

Leon Trotsky on the Paris Commune

Trotsky, Lev, 1879-1940



Pamphlet Collection
Bucks University Library

INTRODUCTION

by Douglas Jenness

Copyright © 1970 by Pathfinder Press, Inc.
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 75-143589
Manufactured in the United States of America

First Edition, December 1970
Second Printing, February 1972

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction by Douglas Jenness	3
Thirty-Five Years After: 1871-1906	10
The Paris Commune	26
The Paris Commune and Soviet Russia	29
Marx and . . . Kautsky	47
Lessons of the Paris Commune	52
Glossary of Names and Terms	62

PATHFINDER PRESS
410 West Street
New York, N. Y. 10014

In May and June of 1968 red flags were raised throughout France. They waved from the tops of government buildings, universities, factories, and even ships in the harbors. They were a symbol of the revolutionary mood and aspirations of millions of French workers and students then conducting the largest general strike ever held in world history.

For today's generation of revolutionary youth, this massive revolt was a most inspiring example of the power and creativity of the students and working masses. More than two years later, revolutionaries throughout the world, not least of all those in the United States, are still studying and absorbing the lessons of this great event.

This is not the first time that France has provided an example to the world revolutionary movement. On many other occasions the eyes of socialists have turned to France to learn from its rich history of working-class uprisings and revolts. The most magnificent example is the Paris Commune of 1871, where the working class gave notice for the first time that it would and could take political power into its own hands.

Like many revolutionary uprisings, the Paris Commune was born of war. Prussia, guided by Bismarck, and the Second Empire of France, headed by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, locked in combat on July 15, 1870. The French army lost one battle after another until early in September when the French emperor was personally captured in a major defeat at Sedan. On September 4 the Empire was swept aside and amid a great uprising a republic was proclaimed. A Government of National Defense headed by a coalition of capitalist politicians was established and continued to conduct the war against Prussia. Shortly after this government came to power, Paris was encircled by the Prussian army. Under a state of siege for 135 days the starvation conditions of the workers steadily worsened. The Government of National Defense continued the war only half-heartedly, as its leaders became increasingly alarmed at the growing discontent of the working masses of Paris. In order to defend Paris the workers were armed and enrolled into the National Guard. They established their own vigilance committees to safeguard their interests in the National Guard and set up a Central Committee with representatives from

each of twenty districts. Later, when the Commune was established, the Central Committee and the National Guard became the military arm of the revolution. Finally, in late January, an armistice was signed between France and Prussia with very harsh concessions forced from the French by Bismarck.

When the capitalist class attempted to disarm the workers in March, the workers refused; and the National Assembly headed by Adolf Thiers retreated and convened in nearby Versailles. The workers were now in power, and on March 26 elections were held to the Commune—the world's first example of a workers' government. As Marx wrote in *The Civil War in France*, "The Commune was formed of the Municipal Councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were, naturally, working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

This new government had little time to work out its program and put it into practice before it was forced to wage a military campaign of defense against the capitalist counterrevolution headed by Thiers. Thiers was able to convince the Prussians, who still occupied a couple of forts outside of Paris, to release hundreds of French prisoners-of-war to fight against the workers' government.

The Commune was finally smashed in late May after a heroic resistance by the workers of Paris. Men, women, and children fought for eight days after the entrance of Thiers's troops into Paris. Tens of thousands were slaughtered in the savage massacres organized by the bourgeois terror. Thousands were deported to remote French colonies.

Although the Commune lasted only seventy-two days before it was drowned in blood, it became one of the great models for learning about the dynamics of working-class revolutions.

Marx, who followed the development of the Paris Commune on a day-to-day basis, drafted three manifestos for the General Council of the First International analyzing the events in France in late 1870 and early 1871. These were distributed widely at the time in French, English, and German, and compose his famous book, *The Civil War in France*.

The only major correction ever proposed by Marx and Engels to the *Communist Manifesto* was based on the experience of the Paris Commune. When the *Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848, Marx and Engels had assumed that the working class as it came to power would use the capitalist state apparatus for its own purposes. Altering this view after the Commune, they wrote in their introduction to an 1872 edition of the *Manifesto*: "One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the work-

ing class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.'"

As Marx and Engels digested the lessons of the Commune, so did the next generation of Marxist revolutionaries, most notably Lenin and Trotsky.

In his writings on the 1905 revolution in Russia, as well as the February and October revolutions of 1917, Lenin utilized the experience of the Commune to explain and develop more clearly the Marxist concept of the state, particularly the difference in form between a workers' state and a bourgeois state. His most extensive treatment of the Commune is included in his book, *State and Revolution*, written in August and September 1917.

Trotsky, like Lenin, recognized the continuity of experience between the Commune and the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917. As the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet in 1905, a principal leader of the October 1917 insurrection, and the organizer of the Red Army's victory against military counterrevolution, he had considerable occasion to contrast the experience of revolutionary Russia with that of France in 1871.

This collection is the most complete ever published in English of Trotsky's writings on the Paris Commune. The first selection, *Thirty-Five Years After: 1871-1906*, was written by Trotsky in December 1905, while in a Czarist prison awaiting trial for his role in the 1905 revolution. It has been translated for this edition by George C. Myland and has never appeared before in English.

It is particularly significant because it demonstrates how Trotsky's study of the Paris Commune played an important part in the development of his theory of the permanent revolution. That theory was first advanced in complete form in a 1906 pamphlet entitled *Results and Prospects*, which was included in his book, *Our Revolution*, published in 1907; a translation appears in the Pathfinder Press edition of *The Permanent Revolution*.

In *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky developed the concept that the Russian Revolution would not end in the establishment of a bourgeois republic even though the traditional tasks of the bourgeois revolution still remained to be accomplished—land reform, national independence, development of a national economy, etc. Rather, he thought, the revolution would lead to the formation of a workers' government, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, led by the working class and supported by the peasantry. In Trotsky's view, the capitalist class of backward Russia was too weak to lead an intransigent struggle against Czarism and foreign imperialism. A successful struggle could only be carried out under the leadership of the working class; and under working-class leadership the struggle, while solving the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, would not limit itself to the establishment of a bourgeois

republic. Thus, Trotsky saw the struggle for bourgeois democracy growing over into the proletarian revolution. Twelve years later this prognosis was proved correct in the successful October Revolution led by the Bolsheviks.

Although *Results and Prospects* was until then his most comprehensive statement of the theory of the permanent revolution, Trotsky had been developing the basic ideas since 1904 in several articles and pamphlets. Among these are *Up to the Ninth of January*, written in January 1905; an introduction to Lassalle's *Speech to the Jury*, written in July 1905; and certain articles in *Nachalo*, a leading Social Democratic newspaper of the time.

Thirty-Five Years After was among the writings of this formative period. In *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky refers to this article and directly quotes a long passage from it. He also incorporated into *Results and Prospects* nearly word for word a large number of additional paragraphs that are not directly quoted. However, except for one or two small references none of the material on the Paris Commune in *Thirty-Five Years After* was used in *Results and Prospects*. For this reason *Thirty-Five Years After* is unique for showing how the experience of France in 1871 helped Trotsky acquire a better understanding of Russia in 1905.

Russian liberals and reformists routinely assumed that a proletarian revolution leading to a workers' state could only occur on the basis of highly advanced productive forces. They argued that a period of capitalist economic development under a bourgeois form of government was necessary until the level of technique and the size of the working class prepared the way for a socialist revolution. Trotsky used the example of the Paris Commune to show that the decisive factor was the relationship of forces between classes and the consciousness of the working class, and these did not follow mechanistically from the level of the productive forces.

In his book, *The Paris Commune of 1871*, Frank Jellinek points out that in 1870 more than 60 percent of the French population were still engaged on the land. Even in Paris in 1866, only 40 percent of the population were wage workers. The average number of workers per shop was only 7.7, scarcely an indication of highly developed industrial production. Yet, as Trotsky points out, the Parisian working class "could not refuse to take power; it was forced to by the sequence of political events."

Against those critics who argued that Trotsky was proposing a transformation to socialism before capitalism had prepared an adequate material base, he explains that the dictatorship of the working class does not immediately institute socialism but rather creates the premises for it. Here again the example of the Com-

mune is used to show how the workers took power, but the new government ". . . was not, of course, a socialist commune."

The Commune immediately took these steps: it instituted separation of church and state, abolished capital punishment, replaced the standing army with a militia of the armed population, and released all citizens from payments of back rent retroactive to October 1870. It made a statistical registration of factories which had been closed by their owners and established plans to carry out work in these factories with workers organized into cooperative societies. To counter bureaucracy, it provided that members of the government were subject to immediate recall and could not receive a salary above that received by the average wage worker.

These measures provided a preview of what a workers' government in power would do. Trotsky, relating this experience to the prospects for Russia, states: "The proletariat will begin with those reforms which enter into the so-called minimum program—and directly from them, by the very logic of its position, will be forced to go over to collectivist measures." Here, in 1905, can be seen the embryonic beginnings of the concept of a transitional program which does away with the artificial separation that many socialists of that time made between a "minimum program" of immediate demands and a "maximum program" of socialist demands.

Although Lenin was in total accord with Trotsky's analysis that the capitalist class could not lead the Russian Revolution, before 1917 he believed that the revolution would be "democratic" rather than socialist, i.e., that it would not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois democracy. In addition, his justified emphasis on the importance of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution led him, in describing the dynamics of the revolution, to put forward an intermediate formula ascribing to the peasant allies of labor a joint leadership role they were unable to assume. He called for a "democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry" and not, in Trotsky's correct formulation, a dictatorship of the working class supported by the peasantry. Referring to this question Trotsky points out that, "The dictatorship of the proletariat will undoubtedly represent all the progressive, valid interests of the peasantry—and not only the peasantry, but also the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. ' . . . The Commune,' says Marx, 'was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government.' But it was still the *dictatorship of the proletariat*." (Emphasis is Trotsky's.)

The second selection, *The Paris Commune*, was printed on March 17, 1917, in *Novy Mir*, a Russian-language Marxist weekly published in New York. It first appeared in English in *The New Militant*, March 21, 1936.

Written shortly after the news of the February revolution in Russia had reached him, it obviously reflects Trotsky's excitement with this event. It is as much a manifesto to the revolutionary workers of Russia as a commemoration of the forty-sixth anniversary of the Commune. It is particularly noteworthy that he emphasizes the internationalism of the Commune ("The Commune began by confirming the election of all foreigners to the workers' government"). The Russian workers even after the February revolution had deep patriotic illusions which Trotsky attempts to combat by appealing to the best traditions of international solidarity.

"The Paris Commune and Soviet Russia" and "Marx and . . . Kautsky" are chapters from Trotsky's *Terrorism and Communism* written in 1920. This book first appeared in English in 1922 when it was published by the American Communists (Workers Party). As he wrote in the introduction to the second English edition, "This book was written . . . in the car of a military train amid the flames of civil war. This circumstance the reader must keep before his eyes if he wishes rightly to understand not only the basic material of the book, but also its harsh allusions, and particularly the tone in which it is written."

The entire book is a polemic against Karl Kautsky's book of the same title. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Karl Kautsky, who at one time had wielded considerable authority among Marxists throughout the world, opened up an attack on the Russian Revolution. In the summer of 1918 his book *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* appeared. Lenin replied to it in *The Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky*. Kautsky resumed the attack a year later with *Terrorism and Communism*, to which Trotsky replied in 1920.

Kautsky, in what appears to be an act of political desperation, attempts to employ the example of the Paris Communards and the reputation of Marx against the conduct of the Russian workers. Partly by half-truths and omissions and partly by advancing himself as a theoretician for vacillation and indecision, he tries to show that the Commune was more democratic and spontaneous, and less violent and bloodthirsty, than Soviet Russia. Referring to two eyewitness historians of the Paris Commune, Pierre Lavrov (*Parizhskaia Kommuna*, 1878) and Prosper Olivier Lissagaray (*History of the Commune of 1871*, 1876), Trotsky effectively counters Kautsky's attacks. At the same time, he offers a most perceptive comparison between the new Soviet Republic and the Paris Commune, contributing to a richer understanding of both phenomena.

The final selection, *Lessons of the Paris Commune*, was written in 1921, but was not published until March 24, 1924, in *La Vie*

Ouvriere. In the same year it also appeared as the preface to *La Commune de Paris* by C. Tales. It first appeared in English in *The New Internationalist*, March 1935.

Writing for the young Communist movement of France at the time, Trotsky underlines more insistently than any prominent Marxist had done previously, that "We can thumb the whole history of the Commune, page by page, and we will find in it one single lesson: a strong party leadership is needed." Basing himself on the lessons of the successful Russian Revolution and the failure of the German (1918) and Hungarian (1919) revolutions, Trotsky closely reexamines the Commune from the standpoint of revolutionary leadership. He concludes that a conscious and resolute revolutionary party would have led the workers to power on September 4 rather than six months later.

His estimate differs somewhat from Marx's advice to the French workers in a manifesto written a few days after the September 4 Republic was proclaimed. After describing the strength of the bourgeois parties and the closeness of Prussian troops to Paris, Marx writes, "The French working class moves, therefore, under circumstances of extreme difficulty. Any attempt at upsetting the new government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the doors of Paris, would be a desperate folly."

The thread of consistency runs between Trotsky's 1905 view of the Commune, when he argues that the relatively low level of productive development did not prevent the workers from taking power, and this 1921 opinion that the presence of a revolutionary party would have made a successful revolution possible. With such a party, he boldly asserts, ". . . the whole history of France and with it the whole history of humanity would have taken another direction."

This lesson of the Paris Commune of 1871 retains its immediacy today when the central problem of the world revolutionary movement and the principal responsibility of all revolutionary Marxists is that of constructing a revolutionary party.

September 1970

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER: 1871-1906

The proletarians of Paris, amidst the failures and treasons of the ruling classes, have understood that the hour has struck for them to save the situation by taking into their own hands the direction of public affairs. . . . They have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power.

*Proclamation of the Central Committee of the
National Guard of Paris, March 18, 1871*

The Russian reader can acquaint himself with the history of the Paris Commune of 1871 through Lissagaray's book, which, if we are not mistaken, is soon due to appear in several editions. He can acquaint himself with the philosophy of this history through Marx's immortal pamphlet, which is equipped with a very valuable introduction by Engels. Subsequent Marxist literature, insofar as we are familiar with it, has added nothing essential during the course of the last thirty-five years to what Marx said about the Commune. The non-Marxist literature is not even worth mentioning: by its very nature, it is incapable of saying anything on this subject. All that is available in Russian, down to the latest translated editions, is a clumsy rehash of the toothless gossip of international reaction, seasoned with the philosophical and moral judgments of the policeman Mymretsov.

Police and censorship have not been the only circumstances that have kept us from interesting ourselves in the Commune. The very character of the ideology which has ruled in our progressive circles — liberal, liberal-Narodnik, and Narodnik-socialist — is completely foreign to that structure of relations, interests, and passions which were manifested in this unforgettable episode of proletarian struggle.

But if a few years ago we were apparently further than any European nation from the traditions of the Paris Commune, then now, in passing through the first phase of our own revolution, which the struggle of the proletariat has made a revolution *in Permanenz*, an uninterrupted revolution, we are confronted by the heritage of the Commune of 1871 more directly than any European nation.

For us, the history of the Commune is now not just a great dra-

matic moment in the international struggle for liberation, not a mere illustration of some sort of tactical situation; it is a direct and immediate lesson.

1. THE STATE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Revolution is the open test of strength between social forces in the struggle for power. The popular masses revolt, set in motion by elemental vital impulses and interests, often without any conception of the paths and goals of the movement: one party writes "law and justice" on its banners, another "order"; the "heroes" of the revolution are guided by a consciousness of "duty," or are carried away by ambition; the behavior of the army is determined by discipline, which does not reason, by fear, which consumes discipline, or, at last, by revolutionary insight, which conquers both discipline and fear; enthusiasm, self-interest, routine, soaring flights of thought, superstition, self-sacrifice — thousands of feelings, ideas, moods, capabilities, passions, throw themselves into the mighty whirlpool, are seized by it, perish or rise to the surface; but the objective sense of a revolution is this — it is a struggle for state power in the name of the reconstruction of antiquated social relationships.

The state is not an end in itself. It is only a machine in the hands of the ruling social force. Like any machine, the state has its motor mechanism, its transmitting mechanism, and its working machine.** The motor force is class interest; its mechanism — agitation, the press, the propaganda of churches and schools, the party, the street meeting, the petition, the insurrection. The transmitting mechanism is the lawmaking organization of the caste, dynastic, estate, or class interest under the guise of divine (absolutism) or national (parliamentarism) will. And finally, the working machine is the administration and the police, courts and prisons, the army.

The state is not an end in itself. But it is a tremendous means of organization, disorganization, and reorganization of social relations. It can be a lever of deep social transformation or an instrument of organized stagnation, depending on whose hands it finds itself in.

** The Russian says literally that ". . . the state has its moving, transmitting, and executive mechanisms." From the context it is clear that Trotsky was referring to Marx's definition of machinery, so this paragraph of Trotsky's has been translated accordingly. Marx makes the distinction between a simple tool used in handicraft (a handsaw, for example) and modern machinery where the tool or "working machine" (the sawteeth of a power saw) is driven by a "motor mechanism" (the power source) by means of the "transmitting mechanism" (gears, pulleys, etc.). See *Capital*, vol. I, chap. 15, sec. 1; International Publishers edition, 1967; Moore-Aveling translation. — Translator.

Every political party worthy of the name strives to acquire the governing power and, in this manner, place the state at the service of the class whose interests it expresses. The Social Democracy,** as the party of the proletariat, naturally strives towards the political rule of the working class.

The proletariat grows and gathers strength together with the growth of capitalism. In this sense the development of capitalism is the development of the proletariat toward dictatorship. But the day and the hour when power goes over into the hands of the working class depends immediately not on the level of the productive forces, but on the relations of the class struggle, on the international situation, and finally, on a series of subjective factors: tradition, initiative, readiness for struggle.

In a country which is economically more backward, the proletariat can come to power sooner than in an advanced capitalist country. In 1871 it consciously "took into its own hands the direction of public affairs" (see the epigraph) in petty-bourgeois Paris—to be sure, only for two months, but it did not take power even for an hour in the large-scale capitalist centers of England and the United States. The idea that the proletarian dictatorship is somehow automatically dependent on the technical forces and means of the country represents a prejudice of an extremely simplified "economic" materialism. Such a viewpoint has nothing in common with Marxism.

The Parisian workers took power in their hands on March 26, 1871, not because the productive relations had matured for the dictatorship of the proletariat nor even because it then appeared to the workers that these relations had "matured," but because they were forced to take power by the betrayal of the bourgeoisie in the matter of national defense. Marx points this out. It was only possible to defend Paris, and together with it all of France, by arming the proletariat. But a revolutionary proletariat is a threat to the bourgeoisie, and an armed proletariat is an armed threat. The government of Thiers, which was concerned not with raising the French masses against the hosts of Bismarck, who were surrounding Paris, but with raising the reactionary hosts of France against proletarian Paris, withdrew to plot in Versailles, leaving the capital in the hands of the workers, who wanted freedom for their country and happiness for themselves and their people. The proletariat recognized that the hour had struck when

** The Russian text reads "Democracy" rather than "Social Democracy," as it is translated here. The Russian was probably a typographical error. Trotsky had been arrested and very possibly did not see the printer's proofs of this essay. In Trotsky's *Results and Prospects* the identical passage reads "Social Democracy."—Translator.

it must save the country itself and become master of its own fate. It could not refuse to take power; it was forced to by the sequence of political events. Power came upon it unawares. However, when it took power, it nevertheless began, as if by force of its own class weight—with waverings to one side or the other—to move along the correct path. Its class position, as Marx and Engels explain, forced it first of all to reform the apparatus of state power appropriately, and also suggested to it the correct policy in the sphere of economy. If the Commune collapsed, this was not at all because the productive forces were insufficiently developed, but for a whole series of reasons of a political nature: the blockade of Paris and its isolation from the provinces, extremely unfavorable international circumstances, its own mistakes, and so on.

2. THE REPUBLIC AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The Paris Commune of 1871 was not, of course, a socialist commune; its regime was not even a developed regime of socialist revolution. The "Commune" was only a prologue. It established the dictatorship of the proletariat, the necessary premise of the socialist revolution. Paris entered into the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat not because it proclaimed the republic, but because out of ninety representatives it elected seventy-two representatives of the workers and stood under the protection of the proletarian guard. It would be truer to say the republic itself was only the natural and inescapable expression of the "workers' power" that had been established in fact.

Alexander Millerand, who figured as something in the nature of a "socialist" hostage in the bourgeois ministry of the late Waldeck-Rousseau, alongside of the late executioner of the Commune, General Gallifet—this former socialist Millerand proclaimed as his political slogan: "The republic is the political formula of socialism; socialism is the economic content of the republic." It is necessary to acknowledge that this "political formula" is deprived of any kind of "socialist content." Contemporary republics, being formally democratic organizations, expressions of the popular will, in essence remain state "formulas" of the dictatorship of the possessing classes. When it separated from Sweden, Norway could have remained in the guise in which it appeared after the separation, i.e., it could have remained a republic, without in the least transforming itself into the "political formula of socialism"—one can affirm that not a single hair would have fallen from the head of burgomaster Stockmann and other "pillars of society." But Norway preferred to obtain a king (the reserve army of most august candidates is very great!) and in this manner it put the finishing touches on its independent provisional republic.

A certain Mr. Grimm, to all appearances a professor, a liberal writer besides, and in addition to all that a collaborator of *Poliarnaia Zvezda* (*The North Star*) recently explained to us "doctrinaires with literary enthusiasms" that a "democratic republic" is neither a "panacea" nor "the most absolutely perfect form of political organization." If Mr. Grimm were even slightly acquainted with those doctrines on which our "literary enthusiasms" rest, he would know that the Social Democrats nourish no illusions whatsoever about the panacea-like qualities of the "democratic republic." To take an example that is not too far afield, Engels in his introduction to *The Civil War in France* literally says the following: "And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed, in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. . . ." But while Mr. Grimm pushes forward the shoddy idea that the essence of the matter is in the "correct relationships of different organs of state power," given which a monarchy and a republic are equally good, international socialism considers that the republic is the only possible form of socialist emancipation—with this condition, that the proletariat tears it from the hands of the bourgeoisie and transforms it from a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" into a weapon for the socialist emancipation of humanity.

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

When the idea of an *uninterrupted revolution* which links the liquidation of absolutism and serfdom with the socialist revolution through a series of growing social clashes, the upheaval of new strata of the masses, and unceasing attacks by the proletariat on the political and economic privileges of the ruling classes, was first formulated in the socialist press, our "progressive" press gave a unanimous howl of spite and indignation. It had put up with a lot, but this was too much! Revolution, it cried, was not a path which can be "legitimized." Exceptional measures are permissible only in exceptional circumstances. The aim of the movement of liberation is not to render the revolution eternal, but to bring it as soon as possible into the framework of *law*, and so forth, and so on. This is the position of the majority of the so-called "Constitutional Democrats,"* and the publicists of this party, Struve, Gessen, Miliukov, who are so tirelessly compromising themselves with their every plan, prediction and warning, rose up long ago against the revolution in the name of the "law" that has already

* See Glossary of Names and Terms

been won. Up until the October strike they tried to steer the revolution (by means of lamentations) into the channel of the Bulygin Duma* and proclaimed any *direct* struggle with the latter to be playing into the hands of reaction. After the manifesto of October 17 they gave the revolution a postdated check for three and a half more months (from August 6 to October 17) and magnanimously adopted the October strike under the name of "glorious." But in order that no one should think that they had learned anything, they demanded, with amazing resourcefulness, that the revolution permit itself to be put in the Procrustean bed of Witte's Constitution,* and any kind of direct struggle with the latter they proclaimed to be playing into the hands of reaction. It is not surprising if these gentlemen, who could only *extend* the time limit of the revolution for three months *post factum*, have stepped forward with clenched teeth at the idea of a revolution with *no time limit at all*. Only a completely stable constitutional regime, with infrequent elections and, if possible, with exceptional laws against the Social Democrats, with conventional protests against these laws by the liberals, with sleepy oppositional interpellations, and lively backstage deals—all this on the basis of uninterrupted capitalist exploitation of the masses, who have been constitutionally muzzled with the aid of the monarchy, a bicameral legislature, and the imperial army—only such a regime of "law" can reward these politicians for all the insults they have suffered and provide them, at last, with a stage on which to play "governing" roles. Events have sufficiently ridiculed these leaders, have so mercilessly exposed their blindness and impotence, as to have long since freed us of any obligation to petition them for the revolution's right to exist.

The less depraved representatives of this same democracy do not dare to come out against revolution in the name of already completed constitutional "conquests." Even for them, a parliamentary cretinism which anticipates the appearance of parliamentarism itself does not seem to be a powerful weapon in the struggle against the proletarian revolution. They are choosing another path; they are arguing not on the basis of law, but on the basis of what appears to them to be the facts—on the basis of historical "possibilities"—on the basis of political "realism"—finally . . . finally, even on the basis of "Marxism." Why not? After all, Antonio, the pious bourgeois of Venice, very acutely remarked:

Mark you this, Bassanio,

The Devil can cite scripture for his purpose.

These gentlemen, not infrequently former "Marxists," possessing that precious freedom of spirit which appears only in the absence of any kind of integrated world view, are equally eager to hide from the revolutionary conclusions of Marxism under the shelter

of "criticism" and use that same Marxism against the revolutionary tactics of the Social Democracy. They are equally decisive in accusing us of slavishly adhering to an obsolete doctrine and of fundamentally betraying the evolutionary theory of Marxism.

Uninterrupted revolution? Socialist transformation? But doesn't Marxism teach that no social form gives way to another before exhausting its own content, before developing its immanent tendencies to the maximum? And has Russian capitalism exhausted itself? Or do the Social Democrats think, like subjectivists, that it is possible to overcome capitalism by ideological means? And so forth and so on. Sometimes the most obdurate liberals, for whom even the Constitutional Democrats aren't moderate enough, take over this argument from the former "Marxists" who are inclined to quote "the conclusions of holy scripture." Thus, Mr. Alexander Kaufman states with deep seriousness in *Poliarnaia Zvezda*: "Believing—many of us—in the final triumph of the socialist ideal, we think together with Rodbertus,* that contemporary [to whom?] humanity is not yet mature enough for the 'promised land of socialism' and we are convinced, together with Marx, that the socialization of the means of production can only flow out of the gradual development of the productive forces of the country and the people." This Mr. Kaufman, who prays for the success of his cause to Rodbertus and Marx, to Luther and the Pope, presents a living example of that malicious ignorance which liberal critics constantly flaunt in questions of socialism.

Capitalism must "exhaust itself" before the proletariat can take state power. What does this mean? Develop the productive forces to a maximum? Bring the concentration of production to a maximum? But if so, what is this maximum? What are its objective characteristics?

The economic development of the last decades has shown that capitalism not only concentrates the main branches of production in a few hands, but also surrounds gigantic economic organisms with a parasitic growth of small industrial and commercial enterprises. In agriculture, capitalism sometimes kills small production outright, transforming the peasant into an agricultural or industrial laborer, a street trader, or a vagabond; sometimes preserves the peasant economy, seizing it in an iron grip; sometimes creates small and even dwarf agricultural enterprises, which secure a peasant labor force for the large landowners. What emerges from the huge mass of intertwining manifestations and facts of capitalist development is this, that the value created by the gigantic enterprises that dominate the main branches of social labor continually grows in comparison with the value created by the small enterprises—and in this manner increasingly facilitates the socialization of the main branches of the economy. But what, in the opinion

of our critics, must be the percentage relationship between these two sectors of social production, in order for one to say that capitalism has exhausted itself, in order for the proletariat to have the right to decide: now the time has come for me to put out my hand and pluck the ripened fruit?

Our party does not expect, having taken power, to construct socialism from the depths of its socialist will; it can and will rest its socialist construction only on objective economic development, which will not cease, one must assume, when the proletariat comes to power. But the point is—and *this is an extremely important aspect of the question*—that in the first place, economic development has long ago rendered socialism an objectively advantageous social order, and in the second place, economic development does not at all contain such objectively determined moments, which mark the beginning of the time when it is possible to enter upon planned state interference in the elemental evolution with the aim of crowding out private production with social production.

To be sure, it is unquestionably true that the higher the form of capitalist development the proletariat finds when it takes power, the more easily it can cope with its socialist tasks, the more immediately it can set about organizing social production, the shorter—*ceteris paribus*—will be the period of socialist revolution. But the point is—and *this is another important aspect of the question*—that the choice of the moment when it can assume state power does not at all depend on the proletariat itself. The class struggle, which develops on the basis of capitalist evolution, is just as *objective* a process, with inner tendencies that are just as inevitable, as economic evolution itself.

Unfortunately, the logic of the class struggle is incomprehensible to all bourgeois politicians, including those who flirt with theoretical Marxism all the more "independently" to struggle with its political expression, the Social Democracy. Every argument that proceeds from the relationships of the class struggle glides off their consciousness as it would from polished glass. They have laboriously memorized some isolated propositions of the Marxist theory of capitalist development, but they remain primitive bourgeois barbarians when it comes to anything that concerns the class struggle and its objective logic. When they appeal to "objective social development" in answer to the idea of uninterrupted revolution, which is a conclusion we have drawn from social and political relations, they are forgetting that this development includes not only economic evolution, which they understand in a superficial way, but also the revolutionary logic of class relationships, which they cannot even bear to think about.

The Social Democracy has both the duty and the desire to be the conscious expression of objective developments. But once the

objective development of the class struggle places before the proletariat the revolutionary alternative of taking upon itself the rights and duties of state power or of abandoning its class position, the Social Democracy makes the conquest of state power its *next order of business*. At the same time it does not in the least ignore objective processes of development of a deeper nature, the processes of growth and concentration of production, but it says: if the logic of the class struggle, which rests, in the final analysis, on the course of economic development, pushes the proletariat toward a dictatorship before the bourgeoisie has "exhausted" its economic tasks (it has hardly even started its political tasks), then that only means that history has burdened the proletariat with problems of colossal difficulty. Perhaps the proletariat will even succumb in the struggle and collapse under their weight—that may be. But it cannot refuse to face them, on pain of class disintegration and the descent of the whole country into barbarism.

4. THE REVOLUTION, THE BOURGEOISIE AND THE PROLETARIAT

The revolution is not a top to be whipped around with a string. But it also is not an obedient Red Sea, which a Moses of liberalism can part with a blow of a rod or a shout. When we speak of an uninterrupted revolution, we are not proceeding from a disinclination on our part to lead the workers' movement into the limits of "law" (what kind of law? the law of the autocracy? of Witte? of Durnovo? the legislative proposals of Struve? what law?), we proceed from our analysis of class relations in the developing revolutionary struggle. We have made this analysis dozens of times. We have approached the question from all sides. Each time the facts have justified our analysis. Bourgeois politicians and publicists have grumbled against us a lot, but not once have they tried to answer us in substance.

For the last year, the revolution, which has displayed a colossal supply of energy and indefatigability, has nonetheless failed to develop a single state institution as an actual support of "freedoms" and "guarantees." The Duma of August 6 was killed. The Duma of October 17 to December 11 is doomed to disaster. The liberals, who all this time have been patiently waiting for the mountain of the revolution to give birth to a mouse, stand back in horror before the "fruitlessness" of the revolution. But meanwhile, the revolution has a right to be proud of this "fruitlessness"; it is only the external expression of its internal strength. Each time absolutism makes an attempt to enter into an agreement with the disconcerted representatives of the possessing classes and, having settled with them, begins to draw constitutional blueprints, a new revolutionary wave, incomparably more powerful than all the

preceding ones, washes out the drawings and throws back or swamps the bureaucratic and liberal draftsmen.

The bourgeoisie is not capable of leading the people to the conquest of a parliamentary order by means of the *overthrow* of absolutism. But the people, in the person of the proletariat, prevent the bourgeoisie from achieving constitutional guarantees by means of *agreement* with absolutism. Bourgeois democracy is not capable of leading the proletariat, for the proletariat has matured too far to follow after it; it wants to lead the bourgeoisie after itself. And democracy is proving even more impotent than liberalism. Like liberalism, it is cut off from the people, but it does not have the social advantages of the bourgeoisie. It is insignificant.

The proletariat is the *only* leading and the *main* fighting force of the revolution. It is in command of the field of battle, and it is not satisfied, nor will it be satisfied, with any concession. With breathing spells and temporary retreats it will lead the revolution to a victory which will transfer power to it.

We will not attempt at this point to demonstrate this on the basis of the facts of the last year; we refer the reader to the Social Democratic literature of this period.**

Here we will pause for only one illustration of the inner impotence of the bourgeoisie in the struggle for a parliamentary order. Popular representation, as the price of an agreement between the bourgeoisie and the monarchy, as well as a continuous arena for making such agreements, is killed by the revolution every time it is ready to be born. Another historical institution of bourgeois revolutions was killed in the very embryo, or to be more precise, at conception. This is the citizens' militia.

The militia (national guard) was the first slogan and the first conquest of all revolutions—in 1789 and 1848 in Paris, in all the Italian states, in Vienna and Berlin. In 1848, the national guard (that is, the arming of the possessing and "educated" classes) was the slogan of all the bourgeois oppositions, even the most moderate, and had the task not only of preserving the conquests or "grants" of freedoms from subversion from above, but also of protecting bourgeois property from the attempts of the proletariat. Thus the militia was a clear class demand of the bourgeoisie. "The Italians knew well," says a liberal English historian of the unification of Italy, "that the arming of a citizen guard made despotism henceforth impossible. To the propertied classes, too, it was a guarantee against possible anarchy and all the turbulence that

** For example, our brochure *Up to the Ninth of January*, and especially Comrade Parvus's introduction. Further, we refer the reader to certain articles in *Nachalo* and also to my introduction to Lassalle's *Speech to the Jury*. This introduction, written in July 1905, has had a complicated fate and is only now appearing in print.

was working below the surface" (Bolton King, *A History of Italian Unity*, Russian translation, Moscow, 1901, vol. I, p. 220). And the ruling reaction, not having sufficient military force at its disposal in the centers of activity to deal with "anarchy," that is, with the revolutionary masses, armed the bourgeoisie. Absolutism first permitted the burghers to suppress and pacify the workers, and then disarmed and pacified the burghers themselves.

In our country, the militia as a slogan has no support at all among the bourgeois parties. It is impossible that the liberals do not understand in substance the importance of being armed: absolutism has given them a few object lessons on this subject. But they also understand the complete impossibility of a militia without the proletariat and against the proletariat in our conditions. The Russian workers but little resemble the workers of 1848, who stuffed their pockets with stones and carried anything they could lay their hands on, at the same time that the shopkeepers, students, and lawyers had royal muskets on their shoulders and sabers at their sides.

In Russia, to arm the revolution means above all to arm the workers. Knowing this and fearing it, the liberals completely give up the militia. They abandon this position to absolutism without a battle—as Thiers abandoned Paris and France to Bismarck, rather than arm the workers.

In the collection *Constitutional Government*, that manifesto of the liberal-democratic coalition, Mr. Dzhivelegov, considering the possibility of an overturn of the government, quite correctly says that "when necessary, society itself must show its readiness to rise to the defense of its constitution." And since the demand to arm the people flows naturally from this, the liberal philosopher considers it "necessary to add" that to repel coups d'etat "it is not at all necessary that everyone have weapons handy." It is only necessary that society itself is ready to give a rebuff. By what means is unknown. If anything is clear from this subterfuge, it is only this—that in the hearts of our democrats the fear of the armed proletariat overpowers the fear of the soldiers of the autocracy.

In the same manner, the task of arming the revolution falls with all its weight on the proletariat. And the citizen's militia, the class demand of the bourgeoisie of 1848, appears in our country from the very beginning as a demand to arm the people and above all, the proletariat. The whole destiny of the Russian revolution comes to bear on this question.

5. THE PROLETARIAT AND THE PEASANTRY

The first tasks which will face the proletariat immediately upon its conquest of power will be political tasks: to consolidate its position, arm the revolution, disarm reaction, widen the base of

the revolution, reconstruct the state. In the fulfillment of these tasks, particularly the last, the experience of the Paris Commune will not be forgotten by the Russian proletariat. The abolition of the standing army and the police, the arming of the people, the dispersion of the mandarin bureaucracy, the establishment of the principle of election of all functionaries, the equalization of their salaries, the separation of church and state—these are the measures which, from the example of the Commune, it is necessary to carry through at the very beginning.

The proletariat will not, however, be able to consolidate its power without having widened the base of the revolution itself. Many layers of the working masses, especially in the countryside, will be drawn into the revolution and receive political organization only after the vanguard of the revolution, the urban proletariat, stands at the helm of state. Revolutionary agitation and organization will be conducted with the help of state resources. Finally, the legislative power itself will become a powerful weapon for the revolutionization of the popular masses.

In addition to this, the character of our social-historical situation, which loads the whole burden of the bourgeois revolution on the shoulders of the proletariat, will not only create enormous difficulties for the workers' government, but will also give it priceless advantages. This will tell in the relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry.

In the revolutions of 1789-1793 and 1848, the power at first passed over from absolutism to the moderate elements of the bourgeoisie; the latter liberated the peasantry (how is another question) before the revolutionary democracy received or was preparing to receive power in its own hands. The peasants, who had been freed from serfdom, lost all interest in the political enterprises of the "townsmen," that is, in the further course of the revolution; and lying as an immobile stratum at the base of "order," they gave the revolution over to Caesarist or traditional absolutist reaction.

The Russian revolution, as has already been said, does not permit the establishment of any kind of bourgeois constitutional order capable of solving the most primitive tasks of democracy. As far as reformer-bureaucrats of the style of Witte are concerned, all their enlightened efforts are being ruined by their own struggle for existence. As a result of this, the fate of the most elementary revolutionary interests of the peasantry—even of the *whole peasantry* as an *estate*—is linked to the fate of the whole revolution, that is, to the fate of the proletariat.

The proletariat in power will appear before the peasantry as a liberating class.

Like the Commune, it will have the full right to proclaim to the peasants: "Our victory is your victory."

The rule of the proletariat will mean not only democratic equality, free self-government, the transfer of all the weight of the tax burden onto the possessing classes, the dissolution of the standing army into the armed people, and the abolition of compulsory contributions to the church, but also the recognition of all the revolutionary reshufflings (seizures) that have been carried out by the peasants in land relations. The proletariat will make these reshufflings the point of departure for further state measures in the sphere of agriculture. Under such conditions the Russian peasantry will in any event have no less of an interest—from the very beginning, during the first, most difficult period—in the support of the proletarian regime (workers' democracy), than the French peasants had in the support of the military regime of Napoleon Bonaparte, which guaranteed to the new property owners, by the strength of its bayonets, the inviolability of their parcels of land. And this means that popular representation, convened under the leadership of the proletariat which has secured the support of the peasantry, will be nothing other than a democratic form of the rule of workers' democracy.

But could not the peasantry itself crowd out the proletariat and occupy its place? This is impossible. All historical experience protests against this proposition. It shows that the peasantry is completely incapable of an *independent* political role. **

The history of capitalism is the history of the subordination of the country to the city. In due time, the industrial development of the European cities rendered impossible the further existence of feudal relations in the sphere of agricultural production. But the countryside itself did not bring forth a class which could cope with the revolutionary task of the destruction of feudalism. It was the selfsame city, which subordinated agriculture to capital, that developed the revolutionary forces which established political hegemony over the villages and propagated in them a revolution in state and property relationships. With further development the coun-

** Are not these considerations, and subsequent ones, refuted by the fact of the rise and development of the "Peasants' Union?" Not in the least. What is the "Peasants' Union?" The unification of certain elements of the radical democracy, who are seeking the masses, with the more conscious elements of the peasantry—apparently *not* its lowest strata—in the name of a democratic overturn and agrarian reform.

However quickly the "Peasants' Union" may grow, there is not the slightest doubt that it is extremely far from becoming the political organization of the peasant masses. The revolution is proceeding at such a tempo that it is impossible to expect—aside from all other considerations—that the "Peasants' Union" could, by the time of the final overthrow of absolutism and the transfer of power into the hands of the revolution, become a serious competitor of the organized proletariat. In addition, it must not be forgotten that the main revolutionary engagements are taking place in the

tryside falls into economic bondage to capital, and the peasantry into political bondage to the bourgeois parties. These resurrect feudalism in parliamentary politics, transforming the peasantry into their political domain and their electoral hunting ground. The contemporary bourgeois state pushes the peasant into the maw of usurers' capital through taxes and militarism, and by means of state priests, state schools, and barracks depravity, makes him a victim of usurious policy.

The Russian bourgeoisie will abandon all its revolutionary positions to the proletariat. It will also be forced to abandon its hegemony over the peasantry. In the situation that will be created by the transfer of power to the proletariat the peasantry will have no alternative but to adhere to the regime of workers' democracy—even if it does so with no more consciousness than it usually shows in adhering to the bourgeois regime. But while every bourgeois party, when it has acquired the votes of the peasantry, hastens to use its power to plunder the peasantry and deceive it in all expectations and promises, and then, as the worst expected penalty, give way to another capitalist party, the proletariat, when supported by the peasantry, will set in motion every force for the elevation of the cultural level of the village and the development of the political consciousness of the peasants.

Marx says, regarding the prejudice of the French peasant ". . . how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry? The Rurals—this was, in fact, their chief apprehension—knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest."

From everything that has been said, it is clear how we look upon the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." The essence of the matter is not in whether we consider it

cities—and that alone assigns to the "Peasants' Union" the role of the auxiliary military detachment, which also determines its place on the scale of political forces.

As to the agrarian program of the "Peasants' Union" ("equality of land use"), which constitutes the reason for its existence, it is necessary to say the following. The wider and deeper the development of the agrarian movement, the sooner it arrives at confiscation and redistribution, the more quickly the "Peasants' Union" will disintegrate by virtue of thousands of class, local, cultural, and technical contradictions. Its members will have their share of influence in the *peasant committees*, the organs of the agrarian revolution in the localities—but of course, the peasant committees, *economic-administrative* institutions, cannot abolish that *political* dependence of the village on the city, which constitutes one of the basic characteristics of contemporary society.

The rule of the proletariat will mean not only democratic equality, free self-government, the transfer of all the weight of the tax burden onto the possessing classes, the dissolution of the standing army into the armed people, and the abolition of compulsory contributions to the church, but also the recognition of all the revolutionary reshufflings (seizures) that have been carried out by the peasants in land relations. The proletariat will make these reshufflings the point of departure for further state measures in the sphere of agriculture. Under such conditions the Russian peasantry will in any event have no less of an interest—from the very beginning, during the first, most difficult period—in the support of the proletarian regime (workers' democracy), than the French peasants had in the support of the military regime of Napoleon Bonaparte, which guaranteed to the new property owners, by the strength of its bayonets, the inviolability of their parcels of land. And this means that popular representation, convened under the leadership of the proletariat which has secured the support of the peasantry, will be nothing other than a democratic form of the rule of workers' democracy.

But could not the peasantry itself crowd out the proletariat and occupy its place? This is impossible. All historical experience protests against this proposition. It shows that the peasantry is completely incapable of an *independent* political role. **

The history of capitalism is the history of the subordination of the country to the city. In due time, the industrial development of the European cities rendered impossible the further existence of feudal relations in the sphere of agricultural production. But the countryside itself did not bring forth a class which could cope with the revolutionary task of the destruction of feudalism. It was the selfsame city, which subordinated agriculture to capital, that developed the revolutionary forces which established political hegemony over the villages and propagated in them a revolution in state and property relationships. With further development the coun-

** Are not these considerations, and subsequent ones, refuted by the fact of the rise and development of the "Peasants' Union?" Not in the least. What is the "Peasants' Union?" The unification of certain elements of the radical democracy, who are seeking the masses, with the more conscious elements of the peasantry—apparently *not* its lowest strata—in the name of a democratic overturn and agrarian reform.

However quickly the "Peasants' Union" may grow, there is not the slightest doubt that it is extremely far from becoming the political organization of the peasant masses. The revolution is proceeding at such a tempo that it is impossible to expect—aside from all other considerations—that the "Peasants' Union" could, by the time of the final overthrow of absolutism and the transfer of power into the hands of the revolution, become a serious competitor of the organized proletariat. In addition, it must not be forgotten that the main revolutionary engagements are taking place in the

tryside falls into economic bondage to capital, and the peasantry into political bondage to the bourgeois parties. These resurrect feudalism in parliamentary politics, transforming the peasantry into their political domain and their electoral hunting ground. The contemporary bourgeois state pushes the peasant into the maw of usurers' capital through taxes and militarism, and by means of state priests, state schools, and barracks depravity, makes him a victim of usurious policy.

The Russian bourgeoisie will abandon all its revolutionary positions to the proletariat. It will also be forced to abandon its hegemony over the peasantry. In the situation that will be created by the transfer of power to the proletariat the peasantry will have no alternative but to adhere to the regime of workers' democracy—even if it does so with no more consciousness than it usually shows in adhering to the bourgeois regime. But while every bourgeois party, when it has acquired the votes of the peasantry, hastens to use its power to plunder the peasantry and deceive it in all expectations and promises, and then, as the worst expected penalty, give way to another capitalist party, the proletariat, when supported by the peasantry, will set in motion every force for the elevation of the cultural level of the village and the development of the political consciousness of the peasants.

Marx says, regarding the prejudice of the French peasant ". . . how could it have withstood the appeal of the Commune to the living interests and urgent wants of the peasantry? The Rurals—this was, in fact, their chief apprehension—knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants, and hence their anxiety to establish a police blockade around Paris, so as to stop the spread of the rinderpest."

From everything that has been said, it is clear how we look upon the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." The essence of the matter is not in whether we consider it

cities—and that alone assigns to the "Peasants' Union" the role of the auxiliary military detachment, which also determines its place on the scale of political forces.

As to the agrarian program of the "Peasants' Union" ("equality of land use"), which constitutes the reason for its existence, it is necessary to say the following. The wider and deeper the development of the agrarian movement, the sooner it arrives at confiscation and redistribution, the more quickly the "Peasants' Union" will disintegrate by virtue of thousands of class, local, cultural, and technical contradictions. Its members will have their share of influence in the *peasant committees*, the organs of the agrarian revolution in the localities—but of course, the peasant committees, *economic-administrative* institutions, cannot abolish that *political* dependence of the village on the city, which constitutes one of the basic characteristics of contemporary society.

permissible in principle, whether we "want" or "don't want" such a form of political cooperation. But we consider it unrealizable — at least in a direct and immediate sense.

In reality, a coalition of this type presupposes either that one of the existing bourgeois parties gains mastery over the peasantry, or that the peasantry creates its own powerful party. Neither one nor the other, as we have attempted to show, is possible.

Nevertheless, the dictatorship of the proletariat will undoubtedly represent all the progressive, valid interests of the peasantry — and not only the peasantry, but also the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. ". . . The Commune," says Marx, "was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government."

But it was still the *dictatorship of the proletariat*.

6. METHODS AND AIMS OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

The dictatorship of the proletariat in no way signifies the dictatorship of the revolutionary organization *over* the proletariat, but a dictatorship over the whole of society *through* the proletariat. And this is best of all shown by the Paris Commune.

The Viennese revolution in March 1848 was dominated by the students, who were the only part of bourgeois society still capable of a firm revolutionary policy. The proletariat, which lacked cohesion, political experience, and independent leadership, followed the students. At all critical moments, the workers invariably offered the "gentlemen who work with their heads" the help of those who "work with their hands." The students would sometimes summon the workers, at other times block their path out of the suburbs. Sometimes, by virtue of their political authority, which was backed up by the weapons of the Academic Legion, they forbade the workers to come out with their own independent demands. This was a classically clear form of a benevolent revolutionary dictatorship *over* the proletariat.

In the Paris Commune, everything was based on the political independence of the workers. The Central Committee of the National Guard warned the proletarian electorate of the Commune not to forget that only those people who were elected from the midst of the workers themselves would serve them well. "Avoid the property owners," wrote the Central Committee, "for it is an extremely rare occurrence, when a person who is well-off is inclined to consider a worker as his brother." The Commune was the executive committee of the proletariat — the National Guard, its army — the officials, its responsible servants. This was the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Russian working class of 1906 is completely unlike the

Viennese working class of 1848. And the best proof of this is the experience of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies all over Russia. These are not previously prepared conspiratorial organizations, which have seized power over the proletarian mass in a time of unrest. No, these are organs which are planned creations of that mass for the coordination of its revolutionary struggle. And these Soviets, which have been elected by the masses and are responsible to the masses, these unconditionally democratic institutions, conduct the most determined class policy in the spirit of revolutionary socialism. They are far from being a provisional government; for the time being, they might even come to nothing. But they are indisputably future local points of support for a provisional government. And all the activity of the Workers' Soviets clearly shows that the policy of the Russian proletariat in power will be a new colossal step forward in comparison with the Commune of 1871.

The Parisian workers, says Marx, did not demand miracles from the Commune. Now too, we must not expect the dictatorship of the proletariat to produce miracles instantly. State power is not all-powerful. It would be absurd to think that all the proletariat has to do is acquire power and it can replace capitalism by socialism by means of a few decrees. The economic structure is not a product of the activity of the state. The proletariat can only apply state power, with all its energy, so as to ease and shorten the path of economic evolution in the direction of collectivism.

The proletariat will begin with those reforms which enter into the so-called minimum program — and directly from them, by the very logic of its position, will be forced to go over to collectivist measures.

To introduce the eight-hour day and a heavily progressive income tax will be a comparatively simple business, although here, too, the center of gravity lies not in the publication of the "act" but in the organization of its execution. But the main difficulty (and here we go over to collectivism!) will consist in the organization of production by the state in those factories and plants which will be closed by their owners in answer to the publication of these acts.

Again, it will be a comparatively simple matter to publish a law abolishing the right of inheritance and to carry this law into practice; a few inheritances in the form of money capital will also cause no difficulties for the proletariat and will not encumber its economy. But for the workers' government to come forward as the inheritor of landed and industrial capital means to take upon itself the organization of production on a socialized basis.

The same thing, but on a much wider scale, must be said about expropriation — with or without compensation. Expropriation with compensation offers political advantages but financial difficulties;

expropriation without compensation offers financial advantages but political difficulties. But greater than either the financial or political difficulties will be the economic and organizational difficulties.

We repeat: a government of the proletariat does not mean a government of miracles.

The socialization of production will begin with those branches which present the least difficulties. In the first period the socialized sector of production will have the appearance of oases connected with private economic enterprises by the laws of commodity exchange. The larger the field that is already occupied by the socialized economy, the more obvious will be its advantages, the more stable the new political regime will feel, and the bolder will be the further economic measures of the proletariat. In these measures it will rely not only on the national productive forces, but also on international technique, in much the same way as it relies, in its revolutionary policy, not only on the immediately given national class relations, but also on the whole historical experience of the international proletariat.

More than that — possessing the power which the revolution has provided it, the Russian proletariat will do everything that circumstances indicate to link immediately and directly the fate of its national cause with the cause of world socialism.** This is not only demanded by the general international principles of proletarian policy — the powerful voice of class self-preservation will force it to enter this path.

The Russian proletariat will not be thrown back; it will be able to carry its great cause to its conclusion, only under one condition — that it knows how to break out of the national framework of our great revolution and make it the prologue to the world victory of labor.

St. Petersburg, December 1905

THE PARIS COMMUNE

Revolution has often followed war in history.

In ordinary times the working masses toil from day to day, docilely performing their slave labor, bowing to the great force of habit. Neither overseers nor police, neither jailkeepers nor executioners could hold the masses in subjection were it not for this habit, which does faithful service to capitalism.

** We spoke in general terms about the international perspectives of the revolution in the above-mentioned introduction to Lassalle's speech.

The war which tortures and destroys the masses is dangerous to the rulers as well — precisely because with a single blow it tears the people from their habitual condition, awakens with its thunder the most backward and dark elements, and compels them to take stock of themselves, and to look around.

WAR AND REVOLUTION

Impelling millions of toilers into the flames, the rulers are obliged to resort to promises and lies in place of habit. The bourgeoisie paints up its war with all those traits which are dear to the magnanimous soul of the masses: the war is for "Liberty," for "Justice," for a "Better Life"! Stirring the masses to their nethermost depths, the war invariably ends by duping them: it brings them nothing except new wounds and chains. For this reason the tense condition of the duped masses produced by the war often leads to an explosion against the rulers; war gives birth to revolution.

This happened twelve years ago during the Russo-Japanese War: it immediately aggravated the dissatisfaction of the people and led to the revolution of 1905.

This happened in France forty-six years ago. The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 led to the uprising of the workers and the creation of the Paris Commune.

THE COMMUNE

The Parisian workers were armed by the bourgeois government and organized into a National Guard for the defense of the capital against the German troops. But the French bourgeoisie stood in greater fear of its own proletarians than of the troops of Hohenzollern. After Paris had capitulated, the Republican government attempted to disarm the workers. But the war had already awakened in them the spirit of rebellion. They did not want to return to their benches the selfsame workers they had been prior to the war. The Parisian proletarians refused to let the weapons out of their hands. A clash took place between the armed workers and the regiments of the government. This occurred on March 18, 1871. The workers were victorious; Paris was in their hands, and on March 28 they established, in the capital, a proletarian government, known as the Commune. The latter did not long maintain itself. After a heroic resistance, on May 28, the last defenders of the Commune fell before the onslaught of bourgeois cohorts. Then ensued weeks and months of bloody reprisals upon the participants in the proletarian revolution. But, despite its brief existence, the Commune has remained the greatest event in the history of the proletarian struggle. For the first time, on the basis of the experience of the Parisian workers, the world proletariat was able to see what

the *proletarian revolution* is, what are its aims, and what paths it must pursue.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMUNE

The Commune began by confirming the election of all foreigners to the workers' government. It proclaimed that: "The banner of the Commune is the banner of a World Republic."

It purged the state and the school of religion, abolished capital punishment, pulled down the Column of the Vendome* (the memorial to chauvinism), transferred all duties and posts to genuine servants of the people, setting their salary at a level not exceeding a workingman's wage.

It began a census of factories and mills, closed by frightened capitalists, in order to initiate production on a social basis. This was the first step towards the socialist organization of economic life.

The Commune did not achieve its proposed measures: it was crushed. The French bourgeoisie, with the cooperation of its "national enemy" Bismarck—*who immediately became its class ally*—drowned in blood the uprising of its real enemy: the working class. The plans and tasks of the Commune did not find their realization. But instead they found their way into the hearts of the best sons of the proletariat in the entire world. They became the revolutionary covenants of our struggle.

And today, on March 18, 1917, the image of the Commune appears before us more clearly than ever before; for, after a great lapse of time, we have once again entered into the epoch of great revolutionary battles.

THE WORLD WAR

The world war has torn tens of millions of toilers out of the habitual conditions under which they labor and vegetate. Up to now this has been the case only in Europe; tomorrow we shall see the same thing in America as well. Never before have the working masses been given such promises. Never before have such rainbows been painted for them. Never have they been so flattered as during this war. Never before have the possessing classes dared to demand so much blood from the people in the name of defending the lie which goes by the name of "Defense of the Fatherland." And never before have the toilers been so duped, betrayed, and crucified as today.

In trenches filled with blood and mud, in starving cities and villages, millions of hearts are beating with exasperation, despair, and anger. And these emotions, correlated with socialist ideas, are being transformed into revolutionary fervor. Tomorrow the flames will burst into the open in mighty uprisings of working masses.

The proletariat of Russia has already emerged onto the great road of revolution, and under its impact are tumbling and crumbling the foundations of the most infamous despotism the world has seen. The revolution in Russia, however, is only the precursor of proletarian uprisings in the whole of Europe and in the entire world.

Remember the Commune! we socialists will say to the insurgent workers' masses. The bourgeoisie has armed you against an external enemy. Refuse to return your weapons, like the Parisian workers refused in 1871! Heed the appeal of Karl Liebknecht and turn these weapons against your real enemy, against capitalism! Tear the state machinery from their hands! Transform it from the instrument of bourgeois oppression into an apparatus of proletarian self-rule. Today, you are infinitely more powerful than were your forefathers in the epoch of the Commune. Tumble all the parasites from their thrones! Seize the land, the mines, and the factories for your own use. Fraternity—in labor; equality—in enjoying the fruits of Labor!

The banner of the Commune is the banner of the World Republic of Labor.

New York, March 17, 1917

THE PARIS COMMUNE AND SOVIET RUSSIA

The short episode of the first revolution carried out by the proletariat for the proletariat ended in the triumph of its enemy. This episode—from March 18 to May 28—lasted seventy-two days. — *The Paris Commune of March 18, 1871*, P. L. Lavrov, Petrograd, Kolos Publishing House, 1919.

THE IMMATURITY OF THE SOCIALIST PARTIES IN THE COMMUNE

The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first, as yet weak, historic attempt of the working class to impose its supremacy. We cherished the memory of the Commune in spite of the extremely limited character of its experience, the immaturity of its participants, the confusion of its program, the lack of unity amongst its leaders, the indecision of their plans, the hopeless panic of its executive organs, and the terrifying defeat fatally precipitated by all these. We cherish in the Commune, in the words of Lavrov, "the first, though still

pale, dawn of the proletarian republic." Quite otherwise with Kautsky. Devoting a considerable part of his book to a crudely tendentious contrast between the Commune and the Soviet power, he sees the main advantages of the Commune in features that we find are its misfortune and its fault.

Kautsky laboriously proves that the Paris Commune of 1871 was not "artificially" prepared, but emerged unexpectedly, taking the revolutionaries by surprise—in contrast to the October Revolution, which was carefully prepared by our party. This is incontestable. Not daring clearly to formulate his profoundly reactionary ideas, Kautsky does not say outright whether the Paris revolutionaries of 1871 deserve praise for not having foreseen the proletarian insurrection, for not having foreseen the inevitable and consciously gone to meet it. However, all Kautsky's picture was built up in such a way as to produce in the reader just this idea: the Communards were simply overtaken by misfortune (the Bavarian philistine, Vollmar, once expressed his regret that the Communards had not gone to bed instead of taking power into their hands), and therefore deserve pity. The Bolsheviks consciously went to meet misfortune (the conquest of power) and, therefore, there is no forgiveness for them either in this or the future world. Such a formulation of the question may seem incredible in its internal inconsistency. Nonetheless, it follows quite inevitably from the position of the Kautskyan "Independents," who draw their heads into their shoulders in order to see and foresee nothing; and if they do move forward, it is only after having received a preliminary stout blow in the rear.

"To humiliate Paris," writes Kautsky, "not to give it self-government, to deprive it of its position as capital, to disarm it in order afterwards to attempt with greater confidence a monarchist *coup d'etat*—such was the most important task of the National Assembly and the chief of the executive power it elected, Thiers. Out of this situation arose the conflict which led to the Paris insurrection.

"It is clear how different from this was the character of the *coup d'etat* carried out by the Bolsheviks, which drew its strength from the yearning for peace; which had the peasantry behind it; which had in the National Assembly against it, not monarchists, but SRs* and Menshevik Social Democrats.

"The Bolsheviks came to power by means of a well-prepared *coup d'etat*, which at one blow handed over to them the whole machinery of the state—immediately utilized in the most energetic and merciless manner for the purpose of suppressing their opponents, amongst them their proletarian opponents.

"No one, on the other hand, was more surprised by the insurrection of the Commune than the revolutionaries themselves, and for

a considerable number amongst them the conflict was in the highest degree undesirable."

In order more clearly to realize the actual sense of what Kautsky has written here of the Communards, let us bring forward the following evidence:

"On March 1, 1871," writes Lavrov, in his very instructive book on the Commune, "six months after the fall of the Empire, and a few days before the explosion of the Commune, the guiding personalities in the Paris International still had no definite political program."

"After March 18," writes the same author, "Paris was in the hands of the proletariat, but its leaders, overwhelmed by their unexpected power, did not take the most elementary measures."

"'Your part is too big for you to play, and your sole aim is to get rid of responsibility,' said one member of the Central Committee of the National Guard. In this was a great deal of truth," writes the Communard and historian of the Commune, Lissagaray. "But at the moment of action itself the absence of preliminary organization and preparation is very often a reason why parts are assigned to men which are too big for them to play."

From this one can already see (later on it will become still more obvious) that the absence of a direct struggle for power on the part of the Paris socialists was explained by their theoretical shapelessness and political helplessness, and not at all by higher considerations of tactics.

We have no doubt that Kautsky's own loyalty to the traditions of the Commune will be expressed mainly in that extraordinary surprise with which he will greet the proletarian revolution in Germany as "a conflict in the highest degree undesirable." We doubt, however, whether this will be ascribed by posterity to his credit. In reality, one must describe his historical analogy as a combination of confusion, omission, and fraudulent suggestion.

The intentions which were entertained by Thiers towards Paris were entertained by Miliukov, who was openly supported by Tsere-telli and Chernov, towards Petrograd. All of them, from Kornilov to Potressov,* affirmed day after day that Petrograd had alienated itself from the country, had nothing in common with it, was completely corrupted, and was attempting to impose its will upon the community. To overthrow and humiliate Petrograd was the first task of Miliukov and his assistants. And this took place at a period when Petrograd was the true center of the revolution, which had not yet been able to consolidate its position in the rest of the country. The former president of the Duma, Rodzianko, openly talked about handing over Petrograd to the Germans for educative purposes, as Riga had been handed over. Rodzianko only called by

its name what Miliukov was trying to carry out, and what Kerensky assisted by his whole policy.

Miliukov, like Thiers, wished to disarm the proletariat. More than that, thanks to Kerensky, Chernov, and Tseretelli, the Petrograd proletariat was to a considerable extent disarmed in July 1917. It was partially rearmed during Kornilov's march on Petrograd in August. And this new arming was a serious element in the preparation of the October insurrection. In this way, it is just the points in which Kautsky contrasts our October Revolution to the March revolt of the Paris workers that, to a very large extent, coincide.

In what, however, lies the difference between them? First of all, in the fact that Thiers's criminal plans succeeded: Paris was throttled by him, and tens of thousands of workers were destroyed. Miliukov, on the other hand, had a complete fiasco: Petrograd remained an impregnable fortress of the proletariat, and the leader of the bourgeoisie went to the Ukraine to petition that the Kaiser's troops should occupy Russia. For this difference we were to a considerable extent responsible—and we are ready to bear the responsibility. There is a capital difference also in the fact—this told more than once in the further course of events—that, while the Communards began mainly with considerations of patriotism, we were invariably guided by the point of view of the international revolution. The defeat of the Commune led to the practical collapse of the First International. The victory of the Soviet power has led to the creation of the Third International.

But Marx—on the eve of the insurrection—advised the Communards not to revolt, but to create an organization! One might understand Kautsky if he adduced this evidence in order to show that Marx had insufficiently gauged the acuteness of the situation in Paris. But Kautsky attempts to exploit Marx's advice as a proof of his condemnation of insurrection in general. Like all the mandarins of German Social Democracy, Kautsky sees in organization first and foremost a method of hindering revolutionary action.

But limiting ourselves to the question of organization as such, we must not forget that the October Revolution was preceded by nine months of Kerensky's government, during which our party, not without success, devoted itself not only to agitation, but also to organization. The October Revolution took place after we had achieved a crushing majority in the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils of Petrograd, Moscow, and all the industrial centers in the country, and had transformed the soviets into powerful organizations directed by our party. The Communards did nothing of the kind. Finally, we had behind us the heroic Commune of Paris, from the defeat of which we had drawn the deduction that revolu-

tionaries must foresee events and prepare for them. For this also we are to blame.

Kautsky requires his extensive comparison of the Commune and Soviet Russia only in order to slander and humiliate a living and victorious dictatorship of the proletariat in the interests of an attempted dictatorship, in the already fairly distant past.

Kautsky quotes with extreme satisfaction the statement of the Central Committee of the National Guard on March 19 in connection with the murder of the two generals by the soldiery. "We say indignantly: the bloody filth with the help of which it is hoped to stain our honor is a pitiful slander. We never organized murder, and never did the National Guard take part in the execution of crime."

Naturally, the Central Committee had no cause to assume responsibility for murders with which it had no concern. But the sentimental, pathetic tone of the statement very clearly characterizes the political timorousness of these men in the face of bourgeois public opinion. Nor is this surprising. The representatives of the National Guard were in most cases men with a very modest revolutionary past. "Not one well-known name," writes Lissagaray. "They were petty-bourgeois shopkeepers, strangers to all but limited circles, and, in most cases, strangers hitherto to politics."

"The modest and, to some extent, fearful sense of terrible historical responsibility, and the desire to get rid of it as soon as possible," writes Lavrov of them, "is evident in all the proclamations of this Central Committee, into the hands of which the destiny of Paris had fallen."

After bringing forward, to our confusion, the declamation concerning bloodshed, Kautsky later on follows Marx and Engels in criticizing the indecision of the Commune. "If the Parisians (*i. e.*, the Communards) had persistently followed up the tracks of Thiers, they would, perhaps, have managed to seize the government. The troops falling back from Paris would not have shown the least resistance . . . but they let Thiers go without hindrance. They allowed him to lead away his troops and reorganize them at Versailles, to inspire a new spirit in, and strengthen, them."

Kautsky cannot understand that it was the same men, and for the very same reasons, who published the statement of March 19 quoted above, who allowed Thiers to leave Paris with impunity and gather his forces. If the Communards had *conquered* with the help of resources of a purely moral character, their statement would have acquired great weight. But this did not take place. In reality, their sentimental humaneness was simply the obverse of their revolutionary passivity. The men who, by the will of fate, had received power in Paris, could not understand the necessity

of immediately utilizing that power to the end, of hurling themselves after Thiers, and, before he recovered his grasp of the situation, of crushing him, of concentrating the troops in their hands, of carrying out the necessary weeding-out of the officer class, of seizing the provinces. Such men, of course, were not inclined to severe measures with counterrevolutionary elements. The one was closely bound up with the other. Thiers could not be followed up without arresting Thiers's agents in Paris and shooting conspirators and spies. When one considered the execution of counterrevolutionary generals as an indelible "crime," one could not develop energy in pursuing troops who were under the direction of counterrevolutionary generals.

In the revolution, in the highest degree of energy is the highest degree of humanity. "Just the men," Lavrov justly remarks, "who hold human life and human blood dear must strive to organize the possibility for a swift and decisive victory, and then to act with the greatest swiftness and energy, in order to crush the enemy. For only in this way can we achieve the minimum of inevitable sacrifice and the minimum of bloodshed."

The statement of March 19 will, however, be considered with more justice if we examine it, not as an unconditional confession of faith, but as the expression of transient moods the day after an unexpected and bloodless victory. Being an absolute stranger to the understanding of the dynamics of revolution, and the internal limitations of its swiftly developing moods, Kautsky thinks in lifeless schemes, and distorts the perspective of events by arbitrarily selected analogies. He does not understand that softhearted indecision is generally characteristic of the masses in the first period of the revolution. The workers pursue the offensive only under the pressure of iron necessity, just as they have recourse to the Red Terror only under the threat of destruction by the White Guards. That which Kautsky represents as the result of the peculiarly elevated moral feeling of the Parisian proletariat in 1871 is, in reality, merely a characteristic of the first stage of the civil war. A similar phenomenon could have been witnessed in our case.

In Petrograd we conquered power in October 1917, almost without bloodshed, and even without arrests. The ministers of Kerensky's government were set free very soon after the revolution. More, the Cossack General Krasnov, who had advanced on Petrograd together with Kerensky after the power had passed to the Soviet, and who had been made prisoner by us at Gatchina, was set free on his word of honor the next day. This was "generosity" quite in the spirit of the first measures of the Commune. But it was a mistake. Afterwards, General Krasnov, after fighting against us for about a year in the South, and destroying many thousands of Communists, again advanced on Petrograd, this time in the

ranks of Yudenich's army. The proletarian revolution assumed a more severe character only after the rising of the junkers in Petrograd, and particularly after the rising of the Czechoslovaks on the Volga organized by the Cadets, the SRs, and the Mensheviks, after their mass executions of Communists, the attempt on Lenin's life, the murder of Uritsky, etc., etc.

The same tendencies, only in an embryonic form, we see in the history of the Commune.

Driven by the logic of the struggle, it took its stand in principle on the path of intimidation. The creation of the Committee of Public Safety was dictated, in the case of many of its supporters, by the idea of the Red Terror. The Committee was appointed "to cut off the heads of traitors" (*Journal Officiel* no. 123), "to avenge treachery" (no. 124). Under the head of "intimidatory" decrees we must class the order to seize the property of Thiers and of his ministers, to destroy Thiers's house, to destroy the Vendome column, and especially the decree on hostages. For every captured Communard or sympathizer with the Commune shot by the Versailles, three hostages were to be shot. The activity of the Prefecture of Paris controlled by Raoul Rigault had a purely terroristic, though not always a useful, purpose.

The effect of all these measures of intimidation was paralyzed by the helpless opportunism of the guiding elements in the Commune, by their striving to reconcile the bourgeoisie with the *fait accompli* by the help of pitiful phrases, by their vacillations between the fiction of democracy and the reality of dictatorship. The late Lavrov expresses the latter idea splendidly in his book on the Commune:

"The Paris of the rich bourgeois and the poor proletarians, as a political community of different classes, demanded, in the name of liberal principles, complete freedom of speech, of assembly, of criticism of the government, etc. The Paris which had accomplished the revolution in the interests of the proletariat, and had before it the task of realizing this revolution in the shape of institutions, Paris, as the community of the emancipated working-class proletariat, demanded revolutionary, i.e., dictatorial, measures against the enemies of the new order."

If the Paris Commune had not fallen, but had continued to exist in the midst of a ceaseless struggle, there can be no doubt that it would have been obliged to have recourse to more and more severe measures for the suppression of the counterrevolution. True, Kautsky would not then have had the possibility of contrasting the humane Communards with the inhumane Bolsheviks. But in return, probably, Thiers would not have had the possibility of inflicting his monstrous bloodletting upon the proletariat of Paris. History, possibly, would not have been the loser.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE "DEMOCRATIC" COMMUNE

"On March 19," Kautsky informs us, "in the Central Committee of the National Guard, some demanded a march on Versailles, others an appeal to the electors, and a third party the adoption, first of all, of revolutionary measures; as if every one of these steps," he proceeds very learnedly to inform us, "were not equally necessary, and as if one excluded the other." Further on, Kautsky, in connection with these disputes in the Commune, presents us with various warmed-up platitudes as to the mutual relations of reform and revolution. In reality, the following was the situation. If it were decided to march on Versailles, and to do this without losing an hour, it was necessary immediately to reorganize the National Guard, to place at its head the best fighting elements of the Paris proletariat, and thereby temporarily to weaken Paris from the revolutionary point of view. But to organize elections in Paris, while at the same time sending out of its walls the flower of the working class, would have been senseless from the point of view of the revolutionary party. Theoretically, a march on Versailles and elections to the Commune, of course, did not exclude each other in the slightest degree, but in practice they did exclude each other: for the success of the elections, it was necessary to postpone the attack; for the attack to succeed, the elections must be put off. Finally, leading the proletariat out to the field and thereby temporarily weakening Paris, it was essential to obtain some guarantee against the possibility of counterrevolutionary attempts in the capital; for Thiers would not have hesitated at any measures to raise a white revolt in the rear of the Communards. It was essential to establish a more military, i.e., a more stringent, regime in the capital. "They had to fight," writes Lavrov, "against many internal foes with whom Paris was full, who only yesterday had been rioting around the Exchange and the Vendome Square, who had their representatives in the administration and in the National Guard, who possessed their press, and their meetings, who almost openly maintained contact with the Versaillese, and who became more determined and more audacious at every piece of carelessness, at every check of the Commune."

It was necessary, side by side with this, to carry out revolutionary measures of a financial and generally of an economic character: first and foremost, for the equipment of the revolutionary army. All these most necessary measures of revolutionary dictatorship could with difficulty be reconciled with an extensive electoral campaign. But Kautsky has not the least idea of what a revolution is in practice. He thinks that theoretically to reconcile is the same as practically to accomplish.

The Central Committee appointed March 22 as the day of elec-

tions for the Commune; but, not sure of itself, frightened at its own illegality, striving to act in unison with more "legal" institutions, entered into ridiculous and endless negotiations with a quite helpless assembly of mayors and deputies of Paris, showing its readiness to divide power with them if only an agreement could be arrived at. Meanwhile precious time was slipping by.

Marx, on whom Kautsky, through old habit, tries to rely, did not under any circumstances propose that, at one and the same time, the Commune should be elected and the workers should be led out into the field for the war. In his letter to Kugelmann, Marx wrote on April 12, 1871, that the Central Committee of the National Guard had too soon given up its power in favor of the Commune. Kautsky, in his own words, "does not understand" this opinion of Marx. It is quite simple. Marx at any rate understood that the problem was not one of chasing legality, but of inflicting a fatal blow upon the enemy. "If the Central Committee had consisted of real revolutionaries," says Lavrov, and rightly, "it ought to have acted differently. It would have been quite unforgivable for it to have given the enemy ten days' respite before the election and assembly of the Commune, while the leaders of the proletariat refused to carry out their duty and did not recognize that they had the right immediately to *lead* the proletariat. As it was, the feeble immaturity of the popular parties created a Committee which considered those ten days of inaction incumbent upon it."

The yearning of the Central Committee to hand over power as soon as possible to a "legal" government was dictated, not so much by the superstitions of formal democracy, of which, by the way, there was no lack, as by fear of responsibility. Under the plea that it was a temporary institution, the Central Committee avoided the taking of the most necessary and absolutely pressing measures, in spite of the fact that all the material apparatus of power was centered in its hands. But the Commune itself did not take over political power in full from the Central Committee, and the latter continued to interfere in all business quite unceremoniously. This created a dual government, which was extremely dangerous, particularly under military conditions.

On May 3 the Central Committee sent deputies to the Commune demanding that the Ministry for War should be placed under its control. Again there arose, as Lissagaray writes, the question as to whether "the Central Committee should be dissolved, or arrested, or entrusted with the administration of the Ministry for War."

Here was a question, not of the principles of democracy, but of the absence, in the case of both parties, of a clear program of action, and of the readiness, both of the irresponsible revolutionary organization in the shape of the Central Committee and of the "democratic" organization of the Commune, to shift

the responsibility onto the other's shoulders, while at the same time not entirely renouncing power.

These were political relations which it might seem no one could call worthy of imitation. "But the Central Committee," Kautsky consoles himself, "never attempted to infringe the principle by virtue of which the supreme power must belong to the delegates elected by universal suffrage." In this respect the "Paris Commune was the direct antithesis of the Soviet republic."

There was no unity of government, there was no revolutionary decision, there existed a division of power, and, as a result, there came swift and terrible destruction. But to counterbalance this (is it not comforting?) there was no infringement of the "principle" of democracy.

THE DEMOCRATIC COMMUNE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY DICTATORSHIP

Comrade Lenin has already pointed out to Kautsky that attempts to depict the Commune as the expression of formal democracy constitute a piece of absolute theoretical swindling. The Commune, in its tradition and in the conception of its leading political party—the Blanquists—was the expression of *the dictatorship of the revolutionary city over the country*. So it was in the Great French Revolution; so it would have been in the revolution of 1871 if the Commune had not fallen in the first days. The fact that in Paris itself a government was elected on the basis of universal suffrage does not exclude a much more significant fact—namely, that of the military operations carried on by the Commune, one city, against peasant France, that is, the whole country. To satisfy the great democrat Kautsky, the revolutionaries of the Commune ought, as a preliminary, to have consulted by means of universal suffrage the whole population of France as to whether it permitted them to carry on a war with Thiers's bands.

Finally, in Paris itself the elections took place after the bourgeoisie, or at least its most active elements, had fled, and after Thiers's troops had been evacuated. The bourgeoisie that remained in Paris, in spite of all its impudence, was still afraid of the revolutionary battalions, and the elections took place under the auspices of that fear, which was the forerunner of what in the future would have been inevitable—namely, of the Red Terror. But to console oneself with the thought that the Central Committee of the National Guard, under whose dictatorship—unfortunately a very feeble and formalist dictatorship—the elections to the Commune were held, did not infringe the principle of universal suffrage, is truly to brush with the shadow of a broom.

Amusing himself by barren analogies, Kautsky benefits by the circumstance that his reader is not acquainted with the facts. In

Petrograd, in November 1917, we also elected a Commune (Town Council) on the basis of the most "democratic" voting, without limitations for the bourgeoisie. These elections, being boycotted by the bourgeois parties, gave us a crushing majority. The "democratically" elected Council voluntarily submitted to the Petrograd Soviet—i.e., placed the fact of the dictatorship of the proletariat higher than the "principle" of universal suffrage—and, after a short time, dissolved itself altogether by its own act, in favor of one of the sections of the Petrograd Soviet. Thus the Petrograd Soviet—that true father of the Soviet regime—has upon itself the seal of a formal "democratic" benediction in no way less than the Paris Commune. **

"At the elections of March 26, eighty members were elected to the Commune. Of these, fifteen were members of the government party (Thiers), and six were bourgeois radicals who were in opposition to the government, but condemned the rising (of the Paris workers).

"The Soviet Republic," Kautsky teaches us, "would never have allowed such counterrevolutionary elements to stand as candidates, let alone be elected. The Commune, on the other hand, out of respect for democracy, did not place the least obstacle in the way of the election of its bourgeois opponents."

We have already seen above that here Kautsky completely misses the mark. First of all, at a similar stage of development of the Russian Revolution, there did take place democratic elections to the Petrograd Commune, in which the Soviet government placed no obstacle in the way of the bourgeois parties; and if the Cadets, the SRs and the Mensheviks, who had their press which was openly calling for the overthrow of the Soviet government, boycotted the elections, it was only because at that time they still hoped soon to make an end of us with the help of armed force. Secondly, no democracy expressing all classes was actually to be found in the Paris Commune. The bourgeois deputies—Conservatives, Liberals, Gambettists—found no place in it.

"Nearly all these individuals," says Lavrov, "either immediately or very soon, left the Council of the Commune. They might have

** It is not without interest to observe that in the Communal elections of 1871 in Paris there participated 230,000 electors. At the Town elections of November 1917 in Petrograd, in spite of the boycott of the election on the part of all parties except ourselves and the Left Social Revolutionaries, who had no influence in the capital, there participated 390,000 electors. In Paris in 1871, the population numbered two millions. In Petrograd in November 1917, there were not more than two millions. It must be noticed that our electoral system was infinitely more democratic. The Central Committee of the National Guard carried out the elections on the basis of the electoral law of the Empire.

been representatives of Paris as a free city under the rule of the bourgeoisie, but were quite out of place in the Council of the Commune, which, willy-nilly, consistently or inconsistently, completely or incompletely, did represent the revolution of the proletariat, and an attempt, feeble though it might be, of building up forms of society corresponding to that revolution." If the Petrograd bourgeoisie had not boycotted the municipal elections, its representatives would have entered the Petrograd Council. They would have remained there up to the first Social Revolutionary and Cadet rising, after which—with the permission or without the permission of Kautsky—they would probably have been arrested if they did not leave the Council in good time, as at a certain moment did the bourgeois members of the Paris Commune. The course of events would have remained the same: only on their surface would certain episodes have worked out differently.

In supporting the democracy of the Commune, and at the same time accusing it of an insufficiently decisive note in its attitude to Versailles, Kautsky does not understand that the Communal elections, carried out with the ambiguous help of the "lawful" mayors and deputies, reflected the hope of a peaceful agreement with Versailles. This is the whole point. The leaders were anxious for a compromise, not for a struggle. The masses had not yet outlived their illusions. Undeserved revolutionary reputations had not yet had time to be exposed. Everything taken together was called democracy.

"We must rise above our enemies by moral force . . ." preached Vermorel. "We must not infringe liberty and individual life . . ." Striving to avoid fratricidal war, Vermorel called upon the liberal bourgeoisie, whom he had hitherto so mercilessly exposed, to set up "a lawful government, recognized and respected by the whole population of Paris." The *Journal Officiel*, published under the editorship of the Internationalist Longuet, wrote: "The sad misunderstanding, which in the June days (1848) armed two classes of society against each other, cannot be renewed. . . . Class antagonism has ceased to exist . . ." (March 30). And, further: "Now all conflicts will be appeased, because all are inspired with a feeling of solidarity, because never yet was there so little social hatred and social antagonism" (April 3).

At the session of the Commune of April 25, Jourde, and not without foundation, congratulated himself on the fact that the Commune had "never yet infringed the principle of private property." By this means they hoped to win over bourgeois public opinion and find the path to compromise.

"Such a doctrine," says Lavrov, and rightly, "did not in the least disarm the enemies of the proletariat, who understood excellently with what its success threatened them, and only sapped the prole-

tarian energy and, as it were, deliberately blinded it in the face of its irreconcilable enemies."

But this enfeebling doctrine was inextricably bound up with the fiction of democracy. It was the form of mock legality that allowed them to think that the problem would be solved without a struggle. "As far as the mass of the population is concerned," writes Arthur Arnould, a member of the Commune, "it was to a certain extent justified in the belief in the existence of, at the very least, a hidden agreement with the government." Unable to attract the bourgeoisie, the compromisers, as always, deceived the proletariat.

The clearest evidence of all, in the conditions of the inevitable and already beginning civil war, that democratic parliamentarism expressed only the compromising helplessness of the leading groups, was the senseless procedure of the supplementary elections to the Commune of April 6. At this moment "it was no longer a question of voting," writes Arthur Arnould. "The situation had become so tragic that there was not either the time or the calmness necessary for the correct functioning of the elections. . . . All persons devoted to the Commune were on the fortifications, in the forts, in the foremost detachments. . . . The people attributed no importance whatever to these supplementary elections. The elections were in reality merely parliamentarism. What was required was not to count voters, but to have soldiers: not to discover whether we had lost or gained in the Commune of Paris, but to defend Paris from the Versaillese." From these words Kautsky might have observed why in practice it is not so simple to combine class war with interclass democracy.

"The Commune is not a Constituent Assembly," Milliere, one of the best brains of the Commune, wrote in his book. "It is a military Council. It must have one aim, victory; one weapon, force; one law, the law of social salvation."

"They could never understand," Lissagaray accuses the leaders, "that the Commune was a barricade, and not an administration."

They began to understand it in the end, when it was too late. Kautsky has not understood it to this day. There is no reason to believe that he will ever understand it.

The Commune was the living negation of formal democracy, for in its development it signified the dictatorship of working-class Paris over the peasant country. It is this fact that dominates all the rest. However much the political doctrinaires, in the midst of the Commune itself, clung to the appearances of democratic legality, every action of the Commune, though insufficient for victory, was sufficient to reveal its illegal nature.

The Commune—that is to say, the Paris City Council—repealed the national law concerning conscription. It called its official organ

The Official Journal of the French Republic. Though cautiously, it still laid hands on the State Bank. It proclaimed the separation of Church and State and abolished the Church Budgets. It entered into relations with various embassies. And so on, and so on. It did all this by virtue of the revolutionary dictatorship. But Clemenceau, young democrat as he was then, would not recognize that virtue.

At a conference with the Central Committee, Clemenceau said: "The rising had an unlawful beginning. . . . Soon the Committee will become ridiculous, and its decrees will be despised. Besides, Paris has not the right to rise against France, and must unconditionally accept the authority of the Assembly."

The problem of the Commune was to dissolve the National Assembly. Unfortunately it did not succeed in doing so. Today Kautsky seeks to discover for its criminal intentions some mitigating circumstances.

He points out that the Communards had as their opponents in the National Assembly the monarchists, while we in the Constituent Assembly had against us . . . socialists, in the persons of the SRs and the Mensheviks. A complete mental eclipse! Kautsky talks about the Mensheviks and the SRs, but forgets our sole serious foe—the Cadets. It was they who represented our Russian Thiers party—i.e., a bloc of property owners in the name of property: and Professor Miliukov did his utmost to imitate the "little great man." Very soon indeed—long before the October Revolution—Miliukov began to seek his Gallifet in the generals Kornilov, Alexiev, Kaledin, and Krasnov in turn. And after Kolchak had thrown aside all political parties, and had dissolved the Constituent Assembly, the Cadet Party, the sole serious bourgeois party, in its essence monarchist through and through, not only did not refuse to support him, but on the contrary devoted more sympathy to him than before.

The Mensheviks and the SRs played no independent role amongst us—just like Kautsky's party during the revolutionary events in Germany. They based their whole policy upon a coalition with the Cadets, and thereby put the Cadets in a position to dictate quite irrespective of the balance of political forces. The Social Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were only an intermediary apparatus for the purpose of collecting, at meetings and elections, the political confidence of the masses awakened by the revolution, and for handing it over for disposal by the counterrevolutionary imperialist party of the Cadets—independently of the issue of the elections.

The purely vassal-like dependence of the SR and Menshevik majority on the Cadet minority itself represented a very thinly veiled insult to the idea of "democracy." But this is not all.

In all districts of the country where the regime of "democracy" lived too long, it inevitably ended in an open coup d'etat of the counterrevolution. So it was in the Ukraine, where the democratic Rada, having sold the Soviet government to German imperialism, found itself overthrown by the monarchist Skoropadsky. So it was in the Kuban, where the democratic Rada found itself under the heel of Denikin. So it was—and this was the most important experiment of our "democracy"—in Siberia, where the Constituent Assembly, with the formal supremacy of the SRs and the Mensheviks, in the absence of the Bolsheviks, and the *de facto* guidance of the Cadets, led in the end to the dictatorship of the Czarist Admiral Kolchak. So it was, finally, in the north, where the Constituent Assembly government of the Social Revolutionary Chaikovsky became merely a tinsel decoration for the rule of counterrevolutionary generals, Russian and British. So it was, or is, in all the small border states—in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Georgia, Armenia—where, under the formal banner of "democracy," there is being consolidated the supremacy of the landlords, the capitalists, and the foreign militarists.

THE PARIS WORKER OF 1871 AND THE PETROGRAD PROLETARIAN OF 1917

One of the most coarse, unfounded, and politically disgraceful comparisons which Kautsky makes between the Commune and Soviet Russia touches the character of the Paris worker in 1871 and the Russian proletarian of 1917-1919. The first Kautsky depicts as a revolutionary enthusiast capable of a high measure of self-sacrifice; the second, as an egoist and a coward, an irresponsible anarchist.

The Parisian worker has behind him too definite a past to need revolutionary recommendations—or protection from the praises of the present Kautsky. Nonetheless, the Petrograd proletarian has not, and cannot have, any reason for avoiding a comparison with his heroic elder brother. The continuous three years' struggle of the Petrograd workers—first for the conquest of power and then for its maintenance and consolidation—represents an exceptional story of collective heroism and self-sacrifice, amidst unprecedented tortures in the shape of hunger, cold, and constant perils.

Kautsky, as we can discover in another connection, takes for contrast with the flower of the Communards the most sinister elements of the Russian proletariat. In this respect also he is in no way different from the bourgeois sycophants, to whom dead Communards always appear infinitely more attractive than the living.

The Petrograd proletariat seized power four and a half decades after the Parisian. This period has told enormously in our favor. The petty-bourgeois craft character of old and partly of new Paris

is quite foreign to Petrograd, the center of the most concentrated industry in the world. The latter circumstance has greatly facilitated our tasks of agitation and organization, as well as the setting up of the Soviet system.

Our proletariat did not have even a faint measure of the rich revolutionary traditions of the French proletariat. But instead, there was still very fresh in the memory of the older generation of our workers, at the beginning of the present revolution, the great experiment of 1905, its failure, and the duty of vengeance it had handed down.

The Russian workers had not, like the French, passed through a long school of democracy and parliamentarism, which at a certain epoch represented an important factor in the political education of the proletariat. But, on the other hand, the Russian working class had not had seared into its soul the bitterness of dissolution and the poison of scepticism, which up to a certain and—let us hope—not very distant moment, still restrain the revolutionary will of the French proletariat.

The Paris Commune suffered a military defeat before economic problems had arisen before it in their full magnitude. In spite of the splendid fighting qualities of the Paris workers, the military fate of the Commune was at once determined as hopeless. Indecision and compromise-mongering above brought about collapse below.

The pay of the National Guard was issued on the basis of the existence of 162,000 rank and file and 6500 officers; the number of those who actually went into battle, especially after the unsuccessful sortie of April 3, varied between twenty and thirty thousand.

These facts do not in the least compromise the Paris workers, and do not give us the right to consider them cowards and deserters—although, of course, there was no lack of desertion. For a fighting army there must be, first of all, a centralized and accurate apparatus of administration. Of this the Commune had not even a trace.

The War Department of the Commune was, in the expression of one writer, as it were a dark room, in which all collided. The office of the Ministry was filled with officers and ordinary Guards, who demanded military supplies and food, and complained that they were not relieved. They were sent to the garrison . . .

"One battalion remained in the trenches for twenty and thirty days, while others were constantly in reserve. . . . This carelessness soon killed any discipline. Courageous men soon determined to rely only on themselves; others avoided service. In the same way did officers behave. One would leave his post to go to the help of a neighbor who was under fire; others went away to the city. . . ."

Such a regime could not remain unpunished; the Commune was drowned in blood. But in this connection Kautsky has a marvelous solution.

"The waging of war," he says, sagely shaking his head, "is, after all, not a strong side of the proletariat."

This aphorism, worthy of Pangloss, is fully on a level with the other great remark of Kautsky, namely, that the International is not a suitable weapon to use in wartime, being in its essence an "instrument of peace."

In these two aphorisms, in reality, may be found the present Kautsky, complete, in his entirety—i. e., just a little over a round zero.

The waging of war, do you see, is on the whole not a strong side of the proletariat, the more that the International itself was not created for wartime. Kautsky's ship was built for lakes and quiet harbors, not at all for the open sea, and not for a period of storms. If that ship has sprung a leak, and has begun to fill, and is now comfortably going to the bottom, we must throw all the blame upon the storm, the unnecessary mass of water, the extraordinary size of the waves, and a series of other unforeseen circumstances for which Kautsky did not build his marvelous instrument.

The international proletariat put before itself as its problem the conquest of power. Independently of whether civil war, "generally," belongs to the inevitable attributes of revolution, "generally" this fact remains unquestioned: that the advance of the proletariat, at any rate in Russia, Germany, and parts of former Austro-Hungary, took the form of an intense civil war not only on internal but also on external fronts. If the waging of war is not the strong side of the proletariat, while the workers' International is suited only for peaceful epochs, then we may as well erect a cross over the revolution and over socialism; for the waging of war is a fairly *strong* side of the capitalist state, which *without* a war will not admit the workers to supremacy. In that case there remains only to proclaim the so-called "socialist" democracy to be merely the accompanying feature of capitalist society and bourgeois parliamentarism—i. e., openly to sanction what the Eberts, Scheidemanns, * Renaudels, carry out in practice and what Kautsky still, it seems, protests against in words.

The waging of war was not a strong side of the Commune. Quite so; that was why it was crushed. And how mercilessly crushed!

"We have to recall the proscriptions of Sulla, Antony, and Octavius," wrote in his time the very moderate liberal, Fiaux, "to meet such massacres in the history of civilized nations. The religious wars under the last Valois, the night of St. Bartholomew, the Reign of Terror were, in comparison with it, child's play. In the last week

of May alone, in Paris, 17,000 corpses of the insurgent Federals were picked up . . . the killing was still going on about June 15."

"The waging of war, after all, is not the strong side of the proletariat."

It is not true! The Russian workers have shown that they are capable of wielding the "instrument of war" as well. We see here a gigantic step forward in comparison with the Commune. It is not a renunciation of the Commune—for the traditions of the Commune consist not at all in its helplessness—but the continuation of its work. The Commune was weak. To complete its work we have become strong. The Commune was crushed. We are inflicting blow after blow upon the executioners of the Commune. We are taking vengeance for the Commune, and we shall avenge it.

* * *

Out of 167,000 National Guards who received pay, only twenty or thirty thousand went into battle. These figures serve as interesting material for conclusions as to the role of formal democracy in a revolutionary epoch. The vote of the Paris Commune was decided, not at the elections, but in the battles with the troops of Thiers. One hundred and sixty-seven thousand National Guards represented the great mass of the electorate. But in reality, in the battles, the fate of the Commune was decided by twenty or thirty thousand persons; the most devoted fighting minority. This minority did not stand alone: it simply expressed, in a more courageous and self-sacrificing manner, the will of the majority. But nonetheless it *was* a minority. The others who hid at the critical moment were not hostile to the Commune; on the contrary, they actively or passively supported it, but they were less politically conscious, less decisive. On the arena of political democracy, their lower level of political consciousness afforded the possibility of their being deceived by adventurers, swindlers, middle-class cheats, and honest dullards who really deceived themselves. But at the moment of open class war, to a greater or lesser degree, they followed the self-sacrificing minority. It was this that found its expression in the organization of the National Guard. If the existence of the Commune had been prolonged, this relationship between the advance guard and the mass of the proletariat would have grown more and more firm.

The organization which would have been formed and consolidated in the process of the open struggle, as the organization of the laboring masses, would have become the organization of their dictatorship—the Council of Deputies of the armed proletariat.

[on a Soviet military train, 1920]

MARX AND . . . KAUTSKY

Kautsky loftily sweeps aside Marx's views on terror, expressed by him in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*—as at that time, you see, Marx was still very "young," and consequently his views had not yet had time to arrive at that condition of complete enfeeblement which is so clearly to be observed in the case of certain theoreticians in the seventh decade of their lives. As a contrast to the green Marx of 1848-1849 (the author of the *Communist Manifesto*!) Kautsky quotes the mature Marx of the epoch of the Paris Commune—and the latter, under the pen of Kautsky, loses his great lion's mane, and appears before us as an extremely respectable reasoner, bowing before the holy places of democracy, declaiming on the sacredness of human life, and filled with all due reverence for the political charms of Scheidemann, Vandervelde, and particularly of his own physical grandson, Jean Longuet.* In a word, Marx, instructed by the experience of life, proves to be a well-behaved Kautskyan.

From the deathless *Civil War in France*, the pages of which have been filled with a new and intense life in our own epoch, Kautsky has quoted only those lines in which the mighty theoretician of the social revolution contrasted the generosity of the Communards with the bourgeois ferocity of the Versaillese. Kautsky has devastated these lines and made them commonplace. Marx, as the preacher of detached humanity, as the apostle of general love of mankind! Just as if we were talking about Buddha or Leo Tolstoy. . . It is more than natural that, against the international campaign which represented the Communards as *souteneurs* and the women of the Commune as prostitutes, against the vile slanders which attributed to the conquered fighters ferocious features drawn from the degenerate imagination of the victorious bourgeoisie, Marx should emphasize and underline those features of tenderness and nobility which not infrequently were merely the reverse side of indecision. Marx was Marx. He was neither an empty pedant nor, even more, the legal defender of the revolution: he combined a scientific analysis of the Commune with its revolutionary apology. He not only explained and criticized—he defended and struggled. But, emphasizing the mildness of the Commune which failed, Marx left no doubt possible concerning the measures which the Commune ought to have taken in order not to fail.

The author of the *Civil War* accuses the Central Committee, i.e., the then Council of National Guards' Deputies, of having too soon given up its place to the elective Commune. Kautsky "does not understand" the reason for such a reproach. This conscientious nonunderstanding is one of the symptoms of Kautsky's mental decline in connection with questions of the revolution generally.

The first place, according to Marx, ought to have been filled by a purely fighting organ, a center of the insurrection and of military operations against Versailles, and not the organized self-government of the labor democracy. For the latter the turn would come later.

Marx accuses the Commune of not having at once begun an attack against the Versailles, and of having entered upon the defensive, which always appears "more humane," and gives more possibilities of appealing to moral law and the sacredness of human life, but in conditions of civil war never leads to victory. Marx, on the other hand, first and foremost wanted a revolutionary victory. Nowhere, by one word, does he put forward the principle of democracy as something standing above the class struggle. On the contrary, with the concentrated contempt of the revolutionary and the Communist, Marx—not the young editor of the *Rhine Paper*, but the mature author of *Capital*: our genuine Marx with the mighty leonine mane, not as yet fallen under the hands of the hairdressers of the Kautsky school—with what concentrated contempt he speaks about the "artificial atmosphere of parliamentarism" in which physical and spiritual dwarfs like Thiers seem giants! The *Civil War*, after the barren and pedantic pamphlet of Kautsky, acts like a storm that clears the air.

In spite of Kautsky's slanders, Marx had nothing in common with the view of democracy as the last, absolute, supreme product of history. The development of bourgeois society itself, out of which contemporary democracy grew up, in no way represents that process of gradual democratization which figured before the war in the dreams of the greatest socialist illusionist of democracy—Jean Jaures—and now in those of the most learned of pedants, Karl Kautsky. In the empire of Napoleon III, Marx sees "the only possible form of government in the epoch in which the bourgeoisie has already lost the possibility of governing the people, while the working class has not yet acquired it." In this way, not democracy, but Bonapartism,* appears in Marx's eyes as the final form of bourgeois power. Learned men may say that Marx was mistaken, as the Bonapartist empire gave way for half a century to the "Democratic Republic." But Marx was not mistaken. In essence he was right. The Third Republic has been the period of the complete decay of democracy. Bonapartism has found in the Stock Exchange Republic of Poincare-Clemenceau a more finished expression than in the Second Empire. True, the Third Republic was not crowned by the imperial diadem; but in return there loomed over it the shadow of the Russian Czar.

In his estimate of the Commune, Marx carefully avoids using the worn currency of democratic terminology. "The Commune was," he writes, "not a parliament, but a working institution, and united

in itself both executive and legislative power." In the first place Marx puts forward not the particular democratic form of the Commune but its class essence. The Commune, as is known, abolished the regular army and the police, and decreed the confiscation of Church property. It did this in the right of the revolutionary dictatorship of Paris, without the permission of the general democracy of the state, which at that moment formally had found a much more "lawful" expression in the National Assembly of Thiers. But a revolution is not decided by votes. "The National Assembly," says Marx, "was nothing more nor less than one of the episodes of that revolution, the true embodiment of which was, nevertheless, armed Paris." How far this is from formal democracy!

"It only required that the Communal order of things," says Marx, "should be set up in Paris and in the secondary centers, and the old central government would in the provinces also have yielded to the *self-government of the producers*." Marx, consequently, sees the problem of revolutionary Paris, not in appealing from its victory to the frail will of the Constituent Assembly, but in covering the whole of France with a centralized organization of Communes, built up not on the external principles of democracy but on the genuine self-government of the producers.

Kautsky has cited as an argument against the Soviet Constitution the indirectness of elections, which contradicts the fixed laws of bourgeois democracy. Marx characterizes the proposed structure of labor France in the following words: "The management of the general affairs of the village communes of every district was to devolve on the Assembly of plenipotentiary delegates meeting in the chief town of the district; while the district assemblies were in turn to send delegates to the National Assembly sitting in Paris."

Marx, as we can see, was not in the least degree disturbed by the many degrees of indirect election, insofar as it was a question of the state organization of the proletariat itself. In the framework of bourgeois democracy, indirectness of election confuses the demarcation line of parties and classes; but in the "self-government of the producers," i. e., in the class proletarian state, indirectness of election is a question not of politics, but of the technical requirements of self-government, and within certain limits may present the same advantages as in the realm of trade-union organization.

The Philistines of democracy are indignant at the inequality in representation of the workers and peasants which, in the Soviet Constitution, reflects the difference in the revolutionary roles of the town and the country. Marx writes: "The Commune desired to bring the rural producers under the intellectual leadership of the central towns of their districts, and there to secure to them, in the workmen of the towns, the natural guardians of their interests." The question was not one of making the peasant equal to the

worker on paper, but of spiritually raising the peasant to the level of the worker. All questions of the proletarian state Marx decides according to the revolutionary dynamics of living forces, and not according to the play of shadows upon the marketplace screen of parliamentarism.

In order to reach the last confines of mental collapse, Kautsky denies the universal authority of the Workers' Councils on the ground that there is no legal boundary between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In the indeterminate nature of the social divisions Kautsky sees the source of the arbitrary authority of the Soviet dictatorship. Marx sees directly the contrary. "The Commune was an extremely elastic form of the state, while all former forms of government had suffered from narrowness. Its secret consists in this, that in its very essence it was the government of the working class, the result of the struggle between the class of producers and the class of appropriators, the political form, long sought, under which there could be accomplished the economic emancipation of labor." The secret of the Commune consisted in the fact that by its very essence it was a government of the working class. This secret, explained by Marx, has remained, for Kautsky, even to this day, a mystery sealed with seven seals.

The Pharisees of democracy speak with indignation of the repressive measures of the Soviet government, of the closing of newspapers, of arrests and shooting. Marx replies to "the vile abuse of the lackeys of the Press" and to the reproaches of the "well-intentioned bourgeois doctrinaires," in connection with the repressive measures of the Commune in the following words: "Not satisfied with their open waging of a most bloodthirsty war against Paris, the Versaillesse strove secretly to gain an entry by corruption and conspiracy. Could the Commune at such a time *without shamefully betraying its trust*, have observed the customary forms of liberalism, just as if profound peace reigned around it? Had the government of the Commune been akin in spirit to that of Thiers, there would have been no more occasion to suppress newspapers of the party of order in Paris than there was to suppress newspapers of the Commune at Versailles." In this way, what Kautsky demands in the name of the sacred foundations of democracy Marx brands as a shameful betrayal of trust.

Concerning the destruction of which the Commune is accused, and of which now the Soviet government is accused, Marx speaks as of "an inevitable and comparatively insignificant episode in the titanic struggle of the newborn order with the old in its collapse." Destruction and cruelty are inevitable in any war. Only sycophants can consider them a crime "in the war of the slaves against their oppressors, *the only just war in history*" (Marx). Yet our dread accuser Kautsky, in his whole book, does not breathe a word of

the fact that we are in a condition of perpetual revolutionary self-defense, that we are waging an intensive war against the oppressors of the world, the "only just war in history."

Kautsky yet again tears his hair because the Soviet government, during the civil war, has made use of the severe method of taking hostages. He once again brings forward pointless and dishonest comparisons between the fierce Soviet government and the humane Commune. Clear and definite in this connection sounds the opinion of Marx. "When Thiers, from the very beginning of the conflict, had enforced the humane practice of shooting down captured Communards, the Commune to protect the lives of those prisoners, *had nothing left for it* but to resort to the Prussian custom of taking hostages. The lives of the hostages had been forfeited over and over again by the continued shooting of the prisoners on the part of the Versaillesse. *How could their lives be spared any longer* after the bloodbath with which MacMahon's Praetorians* celebrated their entry into Paris?" How otherwise, we shall ask together with Marx, can one act in conditions of civil war, when the counterrevolution, occupying a considerable portion of the national territory, seizes wherever it can the unarmed workers, their wives, their mothers, and shoots or hangs them: how otherwise can one act than to seize as hostages the beloved or the trusted of the bourgeoisie, thus placing the whole bourgeois class under the Damocles' sword of mutual responsibility?

It would not be difficult to show, day by day through the history of the civil war, that all the severe measures of the Soviet government were forced upon it as measures of revolutionary self-defense. We shall not here enter into details. But, to give though it be but a partial criterion for evaluating the conditions of the struggle, let us remind the reader that, at the moment when the White Guards, in company with their Anglo-French allies, shoot every communist without exception who falls into their hands, the Red Army spares all prisoners without exception, including even officers of high rank.

"Fully grasping its historical task, filled with the heroic decision to remain equal to that task," Marx wrote, "the working class may reply with a smile of calm contempt to the vile abuse of the lackeys of the Press and to the learned patronage of well-intentioned bourgeois doctrinaires, who utter their ignorant stereotyped commonplaces, their characteristic nonsense, with the profound tone of oracles of scientific immaculateness."

If the well-intentioned bourgeois doctrinaires sometimes appear in the guise of retired theoreticians of the Second International, this in no way deprives their characteristic nonsense of the right of remaining nonsense.

[on a Soviet military train, 1920]

LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

Each time that we study the history of the Commune we see it from a new aspect, thanks to the experience acquired by the later revolutionary struggles and above all by the latest revolutions, not only the Russian but the German and Hungarian revolutions. The Franco-German War was a bloody explosion, harbinger of an immense world slaughter; the Commune of Paris a lightning harbinger of a world proletarian revolution.

The Commune shows us the heroism of the working masses, their capacity to unite into a single bloc, their talent to sacrifice themselves in the name of the future, but at the same time it shows us the incapacity of the masses to choose their path, their indecision in the leadership of the movement, their fatal penchant to come to a halt after the first successes, thus permitting the enemy to regain its breath, to reestablish its position.

The Commune came too late. It had all the possibilities of taking the power on September 4 and that would have permitted the proletariat of Paris to place itself at a single stroke at the head of the workers of the country in their struggle against all the forces of the past, against Bismarck as well as against Thiers. But the power fell into the hands of the democratic praters, the deputies of Paris. The Parisian proletariat had neither a party nor leaders to whom it would have been closely bound by previous struggles. The petty-bourgeois patriots who thought themselves socialists and sought the support of the workers did not really have any confidence in themselves. They shook the proletariat's faith in itself, they were continually in quest of celebrated lawyers, of journalists, of deputies, whose baggage consisted only of a dozen vaguely revolutionary phrases, in order to entrust them with the leadership of the movement.

The reason why Jules Favre, Picard, Garnier-Pages* and Co. took power in Paris on September 4 is the same as that which permitted Paul-Boncour, A. Varenne, Renaudel* and numerous others to be for a time the masters of the party of the proletariat.

The Renaudels and the Boncours and even the Longuets and the Pressemanes are much closer, by virtue of their sympathies, their intellectual habits, and their conduct, to the Jules Favres and the Jules Ferrys than to the revolutionary proletariat. Their socialist phraseology is nothing but an historic mask which permits them to impose themselves upon the masses. And it is just because Favre, Simon, Picard and the others used and abused a demo-

cratico-liberal phraseology that their sons and their grandsons are obliged to resort to a socialist phraseology. But the sons and the grandsons have remained worthy of their fathers and continue their work. And when it will be necessary to decide not the question of the composition of a ministerial clique but the much more important question of knowing what class in France must take power, Renaudel, Varenne, Longuet and their similars will be in the camp of Millerand—collaborator of Gallifet, the butcher of the Commune. . . . When the revolutionary babblers of the salons and of parliament find themselves face to face, in real life, with the revolution, they never recognize it.

The workers' party—the real one—is not a machine for parliamentary maneuvers; it is the accumulated and organized experience of the proletariat. It is only with the aid of the party, which rests upon the whole history of its past, which foresees theoretically the path of development, all its stages, and which extracts from it the necessary formula of action, that the proletariat frees itself from the need of always recommencing its history: its hesitations, its lack of decision, its mistakes.

The proletariat of Paris did not have such a party. The bourgeois socialists with whom the Commune swarmed, raised their eyes to heaven, waited for a miracle or else a prophetic word, hesitated, and during that time the masses groped about and lost their heads because of the indecision of some and the fantasy of others. The result was that the revolution broke out in their very midst, too late, and Paris was encircled. Six months elapsed before the proletariat had reestablished in its memory the lessons of past revolutions, of battles of yore, of the reiterated betrayals of democracy—and it seized power.

These six months proved to be an irreparable loss. If the centralized party of revolutionary action had been found at the head of the proletariat of France in September 1870, the whole history of France and with it the whole history of humanity would have taken another direction.

If the power was found in the hands of the proletariat of Paris on March 18, it was not because it had been deliberately seized, but because its enemies had quitted Paris.

These latter were losing ground continuously; the workers despised and detested them, the petty bourgeoisie no longer had confidence in them, and the big bourgeoisie feared that they were no longer capable of defending it. The soldiers were hostile to the officers. The Government fled Paris in order to concentrate its forces elsewhere. And it was then that the proletariat became master of the situation.

But it understood this fact only on the morrow. The revolution fell upon it unexpectedly.

This first success was a new source of passivity. The enemy had fled to Versailles. Wasn't that a victory? At that moment the governmental band could have been crushed almost without the spilling of blood. In Paris, all the ministers, with Thiers at their head, could have been taken prisoner. Nobody would have raised a hand to defend them. It was not done. There was no organization of a centralized party, having a rounded view of things and special organs for realizing its decisions.

The debris of the infantry did not want to fall back to Versailles. The thread which tied the officers and the soldiers was pretty tenuous. And had there been a directing party center at Paris, it would have incorporated into the retreating armies—since there was the possibility of retreating—a few hundred or even a few dozen devoted workers, and given them the following instructions: enhance the discontent of the soldiers against the officers, profit by the first favorable psychological moment to free the soldiers from their officers and bring them back to Paris to unite with the people. This could easily have been realized, according to the admissions of Thiers's supporters themselves. Nobody even thought of it. Nor was there anybody to think of it. In the midst of great events, moreover, such decisions can be adopted only by a revolutionary party which looks forward to a revolution, prepares for it, does not lose its head, by a party which is accustomed to having a rounded view and is not afraid to act.

And a party of action is just what the French proletariat did not have.

The Central Committee of the National Guard is in effect a Council of Deputies of the armed workers and the petty bourgeoisie. Such a Council, elected directly by the masses who have taken the revolutionary road, represents an excellent apparatus of action. But at the same time, and just because of its immediate and elementary connection with the masses who are in the state in which the revolution has found them, it reflects not only all the strong sides but also the weak sides of the masses; and at first it reflects the weak sides still more than it does the strong: it manifests the spirit of indecision, of waiting, the tendency to be inactive after the first successes.

The Central Committee of the National Guard needed to be led. It was indispensable to have an organization incarnating the political experience of the proletariat and always present—not only in the Central Committee, but in the legions, in the battalions, in the deepest sectors of the French proletariat. By means of the Councils of Deputies—in the given case they were organs of the National Guard—the party could have been in continual contact with the masses, known their state of mind; its leading center could each day put forward a slogan which, through the medium of the

party's militants, would have penetrated into the masses, uniting their thought and their will.

Hardly had the government fallen back to Versailles than the National Guard hastened to unload its responsibility, at the very moment when this responsibility was enormous. The Central Committee imagined "legal" elections to the Commune. It entered into negotiations with the mayors of Paris in order to cover itself, from the right, with "legality."

Had a violent attack been prepared against Versailles at the same time, the negotiations with the mayors would have been a ruse fully justified from the military standpoint and in conformity with the goal. But in reality, these negotiations were being conducted only in order to avert the struggle by some miracle or other. The petty-bourgeois radicals and the socialistic idealists, respecting "legality" and the men who embodied a portion of the "legal" state—the deputies, the mayors, etc.—hoped at the bottom of their souls that Thiers would halt respectfully before revolutionary Paris the minute the latter covered itself with the "legal" Commune.

Passivity and indecision were supported in this case by the sacred principle of federation and autonomy. Paris, you see, is only one commune among many other communes. Paris wants to impose nothing upon anyone; it does not struggle for the dictatorship, unless it be for the "dictatorship of example."

In sum, it was nothing but an attempt to replace the proletarian revolution, which was developing, by a petty-bourgeois reform: communal autonomy. The real revolutionary task consisted of assuring the proletariat the power all over the country. Paris had to serve as its base, its support, its stronghold. And to attain this goal, it was necessary to vanquish Versailles without the loss of time and to send agitators, organizers, and armed forces throughout France. It was necessary to enter into contact with sympathizers, to strengthen the hesitators, and to shatter the opposition of the adversary. Instead of this policy of offensive and aggression which was the only thing that could save the situation, the leaders of Paris attempted to seclude themselves in their communal autonomy: they will not attack the others if the others do not attack them; each town has its sacred right of self-government. This idealistic chatter—of the same gender as mundane anarchism—covered up in reality a cowardice in face of revolutionary action which should have been conducted incessantly up to the very end, for otherwise it should not have been begun . . .

The hostility to capitalist organization—a heritage of petty-bourgeois localism and autonomism—is without a doubt the weak side of a certain section of the French proletariat. Autonomy for the districts, for the wards, for the battalions, for the towns, is the supreme guarantee of real activity and individual independence

for certain revolutionists. But that is a great mistake which cost the French proletariat dearly.

Under the form of the "struggle against despotic centralism" and against "stifling" discipline, a fight takes place for the self-preservation of various groups and subgroupings of the working class, for their petty interests, with their petty ward leaders and their local oracles. The entire working class, while preserving its cultural originality and its political nuances, can act methodically and firmly without remaining in the tow of events and directing each time its mortal blows against the weak sectors of its enemies, on the condition that at its head, above the wards, the districts, the groups, there is an apparatus which is centralized and bound together by an iron discipline. The tendency towards particularism, whatever form it may assume, is a heritage of the dead past. The sooner French communism—socialist communism and syndicalist communism—emancipates itself from it, the better it will be for the proletarian revolution.

The party does not create the revolution at will; it does not choose the moment for seizing power as it likes, but it intervenes actively in the events, penetrates at every moment the state of mind of the revolutionary masses and evaluates the power of resistance of the enemy, and thus determines the most favorable moment for decisive action. This is the most difficult side of its task. The party has no decision that is valid for every case. Needed are a correct theory, an intimate contact with the masses, comprehension of the situation, a revolutionary perception, a great resoluteness. The more profoundly a revolutionary party penetrates into all the domains of the proletarian struggle, the more unified it is by the unity of goal and discipline, the speedier and better will it arrive at resolving its task.

The difficulty consists in having this organization of a centralized party, internally welded by an iron discipline, linked intimately with the movement of the masses, with its ebbs and flows. The conquest of power cannot be achieved save on the condition of a powerful revolutionary pressure of the toiling masses. But in this act the element of preparation is entirely inevitable. The better the party will understand the conjuncture and the moment, the better the bases of resistance will be prepared, the better the forces and the roles will be distributed, the surer will be the success and the fewer the victims it will cost. The correlation of a carefully prepared action and a mass movement is the politico-strategical task of the taking of power.

The comparison of March 18, 1871, with October 25, 1917, is very instructive from this point of view. In Paris, there is an absolute lack of initiative for action on the part of the leading revolu-

tionary circles. The proletariat, armed by the bourgeois government, is in reality master of the town, has all the material means of power—cannon and rifles—at its disposal, but it is not aware of it. The bourgeoisie makes an attempt to retake the weapon of the giant: it wants to steal the cannon of the proletariat. The attempt fails. The government flees in panic from Paris to Versailles. The field is clear. But it is only on the morrow that the proletariat understands that it is the master of Paris. The "leaders" are in the wake of events, they record them when the latter are already accomplished, and they do everything in their power to blunt the revolutionary edge.

In Petrograd, the events developed differently. The party moved firmly, resolutely, to the seizure of power, having its men everywhere, consolidating each position, extending every fissure between the workers and the garrison on the one side and the government on the other.

The armed demonstration of the July days is a vast reconnoitering conducted by the party to sound the degree of close contact between the masses and the power of resistance of the enemy. The reconnoitering is transformed into a struggle of outposts. We are thrown back, but at the same time the action establishes a connection between the party and the depths of the masses. The months of August, September, and October see a powerful revolutionary flux. The party profits by it and augments considerably its points of support in the working class and the garrison. Later, the harmony between the conspirative preparations and the mass action takes place almost automatically. The Second Congress of the Soviets is fixed for October 25. All our preceding agitation was to lead to the seizure of power by the Congress. Thus, the overturn was adapted in advance to October 25. This fact was well-known and understood by the enemy. Kerensky and his councillors could not fail to make efforts to consolidate themselves, to however small an extent, in Petrograd for the decisive moment. Also, they stood in need of shipping out of the capital the most revolutionary section of the garrison. We on our part profited by this attempt by Kerensky in order to make it the source of a new conflict, which had a decisive importance. We openly accused the Kerensky government—our accusation subsequently found a written confirmation in an official document—of having planned the removal of a third of the Petrograd garrison not out of military considerations but for the purpose of counterrevolutionary combinations. This conflict bound us still more closely to the garrison and put before the latter a well-defined task, to support the Soviet Congress fixed for October 25. And since the government insisted—even if in a feeble enough manner—that the garrison be sent off, we created in the Petrograd Soviet, already in our hands, a Revo-

lutionary War Committee, on the pretext of verifying the military reasons for the governmental plan.

Thus we had a purely military organ, standing at the head of the Petrograd garrison, which was in reality a legal organ of armed insurrection. At the same time we designated (communist) commissars in all the military units, in the military stores, etc. The clandestine military organization accomplished specific technical tasks and furnished the Revolutionary War Committee with fully trustworthy militants for important military tasks. The essential work concerning the preparation, the realization, and the armed insurrection took place openly, and so methodically and naturally that the bourgeoisie, led by Kerensky, did not clearly understand what was taking place under their very eyes. (In Paris, the proletariat understood only on the following day that it had been really victorious—a victory which it had not, moreover, deliberately sought—that it was master of the situation. In Petrograd, it was the contrary. Our party, basing itself on the workers and the garrison, had already seized the power, the bourgeoisie passed a fairly tranquil night and learned only on the following morning that the helm of the country was in the hands of its gravedigger.)

As to strategy, there were many differences of opinion in our party.

A part of the Central Committee declared itself, as is known, against the taking of power, believing that the moment had not yet arrived, that Petrograd was detached from the rest of the country, the proletariat from the peasantry, etc.

Other comrades believed that we were not attributing sufficient importance to the elements of military complot. One of the members of the Central Committee demanded the surrounding of the Alexandrine Theater where the Democratic Conference was in session, and the proclamation of the dictatorship of the Central Committee of the party. He said: in concentrating our agitation as well as our preparatory military work for the moment of the Second Congress, we are showing our plan to the adversary, we are giving him the possibility of preparing himself and even of dealing us a preventive blow. But there is no doubt that the attempt at a military complot and the surrounding of the Alexandrine Theater would have been a fact too alien to the development of the events, that it would have been an event disconcerting to the masses. Even in the Petrograd Soviet, where our faction dominated, such an enterprise, anticipating the logical development of the struggle, would have provoked great disorder at that moment, above all among the garrison where there were hesitant and not very trustful regiments, primarily the cavalry regiments. It would have been much easier for Kerensky to crush a complot unexpected by the masses than to attack the garrison consolidating itself more and

more on its position: the defense of its inviolability in the name of the future Congress of the Soviets. Therefore the majority of the Central Committee rejected the plan to surround the Democratic Conference and it was right. The conjuncture was very well judged: the armed insurrection, almost without bloodshed, triumphed exactly on the date fixed in advance and openly for the convening of the Second Soviet Congress.

This strategy cannot, however, become a general rule; it requires specific conditions. Nobody believed any longer in the war with the Germans, and the less revolutionary soldiers did not want to quit Petrograd for the front. And even if the garrison as a whole was on the side of the workers for this single reason, it became stronger in its point of view to the extent that Kerensky's machinations were revealed. But this mood of the Petrograd garrison had a still deeper cause in the situation of the peasant class and in the development of the imperialist war. Had there been a split in the garrison and had Kerensky obtained the possibility of support from a few regiments, our plan would have failed. The elements of purely military complot (conspiracy and great speed of action) would have prevailed. It would have been necessary, of course, to choose another moment for the insurrection.

The Commune also had the complete possibility of winning even the peasant regiments, for the latter had lost all confidence and all respect for the power and the command. Yet it undertook nothing towards this end. The fault here is not in the relationships of the peasant and the working classes, but in the revolutionary strategy.

What will be the situation in this regard in the European countries in the present epoch? It is not easy to foretell anything on this score. Yet, with the events developing slowly and the bourgeois governments exerting all their efforts to utilize past experiences, it may be foreseen that the proletariat, in order to attract the sympathies of the soldiers, will have to overcome a great and well-organized resistance at a given moment. A skillful and well-timed attack on the part of the revolution will then be necessary. The duty of the party is to prepare itself for it. That is just why it must maintain and develop its character of a centralized organization, which openly guides the revolutionary movement of the masses and is at the same time a clandestine apparatus of the armed insurrection.

The question of the electibility of the command was one of the reasons for the conflict between the National Guard and Thiers. Paris refused to accept the command designated by Thiers. Varlin subsequently formulated the demand that the command of the National Guard, from top to bottom, ought to be elected by the

National Guardsmen themselves. That is where the Central Committee of the National Guard found its support.

This question must be envisaged from two sides: from the political and the military sides, which are interlinked but which should be distinguished. The political task consisted in purging the National Guard of the counterrevolutionary command. Complete electibility was the only means for it, the majority of the National Guard being composed of workers and revolutionary petty bourgeois, and in addition, the slogan "electibility of the command" being extended also to the infantry. Thiers would have been deprived at a single stroke of his essential weapon, the counterrevolutionary officers. In order to realize this plan, a party organization, having its men in all the military units, was required. In a word, electibility in this case had as its immediate task not to give good commanders to the battalions, but to liberate them from commanders devoted to the bourgeoisie. Electibility served as a wedge for splitting the army into two parts, along class lines. Thus did matters occur with us in the period of Kerensky, above all on the eve of October.

But the liberation of the army from the old commanding apparatus inevitably involves the weakening of organizational cohesion and the diminution of combative power. As a rule, the elected command is pretty weak from the technico-military standpoint and with regard to the maintenance of order and of discipline. Thus, at the moment when the army frees itself from the old counterrevolutionary command which oppressed it, the question arises of giving it a revolutionary command capable of fulfilling its mission. And this question can by no means be resolved by simple elections. Before wide masses of soldiers acquire the experience of choosing and selecting commanders well, the revolution will be beaten by the enemy, which is guided in the choice of its command by the experience of centuries. The methods of shapeless democracy (simple electibility) must be supplemented and to a certain extent replaced by measures of selection from above. The revolution must create an organ composed of experienced, reliable organizers, in which one can have absolute confidence, giving it full powers to choose, designate, and educate the command. If particularism and democratic autonomism are extremely dangerous to the proletarian revolution in general, they are ten times more dangerous to the army. We saw that in the tragic example of the Commune.

The Central Committee of the National Guard drew its authority from democratic electibility. At the moment when the Central Committee needed to develop to the maximum its initiative in the offensive, deprived of the leadership of a proletarian party, it lost its head and hastened to transmit its powers to the representatives of the Commune which required a broader democratic basis. And

it was a great mistake in that period to play with elections. But once the elections had been held and the Commune brought together, it was necessary to concentrate everything in the Commune at a single blow and to have it create an organ possessing real power to reorganize the National Guard. This was not the case. By the side of the elected Commune there remained the Central Committee; the elected character of the latter gave it a political authority thanks to which it was able to compete with the Commune. But, at the same time, that deprived it of the energy and the firmness necessary in the purely military question which, after the organization of the Commune, justified its existence. Electibility, the democratic method, *is but one of the instruments* in the hands of the proletariat and its party. Electibility can in no wise be a fetish, a remedy for all evils. The methods of electibility must be combined with those of appointments. The power of the Commune came from the elected National Guard. But once created, the Commune should have reorganized the National Guard from top to bottom with a strong hand, given it reliable leaders, and established a regime of very strict discipline. The Commune did not do this, being itself deprived of a powerful revolutionary directing center. It, too, was crushed.

We can thus thumb the whole history of the Commune, page by page, and we will find in it one single lesson: a strong party leadership is needed. More than any other proletariat, the French has made sacrifices for the revolution. But also more than any other, it has been duped. Many times has the bourgeoisie dazzled it with all the colors of republicanism, of radicalism, of socialism, so as always to fasten upon it the fetters of capitalism. By means of its agents, its lawyers and its journalists, the bourgeoisie has put forward a whole mass of democratic, parliamentary, autonomist formulas which are nothing but impediments on the feet of the proletariat, hampering its forward movement.

The temperament of the French proletariat is a revolutionary lava. But this lava is now covered with the ashes of skepticism—the result of numerous deceptions and disenchantments. Also, the revolutionary proletarians of France must be more severe towards their party and unmask more pitilessly any nonconformity between word and action. The French workers have need of an organization strong as steel with leaders controlled by the masses at every new stage of the revolutionary movement.

How much time will history afford us to prepare ourselves? We do not know. For fifty years the French bourgeoisie has retained the power in its hands after having elected the Third Republic on the bones of the Communards. Those fighters of '71 were not lacking heroism. What they lacked was clarity in method and a centralized leading organization. That is why they were vanquished.

Half a century elapsed before the proletariat of France could pose the question of avenging the death of the Communards. But this time, the action will be firmer, more concentrated. The heirs of Thiers will have to pay the historic debt in full.

Zlatoost, February 4, 1921

GLOSSARY OF NAMES AND TERMS

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER: 1871-1906

Bulygin Duma: So-called after Czar's minister; a pseudoparliamentary body established in 1905. The Duma possessed little power. Elected by greatly restricted suffrage, it was considered by the Czar as a consultative, not a legislative, council. The Czar reserved the right to convene or disband the body at will.

Constitutional Democrats (Cadets): A bourgeois party in Russia, formed in 1905; committed to constitutional monarchy. For a short time after the February 1917 revolution, it dominated the Provisional Government.

Rodbertus, Karl Johann (1805-1875): German economist who held socialist but not revolutionary views; Engels deals with his views in detail in the introduction to Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

Witte's Constitution: Count Sergei Witte (1849-1915), semiliberal Russian Prime Minister, wrote a manifesto promising a constitution, civil liberties, and universal suffrage. It was issued by the Czar in October 1905, in view of the uprising of the people, but it never went into effect.

THE PARIS COMMUNE

Column of the Vendome: Column erected to commemorate the victories of Napoleon Bonaparte. Demolished by the Commune, it was reerected by Thiers. It still stands.

THE PARIS COMMUNE AND SOVIET RUSSIA

Potressov, A. I. (1869-1934), and P. N. Miliukov (1859-1943), G. I. Tseretelli (1882-1959), V. M. Chernov (1876-1952), L. G. Kornilov (1870-1918): Potressov was a right-wing Menshevik.

Miliukov, leader of the Cadets, Tseretelli, leading Menshevik, and Chernov, leader of the SRs, held ministerial positions in Kerensky's government. General Kornilov unsuccessfully led an attempted counterrevolutionary coup in August 1917.

Scheidemann, Philip (1865-1937), and Friedrich Ebert (1870-1925): Right-wing Social Democrats, leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, who supported their country's role in World War I. Assuming government posts, they bore responsibility for putting down the revolutionary uprising in Germany in 1918 and for the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Social Revolutionaries: Referred to as SRs, a heterogeneous petty-bourgeois formation in Russia in 1901, generally considered to represent the interests of the poor peasants and agrarian reformers. In October 1917 the party split, with the left wing forming a coalition government with the Bolsheviks. The coalition broke up when the Left SRs turned against the Soviet government for signing the peace of Brest-Litovsk with Germany.

MARX AND . . . KAUTSKY

Bonapartism: A Marxist term describing a dictatorship or a regime with certain features of a dictatorship during a period when class rule is not secure; it is based on the military, police, and state bureaucracy rather than on the parliamentary parties or a mass movement.

Longuet, Jean (1876-1938) and Vandervelde, Emile (1866-1938): Right-wing reformist leaders of the French and Belgian Socialist Parties; voted for war credits during World War I.

MacMahon, Marie Edme Patrice Maurice (1808-1893): French reactionary, militarist, and politician; one of the hangmen of the Paris Commune. The allusion here to praetorians is to his organized gangs of thugs. A similar formation known as the Society of December 10 had been organized in 1849 by Bonapartist generals.

LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

Garnier-Pages, Louis-Antoine (1803-1878), and Jules Favre (1809-1880), Ernest Picard (1821-1877): Moderate bourgeois republicans, ministers of Thiers government; hangmen of the Paris Commune.

Renaudel, Pierre (1871-1935), and Joseph Paul-Boncour (1873-), Alexandre Varenne (1870-1947): Leaders of the French Socialist Party, social chauvinists during World War I.

Also by Leon Trotsky

	Cloth	Paper
The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology (eds.) Isaac Deutscher and George Novack		\$.95
The Case of Leon Trotsky (transcript of his testimony before the Dewey Commission)	\$10.00	
The Chinese Revolution: Problems and Perspectives		.50
The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International ("Transitional Program")		.50
Diary in Exile		1.45
Fascism: What It Is and How To Fight It		.60
Flight from Siberia		.80
History of the Russian Revolution, 3 vols., boxed		5.00
In Defense of Marxism	5.95	2.45
Literature and Revolution	3.75	2.25
Marxism in Our Time		.65
Military Writings	5.95	2.25
My Life	12.50	3.95
On Black Nationalism and Self-Determination		1.05
On Engels and Kautsky		.50
On the Jewish Question		.50
On the Labor Party in the United States		.50
On Literature and Art	6.95	2.95
On the Paris Commune		1.05
On the Suppressed Testament of Lenin		.50
On the Trade Unions		1.05
Permanent Revolution/Results and Prospects	5.95	2.45
Problems of the Chinese Revolution	6.00	3.25
Problems of Civil War		.40
The Revolution Betrayed	5.95	2.95
Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and His Influence	10.00	
The Stalin School of Falsification	8.95	3.45
Stalinism and Bolshevism		.50
Stalin's Frame-Up System and the Moscow Trials		1.00
The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany	12.50	3.95
Terrorism and Communism		2.45
Their Morals and Ours (with essays by John Dewey and George Novack)		1.25
The Third International After Lenin	7.95	3.45
Where Is Britain Going?		1.50
Whither France?	4.95	1.45
Women and the Family		.85
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1939-40)		2.45
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-36-37-38-39, 3 vols.)		ea 2.95
Writings of Leon Trotsky (1934-35)	8.95	3.45

PATHFINDER PRESS, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014

British Distributor: Pathfinder Press, 28 Poland St., London W1V 3DB

(write for free catalog)

COVER DESIGN: BO