



# Lenin's April Theses: The renewal of Bolshevism

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Lenin's April Theses, at 479 words one of the shortest of his major works, represented a qualitative advance in his strategic thinking, effected a transformation of the Bolshevik Party's programme and formed the blue print for the victorious October Revolution that, in turn, changed the world.

Nonetheless, the theses built on the previous achievements of Bolshevism; its recognition that, although it regarded the coming overthrow of Tsarism as a bourgeois revolution, it would be the working class, not the bourgeoisie, that would lead it. Its ally in this task would be the country's huge majority peasantry, whose interest was to expropriate the great landowners, the social base of Tsarism. The centrality of the peasantry underlined the relative economic backwardness of Russia, which meant that, unlike in Western Europe, socialism was not on the revolutionary agenda. This kept Russia's revolution from being a socialist revolution.

Equally importantly, since the unsought for split with the Mensheviks in 1903, Lenin had built a party based on a selected cadre of activists who had operated for fifteen years in conditions of legality and illegality. Repeated factional disputes over both strategy and tactics had moulded the Bolsheviks into a seasoned and politically distinctive current within the Russian Social Democratic and Labour Party, RSDLP. In 1912, after a failed period of reunification, Lenin led a decisive split, which marked a resolute break not only from the opportunist Mensheviks but also conciliators such as Trotsky. After this, the Bolsheviks effectively operated as an independent party.

When war broke out in 1914, Lenin recognised it as the product of a profound change that had taken place in capitalism; its development into a global system had opened a new epoch, imperialism. For the Great Powers, the war was not about defence of the Fatherland, let alone the rights of small nations, it was a fight for control of the world and its resources. Consequently, in this war, there could be no question of siding with one side or another.

This analysis also threw light on the collapse of the Second International after almost all its sections, most importantly its leading section, the German SPD, betrayed its principles and its resolutions by supporting 'their' governments in the war. This, Lenin concluded, reflected the material base of these parties and, crucially, the trades unions, in their advanced capitalist industries, which needed global markets and resources to expand further. With such treacherous parties there could be no common ground, revolutionaries in all countries would have to be as intransigent against opportunism as the Bolsheviks had been in Russia.

Imperialism's creation of a world economy and world politics also had implications for revolutionary strategy within Russia. It meant that there could no longer be two entirely separate revolutions, first bourgeois and then proletarian, separated by an entire historical epoch, as most Marxists had envisaged the future. A revolution against an imperialist power raised the prospect of a socialist revolution. Lenin was, at first, loathe to concede this since it had been an issue of debate with Leon Trotsky in 1905, but he realised that, in practice, the separation between the two revolutions was disappearing and the tasks of both were interlacing. Rather than a mechanical separation, what was involved was a dynamic transition. The 'bourgeois tasks' had still to be fulfilled, and the Bolsheviks had always argued that, in Russia, they would be fulfilled by a working class-led revolution, but a proletarian revolution would have to start to fulfil socialist tasks.

Another area of Lenin's theoretical work in Switzerland was his rediscovery of Marx and Engels' writings on the state in the light of the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. In them, the founders of Communism had given a content

to their earlier argument, from 1851, that the state could not be used to overthrow capitalism, rather it had to be 'smashed'. Now they saw the need not only to break up the machinery of repression but to create a new kind of state, based on the arming of the people and the formation of an executive of elected and recallable delegates. Lenin quickly saw that the workers' councils, soviets, first seen in 1905 in Russia, were precisely such bodies.

Even before the dramatic events began to unfold in Russia, therefore, Lenin was already grappling theoretically with the problems those events would pose and formulating the necessary strategic and programmatic solutions. As we shall see, however, his ideas were far from representative of the party he had spent two decades fighting to build.

When after February Revolution some senior Bolshevik leaders, Lev Kamenev and Joseph Stalin amongst them, thought the war had changed its character, becoming a defence of the democratic conquests made by the workers and soldiers, he insisted it remained an imperialist war and that the Bolsheviks must continue to work to end it in a revolution – a proletarian one and on a Europe-wide scale.

All these new theoretical insights and renewed tactics formed the basis, in the April Theses, for drawing the conclusion that a non-bourgeois second phase of the revolution lay ahead, that the workers party would have to lead it. Indeed, with the support of the workers and soldiers organised in soviets, it would have to seize power, and take measures, not just fulfilling the bourgeois tasks, but beginning the transition to proletarian ones. This was moreover possible because, Lenin insisted, an international socialist revolution was breaking out in Western Europe as a result of the chaos and exhaustion caused by the war

#### An unexpected outcome

The revolutionary explosion of February 1917 destroyed forever the Tsarist regime. But it led to a profoundly contradictory situation when it came to the question of who now held state power. The liberal politicians in the old Tsarist parliament, the Duma; Pavel Milyukov, Alexander Guchkov and Mikhail Rodzianko, had declared themselves the Provisional Government, although they had not called for, let alone led, the uprising. Throughout the events on the streets of Petrograd they had concentrated on trying to find another Romanov to 'save the monarchy'.

They and their foreign backers, the British and French imperialists, were in mortal dread that the Petrograd Soviet might try to form a workers' government and put an end to the war. In fact, the workers' and soldiers' revolution had given the soviets the lion's share of power.

Fortunately for the bourgeoisie, the Soviet's Executive Committee, dominated as it was by the Mensheviks Nikolai Chkheidze and Matvei Skobelev, together with Victor Chernov of the Socialist Revolutionaries, SRs, and Alexander Kerensky of the Trudoviks, were convinced that, since the Russian Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, there must be a bourgeois government. Therefore, the Soviet Executive pledged support to a government headed by liberal landowners, Prince Lvov and Mikhail Rodzianko, and big industrialists like Alexander Guchkov. They were determined to continue the war to seize Constantinople and the rest of Poland, promised to them by Russia's allies, Britain and France.

The leaders of the Petrograd Soviet, on the other hand, knew that the workers and the soldiers who had made the revolution wanted the opening of peace negotiations and a speedy end to the war 'without annexations or indemnities'.

For the time being, the Mensheviks and SRs declined to join the government but Alexander Kerensky, of the small Trudovik Party, saw his opportunity and took it. While the mass of Soviet delegates agreed to support the Provisional Government, they also established, independently of the Executive, an 'observation committee' to watch over it. Moreover, its famous Order No1, which required soviet approval of all troop movements and had been proposed by the troops who had mutinied, effectively put the soldiers under the control of the soviets.

What had emerged therefore was a situation of dual power: power divided between representatives of two potentially irreconcilable class forces. The working masses saw the soviets as the weapon of their struggles. The bourgeoisie saw the Provisional Government as its champion against those struggles. State sovereignty was, in reality, split.

Such an arrangement reflected the illusions on the part of the workers and soldiers in a partnership with the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the Soviet saw it as a long lasting agreement between equal partners. However, as Trotsky explained in his History of the Russian Revolution:

“Either the bourgeoisie will actually dominate the old state apparatus, altering it a little for its purpose, 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 domination of those classes which it served.”

The Bolsheviks unprepared

These momentous events and their outcome found the Bolshevik Party unprepared. The situation simply did not fit the prognosis they had worked with since the revolution of 1905-07. The Mensheviks, starting from the premise that the Russian revolution was bourgeois in character, had concluded that the government must be a bourgeois one, both in terms of its personnel and the tasks it could be expected to undertake. The Bolsheviks, however, had long recognised that the bourgeoisie would play only a counter-revolutionary role, obstructing the fulfilment of the democratic tasks. They concluded from this that the working class party had to lead the revolution and seize power, but in an alliance with the peasantry, particularly its more revolutionary democratic part.

The key tasks were to lead an armed uprising that would install a combined worker-peasant government which, because of the forcible measures it would then have to take against the old landowning class and the bourgeoisie, was described as “the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry”. Even so, the measures to be taken by this government would have to be limited to the minimum part of the 1903 programme which they still shared with the Mensheviks, that is, the Democratic Republic, the Confiscation of the Landed Estates and the Eight-Hour Working Day. These were popularly known as the “Three Whales” after the old Russian folk story that these were what the world rested on.

Whilst they played an active role in the February uprising, the Bolsheviks were puzzled by its outcome. If this was the provisional government envisaged in the prognosis of a democratic dictatorship, why was the bourgeoisie in charge of it and not revolutionary social democrats and populists? If this was not the democratic dictatorship, then did one still have to be created by an armed insurrection, led by the Bolsheviks?

At the same time, despite Milyukov and Guchkov being in office, the workers and the peasants in uniform, had created structures which went beyond those of any democratic republic. Indeed, the soviets, militia and factory committees were the embryo of a new type of state, one which embodied working class, not bourgeois, democracy. Moreover, the workers were armed and the soldiers were no longer under the control of their officers, having formed their own committees, and were obeying only the soviets, to which they elected their own delegates.

What was to be made of the fact that the workers’ soviets supported this provisional bourgeois provisional government and the Mensheviks and the SRs led the soviet. How could one launch an insurrection against a government that the majority of the workers supported?

The Bolsheviks’ Petersburg Committee, in charge of the city’s 15,000 party members, declared on March 3 that it did not, “...oppose the power of the Provisional Government in so far as its activities correspond to the interests of the proletariat and of the broad democratic mass of the people”. This position evaded the question of how “far” the Provisional Government was actually serving the interests of the masses, and implied no immediate challenge to the dominant Menshevik line within the Soviet Executive Committee, indeed, most of the Bolsheviks within that committee voted for the Mensheviks’ resolution on the attitude to the government.

In contrast to this, the District Committee in Vyborg, the main industrial heart of the city, raised demands that expressed severe mistrust of the Provisional Government, but they too continued to believe that the character of the revolution remained a democratic, bourgeois one.

The Russian Bureau of the exiled Central Committee, comprising Alexander Shlyapnikov, Vyacheslav Molotov and P A Zalutsky, veered between different positions. At first, they called for a provisional revolutionary government to be

formed, from above, by the parties represented on the Soviet Executive. However, the Bureau's perspective of a pact with the other Soviet parties ran into a major obstacle; the Mensheviks and SRs, far from wanting to participate in a workers', or workers' and peasants', government, wanted to support the one formed by the bourgeois parties.

In addition, although the majority of the Mensheviks had been antiwar before the Tsar's downfall, they now claimed that the war had changed its character and now represented a defence of the gains of the revolution. This became known as 'revolutionary defencism'.

Faced with these facts, the Russian Bureau moved further to the left and, by 22 March, was characterising the Soviets as the embryos of a new state power - although they were unaware of it, this was close to the position Lenin was developing in Switzerland.

In contrast, the editorial board of the Bolshevik daily, Pravda, occupied the most right-wing position within Bolshevism. Since their return from Siberian exile, Lev Kamenev, Joseph Stalin and M N Muranov had seized control of the editorial board from the Russian Bureau. The paper declared on 7 March: 'As far as we are concerned, what matters now is not the overthrow of capitalism but the overthrow of autocracy and feudalism.' Stalin wrote: 'The Provisional Government has, in fact, assumed the role of defender of the conquests of the revolutionary people . . . At present, it is not in our interest to force events by hastening the eviction of bourgeois strata who, inevitably, will one day detach themselves from us.'

This supportive attitude towards the Provisional Government, a nakedly bourgeois one, apart from the fig-leaf of Kerensky, was soon to bear bitter fruit in the form of support for the war. On 15 March, Kamenev used the pages of Pravda to advocate conditional support for Russia's war effort:

'If the democratic forces in Germany and Austria pay no heed to our voice, then we shall defend our fatherland to the last drop of our blood.'

He continued: 'When army faces army, it would be the most insane policy to suggest to one of those armies to lay down its arms and go home. This would not be a policy of peace, but a policy of slavery, which would be rejected with disgust by a free people. The people will remain intrepidly at their post, answering bullet with bullet and shell with shell. This is beyond dispute. We must not allow any disorganisation of the armed forces of the revolution.'

Small wonder then that, by mid-March, rank and file worker Bolshevik cells in the Vyborg district, who had played a vanguard role in the February uprising, were calling for the expulsion of the Pravda editors from the party.

### Lenin in Switzerland

Lenin expressed his initial responses to the Russian Revolution in a series of articles sent to Pravda, his Letters from Afar. Their political content was so shocking to Stalin and Kamenev that they published only a curtailed version of one of them. In these articles, Lenin presented his newly developed view that the Soviet was 'an organisation of workers, the embryo of a workers' government', and that the only guarantee of destroying Tsarism lay in '... arming the proletariat, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance and power of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies'.

In Switzerland, Lenin had been studying the massively increased role of the state in the imperialist countries and, as we have seen, studying Marx and Engels' writings on France and the Paris Commune. He now realised that the process of smashing the old bureaucratic police and military state machine of the exploiting classes and replacing it with a state of a new type, based on councils of delegates elected in the workplaces, barracks and villages, and recallable at the shortest notice by their electors, was actually underway, thanks to the actions of the masses in the February Revolution. Its completion, however, required conscious leadership or else the officer corps, especially the former Tsarist High Command, would use what remained of the old state to carry through a counter-revolution. Its goal would be to sweep away the democratic gains of the workers which, he emphasised, already made Russia, 'the freest and most democratic country in the world'.

In his third letter, Lenin announced: "I said that the workers had smashed the old state machine. I would be more correct to say have begun to smash it." His conclusion was that the dual power outcome of the February Revolution necessitated either the transition to the workers' council (soviet) state, or the triumph of bourgeois reaction.

### Shock at the Finland station

Having travelled from Switzerland through Germany and Sweden, when Lenin's train crossed the Russian frontier from Finland, a delegation of Bolshevik leaders, including Kamenev and a Kronstadt sailors' leader, Fyodor Raskolnikov, went to meet him. Raskolnikov records Lenin's greeting to Kamenev, "Hardly had he entered the compartment and sat down than Vladimir Ilyich turned on Comrade Kamenev. "What's this you're writing in Pravda? We've seen several issues, and really swore at you?".

Lenin did not wait for a party meeting. He explained his radical change of position to everyone who could hear him at the Finland Station in Petrograd. The Menshevik Chkheidze, chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, who headed the official welcoming party, pleaded with Lenin to play his part in "the closing of the democratic ranks". Lenin ignored his words and declared to the surrounding crowd: "The world-wide socialist revolution has already dawned. . . Any day now the whole of European capitalism may crash. The Russian Revolution accomplished by you has paved the way and opened a new epoch. Long live the world-wide socialist revolution."

From the station, Lenin was taken in a sort of triumphal procession to the Bolshevik HQ in the commandeered mansion of the Tsar's former mistress, the ballerina Ksheshinskaya. There, an audience of Bolsheviks and some left Mensheviks heard Lenin explain his radical new perspective. So shocked was this audience that there were no questions. The next day, at a meeting in the Tauride Place of seventy Bolshevik delegates to the first national gathering of soviets, he read his April Theses for the first time. Again, the response was shock. Lenin's wife Krupskaya in her Memoirs recalls:

"The comrades were somewhat taken aback for the moment. Many of them thought that Ilyich was presenting the case in much too blunt a manner, and that it was too early yet to speak of a socialist revolution." She even confided to one of her friends, "I'm afraid that Ilyich looks as though he's gone crazy".

The same afternoon, Lenin addressed a joint meeting of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, called to discuss prospects for re-unifying the RSDLP. This was another project of the Kamenev-Stalin leadership. Chkheidze was in the chair. The response from the Mensheviks was as to be expected, "these are the ravings of a madman" shouted one. But the support from the Bolsheviks was cool and only Alexandra Kollontai spoke in favour of Lenin's position. However, it was clear the idea of reunification was dead in the water. When one Menshevik mentioned it, Lenin shouted from the floor "Never!?"

An internal struggle ensued, with Kamenev, and a section of the leadership who began to call themselves "Old Bolsheviks", confronting Lenin's "new" Bolshevism. The forums for this debate were the Petrograd City Conference, April 14 - 22, and then the Seventh All-Russia Conference, April 24-29. In these debates, it was Lenin alone who was able to fully transcend the limitations of the old Bolshevik programme and perspective but this was not done without an intense debate. It is testimony to the vitality and strength of the Bolshevik cadres, as created since 1903, as well as to the open and democratic debate in the party, that it was able to undertake such a programmatic re-armament at the crucial hour.

The debate pitted Lenin against the contending Bolshevik groupings in Petrograd. His hardest blows were struck against the right wing, led by Kamenev and Stalin, but he also had to contend with certain leftist forces. These were inclined to ignore the need for patient explanation, and for the tactics that would later be called the united front, to win the masses away from the Mensheviks and the SRs.

Lenin's struggle to re-arm the Bolsheviks met with bitter resistance from many of his closest comrades. When Kamenev published the Theses in Pravda on April 7, he prefaced them with the remark: "As for the general scheme of comrade Lenin, it seems to us unacceptable in that it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution is ended, and counts upon all immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution." Pravda

added the note that these represented Lenin's views not those of the Party.

Lenin's reply to the criticism that he was abandoning the historic positions of Bolshevism was clear and to the point: 'My answer is: the Bolshevik slogans and ideas on the whole have been confirmed by history; but concretely things have worked out differently; they are more original, more peculiar, more variegated than anyone could have expected. To ignore or overlook this fact would mean taking after those 'old Bolsheviks' who, more than once already, have played so regrettable a role in the history of our Party by reiterating formulas senselessly learned by rote instead of studying the specific features of the new and living reality.'

He went on to explain: 'The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has already become a reality in the Russian revolution... The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, there you have the 'revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' already accomplished in reality. This formula is already antiquated. Events have moved it from the realm of formulas into the realm of reality, clothed it with flesh and bone, concretised it and thereby modified it.'

Over a process of three weeks of argument and debate in all the districts and cells of the party, Lenin won the majority to his programmatic line of advance. Putting its wavering and vacillating behind it, the Party now set out to win the masses to recognition of the potential power of the soviets and the fast-growing workers' militia, the Red Guards. The Party now embraced a programme of transition to workers' power.

This episode refutes the Stalinist myth that Bolshevism was always monolithic, that temporary factions and factional struggle were alien to it. Likewise, it refutes the Menshevik and anarchist dogma that Bolshevism was rigid and inflexible, incapable of learning from the revolutionary masses. It is, in short, the practical proof of the correctness of democratic centralism; ensuring full democratic debate and then a focused and disciplined carrying out of a decision once taken.

### The April Days

Meanwhile, the class struggle once again intervened in the debate. The powerful mass yearning for peace amongst both the soldiers and the workers had taken the form in March of fraternisation in the trenches at the front. The Soviet Executive had, with some difficulty, managed to quell this and restore order, where the generals had failed, but the price was to step up appeals for a negotiated peace. The Provisional Government, especially, Guchkov and Milyukov, would have none of this.

They looked to restoring military discipline in the army through commanders like Alexeyev, Kornilov and Brussilov, who were raging at the Soviet's interference in their commands. They also wished to reassure Russia's allies, whose funding and arms supplies they desperately needed, that they would fight on to a victorious conclusion. The publication of a letter from foreign minister Milyukov to the Allies, re-affirming Russia's continued participation in the war, obliquely asserting its continued imperialist war aims, occupation of Constantinople, for example, but omitting any talk of a democratic peace, caused outrage amongst the Soviet delegates. Their Menshevik and SR leaders had been pressing the government to adjust Russia's war aims in the direction of the Zimmerwald slogan of 'a peace without annexations or indemnities'.

On April 20, when news of Milyukov's letter reached the factories and barracks, mass armed demonstrations by workers and soldiers broke out in Petrograd and Moscow, despite strenuous attempts by the Soviet Executive to prevent them. The slogan for peace without annexations predominated but the new Bolshevik slogans, Down with the Provisional Government, All power to the Soviets, appeared for the first time. The counter-revolution also mobilised and on the Nevsky Prospekt, the city's main boulevard, clashes occurred between the demonstrators and armed officer cadets and students. General Kornilov, military commander in the city, tried to use soldiers to disperse the workers and soldier demonstrators but his men refused and appealed to the Soviet which instantly countermanded his order. He resigned his post in disgust, though 'living to fight another day'.

Once more, the power of the Soviet had been displayed. The Cadets and the Soviet leaders, alarmed by the

reappearance of the masses, began negotiations for the entry of 'socialist ministers' into a new, second, Provisional Government. This re-entry of the masses onto the stage, and the revelation of the bourgeois ministers' counter-revolutionary character, exposed the fundamental fault lines within the dual power system. This, in turn, strengthened Lenin's hand in the internal debate, at the Seventh Conference.

The immediate result, after a week or two of frenzied negotiations, was the entry of socialist ministers into Prince Lvov's cabinet. These included two Mensheviks, Skobelev (Labour) and Tseretelli (Posts and Communications), the Socialist Revolutionary leader, Chernov (Agriculture) the Popular Socialist, Peshekhonov (Food), and the Trudovik, Kerensky (war and the navy). Shortly afterwards, Guchkov and Milyukov were forced to resign. Ever the compromiser, despite his comprehensive defeat at the Seventh Congress, Kamenev remarked to Tseretelli: 'After all, in the organisation of the coalition, of which I don't approve, we couldn't have done any better.'

## World Revolution

The April Theses and Lenin's other writings such as his Letters on Tactics, which elaborate on and defend them, plus his many speeches, constitute a remarkable achievement and opened the road to the October Revolution. They were based on a clear perspective of working class power, aided by the poor peasants and the radicalised soldiers, and expressed in a state of soviets and an armed people. 'Old Bolshevism', insofar as it was limited to the democratic dictatorship and the two revolutions perspective, was cast aside. Renewed Bolshevism centred on the slogans 'All Power to the Soviets' and 'Down with the Capitalist Ministers'.

But Lenin's Theses also warned against any failure to recognise that the Bolsheviks were, as yet, a minority in the soviets and that therefore their task was to 'patiently explain' the need for soviet power. In doing this, they could be confident that the Provisional Government would not be able to solve Russia's burning problems, summed up in the famous triad; Bread, Peace and Land, so long as it was chained to the imperialist war and to the bourgeoisie.

Lenin foresaw and, with the aid of rank and file Bolsheviks, the party rapidly came to see it too, that the masses would come over to the side of the Party. As long, that is, as it neither compromised with the Provisional Government nor engaged in an attempt to overthrow it before the workers and soldiers of Russia were ready for this.

The April Theses also had repercussions worldwide. Breaking with a view of the Russian Revolution as an isolated national event, the Party now fought for the Russian workers to stand in the vanguard of the international revolution. As Lenin told the April Conference that endorsed his line: 'The great honour of striking the first blow has fallen to the Russian proletariat, but we should never forget that its progress and revolution are but part of a world-wide and growing revolutionary movement which is daily becoming more powerful . . . We cannot see our task in any other light.'

In the Bolshevik Party, Lenin had forged an instrument for revolution that had been tempered by years of struggle, both theoretical and practical, both internal and external. This Party was, despite the waverings of leaders like Kamenev, a revolutionary party receptive to the needs of the revolution. Moreover, it was an internally democratic party that could be won to change its positions, even its most hallowed ones, in order to serve the revolution and the working class. The triumph of Lenin's line reflected the strength of the Party itself and not just Lenin's genius.

As Trotsky put it: 'The revolutionary tradition of the Party, the pressure of the workers from below and Lenin's criticism from above, compelled the upper stratum during the months of April and May, employing the words of Stalin, 'to come out on a new road'.

## Appendix

The main points of the April Theses:

1) The war remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government. In view of the undoubted honesty of those broad sections of the mass believers in revolutionary defencism it is necessary with particular thoroughness, persistence and patience to explain their error to them, to explain the inseparable connection between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that without overthrowing capital it is impossible to

end the war by a truly democratic peace, a peace not imposed by violence.

The most widespread campaign for this view must be organised in the army at the front. Fraternisation.

2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is passing from the first stage of the revolution which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to its second stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.

3) No support for the Provisional Government;

4) The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the only possible form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, as long as this government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent explanation of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority, we carry on the work of criticising and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the people may overcome their mistakes by experience.

5) Not a parliamentary republic; to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step, but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy. The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6) The weight of emphasis in the agrarian programme to be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies. Confiscation of all landed estates. Nationalisation of all lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies.

8) It is not our immediate task to 'introduce' socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the control of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

9) Party tasks: (a) Immediate convocation of a Party congress (b) Alteration of the Party Programme, on the question of imperialism and the imperialist war, on our demand for a 'commune state'. Amendment of our out-of-date minimum programme. Change of the Party's name, from Social Democrat to Communist.

10. A new International.

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