
Lenin:

The Great Strategist of the Class War.

by A. Lozovsky

Published as No. 13 in the Labor Herald Library by the Trade Union Educational League,
(Chicago: 1924). Translated and introduced by Alexander Bittelman.

Introduction.

If I were asked to tell in a few words what is the most pronounced feature of this pamphlet by A. Lozovsky on "Lenin: The Great Strategist of the Class-War," I should say this: It is a desire to extract from the experiences of Lenin's life as many lessons as is humanly possible for the advancement of the class struggle and for the promotion of the proletarian victory throughout the world.

A. Lozovsky has been prompted to write on Lenin, it seems to me, not merely by a desire to perpetuate Lenin's memory. No. Lenin's name will live in the world as long as toiling masses struggle against exploitation, and as long as oppressed nations and perse-

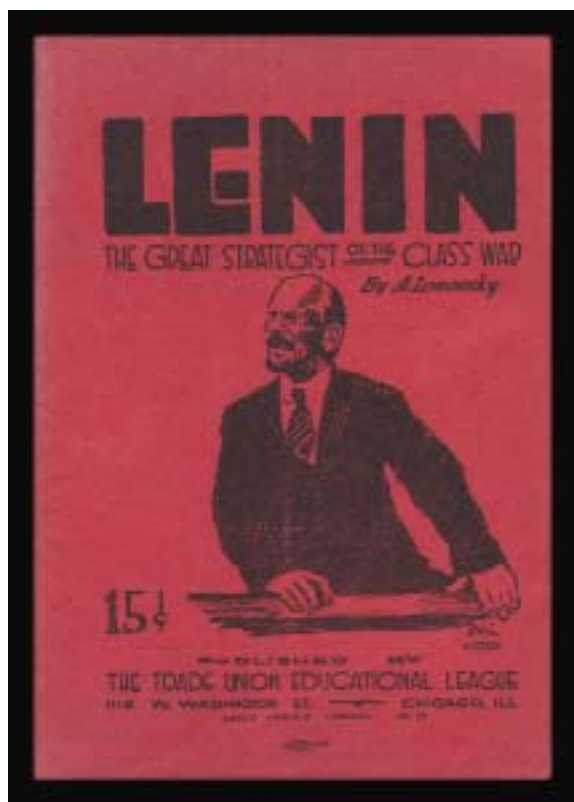
cuted races tread the path of revolt against their masters in a fight for freedom and human equality. The motive that produced this little book is much more immediate, direct and practical than a mere wish to perpetuate the memory of a great leader. It is an earnest attempt to make Lenin in his death as nearly useful to the working class as he was in his life, and a study of this pamphlet will show that its author has acquitted himself of his task with more than ordinary excellence.

What is it that we are primarily interested in about Lenin? We, I mean those that are part and parcel of the labor movement and of the proletarian class struggle and that are fighting for the dawn of a new day. What do we want to know about Lenin and for what purpose?

Lenin was the founder of a great party, the Communist Party of Russia. He was the leader of the first successful proletarian revolution. He was for over six years the head of the first Workers' and Peasants' Government in the world. He was also the founder and recognized leader of the Communist International. For us, working class militants in the cause of labor, there is a world to learn from the experiences of Lenin as to how to educate, organize, and arouse the masses to action against their capitalist exploiters. What we all want to know is, how did Lenin do it? What theories did he hold? What tactics did he pursue? What means did he employ? In short, *what is type essence of Leninism?*

• • • • •

Leninism is the theory and practice of working class struggle. It is the accumulated experience of the battling armies of the proletariat against capitalism



reflected by the mind of a genius. It is the century-old hatred of the oppressed against the oppressors embodied in a man of iron will and a great, beautiful heart. It is the proletarian urge to power expressed, formulated and led by the greatest leader the working class ever had.

To understand thoroughly Lenin and Leninism one needs to be familiar with Russia, its history, the martyrdom of hundreds and thousands of Russian revolutionaries, and the long, bitter years of oppression suffered by the toiling masses of Russia. Lenin is inseparable from the class struggle of the Russian masses.

But his greatness and the importance of his work have gone far beyond the boundaries of his native land. At this moment there is not another name in the whole world which means so much for millions upon millions of human beings. It is as if the deepest longings and most intimate dreams of the oppressed in every corner of the globe, in “civilized” Europe as well as in backward Africa, as much in America, as in Asia, have gone forward into the endless spaces of the universe and have found their point of concentration, their unifying genius in the life and teachings of Lenin.

Was there ever a human being more truly international, more a leader of the people of all countries and all nations, than Lenin? Take his attitude toward the late imperialist war. How did he look upon it? How did he react towards it?

He loved the Russian masses with all the great powers of his human soul. Is anyone in doubt about that? If one’s understanding of the most deeply buried feelings of the masses is any test of one’s love for them, then who in Russia’s history has surpassed Lenin in such understanding? And if one’s sympathy for the sufferings of the masses, sympathy of the purest kind, of a most intense and burning nature, is any sign of one’s love and devotion to the masses, then who in the life of Russia is greater in this respect than Lenin?

And yet Lenin was one of the most consistent opponents of the idea of the workers defending “their” fatherland. He was unalterably opposed to the Russian masses shedding their blood for the greatness of Russia. Why? Because to him “Russia” was not an abstraction, but a real living thing. Because his great realistic mind was able to pierce through the glittering superficialities of patriotism and fatherland and to

reach out after the substance of things. And in doing so he finally reached the truth that if the name Russia stands for the tens of millions of its toiling masses, if the greatness of Russia is the same as the well-being, peace and security of the workers and peasants, then the true way of serving the greatness of Russia was to combat the late war and to destroy those forces which were instrumental in bringing the war about.

This was the Lenin-way of being patriotic and loyal to one’s nation and country.

• • • • •

As these lines are being written, new war clouds are becoming visible on the Far-Eastern horizon. The capitalists of Japan are preparing to resist the encroachment of the capitalists of America in the division of imperialist spoils in China. The capitalists of America are preparing to impose their will by the force of arms. What does it mean? It means that we are drifting with progressively greater speed into a war with Japan. In fact, we are already engaged in war.

Look at what we are now doing in China. All the maneuvers of our bankers and officials in China in support of one warring general against another, all the movements of our warships in the Chinese waters, are nothing else than war against the capitalists of Japan for more power and influence over China for the capitalists of America.

Again the air will be filled with “patriotism,” love of country, loyalty to the fatherland, etc. Again the workers of the United States will be called upon by their masters to come to the defense of the honor, greatness and even freedom of America. The capitalist press of the country, these giant factories for the production of sham and camouflage to dope the working masses, will again start out on a systematic campaign to befog and befuddle the minds of the masses into the belief that “their” country is in danger of being attacked by a foreign enemy.

And when this begins to happen we shall be badly in need of some antidote to the poisonous influences of war propaganda. And what better means is there for such purpose than. The wholesome, nourishing and sustaining food of Leninism?

When in trouble, go back to Lenin. When in doubt, consult Lenin. This should become the maxim

of every worker and poor farmer in the United States. For there is no surer guide to what the oppressed masses must do to protect themselves against the conspiracies of the capitalists than the teachings and directions of Leninism.

Is it war that you are called upon to sacrifice your life for? If it is, here is what Lenin will tell you. First, inquire, ask questions. Who is it that calls you to war? For what purpose? In defense of whose interests?

And when you find, as you are bound to, that the war is championed by the capitalists, that you are called upon to defend the profits and power of your bosses and exploiters, that it is a war of imperialist robbery and plunder, you will say what Lenin said: Not a cent and not a man for the aggrandizement of our class enemies! Instead of waging war for capitalism, we shall start war *against* capitalism, for the overthrow of the power of our bosses and for the establishment of our own rule.

And, then, you might ask some more questions. You might want to know how best to fight your economic battles, how to resist wage cuts, open shops drives, unemployment. You will find, for instance, that one of your main problems in the coming months will be how best to strengthen your unions, to rejuvenate them with a new spirit of militancy and hopefulness. What must you do? What *can* you do?

Turn to Lenin, he'll tell you. He has built a party and led a movement which already conquered for the toiling masses one sixth of the earth's surface. He ought to know how you do those things. Ask him and he'll tell you.

Then, if you go deep enough into the problems of the working class, you will strike the problem of all problems, the question of how you can do away with capitalism altogether. *And* you will want to know the best way, the surest road, the shortest cut to your final goal. And again we say, ask Lenin, study Leninism.

As with all knowledge that is really worth having, there is no royal or short road to the study of Leninism. Many books have been and will be written on Lenin and on Leninism, which is merely another name for the great art and science of the Social Revolution. Those working class militants, who are truly ambitious to serve their class against capitalism, will no doubt find the time and energy required for a thor-

ough study of Leninism. And as a beginning or introduction to such a course of study we know of no better work than this pamphlet by A. Losovsky.

Losovsky's pamphlet should be carefully read and studied by every trade-union militant who is active in the labor movement. For there are few better ways of assimilating the experiences of the great — one is tempted to say the greatest — revolutionary leader and turning these experiences to good account in one's own immediate work, than by studying the life work of Lenin. And for this one would want no more efficient and kindlier guide than this little book.

When you are through with the reading of it, you grasp, perhaps for the first time, the true stature of the Russian giant. His marvelous knowledge of economics and the social sciences generally, his great analytical mind, his almost superhuman sense for detecting the deep, quiet processes that are constantly taking place within the broad masses, his flexibility of mind, his burning hatred of capitalist oppression and his iron determination to fight the bloody thing to a finish — all these qualities of Lenin take living shape under the pen of Lozovsky, who has succeeded in presenting us with a most illuminating picture of the great Strategist of the Class Struggle.

We cannot all become Lenins, it is true, but many a workingman and workingwoman can succeed in approximating the great leader to one degree or another if sufficient effort is lent in that direction in a conscious and determined way.

Our class is badly in need of leaders — loyal, capable, and efficient fighters in the proletarian struggle for power. Never in the history of society has an oppressed class struggling for freedom confronted an enemy as clever, tricky, resourceful, unscrupulous, and brutal as is the ruling class of today, the capitalists. This fact imposes a duty upon every working class militant to study and learn the art and science of social revolution, to familiarize himself with the tactics and methods of Leninism which have been proved to be the only way to the overthrow of capitalism and the complete liberation of the working class.

Alexander Bittelman,
Chicago — September, 1924.

***LENIN: THE GREAT STRATEGIST
OF THE CLASS WAR.***

A Leader Not a Hero.

There are epochs in human history when single individuals incorporate the experiences and historical tasks of whole classes. History develops by curves and as the class struggle develops in intensity these individuals appear in the foreground and assume their greatest importance at a time when the social antagonisms reach their highest point.

Human history knows of many examples of gifted statesmen, thinkers, politicians and diplomats. But all of them up till now have been representatives of the feudal and capitalist classes. Only in the 19th century when the proletariat came to feel itself as a class do we find the reflection of its interests in the genius, Marx. Lenin is the direct successor of Marx.

When we consider closely Lenin's role in the labor movement of the last decades the first question that appears is, whether we Marxians ought not to revise our theory regarding the role of single individuals in history. For is it not a fact that Lenin has been a living illustration of the theory of the heroes and the masses and did he not, by the activities of his life, disprove the correctness of the materialist conception of history? We must consider this problem at the very outset in order to relieve ourselves of any false idealistic conceptions that we might entertain. The truth is that the real greatness of the genius of the most outstanding strategist of the class struggle can be correctly appreciated only from the point of view of the class whose leader he was.

The Marxians who enter the study of Lenin's role in history, are under no necessity of abandoning their theory of the relation between heroes and masses. Quite the contrary. Only on the basis of the materialist conception of history, only through a sober analysis of the forces in the class struggle, can we correctly appreciate the role which Lenin, the greatest thinker and revolutionist, has played in the international labor move-

ment and in the international revolution.

Marxism in Practice.

Lenin was a Marxian dialectician. There are many people that know Marx very well but are incapable of deriving the political lessons and conclusions implied in theory. In this respect Lenin was totally different. He has taken the Marxian theory and methods and applied them in the practice of life. And with the help of his acute analytical mind he interpreted events in their dialectical development. Lenin was one of the foremost experts in the economic and philosophical theories of Marx. But as already said, he was not primarily a theoretician, but a practical Marxian and a political dialectician. The Hegelian dialectics which Marx had developed to its highest point were completely mastered by Lenin. He never reasoned abstractly. He despised pure rationalizing. He hated the free sway of "pure reasoning." He fought against philosophic charlatanism and always proved in action that the truth is concrete.

Just as Marx was maneuvering with the general factors of economic life, so was Lenin maneuvering with the concrete forces of the class struggle. In the colorful kaleidoscope of social relations and from the complexities of the everyday events of modern life; he always managed to hit upon the fundamental and most important tendencies. He was never deceived by appearances. He was a man called upon to tread new paths. Always pursuing his own way, capable by means of his dialectics not only to explain but constantly to drive history forward, Lenin was a dialectician in politics and a Marxist in action. That is, he knew exactly how to make history in as masterly a fashion as Marx explained it.

Identity With a Class.

Lenin joined the labor movement at its very dawn. The first spontaneous outbreaks of the class struggle in the '80s reverberated through Russia with a resounding echo. The advancing Marxian movement thrust itself upon the beginnings of the industrial development of Russia, drawing into its ranks many elements of the radical intelligentsia. The first generation of revolutionary intellectuals (Plekhanov, Vera

Zasulich, and Deutsch) founded the group of “Liberation of Labor” which is the predecessor of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and of the Russian Communist Party. Lenin belonged to the second generation of Marxians. Together with many others he joined the labor movement, but while the others were merely passersby, utilizing it for their own purpose, Lenin remained and led the movement until his very end.

Lenin understood from the very outset the power of the new class. In his very first writings he discusses this matter and says: “The working class is the bearer of the revolution.” The working class stands in the foreground and everything which hampers its development, which demoralizes its ranks, which stands in the way of its historical development, must be destroyed and removed. To say at that period that the working class was the bearer of the revolution meant to determine its historic role as against the conceptions of the old socialist school of the “Narodniki.”

Lenin completely identified himself with the working class and became its spokesman. He knew as nobody else did how to keep away from the working class and from the then-developing working class party all alien elements. At present it is easier, of course, to see which of those elements were really alien to the labor movement. But to have known this 25 or 30 years ago was much more difficult. At that time there were no material advantages to be derived by people accepting the Marxian theory. On the contrary, they had to bring sacrifices, suffer persecutions, etc. Nevertheless some of these Marxians were nothing more than hangers-on to the labor movement. Chief among those was Peter Struve, formerly a Social-Democrat and later on a leader of the left-wing of the liberal movement, still later a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party, and at present a monarchist. One required a sharp theoretical mind, and an extraordinary instinct, to detect in the Marxian phraseology of the first work of Peter Struve the real weak spots.

Lenin possessed the ability to guard the working class theoretically and practically against the intrusion of alien elements. He also knew how to relieve the labor movement of those of them who succeeded in getting into it. Lenin knew the working class, he had faith in it, he grasped its historical importance and therefore understood how to maintain the integrity of the labor movement.

Building the Russian Party.

The working class will win, but only in the event that it succeeds in creating a strongly united organization which is ideologically homogeneous. The working class cannot be victorious without uniting the best, the most class conscious and revolutionary elements. Hence the role of the party as the guiding-force of the revolution. The party is not identical with the working class, but is its natural leader. The party leads the masses only inasmuch as it is organically united with the working class reacting to its everyday life. Without a party the working class cannot make a single step. Without a party the revolution is an empty phrase.

Theoretically this truth was recognized even by Lenin’s predecessors, but it was he alone who understood how to translate into practice these theoretical propositions. The history of the Russian Social Democracy and of the Russian Communist Party is organically bound up with the activities of Lenin. He was the organizer of the party, the educator of a whole generation of party workers and leaders, beginning with the time of underground groups up till the moment when the working class assumed power in the largest country in the world. It was because he understood that the working class cannot live without a party that he devoted his greatest attention to the building up of such a party.

It would be difficult to find another man in the history of parties whose life and activity was so intimately interwoven with the party as was Lenin’s with the Russian Communist Party. He was its theoretician, its man of action, agitator, propagandist, organizer and leader. He was soldier and general, teacher and pupil, but never did he get the idea that: “The party, this is I,” as his opponents used to reproach him. He realized that the power and greatness of the party depends upon its organic connection with the masses, its collaboration with the creative and progressive elements of the working class.

One can state without exaggeration that the Russian Communist Party was the creation of his spirit, the work of his hands. Such a party could be created by one who is perfectly clear as to what are the mutual relations between the party and the class. Lenin’s slogan was: “The party above all.” Why? Because the Party is the vanguard of the working class, and as such must

know not only how to march forward but, if need be, to go against the spontaneous movements among the workers and at decisive moments powerfully to assume the offensive. The party is the organized consciousness of the class, a fact which distinguishes it from the unorganized elemental movements of the workers.

Self-Criticism and Frankness.

Lenin knew exactly the strong and weak sides of the labor movement. And for this reason he reacted so exceptionally critically to every theory built upon the backwardness and weaknesses of the working class. He possessed a sixth sense, the sense of anti-reformism. He smelled reformism from a distance. It was very difficult indeed in 1903 to have determined on the basis of differences of opinion regarding the first paragraph of the party constitution, who were the proletarian Girondists and who were the Jacobins. Nevertheless, Lenin determined this very definitely after the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party. Through the formulation of the famous paragraph one, he came to the creation of the Girondist wing of the Party. Since then he continuously criticized the right wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, whose reformism became apparent to everyone only in 1905.

Throughout the first revolution, in the period preceding the late war, and particularly after the war, this anti-reformist sense of Lenin manifests itself in all his activities. He was deceived neither by revolutionary phrases nor by well-sounding resolutions. He exposed to the daylight the reformist theoreticians and men of action, despite all their attempts to conceal their real nature. He was primarily a man of experience and practical deeds, and it was in this sphere of life that he caused the defeat of the strategists of reformism. More than one half of his writings were devoted to the demoralizing activities of reformism, specifically to the Russian Mensheviks. Just as an archeologist determines the species of a prehistoric animal by the examination of a single bone, so Lenin was able to determine the reformist nature of his opponents by a single phrase in one or another of their articles.

The Enemy of Reformism.

Lenin would reach out after the substance of reformism, no matter under what masks it would make its appearance, and without any effort on his part would tear off the covering. In the attempt that was made before the first revolution to revise Marx, to connect him with Kant and similar philosophers, Lenin immediately recognized the intention to reject the revolution and a tendency to surrender Marxism to the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Lenin never considered reformism as an inner tendency in the working class. He considered reformism rather as a class enemy, operating within the labor movement and therefore more dangerous to it than the outside enemies.

Because of this attitude of Lenin's, he has been charged with sectarianism and intolerance. But he continued to pursue his line of action with the greatest tenacity for details, proving that reformism is one of the greatest enemies of the labor movement, and that our theoretical struggle with the Mensheviks will eventually bring us to the sharpest conflicts with them. The Russian revolution has proved Lenin correct, thereby showing his extraordinary farsightedness and sound instinct. In recent years reformism became the most powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Due to reformism, the working class movement has suffered a series of defeats enabling the capitalist system to continue a while in existence.

Revolution and Actuality.

Lenin conceived of the revolution as of something that was moving right upon us, and not as something lying in the far-off distance. Because of this he never tired of insisting that we must prepare ourselves daily for the revolution, even politically and technically. The political preparations consisted in training the masses for action through everyday struggle. Lenin used to say: "The most important thing is to bring the masses in motion, thereby enabling them to accumulate experiences within a short period of time." The revolution confronts us directly with the problem of armed insurrection. And to speak of this without proper technical preparations, is merely to mouth empty phrases. He who wants the revolution must systematically prepare for it the broad masses, who will,

in the process of preparation, create the necessary organs of the struggle.

The Mensheviks were fond of ridiculing the idea of technical preparations for an armed insurrection. According to their conception the center of gravity would lie in the sphere of propaganda, of arming the minds of the workers. To this Lenin's reply was: "He who refuses technically to prepare for the insurrection ultimately rejects the insurrection itself, and transforms the program of the revolution into an empty phrase."

Although Lenin knew quite well that revolutions are not made to order, that the success of a revolution demands certain deep-going historical changes, nevertheless he insisted that the problem of the revolution is not only political but also the technical organization of the revolutionary class. A party which does not prepare for the revolution must be considered a discussion club rather than the leader of a revolutionary class. No matter how difficult this problem is, yet all the progressive forces of the working class must be organized in order to solve this problem. Thus we see that for Lenin the revolution was always a concrete problem of the day which at times comes close to us and again moves back into the distance, depending upon the situation and the correlation of forces, but always remains the acute problem of the labor movement.

Proletarian Statesmanship.

Lenin was a foremost statesman. What does this mean: According to his own definition a statesman is one who understands how to manoeuvre with millions of people, who is capable of estimating correctly the mutual relations of social classes, who can detect the weak spots in his enemy's armor and who knows how to make effective the strongest side of his own class.

In this respect Lenin possessed extraordinary gifts. He knew above all how to determine the line of demarcation between classes and to create a concrete and practical program of action calculated to bring together the working class with its temporary ally, the peasantry. He based his judgment of political conditions, not on superficial appearances, not upon the so-called public opinion, but upon the deep processes that are taking place within the working class. His mind

always pierced through to the very vitals of a situation. He studied the makeup of social life in order to find for himself a starting point, and then he continued to base his activities on the dynamics of the class struggle.

These traits of Lenin's character made him the most dangerous to, and at the same time the most hated by, the class enemies

of the proletariat, whom he always managed to hit at the softest spot. 'He was a *realer politiker* (of course, realistic not in the reformist sense, for whom realism means adaptation to the bourgeoisie) in the sense that he based his revolutionary activities on the correlation of forces in the class struggle. The reformists of all countries declared Lenin to be a Utopian, an "irrational" statesman, because he always busied himself with the problem of revolution, and themselves they consider realists because they advocate the idea of gradually transforming bourgeois society along the lines of evolution. But these "great realists" became tools in the hands of the bourgeois politicians after the war, while Lenin the "irrational statesman" became the most dangerous opponent of the bourgeoisie and the leader of millions of toilers who have risen against their masters.

Immediately after the October revolution Lenin was charged by all petty bourgeois socialists with being an adventurer. But this "adventurer" proved by his deeds which side the real power was on. The "realists" among the Socialist Revolutionists and Mensheviks have simply missed the importance of the great Change that has taken place in human life. They have even failed to notice that the masses have turned their backs on them. Lenin was the greatest statesman of our age. He has proven this standing at the helm of the greatest state in the world, by the exceptional flexibility of the Russian Communist Party, whose leader and creator he was.

Critical and Realistic.

A sober estimate of his own and his enemies' forces was always the starting point for Lenin's political activity. Only he can be termed a real statesman who is able fearlessly to look reality in the face, who coolly estimates the forces of the opposing class, who is not dealing in mere phrases and who is able merci-

lessly to expose and criticize the weak sides of his own class and his own organization. Also in this respect Lenin possessed an exceptionally strong sense for reality. He never succumbed to the hypnosis of fantastic figures and pompous proclamation.

When he came to Russia in 1917, the time when the Socialist Revolutionaries held full sway, Lenin remarked: "The power they hold is only imaginary. The Party of the Socialist Revolutionaries is an empty shell." Although at that time millions upon millions of workers were following the lead of the party of the Chernovs and Kerenskys, yet he immediately perceived the instability of the influence of the Socialist Revolutionaries.

Basing his opinion on the real situation, Lenin spoke in favor of the Brest-Litovsk treaty against the wish of the "public opinion" (at that time the liberal and reformist press was still in existence) and at first even against the leadership of the Russian Communist Party. Upon what did Lenin base his tactics? Upon those deep processes which have been developing within the broad masses. While these latter had been protesting against the peace treaty, the soldiers were leaving the front en masse. Lenin has defined the situation by a very laconic but significant expression: "The peasants have voted in favor of peace with their legs because they have been leaving the front." No amount of phraseology in favor of a revolutionary war could convince him to the contrary. He was asking his opponents: "Have you got at least one regiment, have you the support of any armed power, which could be put up against the fleeing, demoralized peasant masses? We cannot fight. We need a breathing space. No matter how short, it will be of advantage to us." History has proved that he was right.

Lenin's prognosis that by means of this breathing space we would be able to create a new army, inspired with a new spirit, and able to take the offensive again, has been proven to be correct. "One must know also how to evade a fight," he used to exclaim, arguing in favor of signing the Brest-Litovsk treaty. "It is better to retreat in a semi-orderly fashion than to subject the army to complete dissolution.

A leader is he who knows how to protect his army from breaking up, and who adopts all necessary measures to preserve his army for future battles." Today this looks to us like ABC wisdom. In order to

understand the real extent of Lenin's genius one must remember the tragic situation of Soviet Russia in 1918, and the terrific difficulties which Lenin had to overcome in order to convince his own Party that his estimate of the situation and of the relation of forces was the correct one.

The Great Alliance Between Workers and Peasants.

Lenin's sense for reality has manifested itself also in the fact that long before the revolution he was able to estimate correctly the significance of the peasantry. Most of the Marxians had a very poor conception of the role of the peasants in the approaching revolution. From the fact that agriculture was subservient to city industry and that small-scale production was gradually disappearing, many Marxians drew the conclusion that the peasants will not play in the revolution any active part at all or else will play a reactionary part.

As far back as 1905, Lenin already perceived the insufficiency of the agrarian program of the Social Democratic Party. Immediately upon the beginning of the wide revolutionary movement among the peasants in 1905, he formulated the demand for the nationalization of the land. Lenin's slogan at that time was "The dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." He saw the necessity for an alliance of these two classes in order to remove the power of the large landowners. As the February revolution was developing, making clear the extent of the change that was to come, and as he realized that Russia would not satisfy itself with a bourgeois democracy, he commenced propounding in a practical fashion the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry which was to be incorporated in the Russian Soviet state.

As an expert in the agrarian problems, and as one well versed in the applied phases of political economy, Lenin had been well aware of the fact that the peasantry cannot play any independent role. Put for this very reason, he said, it is our duty to win the peasantry over to the side of the proletariat. He had been writing and saying: "The peasantry will support either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The peasantry stands to gain from the proletariat much more than from the bourgeoisie. Particularly if we pursue such a

policy as to disabuse the peasantry of its prejudices against the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Hence his slogan: “An alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry,” and the policy of winning the masses of the villages for the support of the political and economic policies of the working class.

Learning from Events.

How did Lenin succeed in arriving at such a realistic conception of the role of the peasantry in the revolution? It was due to his ability to estimate correctly the social forces in modern society. He knew how to learn from events. The peasant uprisings of 1902-03, which had assumed very large proportions before the revolution of 1905, the role played by the army in suppressing the first revolution, the role played by the same army during the second revolution, the revolt of the peasants, the vacillating attitude of the peasantry towards the Soviet Power during the first year after the October revolution—all these facts served Lenin as material for his decisions on tactics with regard to the peasantry. He was a realistic statesman in the best sense of the word. A defeat would never cause him to fold his hands in passivity, but on the contrary would just arouse his energy and obstinacy, in a desire to study and arrive at the causes which had led to defeat. He used to say: “We are defeated. We must learn the causes of our defeat, we must throw light upon every wrong step that we have made, so that we become more practical and more farsighted.”

A World Outlook.

Lenin never limited himself to the study of the labor movement of Russia alone but studied with the same vigor all social conflicts in Europe during which the working class suffered defeat. The great French Revolution, the conspiracy of Babeuf, the Chartist movement, the June days in Paris, the Paris Commune, the great economic strikes during the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Century — all these served as the basis for determining the causes of the weakness of the working class movement. Furthermore he studied with the same care the mechanism of modern society and the forces at the disposal of our enemy classes. As the result of his study of capitalist society,

its form and methods of organization, the unity of the bourgeois classes as against the disunity of the working masses, he had found the prime reason for our defeats, for the victories of the bourgeoisie, and had arrived at a correct appreciation of the methods of struggle of the working class.

True Proletarian Internationalism.

As with the agrarian problem, so also with the national problem, Lenin has given it a new conception of its significance. The international Social-Democracy attempted the solution of this problem in a purely rationalistic manner. The Social-Democracy protested formally against the colonial policy of the bourgeoisie. It became apparent, however, right at the beginning of the last war, that international reformism is putting the so-called national interests above the class interests, and is accepting the point of view of the bourgeoisie in the matter of colonial policy. Long before the revolution Lenin had been studying the national problem. During the war he had been writing against the Great Russian chauvinists, exposing the false position of even many of the left-wing elements of the labor movement.

When Lenin came to power he commenced to put into effect his own policies. In doing so, it must be admitted, he found resistance even in the ranks of his own party. Lenin had fought with particular energy against the attempt to carry on a nationalistic and Russifying policy under the cover of internationalism. It is known that Lenin was the spiritual father of the international policies of Soviet Russia. But it is not so well known that he had been following with particular attention Soviet Russia's Eastern policies. From the workers of those countries which hold in subjection other nations, he used to demand not only platonic sympathies for the oppressed, but practical political and technical measures of support to the revolutionary masses which are struggling against the yoke of imperialism.

For Lenin the demand for “self-determination of nations up to the point of separation” was no mere demagogic phrase, but a real law of practical policy. If we follow the line of policy pursued by Soviet Russia since its existence we find that this was the actual policy of Lenin put into effect. He was never satisfied with

general principles alone. He carried out his ideas in all details.

Lenin took part in the debate on the national question which took place in December of 1922. He wrote:

"I have already mentioned in my writings on the national question that there is no use in considering this problem abstractly. It is necessary to distinguish between the nationalism of a people which oppresses, and the nationalism of a people which is itself oppressed, that is, between the nationalism of big nations and the nationalism of small nations. We, as representatives of a big nation, are almost always guilty of endless wrongs against the small nations. And furthermore, unconsciously for ourselves, we perpetrate outrages and give offense. The internationalism of the so-called big nations, of one who is oppressing others, must consist not only in formally accepting the principle of equality of nations, but also in creating conditions for the abolition of the wrong doings of the great nation. He who does not understand this will not be able to assume a correct proletarian position on this question. He will assume substantially the point of view of the petty bourgeoisie, being liable at any moment to follow the lead of the bourgeoisie. What is it that is of importance to the proletariat? It is not only important but absolutely essential that the proletariat possess great confidence in itself. How can this be secured? To establish the principle of formal equality will not suffice. Only through our deeds, through the actual concessions that we make to other nationalities, which will wipe out their memories of former oppression by the old ruling classes, can we establish the necessary self-confidence. I believe that a Bolshevik or a Communist needs no further explanations. A true proletarian policy would demand of us in this sphere of activity, to be particularly careful and conciliatory, and in this given instance it would be much better to yield too much than too little to the national minorities. The interests of proletarian solidarity, and consequently of the proletarian class struggle, demand that we consider the national question not merely in a formal way. We must take into consideration the difference of conception and ideas between the great nation and the small nation. Nothing is so detrimental to the development and consolidation of proletarian solidarity as a sense of national injustice. Nothing calls forth such bitter reactions from the national minorities as the sense of being oppressed by our own proletarian comrades."

This quotation shows the whole genius and simplicity of Lenin's deep understanding of the psychology of the oppressed peoples. Now, has Lenin's national policy brought any positive results? If there is any doubt on that score it can be obliterated by merely inquiring of the oppressed peoples of the East. The oppressed peoples of the entire East have a very correct understanding of the deeply international and revolutionary proletarian character of Lenin's national

policy.

The Gift of Orientation.

Lenin possessed the exceptional ability of orientation and Marxian foresightedness. As a realist in class politics he quickly perceived the nature of bourgeois democracy. But it was in this field that great efforts had to be made to free oneself from historic traditions. For was not Lenin the founder of the Social Democracy which had inscribed on its banner that the way to socialism lies through democracy? Yet in spite of all this he was successful in destroying all fetishes of democracy. He succeeded in this because of the revolution which in its development had to overcome these democratic obstacles. He did not shrink even from dissolving the Constituent Assembly, which had been a sacred thing in the minds of many generations of Russian intellectuals. Political democracy was never able to blind his eyes to the social and economic problems of the revolution. As against bourgeois democracy he placed the democracy of the proletariat.

International reformism saw in this act of Lenin's his heaviest sin, while in reality it was one of his greatest contributions to the proletarian class struggle. The civil war in Russia had exposed the fractions and parties, which had been fighting under the banner of democracy and the Constituent Assembly, as real counterrevolutionists. The last years of struggle in the West have proved very convincingly that the democratic cooperation between the Social Democracy and the bourgeoisie is nothing more than betrayal of the working class.

The Proletarian State and the Communist Party.

Lenin had a perfect conception of the nature of democracy and of the State. He restated the Marxian position regarding the nature of the State and its role in the class struggle. As against the bourgeois democratic State, he placed the Soviet State as the concrete form of the proletarian dictatorship. And he also defined the position of the Soviet State in the development of the social revolution. Every State, including the Soviet State, is the weapon of a definite class. The State as such is an organ of oppression of one

class by the other. In this definition is contained the idea of the transitory nature of the State from a historic point of view. By the abolition of classes and the class struggle, the State will disappear, but as a result of many years of historical development and not as a result of one single act, as in the conception of the Anarchists. To bring about the situation where there are no classes in society, is possible only by means of a firm dictatorship of the working class, because it is only by means of such a dictatorship that we can break the resistance of the classes that are opposed to the proletariat. Lenin also knew that the establishment of the proletarian power is impossible without a violent revolution, and that the maintenance of this proletarian power would be impossible without a merciless suppression of the exploiting classes.

But the State is not an abstract category. The proletariat creates the State in a form which is most advantageous to itself. Such a form is the Soviet System of State, for it best unites the workers for management of the economic and political affairs of the country. Consequently the Soviet system is the best form of the proletarian dictatorship, and the Soviets are the best adapted fighting organs of the working class.

How does the working class realize its dictatorship? Naturally, through the Soviets. And how do the Soviets realize their dictatorship? Through special organs created by themselves. The opponents of Communism criticized Lenin for the fact that he placed the sign of equation between the dictatorship of the class and the dictatorship of the Party. They said: "The dictatorship of the class is one thing, while the dictatorship of the Party is an entirely different proposition." To this Lenin replied: "The working class must realize its dictatorship through its vanguard, and since the Communist Party of Russia is the vanguard of the working class it is quite natural that this Party exercises the power of the proletarian rule." This theory Lenin had put into effect.

And it is not an abstract theory, but a living reality. In the gigantic workshop called Soviet Russia were forged the new historic forms of working class power, and new methods of struggle for its liberation. Lenin always went ahead, clearing the path, casting aside all prejudices and throwing a mighty searchlight of Marxism upon the complex problems of the social and economic struggles.

Power of Concentration.

As a foremost strategist Lenin understood how to direct the attention of the masses to itself, how to concentrate the fighting energies of the masses, directing them to some central point. He knew the secret of formulating slogans in a simple and universally understood manner. He also knew as nobody else did how to organize the masses lead them into struggle, always in accordance with the fundamental principle of strategy which is, that the offensive is the best defensive. Lenin never permitted the initiative to slip out of his hands. He knew that the moment the enemy seizes the initiative our battle is lost. He was always striving towards determining results, even if they were small. He pursued our class enemies to the point of their complete destruction. He knew neither sentimentalism nor vacillation, which was the result, not of his "bloodthirstiness" as our class enemies would have us believe, but of his deep understanding of the mechanism of the social struggle.

When the class struggle reaches a sharpened stage, indecision is much more costly to the working class than the utmost relentlessness towards the enemy. In moments of decision the least failure to adopt energetic measures results in the working class paying with thousands of lives. Such indecision enables the enemy to collect its forces and to assume the offensive. In the whole of Lenin's activities the following passes like a red thread: Initiative, determination, ruthlessness, the pursuit of the enemy until he is destroyed, quick action and the concentration of the proletarian forces at the weakest spot of the enemy's front.

At the same time Lenin understood how to diagnose the weak spots in the armor of his own class. He would fight and exclude from the midst of the proletariat many elements and whole social groups that were steering against the course of the proletarian movement. He had a very fine sense of perception for all the quiet processes that are going on within the masses, he sensed very quickly all the subterranean forces within the proletariat, and he always understood how to differentiate between the sound and unsound tendencies within the working class. We must not forget that the working class finds itself within the capitalist order of society, and that as a result of this, capitalism is exerting a great influence over the proletarian

masses. Reformism, for instance, is the ideology of the bourgeoisie transplanted on working class soil. Lenin was in possession of an iron will to fight. He never permitted himself to be intimidated by defeats. He always entrenched himself in the positions to which the working class would be compelled to retreat and from there again assume the offensive.

An Organizer of Masses.

Lenin was not only a foremost Marxian, a statesman and strategist of extraordinary foresightedness, he was also one of the greatest organizers and leaders of the masses. He knew how to unite around himself large masses of human beings, to draw them into a mass movement, and to lead them into struggles. He always stood at the central point of the class struggle. He was charged with energy, with faith, with absolute conviction, transmitting all this not only to those who stood close to him but also to hundreds of thousands and to millions. The international reformists speak of Lenin as the destroyer of socialism, a sectarian, an intolerant spirit, and so forth. Yes, we will admit that Lenin was the destroyer of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. He couldn't tolerate reformism. He was a sectarian because he refused to deal with the betrayers of the labor movement.

The work of Lenin's life speaks for itself. This "spirit of destruction" stood at the head of a mighty country. This "sectarian" has been the founder and leader of the greatest political party in the world. This "spirit of intolerance" left after him more love and loyalty than anyone else in the course of thousands of years. Lenin's organizing abilities have found their expression in 30 years of work, beginning with the creation of illegal political groups up to the point when he assumed the leadership of Soviet Russia. For him there was no struggle possible, no victory possible, without organization. Organization work was part and parcel of his life's activities. He had built his organization from the bottom up, he created a school of organization that is being followed by a generation which, from his theory and particularly from his action, will draw inspiration for years and years to come.

The Embodiment of the Proletarian Will to Power?

One of Lenin's most notable characteristics was his will power. He knew nothing but the revolution, and had been pursuing this end with all his energy. So-called public opinion had no influence over him. He never paid any attention to "what the other fellow will say." He always felt the pulsation of the working class, because he was so closely connected with it. He also knew how to swim against the current, how to overcome obstacles, whenever this was demanded by the revolution. Let us recollect how he passed to Russia through Germany at the beginning of the revolution without paying the least attention to the insinuations of the capitalist and reformist press the world over. He possessed the ability to concentrate his will power and to strike the enemy at the weakest spot. While he was very patient with his friends he never knew or showed any tolerance to the betrayers of the working class. When a friend of yesterday would become the enemy of today Lenin would pursue the same tactics of uncompromising hostility. His tactics were always elastic, which enabled him to utilize even the slightest mistake of his opponent in order to drive a wedge into the ranks of the enemy. He never shunned responsibility, especially in decisive moments of struggle. He always knew what he wanted. The most characteristic feature of the political and moral physiognomy of Lenin, this gigantic concentration of the will of the proletariat, were his extraordinary will power and his all-inclusive spirit.

Formal Logic versus Revolutionary Tactics.

If one were to approach the estimation of Lenin's activities from the point of view of formal logic, one would find quite a number of contradictions. On the one hand, if one analyzes his activity from the point of view of the objective conditions with which Lenin was dealing, and also considers dialectically the developments themselves, then all contradictions will disappear. *He pursued the tactics of quick changes in orientation.* His agrarian program between 1901 and 1903 had been based upon the principle of the division of land among the peasants, and in October of 1917 he carried through the socialization of land.

Like all Social-Democrats Lenin started out as one favoring the defense of the fatherland. However, when the last war broke out, he immediately adopted the attitude of uncompromising hostility to the theory and practice of national defense. He declared that not even the defeat of Russia would matter for the working class. At that time the Marxian literature had just begun to discuss the problem of national and imperialist war. Lenin began devoting his attention to this problem and came to the conclusion that it is our duty to transform the imperialist war into a civil war.

From the Provisional Government of Russia he demanded the immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and after the October Revolution he dispersed this very same Assembly. In the beginning Lenin was in favor of military Communism, but in 1921 he introduced the New Economic Policy. Following the socialization of the land in 1917, he favored in 1918 the formation of special committees composed of the poorest peasants, in order to split the peasantry thereby deciding the fate of the civil war in the villages. Starting out as an adherent of the idea of revolutionary war, he yet rejected this idea in 1918, and signed the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty. And in 1920, he again favored the revolutionary war, this time against Poland. A deadly enemy of reformism, opposed to all dealings with the reformists, yet when conditions changed he declared in favor of the united front as a means of combating reformism although it involved dealing with the reformists. Although he favored a direct struggle against all parties of the Second International, yet at a certain stage in the development of the class struggle in England he favored the idea of supporting the British Labor Party and its coming into power. We could relate many more illustrations of the same kind.

In view of all this, would not the activity of Lenin appear to be full of contradictions? Closet philosophers, adherents of the so-called rationalistic and logical formulae, could never adjust themselves to the "illogical" thinking of Lenin. But this proves only that these people have forgotten the whole Hegelian rule that the truth is concrete. Lenin's quick changes of orientation were not caused by abstract reasons, but by changes of realities. He was no conserver of dead formulae and lifeless slogans. Lenin's mobility in politics and tactics was always in accord with the daily

changes in the mutual relation of forces between classes.

If we were to collect all that has been written on Lenin by his opponents, we should get one great historical rebus. According to some of his opponents,

Lenin was a typical conspirator, a Blanquist, a Jacobin. According to others, Lenin was one of the greatest opportunists, a careerist, one who was determined upon getting into power, irrespective of the price. All these descriptions are meaningless because they are based upon single instances of Lenin's activities, torn out from their connections with the whole, qualified according to the personal sentiments of one or the other of his enemies, and stamped accordingly.

Lenin was a dialectician in politics. That is, he knew how to attack, when necessary to retreat, always according to plan, to change directions, and when the situation became favorable again, to reassume the offensive, never for a second losing sight of his final aims. During the thirty years of his activities Lenin showed how changes of orientation could be effected without the Party or the class whom he represented breaking their necks, but on the contrary strengthening their fighting ability and organization. From this point of view his entire political work has been a classical example of revolutionary class strategy.

War and Revolution.

From the very beginning Lenin had a clear conception of the international nature of the class struggle. Long before the war he already felt himself a stranger at the international socialist parades where the phrase reigned supreme and where no action was to be seen. As a result of his appearance at international congresses (Stuttgart, Copenhagen) there was formed a small and loosely-allied left wing. This "Russian sectarian" was treated condescendingly by the leaders of European reformism. Some of them looked upon Lenin's activities as a sort of sectarian madness, others considered it a result of the mystical traits of his Slavic character. Very few realized the significance of this coming leader of the international working class movement. Only a few radical Germans, Polish Social Democrats, and several comrades of other countries, stood in close political relations towards Bolshevism. Clara Zetkin relates the following story: At the congress in Stuttgart, held in 1907, Rosa Luxemburg, while pointing

out to her the place occupied by Lenin, said: “See that man? Just watch the characteristics of his head. He looks as if he were ready to crush the whole world, that he would rather break his head than surrender.”

Lenin knew the international working class movement well for many years. But the international labor movement began to know Lenin only after the October Revolution. And here we approach one of the most interesting questions connected with the theory and practice of the labor movement. How many people are familiar with the giant of scientific socialism whose name was Marx? A few hundreds of thousands. On the other hand, how many have heard of Lenin? Hundreds of millions. How is this to be explained? Marx forged the *weapon of criticism* for the struggle against the capitalist system, while Lenin employed this *criticism as a weapon* to strike the enemy over the head. The oppressed millions have gotten a very clear conception of the significance of what Lenin was doing, while the materialistic conception of history, the theory of the socialization of production, could be understood by a limited number of people. But the expropriation of land, factories, and banks, the abolition of exploitation, the annulment of debts — such propaganda by action appealed to and was understood by the widest sections of the working class.

One of the French bourgeois papers wrote after Lenin’s death: “His thoughts were grey and theologically monotonous.”

For the bourgeois world the ideas of Lenin were really grey. But how did the international working class movement respond to his ideas? Millions of people understood his thoughts because they were simple and within the grasp of the masses. They were in harmony with the class instincts of these masses, if not always with their conscious understanding. But the true greatness of Lenin’s “grey ideas” could be seen only after these ideas had been transformed into “red actions.”

When at the end of 1914 Lenin spoke of the necessity of putting up the civil war against the imperialist war, not even the left wing could follow the trend of his thoughts. He therefore organized at Zimmerwald a left wing which assumed definite form only at Kienthal. But even after the conference at Kienthal one of its participants, the French delegate Brisson, spoke of Lenin as of a queer sort of fellow who had been making publicly very childish propositions.

From the very beginning Lenin had a very clear idea as to what results the imperialist war would bring to humanity, and that the capitalist world would under no circumstances be able to avoid civil war. This explains his radical slogans. But the international labor movement had been developing very slowly. It had to have a few more years of war before the masses would come back to their senses. And this had been Lenin’s task, to awaken the masses to revolutionary action although he was very little known to the wide proletarian masses.

After the February Revolution the patriotic henchmen of all countries started a campaign of vilification against Lenin as an agent of the German General Staff. This story found wide circulation also among social-democratic circles. Only after the October Revolution did the masses come to learn the part played by Lenin at Zimmerwald and Kienthal where he demanded that the working class be aroused against the imperialist war. Only after he assumed the leadership of the greatest revolution in the history of the world did the masses come to know who Lenin really was. And since then the international labor movement has been divided into two groups as far as Lenin was concerned, enthusiastic friends and deadly enemies.

Every day of the existence of Soviet Russia, every attack against Russia by its enemies, have contributed towards the increase of Lenin’s popularity among the masses, thereby raising the importance of those organizations (the Communist International and the Red International of Labor Unions) whose fate was bound up with that of Soviet Russia.

Lenin’s death deeply impressed the working masses of the entire world. Most of the leaders of the international revolutionary movement have realized that Lenin has been the trailblazer for the Communist Parties of every country in the world. At present the theoretical and practical features of Bolshevism which were created by Lenin have become factors of world importance. Since Bolshevism has thrown off the chains of Tsarist rule, it has become the object of universal attention and of the hatred of the imperialist bourgeoisie the world over. Bolshevism at present stands against imperialism and reaction as a real power. In the constant development of our movement, in the constant growth of the Communist ideas and Communist Parties, in the extended influence of the Com-

munist International and the Red International of Labor Unions, in the internationalization of our methods of struggle and in the elasticity of our revolutionary tactics, in the growing international unity between the various sections of the revolutionary proletariat — in all this we can see the firm hand and the great genius of Lenin. He stands out in the history of the international labor movement as one of its foremost and greatest leaders.

The Father of the Communist International.

Lenin was the creator and the driving force of the Third Communist International, which he began building during the very first days of the world war. The moment the Parties of the Second International began openly to support their Governments, Lenin issued the following slogan: “*The Second International is dead; long live the Third International.*” He was one of the organizers of the conference of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, where he formulated the basis for the left wing. During the years of war he ruthlessly opposed and attacked every shade of opportunism, particularly the meaningless pacifist abortion of Kautsky. But it was only after the October Revolution that conditions became ripe for the Third International, conditions which laid the national, territorial, social, and political foundations for the International of action. The Russian experiences served the Communist International as the guiding line of its policies.

However, Lenin did not reject in an offhand manner *everything* that was created by the Second International. He understood how to differentiate between what was valuable and what was not. In his article entitled “The Third International and Its Place in History” he said the following:

“The First International laid the foundation for the international proletarian struggle for socialism. The Second International constitutes the epoch in which the ground has been prepared in a number of countries for a mass movement. The Third International utilizes the results of the activities of the Second International, breaks with the opportunistic, social-chauvinistic, and petty-bourgeois tendencies, and begins to realize the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

In the same article Lenin explains what he con-

sidered the foundation of the Third International:

“The historic world significance of the Communist International consists in this, that it begins to put into effect the things which Marx has proven theoretically to be a necessity, thereby realizing the consequences produced by the socialist and labor movement, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Lenin gave the Communist International not only its ideological direction by formulating many of the theses adopted by the Comintern, which have drawn the attention of the Communist Parties to the importance of the agrarian and colonial questions, to the mutual relations between the dictatorship and capitalist democracy, but he also participated directly and actively in the solution of all problems confronted by the Communist International. Between Congresses he always occupied himself very intensively with the problems of the Communist Parties all over the world. And when, in the beginning of 1920, he noticed the appearance of a sort of utopian Communism, he began struggling against it in his famous booklet, *The Infantile Sickness of Communism*, thereby dealing a death-blow to this tendency.

After the formation of the Communist International, Lenin’s main worry was to close the gates to the opportunist elements. The famous 21 Points, which attracted so much attention, not only of the reformist press but also of the capitalist press, belong to Lenin. Lenin looked upon the Communist International not as a meeting place of all kinds of independent national parties, but as an absolutely homogeneous international fighting organization. However, he always had regard for the situations of the various countries, and never presented exaggerated demands to the newly-formed Communist organizations, for he knew only too well how much effort it would require to educate politically and organizationally and to put on the right track all those new Communist Parties which had just emerged from the ranks of the Social Democracy. He considered it the best means to pursue a clear revolutionary policy and, in this sense, he developed his activities in the Communist International. Lenin was, for the Third International, what Marx was for the First. The revolutionary workers of all countries have still a lot to learn from Lenin’s works, particularly from his actions, because Leninism and Communism are

one and the same thing.

Lenin and the Trade Unions.

The trade union movement also is very much indebted to Lenin. First of all because he has determined the correct place to be occupied by the trade unions in the class struggle. He fought very bitterly all those in the trade unions of Europe that favored the existence of the trade unions as perfectly independent organizations from the political party of the proletariat. He proved in a number of cases that, this idea of the independence of the unions from the political movement of the proletariat in reality means independence from revolutionary class politics, that the anarchists and reformists by preaching the idea of the independence of the trade unions are merely serving the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Lenin looked upon the trade unions as the elementary units of working class organization, "as the place where the masses are trained in organization, in collective management, and in Communism." He was at one and the same time opposed to overestimating as well as underestimating the importance of trade unions. He always insisted upon the necessity of taking part in these mass organizations, irrespective of the nature of their leadership. In his book *The Infantile Sicknesses of Communism*, in the chapter entitled, "Shall Revolutionaries Participate in Reactionary Trade Unions?" he criticizes very energetically those Communist elements which at the first onslaught of the reactionary bureaucracy become pessimistic and throw out the slogan of: "Out of the Trade Unions, an immediate split." Such tactics he designates as: "Unpardonable stupidity which is equivalent to offering the greatest service to the bourgeoisie." He says: "We must work wherever the masses are, criticize mercilessly the labor aristocracy which is dominated by reformism, narrow craft egotism, and the ideas of bourgeois imperialism." Lenin would emphasize time and again that without the trade unions the Soviet Government could not have maintained itself in power for more than two weeks. The trade unions are the connecting link between the masses and the proletarian vanguard. It is only by our daily activities that we can convince the masses that it is only we who are capable of leading them from capitalism to Commu-

nism.

The development of the revolutionary trade union movement followed that of the Communist movement. The Russian trade union movement was to the Red International of Labor Unions of the same importance as the Communist Party of Russia was to the Communist International. The Russian trade union movement had begun developing with particular intensity after the October Revolution under the ideological and political leadership of Lenin.

Lenin followed the development of the trade union movement with the same interest with which he followed that of the Communist movement. He would always explain that the Amsterdam International is the main support of the international bourgeoisie, and because of this was he so much interested in the Red International of Labor Unions, as can be seen from his communication to the First Congress of the RILU (July 1921) where Lenin said:

"It is hard to express in words the importance of this international trade union congress. Everywhere in the whole world the Communist ideas find ever more followers among the membership of the trade unions. The progress of Communism does not follow a straight line. It is not regular, it has got to overcome thousands of obstacles, but it moves forward just the same. This international trade union congress will hasten the progress of Communism, which will be victorious in the trade union movement. There is no power on earth that is able to prevent the collapse of capitalism and the victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie."

From this it can be seen what importance Lenin attached to the international unification of the revolutionary trade union movement for the struggles of the working class.

A Child of His People and Century.

Lenin the child of his people, and of his century. When called a Jacobin he would answer: "We, the Bolsheviks, are the Jacobins of the Twentieth Century, that is, the Jacobins of the proletarian revolution." Lenin was, as we have seen, the very embodiment of the idea of internationalism, and at the same time he was part and parcel of the mighty revolutionary movement that the oppressed masses of Russia have been carrying on for years and years. He was really one link in a long chain of struggles for the emancipation of

the Russian proletariat and the Russian peasantry. From Radichev, through Belinsky, Dobroliubov, Bakunin, Chernishevsky, Nechaev, and Yeliabov, through the party “The Will of the People” and through the group of “Emancipation of Labor,” and through many unknown representatives of the workers and peasants, which have been populating the prisons of the Tsar and of Siberia, there runs the thread of struggle which unites Lenin with the Russian revolutionary movement. He was a man of an all-inclusive spirit; the press of our opponents would speak with irony about the utopian plans of Bolshevism. But in this irony there is to be found a profound truth. Lenin has been operating with whole continents. He was basing his policies upon the experiences of millions.

Only the limitless and vast extent of Russia could give birth to such a spirit. This youth, born to a family of state functionaries and adopted by the proletariat, embodied and gave expression to the hatred of the working class of Russia accumulated through centuries. He also reflected in himself the hatred of the peasantry against its oppressors that accumulated through

centuries. He had a deep sense for the sufferings of the toiling masses, even when the masses could not give expression to those sufferings in words.

Lenin cannot be considered apart from the Russian workers and peasants and from the Russian history. Only within the social structure of Russia, the revolutionary struggles of whole generations, only by considering the achievements of the Russian revolutionary movement since the 18th century and up to the last day, can we locate the prime factors that have brought about the appearance of Bolshevism in Russia at the crossroads of two centuries. Only by taking all this into consideration can we properly estimate the moral, political, national, and international physiognomy of Lenin. For us, his contemporaries, who have been living within the circle of his influence, one thing is clear. Lenin was one of those men by whom humanity marks its historical path, concerning whom legends are being told in his lifetime, and the farther we go from the date of his death the clearer will stand before us Lenin’s greatness and immortality.

Transcribed by Brian Read.

Minor additional editing for form by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.