

The Communist Party

By N. Bucharin

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

BY what means is the Communist world order to be established? How are we to attain it?"

The answer of the Communist Party to these questions is: "Through the dictatorship of the proletariat."

"Dictatorship" means a power as strong as iron, a power which gives no quarter to its enemies. "The dictatorship of the proletariat" means the government of the working class which abolishes the landowners and capitalists.

A workers' government can only be produced by a social revolution of the working class; a revolution which will destroy the capitalist state and erect on its ruins a new power; the power of the working class and the poor peasants who support the workers' government.

We Communists, therefore, stand for a workers' government until the workers have gained complete control over their adversaries; until they have crushed the entire employing class and knocked out its pride, and until the employing class itself has given up all hopes of ever again coming into power.

Of course, it will be said: "Then you Communists are believers in force?"

We shall answer: Most certainly; but our belief is in revolutionary force. We are convinced that by soft words the working class will gain nothing from the capitalists. No good will come of conciliation. Nothing short of a revolution, which will overthrow Capitalism and destroy the bourgeois state, can liberate the working class.

Every revolution means using force against the former government. Force was used against the tyrannical landlords and Czar in the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, and in the Revolution of November, 1917, force was used against the capitalists by the workers, peasants, and soldiery. Such force—the use of force against those who are oppressing millions of workers—is not merely free from evil; it is sacred.

Moreover, the working class is obliged to use its power against the capitalists even after Capitalism has been openly overthrown, for even after the workers have destroyed the capitalist state, the capitalist class still exists. Its members by no means disappear all at once. On the contrary, they still hope for the return of the old regime and are prepared to make any kind of alliance against the victorious workers.

The experiences of the Russian Revolution furnish convincing proof of this. In November 1917, the workers eliminated the capitalist class from all share in the Government, but the capitalists did not throw up the sponge; they agitated against the workers, mustering all their forces, and using every means to overthrow the workers' government and recapture power. They organized sabotage, procured a counter-revolutionary strike of government officials, and employees; they mobilized the troops of Dutov, Kaledin, Kornilov, Semenov, and called for help to the armies of foreign Capitalism in Germany, Japan and elsewhere. Thus the Russian experiences have proved that even after what seems a decisive victory the workers' government is forced to resist attack by powerful enemies from abroad who stretch out helping hands to the fallen capitalists at home.

A thoughtful survey of the position reveals to us that Russia is the only country in which the proletariat has yet overthrown the bourgeois state. The rest of the world is still pos-

sessed by the capitalist exploiters. Soviet Russia, with her workers' and peasants' government, is like a tiny island in the stormy ocean of Capitalism. Should the victory of the Russian workers be followed by the victory of the German and Austrian workers, there would still remain the other great robber states of Capitalism. Should the entire Capitalism of Europe give way under the hammer stroke of the working class, there would still remain the Capitalism of Asia, headed by Japan, and the Capitalism of America.

These capitalist states will not surrender their position without a struggle. They will fight desperately in order to prevent the proletariat from securing world power. The greater the onrush of the proletariat the more precarious becomes the position of Capitalism, the more must it strain every muscle in its fight against the workers.

When the proletariat has been victorious in one, two, or three countries it will come into unavoidable collision with the capitalist world still remaining, which will endeavor to crush, with blood and iron, the attempt of the workers to liberate themselves. Therefore, even after the Revolution we must understand, that there will be, in some countries a transition period between Capitalism and Communism, in which the workers will be faced by a hard struggle against their enemies both at home and abroad.

For this struggle it is necessary to have a rigid, widespread, and firmly-welded organization completely equipped for the struggle. The Proletarian State, the Workers' Government, provides this organization. Like every other state that of the working class is an organization of the ruling class. In this case the ruling class is the working class, and its organization is at once a defense against Capitalism and the means which will finally destroy it.

Those who shrink from the establishment of such a power are not really revolutionaries. The assumption that every kind of power must be vicious is arrant nonsense. The power used by the rich, the power used by the capitalists against the workers, has for its object the maintenance of the predatory capitalist system. The power used by the workers against the capitalists has the opposite aim of liberating millions of workers from the yoke of Capitalism, and the freeing of humanity from annexationist wars, which entail the savage pillage and destruction of works and collections on which the human race had been engaged for thousands of years. The rigid mechanism of the proletarian dictatorship is essential for the success of the Revolution and to secure the period of establishing the Communist social order.

It is clear that in this period of transition, the working class must strain every nerve in the struggle with its many adversaries, and that the only organization through which it can attain to victory is one in which the workers and the poor peasants are banded together. Could this organization resist the attack of foreign imperialists without having control of the home government and army? Certainly not.

How will it be possible to force the capitalists to submit to government by the workers and to all sorts of confiscations unless the working class is in possession of the means to force the rich to do their duty?

Members of the employing class have been for so long accustomed to live in idleness exploiting the workers, that even after Capitalism has been overthrown in every country, they will endeavor to evade work and to injure the working class. They will have to be forced to serve the people and force will not first be necessary.

The workers must establish a system for organizing the business concerns which have been taken over from the manufacturers; they must see to the transport of the crops produced by the peasantry; and secure a fair distribution of corn, manufactured goods, agricultural implements and machinery.

However, the small usurer and war profiteer may refuse to serve the community and may say: "I am my own master." The workers and poor peasants must force them to obey, and they must coerce in the same way the big capitalists and the former landowners, generals and officers.

The more perilous the position of the workers' revolution, the greater the number of its enemies; the more firm must be the revolutionary rule of the workers and of the poor peasants, the more energetic the dictatorship. The power in the hands of the workers is the axe which they must hold in readiness against the attacks of the capitalist class. In the communistic social order, when the capitalists will exist no more and all class distinctions will have disappeared, when there will be no more peril from within or from without—then there will be no more necessity for this axe. But we are in the period of transition now, when the enemies around us are showing their teeth, and are ready to drown in blood the whole working class movement. To prove this one need but recall the shooting of the workers in Finland and Kiev, and the wholesale shootings of workers and peasants in the Ukraine and in Lettland. In this period only those who are wholly ignorant of the situation can wish to act without the indispensable weapon of state power.

A hue and cry is raised against the Dictatorship of the Proletariat from two sides. On the one side from the Anarchists, for they are against any kind of government and, consequently, also against the Government of the Workers and Peasants. To them we can only say: "Go into a nunnery, if you are against putting into the hands of the workers the means to coerce the bourgeoisie!"

On the other side the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is attacked by the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries. Though formerly they used to advocate it, they are, so they say, against the interference with the privileges and the liberty of the bourgeoisie. They are of opinion that the workers are not yet "ripe" for a dictatorship. We can only say to them: "Why do you not join the capitalist class which you love so much and which you are trying to protect?" They do not wish to because they would have to own that they are in opposition to the workers and poor peasants.

It is just because the Communist Party stands for the iron dictatorship for the workers over the capitalists, the usurers, the former landowners, and other lovely products of the old bourgeois regime, that it is the most radical, the most revolutionary of all the existing groups and parties. "Through the inexorably firm government of the Workers, to Communism" is the watchword of our party. And the program of our party is the program of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.