

# **Russian Revolution: When workers took power**

Paul Vernadsky

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# Introduction

## Aims

The specific aims of this course are:

- To understand the revolution year of 1917
- To explain the central ideas of the Russian revolutionaries
- To understand the consequences of 1917 for working class politics
- To enable you to make propaganda for basic socialist ideas
- To discuss the lessons the AWL draws from the Russian revolution

## What you need

To do this course you will need:

- A copy of the book, *Russian revolution: When workers' took power*. This will help you understand of the tradition represented by the AWL.
- A copy of these notes
- A way of making notes

## Course structure

This course is 10 sessions long. Each session will probably be at least an hour long, but you may want to take more time. The course is designed to be flexible, so you could combine some sessions, or add in extra sessions on some topics. It is okay to go off on a tangent and study some things in more depth or study things not in this course, but you should aim to cover all 10 sessions so you get a comprehensive introductory knowledge of our ideas.

Each session has some core reading. There is further reading suggested at the back of the book. This is by no means an exhaustive list and a comrade may be able to suggest other further reading.

Each session has some suggested activities to do, you do not have to do any or all of these activities. Each session also has some possible questions to think through and discuss.

Educators' notes are included at the back of this study guide with suggestions on how to run the course.

# **Session 1. Introduction: great days**

## **Reading:**

Chapter 1. Introduction: great days

Chapter 11: Why is the Russian revolution relevant today?

## **Key ideas:**

- Capitalism
- Working class
- Socialism
- Liberation
- Consistent democracy
- Revolutionary party
- Third camp

## **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make a list of the reasons why capitalism should be overthrown.
- ⇒ Write a speech explain why socialism is necessary.
- ⇒ Hold a debate on whether the working class is still central to the modern world.

## **Questions to consider:**

1. Why are we celebrating the centenary of the Russian revolution?
2. What do working class socialists mean by 'revolution'?
3. Why is revolution necessary for working class self-emancipation?
4. What competing interpretation of the Russian revolution do we clash with?
5. What is different about the third camp approach to the revolution?
6. Discuss the main events of 1917, based on what you know/don't know much about.
7. Why is the Russian revolution relevant today?

## **Session 2. The story of 1917**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 2. The story of 1917  
Timeline

### **Key ideas:**

- Tsarism
- Kadets
- Socialist Revolutionaries
- Mensheviks
- Bolsheviks
- Dual power
- Soviet
- Red Guards

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Draw a timeline of the top ten events of 1917.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs Lenin vs Zinoviev/Kamenev October 1917.
- ⇒ Hold a debate in the soviet, 25-26 October 1917.
- ⇒ Write a speech explaining why the Bolsheviks were right to seize power in October 1917.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Was the February revolution spontaneous?
2. What was dual power after the February revolution?
3. How did the Bolsheviks reorientate in April 1917?
4. Why did the Bolsheviks take responsibility for the July days?
5. What was the significance of the Kornilov revolt?
6. Was the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 a coup?
7. Why was the October revolution a socialist revolution?
8. What did the Bolshevik government do in its first months in power?
9. Was Lenin's role irreplaceable in 1917?

## **Session 3. The party of victory**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 3. The party of victory

### **Key ideas:**

- Three fronts of the class struggle
- Social democracy
- Propaganda
- Agitation
- Bolsheviks
- Mensheviks
- Economism
- Democratic centralism
- Recallism (otzovism)
- Liquidationism
- Conciliationism
- Duma

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make a list of all the tendencies within in the RSDLP.
- ⇒ Draw a concept map of Lenin's relations with other tendencies in the Russian Marxist movement.
- ⇒ Hold a debate between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks after the 1903 RSDLP Congress.
- ⇒ Writes speeches for Lenin, the liquidators, the recallists and conciliators in 1911.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. How was the RSDLP built?
2. What did the Bolsheviks learn from the German SPD?
3. How did the Emancipation of Labour group spread socialist ideas in Russia?
4. How did Lenin critique Economist ideas?
5. What was wrong with the Mensheviks?
6. Why did Lenin oppose liquidationism?
7. What is a revolutionary paper for?
8. How did the Bolsheviks fight elections?
9. How did the Bolsheviks relate to workplace struggles?

# **Session 4. Soviets, workers' democracy and workers' control**

## **Reading:**

Chapter 4. Soviets, workers' democracy and workers' control

## **Key ideas:**

- Soviets
- Factory committees
- Trade unions
- Strikes
- Workers' control

## **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ List the strengths and weaknesses of different forms of workers' self-organisation.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs the case for/against dissolving the factory committees.
- ⇒ Hold a debate between the Bolsheviks and anarchists in early 1918.
- ⇒ Write a speech explain the difference between workers' control and self-management.

## **Questions to consider:**

1. What higher forms of democracy did Russian workers pioneer?
2. Why were the soviets so important in 1917?
3. What did the factory committees do in 1917?
4. How did trade union grow in 1917?
5. What was the pattern of strikes during 1917?
6. How important were strikes during the revolution?
7. What are the strengths and limitations of workers' control?
8. Why are these forms of workers' democracy still relevant today?

## **Session 5. Permanent revolution**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 5. Permanent revolution

### **Key ideas:**

- Permanent revolution
- Uneven and combined development
- Bourgeois revolution
- Socialist revolution
- Democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make list of the similarities and differences between the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and Trotsky about the character of the Russian revolution.
- ⇒ Hold a debate between the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and Trotsky in 1905. Repeat for 1917.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs whether Lenin's "democratic dictatorship" is coherent.
- ⇒ Write a speech explain the value and limits of permanent revolution in today's conditions.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. How did the Mensheviks conceive of the Russian revolution?
2. How did the Bolsheviks conceive of the Russian revolution?
3. What was unique about Trotsky's permanent revolution strategy?
4. How does uneven and combined development explain the Russian revolution?
5. Did the Bolsheviks accept Trotsky's permanent revolution in 1917?
6. How did Trotsky generalise permanent revolution?
7. Is permanent revolution still relevant in today's class struggle?

## **Session 6. War and the myth of defeatism**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 6. War and the myth of defeatism

### **Key ideas:**

- War
- Chauvinism
- Imperialism
- Uneven and combined development
- Defeatism
- Defencism

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make a list of the causes of the First World War?
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs the formulations of defeatism and decide if any of them make sense.
- ⇒ Hold a debate between Lenin and Trotsky in 1916 over defeatism.
- ⇒ Write a speech explaining how Marxists assess wars in the last century.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Why did most socialists support their own governments in the First World War?
2. How did international socialists organise to oppose the war?
3. What did Marxists mean by imperialism during the war?
4. How do Marxists explain the First World War?
5. What did Lenin mean by 'defeatism'?
6. How did Trotsky criticise Lenin's formulations of 'defeatism'?
7. Why did the Stalinists take up 'defeatism'?
8. How do Marxists decide our stance towards war?

## **Session 7. Consistent democracy - the national question**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 7. Consistent democracy - the national question

### **Key ideas:**

- Democracy
- Consistent democracy
- National question
- Right of nations to self-determination
- Cultural national autonomy
- Anti-semitism
- Zionism

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ List the ways in which national groups can be oppressed.
- ⇒ Hold a debate between Lenin, Luxemburg and Bauer in 1913.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs how Trotsky's views on the 'Jewish question' advanced over his lifetime.
- ⇒ Write a speech applying consistent democracy to a current national conflict.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Why is democracy essential for socialism?
2. What did Lenin mean by consistent democracy?
3. What does consistent democracy mean in the context of national oppression?
4. What is wrong with Rosa Luxemburg's view of the national question?
5. Why is 'cultural-national autonomy' incoherent?
6. How do Marxists understand anti-semitism?
7. How has the Marxist understanding of Jewish national identity changed?
8. How does consistent democracy help orientate us in today's struggles against national oppression?

## **Session 8. Women's liberation and the Russian revolution**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 8. Women's liberation and the Russian revolution

### **Key ideas:**

- Specific oppression
- Bolshevik feminism
- Women's liberation
- Equality
- Sexual relations
- Autonomy
- Women's movement

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make a list of the measures passed by the Bolshevik government that benefited women.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs whether the Bolsheviks supported women's autonomous organising.
- ⇒ Hold a debate on whether the Bolsheviks were socialist feminists.
- ⇒ Write a speech about how to revive the women's movement.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. What role did women play in the 1917 revolution?
2. How did the Russian revolution improve the lives of women?
3. How did Bolshevik women organise?
4. How did Aleksandra Kollontai develop the Marxist analysis of women's oppression?
5. What criticisms have been made of Bolshevik feminism?
6. Do Bolshevik ideas add anything to our current approach to women's liberation?

## **Session 9. The Communist International: school of strategy**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 9. The Communist International: school of strategy

### **Key ideas:**

- Assessment of the situation
- Revolutionary party
- Strategy
- Tactics
- Transitional demands
- United front
- Workers' government

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Make a list of key ideas developed by the Comintern.
- ⇒ Draw a concept map of Comintern lessons for other revolutionary parties.
- ⇒ Discuss in pairs the merits of the workers' government slogan.
- ⇒ Write a speech explaining strategy and tactics for the British labour movement.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Why did the Bolshevik help build the communist International?
2. How did the Bolsheviks assess the international situation after 1917?
3. What advice did the Bolsheviks give other communists about party building?
4. Why are strategy and tactics irreplaceable?
5. What do we mean by transitional demands?
6. Why did the Bolsheviks believe united fronts were so important?
7. Why is the workers' government slogan a bold tactical compromise?
8. How are Comintern ideas still relevant today?

## **Session 10. Stalin's counter-revolution**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 10. Stalin's counter-revolution

### **Key ideas:**

- Workers' democracy
- Ruling class
- Bureaucracy
- Degenerated workers state
- Left Opposition
- Stalinism

### **Possible activities:**

- ⇒ Draw a timeline of the decline of workers' rule in Russia.
- ⇒ Hold a mock debate between a Trotskyist and a Stalinist in 1927?
- ⇒ Brainstorm the crimes of Stalinism.
- ⇒ Write a speech denouncing Stalinism.

### **Questions to consider:**

1. Why is the question of Leninism leading to Stalinism so important?
2. In what ways did the workers' rule in 1917?
3. Why did the forms of workers' democracy breakdown?
4. Was the repression of the Kronstadt rebellion justified?
5. Why did the state bureaucracy arise in Russia after 1917?
6. Was the ban on factions in 1921 a mistake?
7. How did the state bureaucracy strangle the party?
8. Why is the struggle of the Left Opposition important?
9. When did Russia cease to be a workers' state?
10. Does Trotsky's analysis explain Stalinism?

# **Educator's notes: Session 1. Introduction**

## **Reading:**

Chapter 1. Introduction: great days

Chapter 11: Why is the Russian revolution relevant today?

## **Revolution:**

“The fundamental law of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions and especially by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: for a revolution to take place it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the “lower classes” do not want to live in the old way and the “upper classes” cannot carry on in the old way that the revolution can triumph. This truth can be expressed in other words: revolution is impossible without a nation-wide crisis (affecting both the exploited and the exploiters). It follows that, for a revolution to take place, it is essential, first, that a majority of the workers (or at least a majority of the class-conscious, thinking, and politically active workers) should fully realise that revolution is necessary, and that they should be prepared to die for it; second, that the ruling classes should be going through a governmental crisis, which draws even the most backward masses into politics (symptomatic of any genuine revolution is a rapid, tenfold and even hundredfold increase in the size of the working and oppressed masses—hitherto apathetic—who are capable of waging the political struggle), weakens the government, and makes it possible for the revolutionaries to rapidly overthrow it.”

Lenin, *Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder*, (LCW 31: 84-85).

## **Third camp:**

“Let us now sum up the facts brought to light during the pre-election mobilisation of political forces. Three camps stand out clearly: (1) The Rights – from Purishkevich to Guchkov – are pro-government. The Black-Hundred landlord and the conservative merchant are heart and soul for the government. (2) The liberal bourgeois – the ‘Progressists’ and the Cadets, along with groups of various non-Russians – are against the government and against the revolution... (3) The democratic camp, in which only the revolutionary social-democrats, the anti-liquidationists, united and organised, have firmly and clearly unfurled their own banner, the banner of revolution.”

Lenin, [25 April 1912] ‘The Fourth Duma Election Campaign and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Social-Democrats’, (LCW 18: 17-18).

“When, by the inner logic of the class struggle, our party, standing at the head of the proletariat, came to power, the third camp was brought to the test, the camp of the working class, which by its entire nature is alone capable of fulfilling the fundamental tasks of the revolution”.

Trotsky, [28 March 1918] ‘Work, Discipline, Order’, *Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky. Vol 1*, (1979: 28-30).

## **Educator's notes: Session 2. The story of 1917**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 2. The story of 1917  
Timeline

### **Bolshevik:**

"A Bolshevik is not merely a disciplined person; they are a person who in each case and on each question forges a firm opinion of their own and defends it courageously and independently, not only against their enemies, but inside their own party. Today, perhaps, they will be in the minority in their organisation. They will submit, because it is their party. But this does not always signify that they are in the wrong. Perhaps they saw or understood before the others did a new task or the necessity of a turn. They will persistently raise the question a second, a third, a tenth time, if need be. Thereby they will render their party a service, helping it to meet the new task fully armed or to carry out the necessary turn without organic upheavals, without fractional convulsions."

Trotsky, [8 December 1923] 'The New Course', *Challenge of the Left Opposition, 1923-25*, (1975: 127).

### **Dual power:**

Dual power "a distinct condition of social crisis, by no means peculiar to the Russian revolution of 1917, although there most clearly marked out... The two-power régime arises only out of irreconcilable class conflicts — is possible, therefore, only in a revolutionary epoch, and constitutes one of its fundamental elements... Either the bourgeoisie will actually dominate the old state apparatus, altering it a little for its purposes, in which case the soviets will come to nothing; or the soviets will form the foundation of a new state, liquidating not only the old governmental apparatus but also the dominion of those classes which it served."

Trotsky, [1931] *The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol.1*, (1980: 206, 214).

### **State:**

"The state, first, divides its subjects according to territory... —The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a public power which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the split into classes.... This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds."

Engels, [1884] *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, (MECW 26: 269-270).

"What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command... The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters..."

Lenin, [1917] *The State and Revolution*, (LCW 25: 389, 402-403).



## **Educator's notes: Session 3. The party of victory**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 3. The party of victory

### **Agitation:**

"The agitator conveys only one or a few ideas, but conveys them to a whole mass of people, sometimes to almost the entire population of a particular locality..."

Plekhanov, [1891] 'The Tasks of the Social Democrats in the Struggle against the Famine in Russia', (Harding 1983: 104).

"The agitator... will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to their audience... and, utilising this fact, known to all, will direct their efforts to presenting a single idea to the 'masses'... they will strive to rouse discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice."

Lenin, [1902] What is to be Done, (LCW 5: 409-10).

### **Conciliators:**

"Conciliationism is the totality of moods, strivings and views that are indissolubly bound up with the very essence of the historical task confronting the RSDLP during the period of the counter-revolution of 1908-11. That is why, during this period, a number of social-democrats, proceeding from essentially different premises, 'lapsed' into conciliationism... The root of the process of fusion of the factions is not the change in the relations between the classes, not the evolution of the fundamental ideas of the two principal factions, but the observance or otherwise of agreements concluded between all the 'intellectual' factions."

Lenin, [18 October 1911] 'The New Faction of Conciliators, or the Virtuous', (LCW 17: 258).

### **Democratic centralism:**

Democratic centralism was first put forward and adopted at the Mensheviks all-Russian conference on 20 November 1905. The Menshevik resolution 'On the Organisation of the Party' stated that "the RSDLP must be organised according to the principle of democratic centralism". At the Bolshevik conference on 12-17 December 1905, in the resolution, 'On Party Organisation' recognised "as indisputable the principle of democratic centralism". The RSDLP's fourth 'unity' congress of on 25 April 1906 agreed that "all party organisations are built on the principles of democratic centralism".

"The principle of democratic centralism and autonomy for local party organisations implies universal and full freedom to criticise, so long as this does not disturb the unity of a definite action; it rules out all criticism which disrupts or makes difficult the unity of an action decided on by the party."

Lenin, [20 May 1906] 'Freedom to Criticise and Unity of Action', (LCW 10: 443).

### **Economism:**

"Economism... is incomprehension, even *defence, of lagging*, i.e... the lagging of the conscious leaders behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses. The characteristic features of this trend express themselves in the following: with respect to principles, in a vulgarisation of Marxism and in helplessness in the

face of modern 'criticism', that up-to-date species of opportunism; with respect to politics, in the striving to restrict political agitation and political struggle or to reduce them to petty activities, in the failure to understand that unless social-democrats take the leadership of the general democratic movement in their own hands, they will never be able to overthrow the autocracy; with respect to tactics, in utter instability..."

Lenin, [6 December 1901] 'A Talk with Defenders of Economism', (LCW 5: 317).

**Liquidationism:**

“Liquidationism... consists ideologically in negation of the revolutionary class struggle of the socialist proletariat in general, and denial of the hegemony of the proletariat in our bourgeois-democratic revolution in particular... In respect of organisation, liquidationism means denying the necessity for an illegal social-democratic party, and consequently renouncing the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, leaving its ranks. It means fighting the party in the columns of the legal press, in legal workers’ organisations, in the trade unions and co-operative societies, at congresses attended by working-class delegates...”

Lenin, [11 July 1909] ‘The Liquidation of Liquidationism’, (LCW 15: 454).

**Otzovists:**

Otzovism (recallism) was the proposal by Bogdanov and his supporters for the social democratic deputies elected to the third Duma (1907-12) to boycott parliamentary work. Some proposed to issue an ultimatum as a pretext for withdrawal.

**Propaganda:**

“Propaganda conveys the correct views to dozens, hundreds, thousands of people. But people holding the correct views only become historical activists when they exert a direct influence on public life... the propagandist conveys many ideas to a single person or to a few people...”

Plekhanov, [1891] ‘The Tasks of the Social Democrats in the Struggle against the Famine in Russia’, (Harding 1983: 104).

“Hitherto we thought (with Plekhanov, and with all the leaders of the international working class movement) that the propagandist... must present ‘many ideas’, so many, indeed, that they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons.”

Lenin, [1902] *What is to be Done*, (LCW 5: 409-10).

## **Educator's notes: Session 4. Soviets, workers' democracy**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 4. Soviets, workers' democracy and workers' control

#### **Soviets:**

"Politically the soviet of workers' deputies [councils of elected delegates] should be regarded as the embryo of a provisional revolutionary government. I think the Soviet should proclaim itself the provisional revolutionary government of the whole of Russia as early as possible..."

Lenin, [2-4 November 1905] 'Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies: A Letter to the Editor'. (LCW 10: 21).

"The soviet of workers' deputies is not a labour parliament and not an organ of proletarian self-government, nor an organ of self-government at all, but a fighting organisation for the achievement of definite aims... For all practical purposes, the soviet of workers' deputies is an inchoate, broad fighting alliance of socialists and revolutionary democrats, the term 'non-party revolutionary', of course, representing a series of transitional stages between the former and the latter."

Lenin, [25 November 1905] 'Socialism and Anarchism', (LCW 10: 72).

#### **Workers' control:**

"In a developed form, workers' control thus implies a sort of economic dual power in the factory, the bank, commercial enterprise, and so forth.

"If the participation of the workers in the management of production is to be lasting, stable, "normal," it must rest upon class collaboration, and not upon class struggle. Such a class collaboration can be realised only through the upper strata of the trade unions and the capitalist associations. There have been not a few such experiments: in Germany ("economic democracy"), in Britain ("Mondism"), etc. Yet, in all these instances, it was not a case of workers' control over capital, but of the subserviency of the labour bureaucracy to capital. Such subserviency, as experience shows, can last for a long time: depending on the patience of the proletariat..."

"Workers' control consequently, can be carried out only under the condition of an abrupt change in the relationship of forces unfavourable to the bourgeoisie and its state. Control can be imposed only by force upon the bourgeoisie, by a proletariat on the road to the moment of taking power from them, and then also ownership of the means of production. Thus the regime of workers' control, a provisional transitional regime by its very essence, can correspond only to the period of the convulsing of the bourgeois state, the proletarian offensive, and the falling back of the bourgeoisie, that is, to the period of the proletarian revolution in the fullest sense of the word."

Trotsky, [20 August 1931] 'Workers' Control of Production', *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany*, (1971: 77-78).

# **Educator's notes: Session 5. Permanent revolution**

## **Reading:**

Chapter 5. Permanent revolution

### **Mensheviks on bourgeois revolution:**

"In the case of our party, however, its historical position is characterised by contrary tendencies, and its immediate task consists not in organising the proletariat to overthrow bourgeois rule, but in destroying root and branch a social and political order which prevents the bourgeoisie from attaining unfettered power. Social relations in Russia have not matured beyond the point of bourgeois revolution: history impels workers and revolutionaries more and more strongly towards bourgeois revolutionism..."

"We cannot, in absolutist Russia, ignore the objective historical requirement for 'political cooperation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the political crux of Russian social democracy consists precisely in the problem of organically and systematically uniting the cause of the proletariat with the claims of a broad democracy as they are determined by the social content of our revolution."

Pavel Axelrod, [April-May 1906] 'Speech at the Fourth Party Congress', Abraham Ascher, *The Mensheviks in the Russian Revolution*, (1976: 59-60).

### **Lenin on bourgeois revolution:**

"Marxists are absolutely convinced of the bourgeois character of the Russian revolution. What does this mean? It means that the democratic reforms in the political system and the social and economic reforms, which have become a necessity for Russia, do not in themselves imply the undermining of capitalism, the undermining of bourgeois rule; on the contrary, they will, for the first time, really clear the ground for a wide and rapid, European, and not Asiatic, development of capitalism; they will, for the first time, make it possible for the bourgeoisie to rule as a class.

"A bourgeois revolution is a revolution that does not depart from the framework of the bourgeois i.e. capitalist, socio-economic system." He added: "In countries like Russia, the working class suffers not so much from capitalism as from the insufficient development of capitalism. The working class is therefore decidedly interested in the broadest, freest and most rapid development of capitalism." Lenin, [June-July 1905] *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, (LCW 9: 48, 49-50).

### **Trotsky on permanent revolution:**

"Here we are confronted by questions of tactics: should we consciously work towards a working-class government in proportion as the development of the revolution brings this stage nearer, or must we at that moment regard political power as a misfortune which the bourgeois revolution is ready to thrust upon the workers, and which it would be better to avoid?

"In the event of a decisive victory of the revolution, power will pass into the hands of that class which plays a leading role in the struggle – in other words, into the hands of the proletariat. Let us say at once that this by no means precludes revolutionary representatives of non-proletarian social groups entering the government. They can and should be in the government: a sound policy will

compel the proletariat to call to power the influential leaders of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, of the intellectuals and of the peasantry. The whole problem consists in this: who will determine the content of the government's policy, who will form within it a solid majority?

"And when we speak of a workers' government, by this we reply that the hegemony should belong to the working class... When we speak of a workers' government we have in view a government in which the working-class representatives dominate and lead. The proletariat, in order to consolidate its power, cannot but widen the base of the revolution."

Trotsky, [1906], *Results and Prospects*, (1969: 67-70).

### **Uneven and combined development:**

"The fundamental and most stable feature of Russian history is the slow tempo of her development, with the economic backwardness, primitiveness of social forms and low level of culture resulting from it...

"Although compelled to follow after the advanced countries, a backward country does not take things in the same order. The privilege of historic backwardness – and such a privilege exists – permits, or rather compels, the adoption of whatever is ready in advance of any specified date, skipping a whole series of intermediate stages.

"The development of historically backward nations leads necessarily to a peculiar combination of different stages in the historic process. Their development as a whole acquires a planless, complex, combined character...

"The possibility of skipping over intermediate steps is of course by no means absolute. Its degree is determined in the long run by the economic and cultural capacities of the country. The backward nation, moreover, not infrequently debases the achievements borrowed from outside in the process of adapting them to its own more primitive culture. In this the very process of assimilation acquires a self-contradictory character. Thus the introduction of certain elements of Western technique and training, above all military and industrial, under Peter I, led to a strengthening of serfdom as the fundamental form of labour organisation. European armament and European loans – both indubitable products of a higher culture – led to a strengthening of tsarism, which delayed in its turn the development of the country.

"The laws of history have nothing in common with a pedantic schematism.

Unevenness, the most general law of the historic process, reveals itself most sharply and complexly in the destiny of the backward countries. Under the whip of external necessity their backward culture is compelled to make leaps. From the universal law of unevenness thus derives another law which, for the lack of a better name, we may call the law of *combined development* – by which we mean a drawing together of the different stages of the journey, a combining of the separate steps, an amalgam of archaic with more contemporary forms. Without this law, to be taken of course, in its whole material content, it is impossible to understand the history of Russia, and indeed of any country of the second, third or tenth cultural class."

Trotsky, [1931] *The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol.1*, (1980: 1-6).

## **Educator's notes: Session 6. War and defeatism**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 6. War and the myth of defeatism

#### **Clausewitz: 'war is the continuation of politics by other means':**

This famous aphorism ["war is the continuation of politics by other means"] was uttered by one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war, Clausewitz. Marxists have always rightly regarded this thesis as the theoretical basis of views concerning the significance of every given war...

Apply this view to the present war. You will see that for decades, for almost half a century, the governments and the ruling classes of England, and France, and Germany, and Italy, and Austria, and Russia, pursued a policy of, plundering colonies, of oppressing other nations, of suppressing the working-class movement. It is this, and only this policy that is being continued in the present war. In particular, the policy of both Austria and Russia peacetime as well as in war, is a policy of enslaving and not of liberating nations...

It is sufficient to glance at the present war from the viewpoint that it is a continuation of the politics of the great powers, and of the principal classes within them, to see at once the howling anti-historicalness, falsity and hypocrisy of the view that the "defence of the fatherland" idea can be justified in the present war."

Lenin, [July-August 1915] *Socialism and War*, (LCW 21: 304).

"The objective historical meaning of the war is of decisive importance for the proletariat: What class is conducting it and for the sake of what? This is decisive, and not the subterfuges of diplomacy by means of which the enemy can always be successfully portrayed to the people as an aggressor."

Trotsky, [30 December 1938] 'Lenin and Imperialist War', *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1938-39*, (1974: 166).

#### **Imperialism:**

"We have to begin with as precise and full a definition of imperialism as possible. Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is monopoly capitalism; parasitic, or decaying capitalism; moribund capitalism. The supplanting of free competition by monopoly is the fundamental economic feature, the quintessence of imperialism. Monopoly manifests itself in five principal forms: (1) cartels, syndicates and trusts—the concentration of production has reached a degree which gives rise to these monopolistic associations of capitalists; (2) the monopolistic position of the big banks—three, four or five giant banks manipulate the whole economic life of America, France, Germany; (3) seizure of the sources of raw material by the trusts and the financial oligarchy (finance capital is monopoly industrial capital merged with bank capital); (4) the (economic) partition of the world by the international cartels has begun. There are already over one hundred such international cartels, which command the entire world market and divide it "amicably" among themselves—until war redivides it. The export of capital, as distinct from the export of commodities under non-monopoly capitalism, is a highly characteristic phenomenon and is closely linked with the economic and

territorial-political partition of the world; (5) the territorial partition of the world (colonies) is completed.”  
Lenin, [October 1916] ‘Imperialism and the Split on Socialism’, (LCW 23: 105).

**Defeatism:**

By March 1915, Lenin had produced four formulas of “defeatism” in an attempt to deal with the insoluble contradictions of the term (though without solving them). These were:

No.1: The special Russian position: defeat of Russia by Germany is the “lesser evil”

No.2: The objective statement that “defeat facilitates revolution”

No.3: The slogan: wish defeat in every country

No.4: Do not halt before the risk of defeat.

Hal Draper, [1953-54] *War and Revolution: Lenin and the Myth of Revolutionary Defeatism* (1996: 64-65).

**Against defeatism:**

“Under no conditions can I agree with your opinion, which is emphasised by a resolution, that Russia’s defeat would be a ‘lesser evil’. This opinion represents a fundamental concession to the political methodology of social-patriotism, a concession for which there is no reason or justification, and which substitutes an orientation (extremely arbitrary under present conditions) along the lines of a ‘lesser evil’ for the revolutionary struggle against war and the conditions which generate this war.”

Trotsky, [June 1915] ‘Open Letter to the Editorial Board of *Kommunist*’, Olga Gankin and Harold Fisher, *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, (1940: 170).

# **Educator's notes: Session 7. the national question**

## **Reading:**

Chapter 7. Consistent democracy – the national question

### **Consistent democracy:**

“Just as socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy”.

Lenin, [February 1916] ‘The Socialist Revolution and the Rights of Nations to Self-Determination’, (LCW 22: 144).

“We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressor nation, and do not in any way condone strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation”.

Lenin, [February-May 1914] ‘The Right of Nations to Self-Determination’, (LCW 20: 411-412).

“1. Insofar as national peace is in any way possible in a capitalist society based on exploitation, profit-making and strife, it is attainable only under a consistently and thoroughly democratic republican system of government which guarantees full equality of all nations and languages, which recognises no compulsory official language, which provides the people with schools where instruction is given in all the native languages, and the constitution of which contains a fundamental law that prohibits any privileges whatsoever to any one nation and any encroachment whatsoever upon the rights of a national minority. This particularly calls for wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local self-government, with the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions determined by the local inhabitants themselves on the basis of their economic and social conditions, national make-up of the population, etc...”

4. As regards the right of the nations oppressed by the tsarist monarchy to self-determination, i.e., the right to secede and form independent states, the social-democratic party must unquestionably champion this right. This is dictated by the fundamental principles of international democracy in general, and specifically by the unprecedented national oppression of the majority of the inhabitants of Russia by the tsarist monarchy, which is a most reactionary and barbarous state compared with its neighbouring states in Europe and Asia.

5. The right of nations to self-determination (i.e., the constitutional guarantee of an absolutely free and democratic method of deciding the question of secession) must under no circumstances be confused with the expediency of a given nation's secession. The social-democratic party must decide the latter question exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of social development as a whole and with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.”

Lenin, [September 1913] ‘Resolutions of the Summer 1913, Joint Conference of the Central Committee of the RSDLP and Party Officials’, (LCW 19: 427-29).

“Lenin's position was the direct opposite. Regarding nationality as unseverably connected with territory, economy and class structure, he refused at the same time to regard the historical state, the borders of which cut across the living body of the nations, as a sacrosanct and inviolate category. He demanded

recognition of the right to secession and independent existence for each national portion of the state. In so far as the various nationalities, voluntarily or through force of necessity, coexist within the borders of one state, their cultural interests must find the highest possible satisfaction within the framework of the broadest regional (and consequently, territorial) autonomy, including statutory guarantees of the rights of each minority. At the same time, Lenin deemed it the incontrovertible duty of all the workers of a given state, irrespective of nationality, to unite in one and the same class organisations.”  
Trotsky, [1940], *Stalin*, (2016: 195-96).

**Anti-Semitism:**

“Before exhausting or drowning mankind in blood, capitalism befouls the world atmosphere with the poisonous vapours of national and race hatred. Anti-Semitism today is one of the most malignant convulsions of capitalism’s death agony.

“An uncompromising disclosure of the roots of race prejudice and all forms and shades of national arrogance and chauvinism, particularly anti-Semitism, should become part of the daily work of all sections of the Fourth International, as the most important part of the struggle against imperialism and war. Our basic slogan remains: Workers of the World Unite!”

Trotsky, [1938] ‘The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International’, *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, (1973: 93).

“Anti-Semitism, which Hitler has given a zoological form, discovering the true language of “race” and “blood” in the dog’s bark and the pig’s grunt.”

Trotsky, [May 1940], ‘Manifesto of the Fourth International on Imperialist War and the Imperialist War’, in *Writings 1939-40*, (1973: 193).

**Jewish nation:**

I do not know whether Jewry will be built up again as a nation. However, there can be no doubt that the material conditions for the existence of Jewry as an independent nation could be brought about only by the proletarian revolution. There is no such a thing on our planet as the idea that one has more claim to land than another.”

Trotsky, [February 1934] ‘On the “Jewish Problem”’, *On the Jewish Question*, (1970: 18).

**Zionism:**

“On the other hand the Jews of different countries have created their press and developed the Yiddish language as an instrument adapted to modern-culture. One must therefore reckon with the fact that the Jewish nation will maintain itself for an entire epoch to come. Now the nation cannot normally exist without a common territory. Zionism springs from this very idea. But the facts of every passing day demonstrate to us that Zionism is incapable of resolving the Jewish question. The conflict between the Jews and Arabs in Palestine acquires a more and more tragic and more and more menacing character. I do not at all believe that the Jewish question can be resolved within the framework of rotting capitalism and under the control of British imperialism.”

Trotsky, [18 January 1937] ‘Interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency’, *On the Jewish Question*, (1970: 20).

“The very same methods of solving the Jewish question which under decaying capitalism will have a utopian and reactionary character (Zionism) will, under the regime of a socialist federation take on real and salutary meaning. This is what I want to point out. How could any Marxist or even any consistent democrat object to this?”

Trotsky, [22 February 1937] ‘Thermidor and Anti-Semitism’, *On the Jewish Question*, (1970: 28).

## **Educator's notes: Session 8. Women's liberation**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 8. Women's liberation and the Russian revolution

### **Oppression:**

"To become really free woman has to throw off the heavy chains of the current forms of the family, which are outmoded and oppressive. For women, the solution of the family question is no less important than the achievement of political equality and economic independence."

Kollontai, [1909] 'The Social Basis of the Woman Question', *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, (1977: 64).

"The woman who is wife, mother, and worker has to expend every ounce of energy to fulfil those roles. She has to work the same hours as her husband in some factory, printing-house, or commercial establishment, and then on top of that she has to find the time to attend to her household and look after her children".

Kollontai, [1920] 'Communism and the Family', *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, (1977: 252);

### **Sexual relations:**

"The sexual act must be seen not as something shameful and sinful but as something which is as natural as the other needs of healthy organism, such as hunger and thirst. Such phenomena cannot be judged as moral or immoral".

Kollontai, [1921] 'Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations', *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, (1977: 229).

"History has never seen such a variety of personal relationships - indissoluble marriage with its 'stable family', 'free unions', secret adultery; a girl living quite openly with her lover in so-called 'wild marriage'; pair marriage, marriage in threes and even the complicated marriage of four people - not to talk of the various forms of commercial prostitution".

Kollontai, [1921] 'Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle', *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, (1977: 241).

### **Liberation:**

"Under communism everyone will be able to eat in the communal kitchens and dining-rooms. The working woman will not have to slave over the washtub any longer, or ruin her eyes in darning her stockings and mending her linen; she will simply take these things to the central laundries each week and collect the washed and ironed garments later. That will be another job less to do. Special clothes-mending centres will free the working woman from the hours spent on mending and give her the opportunity to devote her evenings to reading, attending meetings and concerts. Thus the four categories of housework are doomed to extinction with the victory of communism. And the working woman will surely have no cause to regret this. Communism liberates women from her domestic slavery and makes her life richer and happier...

"Just as housework withers away, so the obligations of parents to their children wither away gradually until finally society assumes the full responsibility."

Kollontai, [1920] 'Communism and the Family', *Selected Writings of Alexandra Kollontai*, (1977: 255-56).

## **Educator's notes: Session 9. The Comintern**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 9. The Communist International: school of strategy

### **Strategy:**

"By tactics in politics we understand, using the analogy of military science, the art of conducting isolated operations. By strategy, we understand the art of conquest, i.e., the seizure of power. Prior to the war we did not, as a rule, make this distinction... The great epoch of revolutionary strategy began in 1917, first for Russia and afterwards for the rest of Europe. Strategy, of course, does not do away with tactics. The questions of the trade union movement, of parliamentary activity, and so on, do not disappear, but they now become invested with a new meaning as subordinate methods of a combined struggle for power. Tactics are subordinated to strategy."

Trotsky, [15 September 1924] 'The Lessons of October', *Challenge of the Left Opposition*, (1975: 204).

"By the conception of tactics is understood the system of measures that serves a single current task or a single branch of the class struggle. Revolutionary strategy on the contrary embraces a combined system of actions which by their association, consistency, and growth must lead the proletariat to the conquest of power."

Trotsky, [28 June 1928] 'Strategy and tactics in the imperialist epoch', *The Third International after Lenin*, (1970: 75).

### **Tactics:**

"By the party's tactics we mean the party's political conduct, or the character, the direction and methods of its political activity. Tactical resolutions are adopted by party congresses in order precisely to define the political conduct of the party as a whole with regard to new tasks, or in view of a new political situation."

Lenin, [June-July 1905] *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, (LCW 9: 22).

"Tactics must be debated, but in this the utmost clarity must be striven for. Questions of tactics are questions of the party's political conduct. A line of conduct can and should be grounded in theory, in historical references, in an analysis of the entire political situation, etc. But in all these discussions the party of a class engaged in a struggle should never lose sight of the need for absolutely clear answers—which do not permit of a double interpretation – to concrete questions of our political conduct: 'yes' or 'no'? Should this or that be done right now, at the given moment, or should it not be done?"

Lenin, [13 September 1905] 'Argue About Tactics, But Give Clear Slogans!', (LCW 9: 262).

### **Transitional demands:**

"The Communist International offers a struggle for the specific demands of the proletariat, as part of a system of demands that, in their totality, undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat, and mark out the different stages of the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. Each of these demands gives expression to the needs of the broad masses, even when they do not yet consciously take a stand for proletarian dictatorship."

Radek, [9 July 1921] 'Theses on Tactics and Strategy', Riddell, *To the Masses*, (2015: 936).

“It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demand and the socialist programme of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.”

Trotsky, [1938] *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, (1973: 75).

**United front:**

“Only in the struggle for the most basic essentials of life of the working masses can we establish the unified front of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and end the splintering of the proletariat, which alone enables the bourgeoisie to continue to exist. But this proletarian front will be strong and militant only if it is held together by Communist parties, unified and strong in spirit and iron in their discipline. The Third World Congress of the Communist International turns to Communists everywhere with the call, ‘To the masses!’ and ‘Establish the unified proletarian front!’”

Trotsky, [17 July 1921] ‘Forward to New Work and New Struggles’, Riddell, (2015: 1037).

**Workers’ government:**

“The only type of government that can be considered a genuine workers’ government is one that is determined to take up a resolute struggle at least to achieve the workers’ most important immediate demands against the bourgeoisie. That is the only type of workers’ government in which communists can participate.”

Radek, [5 December 1922] ‘On the Tactics of the Comintern’, Riddell, *Toward the United Front*, (2011: 1161-62).

## **Educator's notes: Session 10. Stalin's counter-revolution**

### **Reading:**

Chapter 10. Stalin's counter-revolution

### **Class:**

"The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus labour is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers and ruled... it is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers... which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state."

Marx, *Capital*, Vol.3, (MECW 37: 777-78).

### **Kronstadt:**

"Let us suppose briefly that the Kronstadt mutiny had turned out to be victorious. Its results would have been immediate chaos, the terrible kindling of a civil war in which this time the party of the revolutionary proletariat and the broad peasant masses would have been locked in combat. Within a short time a handful of liberal lawyers and Tsarist generals, fortified by the sympathies of the whole bourgeois world, would have drenched their hands in the blood of the Russian people in order to pick up the abandoned power. Thermidor would have come."

Victor Serge, [21 March 1922] 'The Tragic Face of Revolution', David Cotterill, *The Serge-Trotsky Papers*, (1994: 19).

### **Bureaucracy:**

"We took over the old machinery of state, and that was our misfortune. Very often this machinery operates against us. In 1917, after we seized power, the government officials sabotaged us. This frightened us very much and we pleaded: 'Please come back'. They all came back, but that was our misfortune. We now have a vast army of government employees, but lack sufficiently educated forces to exercise real control over them. In practice it often happens that here at the top, where we exercise political power, the machine functions somehow; but down below government employees have arbitrary control and they often exercise it in such a way as to counteract our measures. At the top, we have, I don't know how many, but at all events, I think, no more than a few thousand, at the outside several tens of thousands of our own people. Down below, however, there are hundreds of thousands of old officials whom we got from the tsar and from bourgeois society and who, partly deliberately and partly unwittingly, work against us."

Lenin, [13 November 1922] 'Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution', (LCW 33: 428-429).

"This political position (of directing class) is not without its dangers: on the contrary, the dangers are very great. I do not refer here to the objective difficulties due to the whole complex of historical conditions, to the capitalist encirclement on the outside, and the pressure of the petty bourgeois inside the country. No, I refer to the inherent difficulties of any new directing class,

consequent on the taking and on the exercise of power itself, on the ability or inability to make use of it. You will understand that these difficulties would continue to exist up to a certain point, even if we allowed, for a moment, that the country was inhabited only by proletarian masses and the exterior was made up solely of proletarian states. These difficulties might be called the “professional dangers” of power...

“When a class takes power, one of its parts becomes the agent of that power. Thus arises bureaucracy. In a socialist state, where capitalist accumulation is forbidden by members of the directing party, this differentiation begins as a functional one; it later becomes a social one. I am thinking here of the social position of a communist who has at his disposal a car, a nice apartment, regular holidays, and receiving the maximum salary authorised by the party; a position which differs from that of the communist working in the coal mines and receiving a salary of fifty or sixty rubles per month. As regards workers and employees, you know that they are divided into eighteen different categories...”

Rakovskii, [8 August 1928] ‘Letter to Valentinov’, *Selected Writings on Opposition in the USSR 1923-30*, (1980: 125-32).

### **Workers’ state:**

“The question thus comes down to the same thing: Is the proletarian kernel of the party, assisted by the working class, capable of triumphing over the autocracy of the party apparatus which is fusing with the state apparatus? Whoever replies in advance that it is incapable, thereby speaks not only of the necessity of a new party on a new foundation, but also of the necessity of a second and new proletarian revolution.”

Trotsky, [End of 1928] ‘Our Differences with the Democratic Centralists: Letter to Borodai’, *Fate of the Russian Revolution*, (1998: 306).

“The socialist character of industry is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the role of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, and conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc. If we allow that this web is weakening, disintegrating and ripping, then it becomes absolutely self-evident that within a brief period nothing will remain of the socialist character of state industry, transport, etc.”

Trotsky, [12 July 1928] ‘What Now?’ *The Third International after Lenin*, (1970: 300).

## **Educator's notes: Miscellaneous**

### **Bend the stick:**

"The stock of Bakuninist and Proudhonist theories that were in use among us proved insufficient even for the correct posing of those questions. The stick that was previously bent over in one direction has now been bent back in the other". Plekhanov, [22 July 1884] 'Our Differences', (SPW 1: 135).

"We all know now that the economists *bent the stick in one direction*. In order to straighten the stick it was necessary to bend it in the other direction, and that is what I did. I am convinced that the Russian social-democratic movement will always vigorously straighten out a stick that has been bent by opportunism of any kind, and that our stick will always, therefore, be the straightest and fittest for action."

Lenin, (22 July 1903) 'Ninth Session. Second Congress of the RSDLP', (1978: 169-170).

"[Lenin] not only failed to let go of sticks bent by him in the polemic with the 'Economists', but sat on the top of that curved stick and revealed the most unmistakable intention to travel on it... I do not find it necessary to hide the fact that, in this critical work, I will start with a firm conviction of the need to liquidate the 'fourth' period of our party's history, having thrown Lenin's 'over-bent stick' onto the rubbish heap."

Plekhanov, [1 August 1904] 'The Working Class and the Social-Democratic Intelligentsia'. In Richard Mullin, *The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, 1899–1904*, (2016: 571-72).

### **Centrism:**

"Theoretically, centrism is amorphous and eclectic; so far as possible it evades theoretical obligations and inclines (in words) to give preference to "revolutionary practice" over theory, without understanding that only Marxist theory can impart revolutionary direction to practice... A centrist, always uncertain of his position and his methods, views with hatred the revolutionary principle: state what is. They are inclined to substitute for a principled policy personal manoeuvring and petty organisational diplomacy."

Trotsky, [22 February 1934] 'Centrism and the Fourth International', *Writings 1933-34*, (1975: 233).

### **Combination tool:**

"We wish particularly to emphasise our opposition to the view that a workers' newspaper should devote its pages exclusively to matters that immediately and directly concern the spontaneous working-class movement, and leave everything pertaining to the theory of socialism, science, politics, questions of party organisation, etc., to a periodical for the intelligentsia. On the contrary, it is necessary to combine all the concrete facts and manifestations of the working-class movement with the indicated questions; the light of theory must be cast upon every separate fact; propaganda on questions of politics and party organisation must be carried on among the broad masses of the working class; and these questions must be dealt with in the work of agitation."

Lenin, [1900] 'Draft of a Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra and Zarya', (LCW 4: 326).

### **Conspiracy:**

Lenin uses the term *konspiritsiia* forty times in *What is to be Done* (1902). Lars Lih translates it as "the fine art of not getting arrested". Social-democratic *konspiritsiia* set out to achieve political freedom that would make conspiracies

unnecessary, but *konspiritsiia* did so by creating a space for open politics even under police-state conditions.

Lars Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What is to be Done' in Context*, (2008: 447-449).

**Factions:**

“In our party Bolshevism is represented by the Bolshevik faction. But a faction is not a party. A party can contain a whole gamut of opinions and shades of opinion, the extremes of which may be sharply contradictory. In the German party, side by side with the pronouncedly revolutionary wing of Kautsky, we see the ultra-revisionist wing of Bernstein. That is not the case within a faction. A faction in a party is a group of like-minded persons formed for the purpose primarily of influencing the party in a definite direction, for the purpose of securing acceptance for their principles in the party in the purest possible form. For this, real unanimity of opinion is necessary.”

Lenin, [8-17 June 1909] ‘Report on the Conference of the Extended Editorial Board of Proletary’, (LCW 15: 430), translation tweaked.

**Hegemony:**

“The revolutionary movement in Russia can triumph only as the revolutionary movement of the workers. There is not and cannot be any other way out for us.” Plekhanov, [1889] ‘Speech at the Second International Workers’ Socialist Congress in Paris’, (SPW 1: 452).

“If there is no possibility of assigning to the Russian proletariat an independent, pre-eminent role in the struggle against police Tsarism, autocracy and arbitrariness, then Russian social democracy has no historical right to exist.”

Axelrod, [December 1897] ‘On the Question of the Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social Democrats (Draft Programme), Harding, (1983: 237).

**Intellectuals:**

“Intellectuals have only one task in our party: to defend clarity. Everything else is taken care of by the proletarians alone.”

Kautsky, [4 April 1903] ‘Letter to Victor Adler’, Massimo Salvadori, *Karl Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution*, (1979: 77).

“The role of the ‘intelligentsia’ is to make special leaders from among the intelligentsia unnecessary”.

Lenin, [1894] ‘What the “Friends of the People” Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats’, (LCW 1: 298).

**Lever:**

“We have people... [who] snigger maliciously or curl a contemptuous lip and ask: ‘If the entire party were limited to the underground, how many members would it have? Two or three hundred?’... ‘Two or three hundred’ workers, the flower of the Petersburg proletariat, people who not only call themselves social-democrats but work as social-democrats, people who are esteemed and appreciated for it by the entire working class of Russia... print and circulate underground leaflets... In accordance with a decision drawn up by half a dozen members of the executive commission of the Petersburg committee – a leaflet printed and circulated by ‘two or three hundred’ – two hundred and fifty thousand people rise as one in Petersburg... The two million inhabitants of Petersburg see and hear these appeals for revolution which go to the hearts of all toiling and oppressed sections of the people.”

Lenin, [15 June 1913] ‘May Day Action by the Revolutionary Proletariat’, (LCW 19: 224-25).

**March separately, strike together:**

“Do not blur the organisational lines. March separately, but strike in unison.”

Parvus, [January 1905] ‘What Was Accomplished on the Ninth of January’. In Richard Day and Daniel Gaido, *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution*, (2009: 267).

“We shall inevitably have to march separately, but we can strike together more than once and particularly now.”  
Lenin, [8 February 1905] ‘A Militant Agreement for the Uprising’, (LCW 8: 164).

**Merger formula:**

“By directing socialism towards a merger with the working-class movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did their greatest service: they created a revolutionary theory that explained the necessity for this fusion and gave socialists the task of organising the class struggle of the proletariat.”  
Lenin, [1899] ‘A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy’, (LCW 4: 257-58).

**Parliamentarism:**

“Parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression. By helping to enlighten and to organise immeasurably wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events, parliamentarism does not make for the elimination of crises and political revolutions, but for the maximum intensification of civil war during such revolutions.”

Lenin, [3 April 1908] ‘Marxism and Revisionism’, (LCW 15: 36-37).

**Polemics:**

“Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation... Open polemics, conducted in full view of all Russian social-democrats and class-conscious workers, are necessary and desirable in order to clarify the depth of existing differences.”

Lenin, [1900] ‘Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra’, (LCW 4: 354-55).

“A socialist paper must carry on polemics: our times are times of desperate confusion, and we can’t do without polemics... You can’t hide differences from the workers (as Pravda is doing): it’s harmful, fatal, ridiculous... Pravda will perish if it is only a ‘popular’, ‘positive’ organ, that is certain... It would certainly be victorious if it were not afraid of polemics, talked straight... became lively through argument... A paper must be a step ahead of everyone.”

Lenin, [24 July 1912] ‘To the Editor of Nevskaya Zvezda’, (LCW 35: 42-43).

**Professional revolutionary:**

“A professional revolutionist is a person who completely dedicates themselves to the labour movement under conditions of illegality and forced conspiracy... The youth of the revolutionary generation coincided with the youth of the labour movement. It was the epoch of people between the ages of eighteen and thirty. Revolutionists above that age were few in number and seemed old men. The movement was as yet utterly devoid of careerism, lived on its faith in the future and on its spirit of self-sacrifice. There were as yet no routine, no set formulae, no theatrical gestures, no ready-made oratorical tricks... Whoever joined an organisation knew that prison followed by exile awaited him within the next few months. The measure of ambition was to last as long as possible on the job prior to arrest; to hold oneself steadfast when facing the gendarmes; to ease, as far as possible, the plight of one’s comrades; to read, while in prison, as many books as possible; to escape as soon as possible from exile abroad; to acquire wisdom there; and then return to revolutionary activity in Russia. The professional revolutionists believed what they taught... Solidarity under persecution was no empty word, and it was augmented by contempt for cowardice and desertion... The young men and young women who devoted themselves entirely to the revolutionary movement, without demanding anything in return, were not the worst representatives of their generation.”

Trotsky, [1940] *Stalin: An Appraisal of the Man and his Influence*, (2016: 71-72).

Contrasted with *kustarnichestvo* – artisan limitations: outmoded methods of political work.

**Sectarianism:**

“The centrist frequently covers up his dawdling by referring to the danger of "sectarianism," by which he understands not abstract propagandist passivity (of the Bordigist type) but an active concern for purity of principles, clarity of position, political consistency and organisational completeness.”

Trotsky, [22 February 1934] 'Centrism and the Fourth International', Writings 1933-34, (1975: 233).

**Tailism:**

“Instead of following in the tail of so-called intelligentsia circles, [the worker intelligentsia] must direct all its energy to the formation of a single independent workers' union or workers' party.”

Plekhanov and Axelrod (1884) 'From the Publishers of the 'Workers' Library'', in Harding, *Marxism in Russia*, (1983: 71).

“But since the end of 1897... there have come forward in the Russian social-democratic movement individuals and periodicals... that have declared it to be a special virtue, that have elevated the worship of, and servility towards, spontaneity to the dignity of a theory and are preaching that social-democrats must not march ahead of the movement, but should drag along at the tail-end.”

Lenin, [6 December 1901] 'A Talk with Defenders of Economism', (LCW 5: 317).

**Theory:**

“For without revolutionary theory there is no revolutionary movement in the true sense of the word. Any class which strives for its emancipation, any political party which aims at dominance, is revolutionary only insofar as it represents the most progressive social trends and consequently is a vehicle of the most progressive ideas of its time.”

Plekhanov, [1883] 'Socialism and the Political Struggle', (SPW 1: 102).

**Truth is concrete:**

“This rule was expressed by the formula: 'There is no abstract truth; truth is concrete,' i.e., a definite judgement can be pronounced only about a definite fact, after examining all the circumstances on which it depends.” [Originally Chernyshevsky, [1855] *Sketches of the Gogol Period*]

Plekhanov, [January 1895] *The Development of the Monist View of History*, (SPW 1: 615-16).

**Universal suffrage:**

“Universal suffrage is the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state; but that, is sufficient. On the day the thermometer of universal suffrage registers boiling point among the workers, both they and the capitalists will know where they stand.”

Engels, [1884] *Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*, (MECW 26: 272).

**What is:**

“All great political action consists in the stating of that which is, and begins with, such a statement. All political pettifogging consists in concealing and cloaking that which is.”

Lassalle, [17 November 1862] 'What now'? *Speeches of Ferdinand Lassalle: Voices of Revolt, Vol.3*, (1927: 46)

“We, however, think that it is unworthy of a socialist to conceal or blur the truth concerning a serious political matter. We must call a spade a spade. We must expose all subterfuges and pretences, so that the mass of the workers may clearly understand what is going on.”

Lenin, [13-14 January 1907] 'The Social-Democrats and the Duma Elections', (LCW 11: 444-45).

“To face reality squarely; not to seek the line of least resistance; to call things by their right names; to speak the truth to the masses, no matter how bitter it may be; not to fear obstacles; to be true in little things as in big ones; to base one’s programme on the logic of the class struggle; to be bold when the hour for action arrives – these are the rules of the Fourth International.”

Trotsky, [1938] *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution*, (1973: 108).

**Worker-intellectuals:**

“The absence of allies among the ‘intelligentsia’ not prevent our working class from becoming aware of its interests, understanding its tasks, bringing forward leaders from its own ranks and creating its own working-class intelligentsia. Such an intelligentsia will not betray its cause or abandon it to the mercy of fate.”

Plekhanov, [3 March 1889] ‘A New Champion of Autocracy’, (SPW 1: 446).