the trade unions would take the side of the war government, and that the whole of this power would be

used for the purpose of suppressing the revolutionary energy of the masses” (p. 34 of Legien’s pamphlet).

This is the absolute truth. Also true is the following statement contained in the same document:

“The vote of the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag on August 4 proved that a different attitude, even had it been deeply rooted in the masses, could not have asserted itself under the leadership of a tested party. It could have asserted itself only against the will of the leading party bodies, only by overcoming the resistance of the party and the trade unions” (*ibid.*).

This is the absolute truth.

“Had the Social-Democratic group in the Reichstag done its duty on August 4, the external form of organization would probably have been destroyed, but the spirit would have remained, the spirit that animated the Party under the Anti-Socialist Law and helped it to overcome all difficulties” (*ibid.*).

It is pointed out in Legien’s pamphlet that the “leaders”, brought together to listen to his lecture and styling themselves leading trade union officials, *laughed* when they heard this. The idea that it was possible and necessary to organize illegal revolutionary organizations at a moment of crisis (as was done under the Anti-Socialist Law) seemed *ridiculous* to them. Legien, that most faithful watchdog of the bourgeoisie, exclaimed, beating his breast:

“This is an obviously anarchist idea: to wreck the organization in order to bring about a solution of the problem by the masses. There is no doubt in my mind that this is an anarchist idea!”

“Hear, hear!” came a chorus of exclamations (*ibid.*, p. 37) from the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who style themselves leaders of the Social-Democratic organizations of the working class.

An edifying picture. People are so degraded and stultified by bourgeois legality that they cannot even *conceive* of the need for organizations of *another* kind, *illegal* organizations, for the purpose of guiding the revolutionary struggle. So low have people fallen that they imagine that legal unions existing with the permission of the police are a kind of *ultima Thule*<sup>17</sup>—as though the *preservation* of such unions as *leading* bodies is at all conceivable at a time of crisis! Here you have the living dialectic of opportunism: the mere growth of legal unions and the mere habit that stupid but conscientious philistines have of confining themselves to book-keeping, have created a situation in which, during a crisis, these conscientious philistines have proved to be traitors and betrayers, who would *smother* the revolutionary energy of the masses. This is no chance occurrence. The building of a revolutionary organization must be begun—that is demanded by the new historical situation, by the epoch of proletarian revolutionary action—but it can be begun only *over the heads* of the old leaders, the stranglers of revolutionary energy, *over the heads* of the old party, through its *destruction*.

Of course, the counter-revolutionary philistines cry out “anarchism!”, just as the opportunist Eduard David cried “anarchism” when he denounced Karl Liebknecht.

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17 *ultima Thule*—the highest degree attainable, the limit. Latin.



In Germany, only those leaders seem to have remained honest socialists whom the opportunists revile as anarchists...

Take the army of today. It is a good example of organization. This organization is good only because it is *flexible* and is able at the same time to give millions of people *a single will*. Today these millions are living in their homes in various parts of the country; tomorrow mobilization is ordered, and they report for duty. Today they lie in the trenches, and this may go on for months; tomorrow they are led to the attack in another order. Today they perform miracles in sheltering from bullets and shrapnel; tomorrow they perform miracles in hand-to-hand-combat. Today their advance detachments lay minefields; tomorrow they advance scores of miles guided by airmen flying overhead. When, in the pursuit of a single aim and animated by a single will, millions alter the forms of their communication and their behavior, change the place and the mode of their activities, change their tools and weapons in accordance with the changing conditions and the requirements of the struggle—all this is genuine organization.

The same holds true for the working-class struggle against the bourgeoisie. Today there is no revolutionary situation, the conditions that cause unrest among the masses or heighten their activities do not exist; today you are given a ballot paper—take it, learn to organize so as to use it as a weapon against your enemies, not as a means of getting cushy legislative jobs for men who cling to their parliamentary seats for fear of having to go to prison. Tomorrow your ballot paper is taken from you and you are given a rifle or a splendid and most up-to-date quick-firing gun—take this weapon of death and destruction, pay no heed to the mawkish snivellers who are afraid of war; too much still remains in the world that *must* be destroyed with fire and sword for the emancipation of the working class; if anger and desper-

ation grow among the masses, if a revolutionary situation arises, prepare to create new organizations and use these useful weapons of death and destruction *against* your *own* government and your *own* bourgeoisie.

That is not easy, to be sure. It will demand arduous preparatory activities and heavy sacrifices. This is a *new* form of organization and struggle that also *has to be learned*, and knowledge is not acquired without errors and setbacks. This form of the class struggle stands in the same relation to participation in elections as an assault against a fortress stands in relation to maneuvering, marches, or lying in the trenches. It is *not so often* that history places this form of struggle on the order of the day, but then its significance is felt for decades to come. *Days* on which *such* method of struggle can and must be employed are equal to *scores of years* of other historical epochs.

Compare K. Kautsky and K. Legien. Kautsky writes:

“As long as the party was small, every protest against war had propagandist value as an act of bravery... the conduct of the Russian and Serbian comrades has met with general appreciation. The stronger a party becomes, the more are the propagandist considerations, in the motives of its decisions, interwoven with the calculation of practical consequences, the more difficult does it become to give due regard equally to both motives, and yet neither of them must be neglected. Therefore, the stronger we become, the more easily differences arise between us in every new and complex situation” (*Internationalism and the War*, p. 30).

These arguments of Kautsky’s differ from Legien’s only in that they are hypocritical and cowardly. In substance, Kautsky supports and justifies the Legien’s

despicable renunciation of revolutionary activities, but he does so stealthily, without committing himself; he makes shift with hints, and confines himself to complimenting both Legien and the revolutionary behavior of the Russians. We Russians are used to witnessing this kind of attitude towards revolutionaries only among the liberals; the latter are always ready to acknowledge the "courage" of the revolutionaries, but at the same time they will on no account renounce their ultra-opportunist tactics. Self-respecting revolutionaries will not accept Kautsky's "expressions of appreciation" and will indignantly reject such a presentation of the question. Were there no revolutionary situation, were it not obligatory to propagate revolutionary action, the conduct of the Russians and Serbians would be incorrect, and their tactics would be wrong. Let such knightly persons as Legien and Kautsky at least have the courage of their convictions; let them say this openly.

If, however, the tactics of the Russian and Serbian socialists deserve "appreciation", then it is wrong and criminal to justify the *contrary* tactics of the "strong" parties, the German, the French, etc. By means of an intentionally vague expression—"practical consequences"—Kautsky has *concealed* the plain truth that the great and strong parties were *frightened* by the prospect of their organizations being dissolved, their funds sequestered and their leaders arrested by the government. This means that Kautsky justifies betrayal of socialism by pleading the unpleasant "practical consequences" that follow from revolutionary tactics. Is this not a prostitution of Marxism?

"We would have been arrested," one of the Social-Democratic deputies who voted for the war credits on August is alleged to have declared at a workers' meeting in Berlin. The workers shouted in reply: "Well, what would have been bad about that?"

If there was no other *signal* that would instill in the German *and the French* working masses revolutionary sentiments and the need to prepare for revolutionary action, the arrest of a member of parliament for a courageous speech would have been useful as a call for *unity* of the proletarians of the various countries in their revolutionary work. It is *not easy* to bring about such unity; all the more was it the duty of members of parliament, whose high office made their purview of the entire political scene so extensive, *to take the initiative*.

Not only in wartime but positively in any acute political situation, to say nothing of periods of revolutionary mass action of any kind, the governments of even the *freest* bourgeois countries will threaten to dissolve the legal organizations, seize their funds, arrest their leaders, and threaten other “practical consequences” of the same kind. What are we to do then? Justify the opportunists on these grounds, as Kautsky does? But this would mean sanctifying the transformation of the Social-Democratic parties into national liberal-labor parties.

There is only one conclusion a socialist can draw, namely, that pure legalism, the legalism-and-nothing-but-legalism of the “European” parties, is now obsolete and, as a result of the development of capitalism in the pre-imperialist stage, has become the foundation for a bourgeois labor policy. It must be augmented by the creation of an illegal basis, an illegal organization, illegal Social-Democratic work, without, however, surrendering a single legal position. Experience will show *how* this is to be done, if only the desire to take this road exists, as well as a realization that it is necessary. In 1912-14, the revolutionary Social-Democrats of Russia proved that this problem can be solved. Muranov, the workers’ deputy in the Duma, who at the trial behaved better than the rest and was exiled to Siberia, clearly demonstrated that—besides “*ministeriable*” parliamen-

tarism (from Henderson, Sembat and Vandervelde down to Südekum and Scheidemann, the latter two are also being completely “ministeriable”, although they are not admitted further than the ante-room!)—there can be *illegal and revolutionary* parliamentarism. Let the Kosovskys and Potresovs admire the “European” parliamentarism of the lackeys or accept it—we shall not tire of telling the workers that such legalism, *such* Social-Democracy of the Legien, Kautsky, Scheidemann brand, deserves nothing but contempt.

## IX

To sum up.

The collapse of the Second International has been most strikingly expressed in the flagrant betrayal of their convictions and of the solemn Stuttgart and Basle resolutions by the majority of the official Social-Democratic parties of Europe. This collapse, however, which signifies the complete victory of opportunism, the transformation of the Social Democratic parties into national liberal-labor parties, is merely the result of the entire historical epoch of the Second International—the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The objective conditions of this epoch—transitional from the consummation of West European bourgeois and national revolutions to the beginning of socialist revolutions—engendered and fostered opportunism. During this period we see a split in the working class and socialist movement in some European countries, which, in the main, was cleavage along the line of opportunism (Britain, Italy, Holland, Bulgaria and Russia); in other countries, we see a long and stubborn struggle of trends along the same line (Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland). The crisis created by the great war has torn away all coverings, swept away conventions, exposed an abscess that has

long come to a head, and revealed opportunism in its true role of ally of the bourgeoisie. The complete organizational severance of this element from the workers' parties has become imperative. The epoch of imperialism cannot permit the existence, in a single party, of the revolutionary proletariat's vanguard and the semi-petty-bourgeois aristocracy of the working class, who enjoy morsels of the privileges of their "own" nation's "Great-Power" status. The old theory that opportunism is a "legitimate shade" in a single party that knows no "extremes" has now turned into a tremendous deception of the workers and a tremendous hindrance to the working-class movement. Undisguised opportunism, which immediately repels the working masses, is not so frightful and injurious as this theory of the golden mean, which uses Marxist catchwords to justify opportunist practice, and tries to prove, with a series of sophisms, that revolutionary action is premature, etc. Kautsky, the most outstanding spokesman of this theory, and also the leading authority in the Second International, has shown himself a consummate hypocrite and a past master in the art of prostituting Marxism. All members of the million-strong German party who are at all honest, class-conscious and revolutionary have turned away in indignation from an "authority" of this kind so ardently defended by the Südekums and the Scheidemanns.

The proletarian masses—probably about nine-tenths of whose former leaders have gone over to the bourgeoisie—have found themselves disunited and helpless amid a spate of chauvinism and under the pressure of martial law and the war censorship. But the objective war-created revolutionary situation, which is extending and developing, is inevitably engendering revolutionary sentiments; it is tempering and enlightening all the finest and most class-conscious proletarians. A sudden change in the mood of the masses is not only

possible, but is becoming more and more probable, a change similar to that which was to be seen in Russia early in 1905 in connection with the “Gaponade”,<sup>18</sup> when, in the course of several months and sometimes of several weeks, there emerged from the backward proletarian masses an army of millions, which followed the proletariat’s revolutionary vanguard. We cannot tell whether a powerful revolutionary movement will develop immediately after this war, or during it, etc., but at all events, it is only work in this direction that deserves the name of socialist work. The slogan of a civil war is the one that summarises and directs this work, and helps unite and consolidate those who wish to aid the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat against its own government and its own bourgeoisie.

In Russia, the complete severance of the revolutionary Social-Democratic proletarian elements from the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements has been prepared by the entire history of the working-class movement. Those who disregard that history, and, by declaiming against “factionalism”, make themselves incapable of understanding the real process of the formation of a proletarian party in Russia, which has

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18 *Gaponade*—derived from the name of Gapon, a priest of the Orthodox Church. On the eve of the first Russian revolution he founded the Assembly of Russian Factory Workers, with the aim of distracting the workers from the revolutionary struggle. In so doing he acted on instructions from the tsarist secret police. On January 9, 1905, Gapon, taking advantage of the growing unrest, provoked the workers into demonstrating before the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg for the purpose of presenting a petition to the tsar. By order of Nicholas II, troops fired at the unarmed demonstrators. This act destroyed the naïve faith of workers throughout the country in the tsar, and served as the starting-point of the first Russian revolution. The political consciousness of the proletariat was aroused and a wave of protest strikes swept Russia.

developed in the course of many years of struggle against various varieties of opportunism, are rendering that movement the worst possible service. Of all the "Great" Powers engaged in the present war, Russia is the only one that recently experienced a revolution. The bourgeois content of that revolution, in which the proletariat nevertheless played a decisive part, could not but cause a split between the bourgeois and proletarian trends in the working-class movement. In the approximately twenty years (1894-1914) that Russian Social-Democracy has existed as an organization linked with the mass working-class movement (and not only as an ideological trend, as in 1883-94), there was a struggle between the proletarian-revolutionary trends and the petty-bourgeois, opportunist trends. The Economism of 1894-1902 was undoubtedly a trend of the latter kind. A number of its arguments and ideological features—the "Struivist" distortion of Marxism, references to the "masses" in order to justify opportunism, and the like—bear a striking resemblance to the present vulgarized Marxism of Kautsky, Cunow, Plekhanov, etc. It would be a very grateful task to remind the present generation of Social-Democrats of the old *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, as a parallel to the Kautsky of today.

The "Menshevism" of the next period (1903-08) was the direct successor, both ideological and organizational, to Economism. During the Russian revolution, it pursued tactics that objectively meant the dependence of the proletariat upon the liberal bourgeoisie, and expressed petty-bourgeois, opportunist trends. When, in the ensuing period (1908-14), the mainstream of the Menshevik trend produced liquidationism, the class significance of that trend became so apparent that the best representatives of Menshevism were continually protesting against the policy of *Nasha Zarya* group. It is that very group—the only one which, during the past five or six years, has conducted systematic work among



the masses in *opposition* to the revolutionary Marxist party of the working class—that has proved to be *social-chauvinist* in the war of 1914-15! And this in a country where absolutism still exists, the bourgeois revolution is far from consummated, and forty-three per cent of the population oppresses a majority consisting of non-Russian nations. The “European” type of development, in which certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the intelligentsia and an insignificant section of the labor aristocracy can share in the “Great-Power” privileges of their “own” nation, could not but have its Russian counterpart.

All their history has prepared the working class and the workers’ Social-Democratic Party of Russia for “internationalist” tactics, i.e., such that are truly revolutionary and consistently revolutionary.

P.S. This article had already been set when a manifesto appeared in the press, jointly issued by Kautsky, Haase and Bernstein, who, seeing that the masses are swinging to the left, are therefore now prepared to “make peace” with the Left wing—naturally, at the price of maintaining “peace” with the Südekums. Verily, *Mädchen für alle!*

# Imperialism and the Split in Socialism<sup>19</sup>

Is there any connection between imperialism and the monstrous and disgusting victory opportunism (in the form of social-chauvinism) has gained over the labor movement in Europe?

This is the fundamental question of modern socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first, the imperialist character of our era and of the present war<sup>20</sup>, and, second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, as well as the intrinsic similarity of their political ideology, we can and must proceed to analyze this fundamental question.

We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the *quintessence* of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of *raw material* by the trusts and the financial oligarchy

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19 *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, written by Lenin in October 1916, was published in the Bolshevik magazine *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata*.

20 The reference is to the First World War of 1914–18. —*Lenin*

(finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels has *begun*. There are already over *one hundred* such international cartels, which command the *entire* world market and divide it “amicably” among themselves—until war *redivides* it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is *completed*.

Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism in America and Europe, and later in Asia, took final shape in the period 1898–1914. The Spanish-American War (1898), the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) and the economic crisis in Europe in 1900 are the chief historical landmarks in the new era of world history.

The fact that imperialism is parasitic or decaying capitalism is manifested first of all in the tendency to decay, which is characteristic of *every* monopoly under the system of private ownership of the means of production. The difference between the democratic-republican and the reactionary-monarchist imperialist bourgeoisie is obliterated precisely because they are both rotting alive (which by no means precludes an extraordinarily rapid development of capitalism in individual branches of industry, in individual countries, and in individual periods). Secondly, the decay of capitalism is manifested in the creation of a huge stratum of rentiers, capitalists who live by “clipping coupons”. In each of the four leading imperialist countries—England, U.S.A., France and Germany—capital in securities amounts to 100,000 or 150,000 million francs, from which each country derives an annual income of no less than five to eight thousand million. Thirdly, export of capital is parasitism

raised to a high pitch. Fourthly, “finance capital strives for domination, not freedom”. Political reaction *all along* the line is a characteristic feature of imperialism. Corruption, bribery on a huge scale and all kinds of fraud. Fifthly, the exploitation of oppressed nations—which is inseparably connected with annexations—and especially the exploitation of colonies by a handful of “Great” Powers, increasingly transforms the “civilized” world into a parasite on the body of hundreds of millions in the uncivilized nations. The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation. A privileged upper stratum of the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilized nations.

It is clear why imperialism is *moribund* capitalism, capitalism in *transition* to socialism: monopoly, which grows *out* of capitalism, is *already* dying capitalism, the beginning of its transition to socialism. The tremendous *socialization* of labor by imperialism (what its apologists—the bourgeois economists—call “interlocking”) produces the same result.

Advancing this definition of imperialism brings us into complete contradiction to K. Kautsky, who refuses to regard imperialism as a “phase of capitalism” and defines it as a *policy* “preferred” by finance capital, a tendency of “industrial” countries to annex “agrarian” countries.<sup>21</sup> Kautsky’s definition is thoroughly false from the theoretical standpoint. What distinguishes imperialism is the rule *not* of industrial capital, but of finance

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21 “Imperialism is a product of highly developed industrial capitalism. It consists in the striving of every industrial capitalist nation to subjugate and annex ever larger agrarian territories irrespective of the nations that inhabit them” (Kautsky in *Die Neue Zeit*; September 11, 1914). —*Lenin*

capital, the striving to annex *not* agrarian countries, particularly, but *every* kind of country. Kautsky *divorces* imperialist politics from imperialist economics, he divorces monopoly in politics from monopoly in economics in order to pave the way for his vulgar bourgeois reformism, such as “disarmament”, “ultraimperialism” and similar nonsense. The whole purpose and significance of this theoretical falsity is to obscure the *most profound* contradictions of imperialism and thus justify the theory of “unity” with the apologists of imperialism, the outright social-chauvinists and opportunists.

We have dealt at sufficient length with Kautsky’s break with Marxism on this point in *Sotsial-Demokrat* and *Kommunist*. Our Russian Kautskyites, the supporters of the Organising Committee<sup>22</sup> (O.C.), headed by Axelrod and Spectator, including even Martov, and to a large degree Trotsky, preferred to maintain a discreet silence on the question of Kautskyism as a trend. They did not dare defend Kautsky’s war-time writings, confining themselves simply to praising Kautsky (Axelrod in his German pamphlet, which the Organising Committee has *promised* to publish in Russian) or to quoting Kautsky’s private letters (Spectator), in which he says he belongs to the opposition and jesuitically tries to nullify his chauvinist declarations.

It should be noted that Kautsky’s “conception” of imperialism—which is tantamount to embellishing imperialism—is a retrogression not only compared with Hilferding’s *Finance Capital* (no matter how assiduously Hilferding now defends Kautsky and “unity” with

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22 *Organising Committee* (O.C.)—the leading center of the Mensheviks, supporters of the petty-bourgeois, opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Party. It was formed in 1912; during the world imperialist war it took a social-chauvinist stand, justifying the war led by the tsarist government and preaching nationalistic and chauvinistic ideas.  
—*Lenin*

the social-chauvinists!) but also compared with the *social-liberal* J. A. Hobson. This English economist, who in no way claims to be a Marxist, defines imperialism, and reveals its contradictions, much more profoundly in a book published in 1902.<sup>23</sup> This is what Hobson (in whose book may be found nearly all Kautsky's pacifist and "conciliatory" banalities) wrote on the highly important question of the parasitic nature of imperialism:

Two sets of circumstances, in Hobson's opinion, weakened the power of the old empires: (1) "economic parasitism", and (2) formation of armies from dependent peoples. "There is first the habit of economic parasitism, by which the ruling state has used its provinces, colonies, and dependencies in order to enrich its ruling class and to bribe its lower classes into acquiescence." Concerning the second circumstance, Hobson writes:

"One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism [this song about the "blindness" of imperialists comes more appropriately from the social-liberal Hobson than from the "Marxist" Kautsky] is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain, France, and other imperial nations are embarking on this perilous dependence. Great Britain has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives."

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23 J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*, London, 1902. —*Lenin*

The prospect of partitioning China elicited from Hobson the following economic appraisal: "The greater part of Western Europe might then assume the appearance and character already exhibited by tracts of country in the South of England, in the Riviera, and in the tourist-ridden or residential parts of Italy and Switzerland, little clusters of wealthy aristocrats drawing dividends and pensions from the Far East, with a somewhat larger group of professional retainers and tradesmen and a larger body of personal servants and workers in the transport trade and in the final stages of production of the more perishable goods: all the main arterial industries would have disappeared, the staple foods and semi-manufactures flowing in as tribute from Asia and Africa.... We have foreshadowed the possibility of even a larger alliance of Western states, a European federation of Great Powers which, so far from forwarding the cause of world civilization, might introduce the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial services under the control of a new financial aristocracy. Let those who would scout such a theory [he should have said: prospect] as undeserving of consideration examine the economic and social condition of districts in Southern England today which are already reduced to this condition, and reflect upon the vast extension of such a system which might be rendered feasible by the subjection of China to the economic control of similar groups of financiers, investors [rentiers] and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of world forces far too incalculable, to render this or any

other single interpretation of the future very probable; but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe today are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make towards such a consummation.”

Hobson, the social-liberal, fails to see that this “counteraction” can be offered only by the revolutionary proletariat and *only* in the form of a social revolution. But then he is a social-liberal! Nevertheless, as early as 1902 he had an excellent insight into the meaning and significance of a “United States of Europe” (be it said for the benefit of Trotsky the Kautskyite!) and of all that is now being glossed over by the *hypocritical Kautskyites* of various countries, namely, that the *opportunists* (social-chauvinists) are working hand in glove with the imperialist bourgeoisie *precisely* towards creating an imperialist Europe on the backs of Asia and Africa, and that objectively the *opportunists* are a section of the petty bourgeoisie and of a certain strata of the working class who *have been bribed* out of imperialist superprofits and converted to *watchdogs* of capitalism and corruptors of the labor movement.

Both in articles and in the resolutions of our Party, we have repeatedly pointed to this most profound connection, the economic connection, between the imperialist bourgeoisie and the opportunism which has triumphed (for long?) in the labor movement. And from this, incidentally, we concluded that a split with the social-chauvinists was inevitable. Our Kautskyites preferred to evade the question! Martov, for instance, uttered in his lectures a sophistry which in the *Bulletin of the Organising Committee, Secretariat Abroad* (No. 4, April 10, 1916) is expressed as follows:

“...The cause of revolutionary Social-Democracy would be in a sad, indeed hopeless, plight if those groups of workers who in mental develop-



ment approach most closely to the ‘intelligentsia’ and who are the most highly skilled fatally drifted away from it towards opportunism....”

By means of the silly word “fatally” and a certain sleight-of-hand, the *fact* is *evaded* that *certain* groups of workers *have already drifted away* to opportunism and to the imperialist bourgeoisie! And that is the very fact the sophists of the O.C. want to *evade*! They confine themselves to the “official optimism” the Kautskyite Hilferding and many others now flaunt: objective conditions guarantee the unity of the proletariat and the victory of the revolutionary trend! We, forsooth, are “optimists” with regard to the proletariat!

But in reality all these Kautskyites—Hilferding, the O.C. supporters, Martov and Co.—are *optimists*... with regard to *opportunism*. That is the whole point!

The proletariat is the child of capitalism—of world capitalism, and not only of European capitalism, or of imperialist capitalism. On a world scale, fifty years sooner or fifty years later—measured on a *world* scale, this is a minor point—the “proletariat” of course “will be” united, and revolutionary Social-Democracy will “inevitably” be victorious within it. But that is not the point, Messrs. Kautskyites. The point is that at the present time, in the imperialist countries of Europe, *you are fawning* on the opportunists, who are *alien* to the proletariat as a class, who are the servants, the agents of the bourgeoisie and the vehicles of its influence, and *unless* the labor movement *rids* itself of them, it will remain a *bourgeois labor movement*. By advocating “unity” with the opportunists, with the Legiens and Davids, the Plekhanovs, the Chkhenkelis and Potresovs, etc., you are, objectively, defending the *enslavement* of the workers by the imperialist bourgeoisie with the aid of its best agents in the labor movement. The victory of revolutionary Social-Democracy on a world scale is

absolutely inevitable, only it is moving and will move, is proceeding and will proceed, *against* you, it will be a victory *over* you.

These two trends, one might even say two parties, in the present-day labor movement, which in 1914–16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, were *traced by Engels and Marx in England* throughout the course of decades, roughly from 1858 to 1892.

Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the imperialist epoch of world capitalism, which began not earlier than 1898–1900. But it has been a peculiar feature of England that even in the middle of the nineteenth century she already revealed at least two major distinguishing features of imperialism: (1) vast colonies, and (2) monopoly profit (due to her monopoly position in the world market). In both respects England at that time was an exception among capitalist countries, and Engels and Marx, analyzing this exception, quite clearly and definitely indicated its *connection* with the (temporary) victory of opportunism in the English labor movement.

In a letter to Marx, dated October 7, 1858, Engels wrote: "...The English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *alongside* the bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable."

In a letter to Sorge, dated September 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that "the English labor leaders had sold themselves".

Marx wrote to Sorge on August 4, 1874: "As to the urban workers here [in England], it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into Parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot."

In a letter to Marx, dated August 11, 1881, Engels speaks about “those very worst English trade unions which allow themselves to be led by men sold to, or at least paid by, the bourgeoisie.”

In a letter to Kautsky, dated September 12, 1882, Engels wrote: “You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same as they think about politics in general. There is no workers’ party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals, and the workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and the colonies.”

On December 7, 1889, Engels wrote to Sorge: “The most repulsive thing here [in England] is the bourgeois ‘respectability’, which has grown deep into the bones of the workers.... Even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the best of the lot, is fond of mentioning that he will be lunching with the Lord Mayor. If one compares this with the French, one realizes, what a revolution is good for, after all.” In a letter, dated April 19, 1890: “But *under* the surface the movement [of the working class in England] is going on, is embracing ever wider sections and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant *lowest* [Engels’s italics] strata. The day is no longer far off when this mass *will* suddenly *find itself*, when it will dawn upon it that it itself is this colossal mass in motion.” On March 4, 1891: “The failure of the collapsed Dockers’ Union; the ‘old’ conservative trade unions, *rich* and therefore cowardly, remain lone on the field....” September 14, 1891: at the Newcastle Trade Union Congress the old unionists, opponents of the eight-hour day, were defeated “and the bourgeois papers recognize the defeat of the *bourgeois labor party*” (Engels’s italics throughout)....

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were so expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proved by his preface to the sec-

ond edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England, 1892*. Here he speaks of an “aristocracy among the working class”, of a “privileged minority of the workers”, in contradistinction to the “great mass of working people”. “A small, privileged, protected minority” of the working class alone was “permanently benefited” by the privileged position of England in 1848–68, whereas “the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement”.... “With the break-down of that [England’s industrial] monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position...” The members of the “new” unions, the unions of the unskilled workers, “had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited ‘respectable’ bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated ‘old unionists’”.... “The so-called workers’ representatives” in England are people “who are forgiven their being members of the working class because they themselves would like to drown their quality of being workers in the ocean of their liberalism...”

We have deliberately quoted the direct statements of Marx and Engels at rather great length in order that the reader may study them *as a whole*. And they should be studied, they are worth carefully pondering over. For they are the *pivot* of the tactics in the labor movement that are dictated by the objective conditions of the imperialist era.

Here, too, Kautsky has tried to “befog the issue” and substitute for Marxism sentimental conciliation with the opportunists. Arguing against the avowed and naive social-imperialists (men like Lensch) who justify Germany’s participation in the war as a means of destroying England’s monopoly, Kautsky “*corrects*” this obvious falsehood by another equally obvious falsehood. Instead of a cynical falsehood he employs a suave false-

hood! The *industrial* monopoly of England, he says, has long ago been broken, has long ago been destroyed, and there is nothing left to destroy.

Why is this argument false?

Because, firstly, it overlooks England's *colonial* monopoly. Yet Engels, as we have seen, pointed to this very clearly as early as 1882, thirty-four years ago! Although England's industrial monopoly may have been destroyed, her colonial monopoly not only remains, but has become extremely accentuated, for the whole world is already divided up! By means of this suave lie Kautsky smuggles in the bourgeois-pacifist and opportunist-philistine idea that "there is nothing to fight about". On the contrary, not only have the *capitalists* something to fight about now, but they *cannot help* fighting if they want to preserve capitalism, for without a forcible redivision of colonies the *new imperialist* countries cannot obtain the privileges enjoyed by the older (*and weaker*) imperialist powers.

Secondly, why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *superprofits*, *i.e.*, a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists *can* devote a part (and not a small one, at that!) of these superprofits to bribe *their own* workers, to create something like an alliance (recall the celebrated "alliances" described by the Webbs of English trade unions and employers) between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries. England's industrial monopoly was already destroyed by the end of the nineteenth century. That is beyond dispute. But *how* did this destruction take place? Did *all* monopoly disappear?

If that were so, Kautsky's "theory" of conciliation (with the opportunists) would to a certain extent be justified. But it is *not* so, and that is just the point.

Imperialism is monopoly capitalism. Every cartel, trust, syndicate, every giant bank is a monopoly Superprofits have not disappeared; they still remain. The exploitation of *all* other countries by one privileged, financially wealthy country remains and has become more intense. A handful of wealthy countries—there are only four of them, if we mean independent, really gigantic, “modern” wealth: England, France, the United States and Germany—have developed monopoly to vast proportions, they obtain *superprofits* running into hundreds, if not thousands, of millions, they “ride on the backs” of hundreds and hundreds of millions of people in other countries and fight among themselves for the division of the particularly rich, particularly fat and particularly easy spoils.

This, in fact, is the economic and political essence of imperialism, the profound contradictions of which Kautsky glosses over instead of exposing.

The bourgeoisie of an imperialist “Great” Power *can economically* bribe the upper strata of “its” workers by spending on this a hundred million or so francs a year, for its *superprofits* most likely amount to about a thousand million. And how this little sop is divided among the labor ministers, “labor representatives” (remember Engels’s splendid analysis of the term), labor members

of War Industries Committees,<sup>24</sup> labor officials, workers belonging to the narrow craft unions, office employees, etc., etc., is a secondary question.

Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, only England enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail there for decades. No other countries possessed either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.

The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.) This difference explains why England's monopoly position *could* remain *unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the era of imperialist wars has begun. It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of *one* country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist "Great" Power can and does bribe *smaller* strata (than in England in 1848–68) of the "labor aristocracy". Formerly a "*bourgeois labor party*", to use Engels's remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one coun-

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24 *War Industries Committees* were set up in Russia in May 1915 by the big imperialist bourgeoisie for aiding tsarism in conducting the war. In an attempt to bring the workers under its influence and instill defencist sentiments into them, the bourgeoisie decided to form "Workers' Groups" of the War Industries Committees, thereby showing that a "class truce" between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was established in Russia. The Bolsheviks advocated a boycott of the War Industries Committees and were successful in securing this boycott with the support of the majority of the workers. —*Lenin*

try, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but, on the other hand, it could exist for a long time. Now a “*bourgeois labor party*” is *inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries. For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while *enabling* the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.

On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into “eternal” parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to “rest on the laurels” of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of the excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labor movement will now inevitably develop. For the first tendency is not accidental; it is “substantiated” economically. In all countries the bourgeoisie has already begotten, fostered and secured for itself “bourgeois labor parties” of social-chauvinists. The difference between a definitely formed party, like Bissolati’s in Italy, for example, which is fully social-imperialist, and, say, the semi-formed near-party of the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Bulkins, Chkheidzes, Skobelevs and Co., is an immaterial difference. The important thing is that, economically, the desertion of a stratum of the labor aristocracy to the bourgeoisie has matured and become



an accomplished fact; and this economic fact, this shift in class relations, will find political form, in one shape or another, without any particular “difficulty”.

On the economic basis referred to above, the political institutions of modern capitalism—press, parliament associations, congresses etc.—have created *political* privileges and sops for the respectful, meek, reformist and patriotic office employees and workers, corresponding to the economic privileges and sops. Lucrative and soft jobs in the government or on the war industries committees, in parliament and on diverse committees, on the editorial staffs of “respectable”, legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and “bourgeois law-abiding” trade unions—this is the bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and supporters of the “bourgeois labor parties”.

The mechanics of political democracy works in the same direction. Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, and promising all manner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left—as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of bourgeoisie. I would call this system Lloyd-Georgism, after the English Minister Lloyd George, one of the foremost and most dexterous representatives of this system in the classic land of the “bourgeois labor party”. A first-class bourgeois manipulator, an astute politician, a popular orator who will deliver any speeches you like, even r-r-revolutionary ones, to a labor audience, and a man who is capable of obtaining sizable sops for docile workers in the shape of social reforms (insurance, etc.), Lloyd George serves the

bourgeoisie splendidly,<sup>25</sup> and serves it precisely *among* the workers, brings its influence *precisely* to the proletariat, to where the bourgeoisie needs it most and where it finds it most difficult to subject the masses morally.

And is there such a great difference between Lloyd George and the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Hendersons and Hyndmans, Plekhanovs, Renaudels and Co.? Of the latter, it may be objected, some will return to the revolutionary socialism of Marx. This is possible, but it is an insignificant difference in degree, if the question is regarded from its political, *i.e.*, its mass aspect. Certain individuals among the present social-chauvinist leaders may return to the proletariat. But the social-chauvinist or (what is the same thing) opportunist *trend* can neither disappear nor “return” to the revolutionary proletariat. Wherever Marxism is popular among the workers, this political trend, this “bourgeois labor party”, will swear by the name of Marx. It cannot be prohibited from doing this, just as a trading firm cannot be prohibited from using any particular label, sign or advertisement. It has always been the case in history that after the death of revolutionary leaders who were popular among the oppressed classes, their enemies have attempted to appropriate their names so as to deceive the oppressed classes.

The fact that is that “bourgeois labor parties,” as a political phenomenon, have already been formed in *all* the foremost capitalist countries, and that unless determined and relentless struggle is waged all along the line against these parties—or groups, trends, etc., it is all the

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25 I recently read an article in an English magazine by a Tory, a political opponent of Lloyd George, entitled “Lloyd George from the Standpoint of a Tory”. The war opened the eyes of this opponent and made him realize what an excellent servant of the bourgeoisie this Lloyd George is! The Tories have made peace with him! —*Lenin*

same—there can be no question of a struggle against imperialism, or of Marxism, or of a socialist labor movement. The Chkheidze faction, *Nashe Dyelo* and Golos Truda in Russia, and the O.C. supporters abroad are nothing but varieties of one such party. There is not the slightest reason for thinking that these parties will disappear *before* the social revolution. On the contrary, the nearer the revolution approaches, the more strongly it flares up and the more sudden and violent the transitions and leaps in its progress, the greater will be the part the struggle of the revolutionary mass stream against the opportunist petty-bourgeois stream will play in the labor movement. Kautskyism is not an independent trend, because it has no roots either in the masses or in the privileged stratum which has deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the danger of Kautskyism lies in the fact that, utilizing the ideology of the past, it endeavors to reconcile the proletariat with the “bourgeois labor party”, to preserve the unity of the proletariat with that party and thereby enhance the latter’s prestige. The masses no longer follow the avowed social-chauvinists: Lloyd George has been hissed down at workers’ meetings in England; Hyndman has left the party; the Renaudels and Scheidemanns, the Potresovs and Gvozdyovs are protected by the police. The Kautskyites’ masked defense of the social-chauvinists is much more dangerous.

One of the most common sophistries of Kautskyism is its reference to the “masses”. We do not want, they say, to break away from the masses and mass organizations! But just think how Engels put the question. In the nineteenth century the “mass organizations” of the English trade unions were on the side of the bourgeois labor party. Marx and Engels did not reconcile themselves to it on this ground; they exposed it. They did not forget, firstly, that the trade union organizations directly embraced a *minority of the proletariat*. In Eng-

land then, as in Germany now, not more than one-fifth of the proletariat was organized. No one can seriously think it possible to organize the majority of the proletariat under capitalism. Secondly—and this is the main point—it is not so much a question of the size of an organization, as of the real, objective significance of its policy: does its policy represent the masses, does it serve them, *i.e.*, does it aim at their liberation from capitalism, or does it represent the interests of the minority, the minority's reconciliation with capitalism? The latter was true of England in the nineteenth century, and it is true of Germany, etc., now.

Engels draws a distinction between the “bourgeois labor party” of the old trade unions—the privileged minority—and the “*lowest mass*”, the real majority, and appeals to the latter, who are not infected by “bourgeois respectability”. This is the essence of Marxist tactics!

Neither we nor anyone else can calculate precisely what portion of the proletariat is following and will follow the social-chauvinists and opportunists. This will be revealed only by the struggle, it will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the “defenders of the fatherland” in the imperialist war *represent* only a minority. And it is therefore our duty, if we wish to remain socialists to go down *lower and deeper*; to the real masses; this is the whole meaning and the whole purport of the struggle against opportunism. By exposing the fact that the opportunists and social-chauvinists are in reality betraying and selling the interests of the masses, that they are defending the temporary privileges of a minority of the workers, that they are the vehicles of bourgeois ideas and influences, that they are really allies and agents of the bourgeoisie, we teach the masses to appreciate their true political interests, to fight for

socialism and for the revolution through all the long and painful vicissitudes of imperialist wars and imperialist armistices.

The only Marxist line in the world labor movement is to explain to the masses the inevitability and necessity of breaking with opportunism, to educate them for revolution by waging a relentless struggle against opportunism, to utilize the experience of the war to expose, not conceal, the utter vileness of national-liberal labor politics.

In the next article, we shall try to sum up the principal features that distinguish this line from Kautskyism.