

Josef Stalin

2. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

From this theme I take the three main questions: (a) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution; (b) the dictatorship of the proletariat as the domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie; (c) the Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

I. *The dictatorship of the proletariat as the instrument of the proletarian revolution.* The question of the proletarian dictatorship is above all a question of the main content of the proletarian revolution. The proletarian revolution, its movement, its scope, and its achievements acquire flesh and blood only through the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the proletarian revolution, its organ, its most important mainstay, brought into being for the purpose of, firstly, crushing the resistance of the overthrown exploiters and consolidating the achievements of the proletarian revolution, and, secondly, carrying the proletarian revolution to its completion, carrying the revolution to the complete victory of Socialism. The revolution can vanquish the bourgeoisie, can overthrow its power, without the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the revolution will be unable to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, to maintain its victory, and push forward to the final victory of Socialism unless at a certain stage in its development, it creates a special organ in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat as its principal mainstay.

‘The fundamental question of revolution is the question of power.’ (*Lenin.*) Does this mean that all that is required is to assume power, to seize it? No, it does not mean that. The seizure of power is only the beginning. For many reasons the bourgeoisie that is overthrown in one country remains for a long time stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it. Therefore, the whole point is to retain power, to consolidate it, to make it invincible. What is needed to attain this? To attain this it is necessary to carry out at least the three main tasks that confront the dictatorship of the proletariat ‘on the morrow’ of victory:

(a) to break the resistance of the landlords and capitalists who have been overthrown and expropriated by the revolution, to liquidate every attempt on their part to restore the power of capital;

(b) to organize construction in such a way as to rally all the labouring people

around the proletariat, and to carry on this work along the lines of preparing for the liquidation, the abolition of classes;

(c) to arm the revolution, to organize the army of the revolution for the struggle against foreign enemies, for the struggle against imperialism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is needed to carry out, to fulfill these tasks.

The transition from capitalism to Communism [says Lenin] represents an entire historical epoch. Until this epoch has terminated, the exploiters will inevitably cherish the hope of restoration, and this *hope* will be converted into *attempts* at restoration. And after their first serious defeat, the overthrown exploiters—who had not expected their overthrow, never believed it possible, never conceded the thought of it—will throw themselves with tenfold energy, with furious passion and hatred grown a hundredfold, into the battle for the recovery of their lost ‘paradise’, on behalf of their families, who had been leading such a sweet and easy life and whom now the ‘common herd’ is condemning to ruin and destitution (or to ‘common’ work)... In the train of the capitalist exploiters will be found the broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie, with regard to whom the historical experience of every country for decades testifies that they vacillate and hesitate, one day marching behind the proletariat and the next day taking fright at the difficulties of the revolution; that they become panic-stricken at the first defeat or semi-defeat of the workers, grow nervous, run about aimlessly, snivel and rush from one camp to the other. (Lenin, *Selected Works*. Vii. 140-41.)

And the bourgeoisie has its grounds for making attempts at restoration, because for a long time after its overthrow it remains stronger than the proletariat which has overthrown it.

If the exploiters are defeated in one country only [says Lenin] and this, of course, is typical, since a simultaneous revolution in a number of countries is a rare exception, they *still* remain *stronger* than the exploited. (Ibid, p. 140.)

Wherein lies the strength of the overthrown bourgeoisie?

Firstly, ‘in the strength of the international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie.’ (Lenin, *Selected Works*, x. 60.)

Secondly, in the fact that

for a long time after the revolution the exploiters inevitably continue to enjoy a number of great practical advantages: they still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money all at once), some movable property—often fairly considerable: they still have various connections, habits of organization and management, knowledge of all the ‘secrets’ (customs, methods, means, and possibilities) of management, superior education, close connection with the higher technical personnel (who live and think like the bourgeoisie), incomparably greater experience in the art of war (this is very important), and so one, and so forth. (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 140.)

Thirdly,

in the *force of habit*, in the strength of *small-scale production*. For unfortunately, there is still very, very much of small-scale production left in the world, and small-scale production *engenders* capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale;... [for] the abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists—that we accomplished with comparative ease: it means also *getting rid of the small commodity producers*, and they *cannot be driven out*, they cannot be crushed, we must live *in harmony* with them; they can (and must) be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organization work. (Lenin, *Selected Works*, x. 60, 83.)

That is why Lenin says:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a *more powerful* enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased *tenfold* by its overthrow;... [that] the dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle—sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and traditions of the old society. (Lenin, *Selected Works*, x. 60, 84.)

It need hardly be proved that there is not the slightest possibility of carrying out these tasks in a short period, of doing all this in a few years. Therefore, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the transition from capitalism to Communism, must not be regarded as a fleeting period of ‘super-revolutionary’ acts and decrees, but as an entire historical era, replete with civil wars and external conflicts, with persistent organizational work and economic construction, with

advances and retreats, victories and defeats. This historical era is needed not only to create the economic and cultural prerequisites for the complete victory of Socialism, but also to enable the proletariat, first, to educate itself and become steeled as a force capable of governing the country, and, secondly, to re-educate and remould the petty-bourgeois strata along such lines as will assure the organization of Socialist production.

Marx said to the workers:

You will have to go through fifteen, twenty, or fifty years of civil wars and international conflicts, not only to change existing conditions, but also to change yourselves and to make yourselves capable of wielding political power.

Continuing and developing Marx's idea still further, Lenin wrote that it will be necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat to re-educate 'millions of peasants and small proprietors and hundreds of thousands of office employees, officials and bourgeois intellectuals', to subordinate 'all these to the proletarian state and to proletarian leadership', to overcome 'their bourgeois habits and traditions... just as it will be necessary '...to re-educate—in a protracted struggle, on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences'. (Lenin, *Selected Works*, x. 157, 156.)

2. The dictatorship of the proletariat as the domination of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

From the foregoing it is evident that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of personalities in the government, a change of 'cabinet', etc., leaving the old economic and political order intact. The Mensheviks and opportunists of all countries, who fear dictatorship like fire and in their fright substitute the concept 'conquest of power' for the concept 'dictatorship of the proletariat', usually reduce the meaning of 'conquest of power' to a change of 'cabinet', to the accession to power of a new ministry made up of people like Scheidemann and Noske, MacDonald and Henderson. It is hardly necessary to explain that these and similar cabinet changes have nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the conquest of real power by the real proletariat. The MacDonalds and Scheidemanns in power, while the old bourgeois order is allowed to remain, their so-called governments cannot be anything else than an apparatus serving the bourgeoisie, a screen to hide the ulcers of imperialism, a weapon in the

hands of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary movement of the oppressed and exploited masses. Capital needs such governments as a screen when it finds it inconvenient, unprofitable, difficult to oppress and exploit the masses without the aid of a screen. Of course, the appearance of such governments is a symptom that 'over there' (i.e., in the capitalist camp) 'all is not quiet at the Shipka Pass'; nevertheless, governments of this kind necessarily remain governments of capital in disguise. The government of a MacDonald or a Scheidemann is as far removed from the conquest of power by the proletariat as the sky from the earth. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not a mere change of government, but a new State, with new organs of power, both central and local; it is the State of the proletariat, which has arisen on the ruins of the old State, the State of the bourgeoisie.

The dictatorship of the proletariat arises not on the basis of the bourgeois order, but in the process of the breaking up of this order after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, in the process of the expropriation of the landlords and capitalists, in the process of the socialization of the principal instruments and means of production, in the process of a violent proletarian revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a revolutionary power based on the use of force against the bourgeoisie.

The State is a machine in the hands of the ruling class for suppressing the resistance of its class enemies. *In this respect* the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian State is a machine for the suppression of the Bourgeoisie. But there is one *substantial* difference. The difference consists in the fact that all hitherto existing class States have been dictatorships of an exploiting minority over the exploited majority, whereas the dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.

Briefly: *the dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force—of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses. (The State and Revolution.)*

From this follow two main conclusions:

First conclusion: the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be 'complete' democracy, democracy for *all*, for the rich as well as for the poor; the dictatorship of the proletariat 'must be a State that is democratic *in a new way—for* the proletarians and the propertyless in general—and dictatorial *in a new way—against* the bourgeoisie...' (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 34.) The talk of Kautsky and Co, about universal equality, about 'pure' democracy, about 'perfect' democracy, and the like, is but a bourgeois screen to conceal the indubitable fact that equality between exploited and exploiters is impossible. The theory of 'pure' democracy is the theory of the upper

stratum of the working class, which has been broken in and is being fed by the imperialist robbers. It was brought into being for the purpose of concealing the ulcers of capitalism, of touching up imperialism and lending it moral strength in the struggle against the exploited masses. Under capitalism there are no real 'liberties' for the exploited, nor can there be, if for no other reason than that the premises, printing plants, paper supplies, etc., indispensable for the actual enjoyment of 'liberties' are the privilege of the exploiters. Under capitalism the exploited masses do not, nor can they, really participate in the administration of the country, if for no other reason than that, even under the most democratic regime, governments, under the conditions of capitalism, are not set up by the people but by the Rothschilds and Stinneses, the Rockefellers and Morgans. Democracy under capitalism is *capitalist* democracy, the democracy of the exploiting minority, based on the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority, and directed against this majority. Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat are real 'liberties' for the exploited and real participation in the administration of the country by the proletarians and peasants possible. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is proletarian democracy, the democracy of the exploited majority, based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

Second conclusion: The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot arise as the result of the peaceful development of bourgeois society and of bourgeois democracy; it can arise only as the result of the smashing of the bourgeois State machine, the bourgeois army, the bourgeois bureaucratic machine, the bourgeois police.

In a preface to *The Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote: 'The working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machine and wield it for its own purposes.'

In a letter to Kugelmann (1871) Marx wrote that the task of the proletarian revolution is 'no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and that is a preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the Continent'.

Marx's qualifying phrase about the Continent gave the opportunists and Mensheviks of all countries a pretext for proclaiming that Marx had thus conceded the possibility of the peaceful evolution of the bourgeois democracy into a proletarian democracy, at least in certain countries outside the European continent (England, America). Marx did in fact concede that possibility, and he had good grounds for conceding it in regard to England and America in the seventies of the last century, when monopoly capitalism and imperialism did not yet exist, and when these countries, owing to the special conditions of their development, had as yet no developed militarism and bureaucracy. That was the situation before the appearance of developed

imperialism. But later, after a lapse of thirty or forty years, when the situation in these countries had radically changed, when imperialism had developed and had embraced all capitalist countries without exception, when militarism and bureaucracy had appeared in England and America also, when the special conditions for peaceful development in England and the United States had disappeared—then the qualification in regard to these countries necessarily could no longer hold good.

Today [said Lenin] in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, this qualification made by Marx is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon ‘liberty’, in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy were absent, have slid down entirely into the all-European, filthy, bloody, morass of military-bureaucratic institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything underfoot. Today, both in England and America, the ‘preliminary condition for every real people’s revolution’ is the smashing, the *destruction* of the ‘ready-made State machine’ (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general ‘European’ imperialist perfection). (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 37.)

In other words, the law of violent proletarian revolution, the law of the smashing of the bourgeois State machine as a preliminary condition for such a revolution, is an inevitable law of the revolutionary movement in the imperialist countries of the world.

Of course, in the remote future, if the proletariat is victorious in the most important capitalist countries, and if the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a Socialist encirclement, a ‘peaceful’ path of development is quite possible for certain capitalist countries, whose capitalists, in view of the ‘unfavourable’ international situation, will consider it expedient ‘voluntarily’ to make substantial concessions to the proletariat. But this supposition applies only to a remote and possible future. With regard to the immediate future, there is no ground whatsoever for the supposition.

Therefore, Lenin is right in saying: ‘The proletarian revolution is impossible without the forcible destruction of the bourgeois State machine and the substitution for it of a *new one*...’ (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 124.)

3. *The Soviet power as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.* The victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat signifies the suppression of the bourgeoisie, the smashing of the bourgeois State machine, and the substitution of proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy.

That is clear. But by means of what organizations can this colossal task be carried out? The old forms of organization of the proletariat, which grew up on the basis of bourgeois parliamentarism, are inadequate for this task—of that there can hardly be any doubt. What then, are the new forms of organization of the proletariat that are capable of serving as the grave-diggers of the bourgeois State machine, that are capable not only of smashing this machine, not only of substituting proletarian democracy for bourgeois democracy, but also of becoming the foundation of the proletarian State power?

This new form of organization of the proletariat is the Soviets.

Wherein lies the strength of the Soviets as compared with the old forms of organization?

In that the Soviets are the most *all-embracing* mass organizations of the proletariat, for they and they alone embrace all workers without exception.

In that the Soviets are the *only* mass organizations which embrace all the oppressed and exploited, workers and peasants, soldiers and sailors, and in which the vanguard of the masses, the proletariat, can, for this reason, most easily and most completely exercise its political leadership of the mass struggle.

In that the Soviets are the *most powerful organs* of the revolutionary struggle of the masses, of the political actions of the masses, of the insurrection of the masses—organs capable of breaking the omnipotence of finance capital and of its political appendages.

In that the Soviets are the *immediate* organizations of the masses themselves, i.e., they are *the most democratic* and therefore the most authoritative organizations of the masses, which facilitate to the utmost their participation in the work of building up the new state and in its administration, and which bring into full play the revolutionary energy, initiative, and creative abilities of the masses in the struggle for the destruction of the old order, in the struggle for the new, proletarian order.

The Soviet power is the amalgamation and formation of the local Soviets into one common State organization, into the State organization of the proletariat as the vanguard of the oppressed and exploited masses and as the ruling class—their amalgamation into the republic of Soviets.

The essence of the Soviet power is contained in the fact that these organizations of a most pronounced mass character, these most revolutionary organizations of precisely those classes that were oppressed by the capitalists and landlords, are not the '*permanent and sole* basis of the whole power of the State, of the whole State apparatus': that 'precisely those masses which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics while being equal in law, have in fact been prevented by thousands of tricks and devices from taking part in political life and from enjoying democratic

rights and liberties, are no drawn unfailingly into *constant* and, moreover, *decisive* participation in the democratic administration of the State.’ (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 231.)

This is why the Soviet power is a *new form* of State organization, different in principle from the old bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary form, a *new type* of State, adapted not to the task of exploiting and oppressing the labouring masses, but to the task of completely emancipating them from all oppression and exploitation, to the tasks facing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin rightly says that with the appearance of the Soviet power ‘the era of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism has come to an end, and a new chapter in world history—the era of proletarian dictatorship—has commenced’.

What are the characteristic features of the Soviet power?

The Soviet power has a most pronounced mass character and is the most democratic State organization of all possible State organizations while classes continue to exist; for, being the arena of the bond and collaboration between the workers and the exploited peasants in their struggle against the exploiters, and basing itself in its work on this bond and on this collaboration, it represents, by virtue of this, the power of the majority of the population over the minority, it is the state of the majority, the expression of its dictatorship.

The Soviet power is the most internationalist of all State organizations in class society, for, since it destroys every kind of nation oppression and rests on the collaboration of the labouring masses of the various nationalities, it facilitates, by virtue of this, the amalgamation of these masses into a single State union.

The Soviet power, by its very structure, facilitates the task of leading the oppressed and exploited masses for the vanguard of these masses—for the proletariat, as the most consolidated and most class-conscious core of the Soviets.

‘The experience of all revolutions and of all movements of the oppressed classes, the experience of the world Socialist movement teaches’, says Lenin, ‘that the proletariat alone is able to unite and lead the scattered and backward strata of the toiling and exploited population.’ (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii. 232.) The structure of the Soviet power facilitates the practical application of the lessons drawn from this experience.

The Soviet power, by combining the legislative and executive functions in a single State body and replacing territorial electoral constituencies by industrial units, factories, and mills thereby directly links the workers and the labouring masses in general with the apparatus of State administration, teaches them how to administer the country.

The Soviet power alone is capable of releasing the army from its subordination to bourgeois command and of converting it from the instrument of oppression of the people which it is under the bourgeois order into an instrument for the liberation of the people from the yoke of the bourgeoisie, both native and foreign.

‘The Soviet organization of the State alone is capable of immediately and effectively smashing and finally destroying the old, i.e., the bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus.’ (Ibid.)

The Soviet form of State alone, by drawing the mass organizations of the toilers and exploited into constant and unrestricted participation in State administration, is capable of preparing the ground for the withering away of the State, which is one of the basic elements of the future Stateless Communist society.

The republic of Soviets is thus the political form, so long sought and finally discovered, within the framework of which the economic emancipation of the proletariat, the complete victory of Socialism, is to be accomplished.

The Paris Commune was the embryo of this form; the Soviet power is its development and culmination.

Hence the three main aspects of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

1. The utilization of the power of the proletariat for the suppression of the exploiters, for the defence of the country, for the consolidation of the ties with the proletarians of other lands, and for the development and the victory of the revolution in all countries.

2. The utilization of the power of the proletariat in order to detach the toiling and exploited masses once and for all from the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the alliance of the proletariat with these masses, to enlist these masses for the work of Socialist construction, and to ensure the State leadership of these masses by the proletariat.

3. The utilization of the power of the proletariat for the organization of Socialism, for the abolition of classes, for the transition to a society without classes, to a society without a State.

The proletarian dictatorship is a combination of all three aspects. Not one of these three aspects can be advanced as the *sole* characteristic feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the other hand, it is sufficient, under the conditions of capitalist encirclement, that even on of these three features be lacking for the dictatorship of the proletariat to cease being a dictatorship. Therefore, not one of these three aspects can be omitted without running the risk of distorting the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only all these three aspects taken together give us a complete and finished concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat has its periods, its special forms, diverse methods, of work. During the period of civil war, the violent side of the dictatorship is most conspicuous. But it by no means follows from this that no constructive work is carried on during the period of civil war. Without constructive work it is impossible wage civil war. During the period of Socialist construction on the other hand, the peaceful organizational, and cultural work of the dictatorship, revolutionary law, etc., are most conspicuous. But here, again, it by no means follows that the violent side of the dictatorship has fallen away, or can fall away, in the period of construction. The organs of suppression, the army and other organizations, are as necessary now, in the period of construction, as they were during the period of civil war. Without these organs, constructive work by the dictatorship with any degree of security would be impossible. It should not be forgotten that for the time being the revolution has been victorious in only one country. It should not be forgotten that as long as the capitalist encirclement exists the danger of intervention, with all the consequences resulting from this danger, will exist.

3. Socialism in One Country

What do we mean by the *possibility* of the victory of Socialism in one country?

We mean the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the aid of the internal forces of our country, the possibility of the proletariat assuming power and using that power to build a complete Socialist society in our country, with the sympathy and the support of the proletarians of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

Without such a possibility, the building of Socialism is building without prospects, building without being sure that Socialism will be built. It is no use building Socialism without being sure that we can build it, without being sure that the technical backwardness of our country is not an *insuperable* obstacle to the building of a complete Socialist society. To deny such a possibility is to display lack of faith in the cause of building Socialism, to abandon Leninism.

What do we mean by the *impossibility* of the complete, final victory of Socialism in one country without the victory of the revolution in other countries?

We mean the impossibility of having full guarantees against intervention, and consequently against the restoration of the bourgeois order, without the victory of the revolution in at least a number of countries. To deny this indisputable thesis is to abandon internationalism, to abandon Leninism...

For what else is our country, 'the country that is building Socialism', if not the base of the world revolution? But can it be a real base of the world revolution if it is incapable of building Socialist society? Can it remain the mighty centre of attraction for the workers of all countries that it undoubtedly is now, if it is incapable of achieving victory over the capitalist elements in its economy, the victory of Socialist construction? I think not. But does it not follow from this that skepticism regarding the victory of Socialist construction, the dissemination of this skepticism, will lead to our country being discredited as the base of the world revolution? And if our country is discredited the world revolutionary movement will be weakened. How did Messrs the Social Democrats try to scare the workers away from us? By preaching that 'the Russians will get nowhere'. Wherewith do we beat the Social Democrats now, when we attract numerous workers' delegations to our country and thereby strengthen the position of Communism all over the world? By our successes in building Socialism. Is it not obvious, then that whoever disseminates skepticism regarding our successes in building Socialism thereby indirectly helps the Social Democrats, reduces the sweep of the international revolutionary movement, and inevitably departs from internationalism...?

4. Revolution from Above

Marxism holds that the transition of a language from an old quality to a new does not take place by way of an explosion, by the destruction of an existing language and the creation of a new one, but by the gradual accumulation of the elements of the new quality, and, hence, by the gradual dying away of the elements of the old quality.

It should be said in general for the benefit of comrades who have an infatuation for such explosions that the law of transition from an old quality to a new by means of an explosion is inapplicable not only to the history of the development of languages; it is not always applicable to some other social phenomena of a basal or superstructural character. It is compulsory for a society divided into hostile classes. But it is not at all compulsory for a society which has no hostile classes. In a period of eight to ten years we effected a transition in the agriculture of our country from the bourgeois individual-peasant system to the Socialist, collective-farm system. This was a revolution which eliminated the old bourgeois economic system in the countryside and created a new Socialist system. But this revolution did not take place by means of an explosion, that is, by the overthrow of the existing power and the creation of a new power, but by a gradual transition from the old bourgeois system of the countryside to a new system. And we succeeded

in doing this because it was a revolution from above, because the revolution was accomplished on the initiative of the existing power with the support of the overwhelming mass of the peasantry...

Further, the superstructure is a product of the base; but this does not mean that it merely reflects the base, that it is passive, neutral, indifferent to the fate of its base, to the fate of the classes, to the character of the system. On the contrary, no sooner does it arise than it becomes an exceedingly active force, actively assisting its base to take shape and consolidate itself, and doing everything it can to help the new system finish off and eliminate the old base and the old classes.

It cannot be otherwise. The base creates the superstructure precisely in order that it may serve it, that it may actively help it to take shape and consolidate itself, that it may actively strive for the elimination of the old, moribund base and its old superstructure. The superstructure has only to renounce its role of auxiliary, it has only to pass from a position of active defense of its base to one of indifference toward it, to adopt the same attitude to all classes, and it loses its virtue and ceases to be a superstructure.

5. Wars Between Capitalist Nations

Some comrades hold that, owing to the development of a new international conditions since the Second World War, wars between capitalist countries have ceased to be inevitable. They consider that the contradictions between the Socialist camp and the capitalist camp are more acute than the contradictions among the capitalist countries; that the USA has brought the other capitalist countries sufficiently under its sway to be able to prevent them going to war among themselves and weakening one another; that the foremost capitalist minds have been sufficiently taught by the two world wars and the severe damage they have caused to the whole capitalist world not to venture to involve the capitalist countries in war with one another again—and that, because of all of this, wars between capitalist countries are no longer inevitable.

These comrades are mistaken. They see the outward phenomena that come and go on the surface, but they do not see those profound forces which, although they are so far operating imperceptibly, will nevertheless determine the course of developments.

Outwardly, everything would seem to be 'going well': the USA has put Western Europe, Japan, and other capitalist countries on rations; Germany (Western), Britain, France, Italy, and Japan have fallen into the clutches of the USA and are meekly obeying its commands. But it would be mistaken to think that things can continue to 'go well' for 'all eternity', that these countries will tolerate the domination and oppression of the United States endlessly, that they will

not endeavour to tear loose from American bondage and take the path of independent development.

Take, first of all, Britain and France. Undoubtedly, they are imperialist countries. Undoubtedly, cheap raw materials and secure markets are of paramount importance to them. Can it be assumed that they will endlessly tolerate the present situation, in which, under the guise of 'Marshall Plan aid', Americans are penetrating into the economies of Britain and France and trying to convert them into adjuncts of the United States economy, and American capital is seizing raw materials and markets in the British and French colonies and thereby plotting disaster for the high profits of the British and French capitalists? Would it not be truer to say that capitalist Britain and, after her, capitalist France will be compelled in the end to break from the embrace of the USA and enter into conflict with it in order to secure an independent position and, of course, high profits?

Let us pass to the major vanquished countries, Germany (Western) and Japan. These countries are now languishing in misery under the jackboot of American imperialism. Their industry and agriculture, their trade, their foreign and home policies, and their whole life are fettered by the American occupation 'regime'. Yet only yesterday these countries were great imperialist powers and were shaking the foundations of the domination of Britain, the USA and France in Europe and Asia. To think that these countries will not try to get on their feet again, will not try to smash the US 'regime', and force their way to independent development, is to believe in miracles.

It is said the contradictions between capitalism and socialism are stronger than the contradictions among the capitalist countries. Theoretically, of course, that is true. It is not only true now, today; it was true before the Second World War. And it was more or less realized by the leaders of the capitalist countries. Yet the Second World War began not as a war with the USSR, but as a war between capitalist countries. Why? Firstly, because war with the USSR, as a socialist land, is more dangerous to capitalism than war between capitalist countries; for whereas war between capitalist countries puts in question only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others, war with the USSR must certainly put in question the existence of capitalism itself. Secondly, because the capitalists, although they clamour, for 'propaganda' purposes, about the aggressiveness of the Soviet Union, do not themselves believe that it is aggressive, because they are aware of the Soviet Union's peaceful policy and know that it will not itself attack capitalist countries.

After the First World War it was similarly believed that Germany had been definitely put out of action, just as certain comrades now believe that Japan and Germany have been definitely

put out of action. Then, too, it was said and clamoured in the press that the United States had put Europe on rations; that Germany would never rise to her feet again, and that there would be no more wars between capitalist countries. In spite of this, Germany rose to her feet again as a great power within the space of some fifteen or twenty years after her defeat, having broken out of bondage and taken the path of independent development. And it is significant that it was none other than Britain and the United States that helped Germany to recover economically and enhance her economic war potential. Of course, when the United States and Britain assisted Germany's economic recovery, they did so with a view to setting a recovered Germany against the Soviet Union, to utilizing her against the land of Socialism. But Germany directed her forces in the first place against the Anglo-French-American bloc. And when Hitler Germany declared war on the Soviet Union, the Anglo-French-American bloc, far from joining with the Hitler Germany, was compelled to enter into a coalition with the USSR against Hitler Germany.

Consequently, the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors proved in practice to be stronger than the contradictions between the capitalist camp and the Socialist camp.

What guarantee is there, then, that Germany and Japan will not rise to their feet again, will not attempt to break out of American bondage and live their own independent lives? I think there is no such guarantee.

But it follows from this that the inevitability of wars between capitalist countries remains in force.

It is said that Lenin's thesis that imperialism inevitably generates war must now be regarded as obsolete, since powerful popular forces have come forward today in defence of peace and against another world war. That is not true.

The object of the present movement is to rouse the masses of the people to fight for the preservation of peace and for the prevention of another world war. Consequently, the aim of this movement is not to overthrow capitalism and establish Socialism—it confines itself to the democratic aim of preserving peace. In this respect, the present-day peace movement differs from the movement of the time of the First World War for the conversion of the imperialist war into Civil war, since the latter movement went farther and pursued Socialist aims.

It is possible that in a definite conjuncture of circumstances the fight for peace will develop here or there into a fight for Socialism. But then it will no longer be the present-day peace movement; it will be a movement for the overthrow of capitalism.

What is more likely is that the present-day peace movement, as a movement for the preservation of peace, will, if it succeeds, result in preventing a *particular* war, in its temporary

postponement, in the temporary preservation of a *particular* peace, in the resignation of a bellicose government and its supersession by another that is prepared temporarily to keep the peace. That, of course, will be good. Even very good. But, all the same, it will not be enough to eliminate the inevitability of wars between capitalist countries generally. It will not be enough, because, for all the successes of the peace movement, imperialism will remain, continue in force—and, consequently, the inevitability of wars will also continue in force.

To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism.