

# Phases of Communist Reconstruction.

By N. Lenin

(From a Report to the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party.)

COMRADES! It is very natural that in the development of the proletarian revolution we should place the greatest emphasis now on one, now on another of the intricate and important questions of social life. And if at present we find it necessary to discuss the question of our work in the villages and detach from this question primarily the condition of the middle-peasant, it cannot be considered strange and abnormal from the standpoint of the development of the proletarian revolution.

Of course, the proletarian revolution had to start from the fundamental relation between the contending classes, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The fundamental problem was to transfer power into the hands of the working class, to secure its dictatorship, to overthrow the bourgeoisie and deprive it of those sources of power, which undoubtedly are a hindrance in any work of Socialist reconstruction. Being familiar with Marxism, we never doubted the assertion that the decisive role in capitalist society must belong, according to the economic structure of society, either to the proletariat or to the bourgeoisie. But now we see many former Marxists, for instance from the camp of the Mensheviks, who claim that during the period of decisive struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie the regime of democracy can be maintained. So speak the Mensheviks in complete unison with the Social-Revolutionaries. As if the bourgeoisie does not establish or abolish democracy according to its own sweet will. And once that is so what sense is there in the talk of democracy at the time of the fiercest struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It is only too surprising how quickly these Marxists or would-be Marxists, like the Mensheviks, display their true colors, how quickly their true nature is exposed, the nature of petit-bourgeois democrats.

All his life Marx chiefly fought against the illusions of petit-bourgeois democracy and bourgeois democratism. Marx constantly ridiculed the liberty of the worker under capitalism,—which means his liberty to die of hunger,—and that equality of persons to sell their labor and of the bourgeois who has an equal right to buy that labor freely, buy in a so-called free market, etc. In all of his economic writings Marx endeavored to clarify this point. It might be said that Marx's entire "Capital" is devoted to the exposition of the truth that the basic forces of capitalist society are embodied in the bourgeoisie and the proletariat,—the bourgeoisie as the builder of that capitalist society, and the proletariat as its grave-digger, as the only force capable of supplanting it. There can hardly be found a chapter in Marx not dealing with this question. It might be said that the Socialists of the world as represented in the Second Internationale have sworn numberless times before the workers, attesting their understanding of this truth. But when events reached the stage of the decisive struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for power, then we observed how our Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries as well as the leaders of the Socialist parties of the world renounced this truth and began mechanically repeating pseudo-scientific phrases about "democracy in general."

## The Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

Some are trying to add to these words a "something" to make them still "stronger"

by saying: "the dictatorship of the proletariat". This is an absolute absurdity. We know from history perfectly well that the dictatorship of the democratic bourgeoisie means nothing else than the beating-down of the rising workers. So it was, beginning in 1834, at any rate. History shows that particularly in bourgeois democracy does the fiercest struggle develop between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, unfolding itself widely and freely. We were convinced by practice of the correctness of this truth. And if the policy of the Soviet Government from November 1917 was characterized by adherence to this truth in questions, it is exactly because we never receded from this truth, we never forgot it. Only the dictatorship of one class—the proletariat—can solve the problem involved in the struggle for domination. Only the dictatorship of the proletariat can conquer the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat can overthrow the bourgeoisie. Only the proletariat can carry the masses in the struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, under no condition does it follow,—such a view would be a great mistake,—that in the future construction of Communism, when the bourgeoisie is already overthrown, when the political power is already in the hands of the proletariat,—that we can then afford to reject the aid of the middle-class, intermediate elements. It is natural that in the beginning of the proletarian revolution the attention of its representatives is concentrated upon the main and essential task—domination by the proletariat and safeguarding against a return of the bourgeoisie to power. We realize perfectly well that the bourgeoisie still retains certain advantages derived either from wealth in foreign countries, or in the form of money hidden by it right here in this country. We realize perfectly well that the bourgeoisie has not abandoned the hope of regaining power, has not ceased plotting to restore its domination. But this is by far not all. The bourgeoisie whose faith is: "Where is the money there is our country," the bourgeoisie which financially has long been international, the bourgeoisie in its world-sphere is as yet stronger than we are. It is beginning to grasp that its domination is shaking, that its freedom of

action is lost. But at present, if we calculate the material means in the whole world we must admit that the bourgeoisie is materially still stronger than we are. This is why nine-tenths of our attention, of our practical activity, had to be devoted to the fundamental task,—the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the strengthening of the proletariat, the eradication of every possibility of the return of the bourgeoisie to power. It was absolutely natural, lawful, inevitable, and a great deal of it was successfully accomplished.

## The Question of Other Social Strata.

Now we must place on the order of the day the question concerning the other social strata. We must,—this was our common conclusion in the agrarian question, and on this we believe all our party workers will agree, for we only summarized their observations—we must place on the order of the day in its entirety the question of the middle-peasantry.

Of course, there will be people who instead of reasoning out the course of our revolution and comprehending what problems we are facing, will utilize every step of the Soviet Government as a target for scornful laughter and so-called criticism, of the type which we observe among our gentlemen Mensheviks and Right Social-Revolutionaries. These are people who have not as yet comprehended that they must choose between us and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We have manifested towards them much patience and even good-naturedness, we shall once more give them the benefit of our good-naturedness, but in the near future our patience and good-naturedness will be exhausted, and if at that time they will not have arrived yet at a definite choice, we shall most earnestly offer them help to go to Kolchak (applause). We do not expect very brilliant thinking from those people (laughter). But we expect that having experienced the cruelty of Kolchak they could understand that we have the right to demand of them that they make their choice between us and Kolchak. If in the first months after November many naive people were foolish enough to think that the dictatorship of the proletariat is something ephemeral, accidental, at present even the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries should understand that there is something in the nature of a law operating in the struggle which is now carried forward under the onslaught of the international bourgeoisie.

In reality there exist only two forces: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Whoever did not find that in the writings of Marx, or in the writings of all the great Socialists, was never a Socialist, understood nothing about Socialism, but merely called himself a Socialist. We give these people a little time to think it over and demand that they settle this question. I speak about them, because they say or will say: "The Bolsheviks raise the question of the middle-peasantry in order to entice it." I am fully aware that such arguments and even arguments of a cheaper sort are given much space in the Menshevik press. We throw them to the winds, because we pay little attention to the clap-trap of our opponents. People capable of vacillating at the present time between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat may say what they please. We go our own way. Our path is first of all determined by the weighing of class power. In capitalist so-

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## MASS MEETING

### Czarism in America

Sunday, Nov. 16, 2 P. M.

## Ashland Auditorium

(CARMEN'S HALL)

Ashland Blvd. and Van Buren St.

Leading Communist Speakers from New York, Boston, and other cities.

Communists are arrested throughout the country and many are being held for deportation, upon no evidence other than membership and activity in our party. This is a time for a strong showing of solidarity.

Auspices of Communist Party of Chicago and of the National Office.

Meeting opens promptly at 2:00 P. M.

ADMISSION FREE