

# Marxism versus holy script

There are those on the left who still insist, for their own peculiar reasons, on getting the history of Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution radically wrong. Jack Conrad replies to Jim Creegan

**M**arxism is scientific in the sense of being rational, systematic, enquiring, dynamic and open-ended. The very antithesis of religion. Yet there are those on the left who dogmatically regurgitate tired, discredited, versions of history, those who fearfully deny screamingly obvious facts, those who close already narrowed minds to new arguments and new evidence ... and dare to call their results 'Marxism'. Jim Creegan writing about the Lenin, Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution is a sad case in point.

His article, 'Different perspectives, different objectives', is an object lesson in how *not* to investigate history.<sup>1</sup> He simply refuses to understand the standing programme of the Bolsheviks; he naively pictures Lenin as surrounding himself with dim-witted, backsliding, politically hopeless individuals; he insists on turning tactical disagreements, passing misunderstandings - even differences of temperament, natural in the leadership of any real working class party - into matters of the highest principle.

In other words, comrade Creegan treats Leon Trotsky's factionally motivated essay, *Lessons of October* (1924), as holy script. He does so, naturally, with the best possible intentions. Trotsky is Joseph Stalin's most famous, most influential, leftwing opponent. And, of course, Stalin - the personification of the counterrevolution within the revolution - presided over the physical extermination of the old Bolsheviks in the 1930s, not least Lenin's closest lieutenants ... and millions of others besides. So comrade Creegan despises Stalin with a passion. By equal measure he adores Trotsky.

It is more than ironic then, that with the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) - short course* (1939), we find Stalin - widely accepted as the main author of this notorious work of truths, half-truths and downright lies - pirating Trotsky's account of 1917. The story of Lenin, the towering genius of the revolution, one of history's great men, returning from his Swiss exile and having to strong-arm an utterly disorientated Bolshevik Party into accepting his "brilliant plan of struggle for the transition from the bourgeois democratic to the socialist revolution", of the opposition of Kamenev, Rykov, Pyatakov and their "types", of how Zinoviev and Kamenev "betrayed" the plan for the armed uprising - all that suited Stalin admirably.<sup>2</sup> As might be expected, Stalin foregrounds himself and reduces Trotsky to a bit-part player. Nonetheless, the original story is impossible to hide. When it comes to 1917 the *Short course* is a palimpsest of *Lessons of October*.

Let us flesh out Trotsky's 1924 narrative. According to Trotsky, the old Bolsheviks called for a proletarian-led overthrow of tsarism ... but they then wanted to limit social and political tasks to those of a "bourgeois democratic revolution".<sup>3</sup> Socialism - ie, working class rule, leaving wage labour behind and introducing production for need - was



**Peasants set the limits (1921 poster)**

categorically ruled out due to impoverished material circumstances and the overwhelming peasant majority. Moreover - again according to the Trotsky of 1924 - faced with the 1917 February revolution, the actual overthrow of tsarism, and workers and soldiers establishing their soviets, the Bolshevik leadership *within Russia* proved worse than useless (when it comes to 1917, in this article we shall stick to the Julian calendar, because the key moments are generally known by their old monthly dates).

Under the duumvirate of Lev Kamenev and Joseph Stalin, which lasted only a matter of weeks, the commitment to the "bourgeois democratic revolution" continued undiminished. Because of this "ossified" formulation Kamenev and Stalin flatly

rejected mounting rank-and-file demands to overthrow the Provisional government. Like the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, the Bolsheviks merely wanted to exert "pressure" on the Provisional government and "remain within the framework of the bourgeois democratic regime".<sup>4</sup> So reckoned Trotsky in 1924.

The Provisional government was, of course, not only initially stuffed full of capitalist ministers, but committed itself to continuing tsarist foreign policy and the predatory war with the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman empire and Bulgaria). Inexorably, the Bolsheviks, therefore, found themselves swept along by the prevailing mood of "revolutionary defencism". An outcome, which, we are told, logically flowed

from the deeply flawed theory of stages - a "scholastic parody of Marxism" that can be traced back to the Emancipation of Labour group in the 1880s.<sup>5</sup>

This theory of stages insisted that Russia would have to undergo two distinct revolutions. The model is England, Holland, America and France. First stage - a bourgeois democratic revolution, which does away with tsarism. Second stage - after a considerable time delay - the socialist revolution comes onto the agenda.

Comrade Creegan sees Bolshevism entirely through Trotsky's 1924 lens. Hence he has Lenin, in his *Two tactics of social democracy* (July 1905), making it *perfectly* clear that he "regarded the democratic dictatorship" of the proletariat and peasantry, to be "no more than a temporary interlude between tsarism and a bourgeois republic".<sup>6</sup> Comrade Creegan knows this because he has come across an article of Lenin's ... dated March 30 1905!

Assuming that Lenin's perspective of establishing a revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry equates with a *provisional* revolutionary government, there can be no doubt about the temporary nature of such a regime. 'Provisional' means temporary. In March 1905 Lenin writes of implementing the "sum-total of democratic changes envisaged in our minimum programme" in months. Though he also expects revolution in Russia to be the "prelude to the socialist revolution in Europe".<sup>7</sup>

However, revolution teaches. And 1905 was a year of revolution. After January 9, Bloody Sunday, popular consciousness, discipline and fighting capacity grew in leaps and bounds. Party ranks expanded to truly mass proportions. And experience of open politics, press freedom, general strikes, militant street demonstrations and contesting soviet elections provided the raw material for an evolution, a development of grand strategy. Ambitions rise above old assumptions. Leave aside, for the moment, Lenin's fully elaborated *Two tactics*. In June-July 1905 we find him sketching out the *possibility* of "peasants and workers" winning "the majority" in elections to a Constituent Assembly - hence the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry taking the form of a *constitutionally* enshrined revolutionary government ... which "sets Europe aflame".<sup>8</sup>

But we must not run ahead of ourselves. Let us stick to what comrade Creegan *wrongly* calls Lenin's "major prognosis" up to April 1917 (in fact his "major prognosis" up to June-July 1905). Having overthrown the tsarist regime, there quickly follows elections to a Constituent Assembly. The old assumption being that this results in a bourgeois government, a government which relies on peasant votes and presides over *normal* capitalist development. At some point in the somewhat distant future, economic progress creates a working class majority ... and therefore the possibility

# SUPPLEMENT

of socialist revolution. The “bourgeois democratic revolution” and the socialist revolution are entirely distinct, unconnected, separate. In other words, Lenin too advocated a “scholastic parody of Marxism”.

Comrade Creegan is, of course, far from alone in peddling what is a calumny.<sup>9</sup> In actual fact, as I will once again show, the theory of stages was held not by the Bolsheviks, but the Mensheviks. Indeed they considered it impossible to “carry out a bourgeois revolution without the bourgeoisie”. An argument contemptuously dismissed by the 1917 Trotsky: “At first blush this idea would appear to be axiomatic. But in fact it is just a piece of stupidity.”<sup>10</sup>

However, in 1924 Trotsky was determined to paint the old Bolsheviks - ie, the pre-February 1917 cadre - in the colours of Menshevism. A version of history which allows him to claim that Lenin’s 1917 April theses represented a dramatic rupture with the orthodoxy of stagism. As recounted in *Lessons of October*, only “after the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd”, in early April, was the “problem of the conquest of power” put before the party.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the Trotsky of 1924 even claims that Lenin “came out furiously against the old Bolshevik slogan of the ‘democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’”.<sup>12</sup> Instead he proclaims “the socialist character of the revolution”.<sup>13</sup> An article of faith for modern-day followers of Trotsky ... and the heirs of Stalin alike. Writing in the *Morning Star*, Mary Davis says that, instead of the “bourgeois republic” he imagined in 1905, Lenin held out the prospect of a “full socialist state” in 1917.<sup>14</sup>

Though he never admitted it in any publication, speech, letter or telegram, Lenin had stolen, adopted - or maybe through his own gallant efforts independently arrived at - the theory of permanent revolution, as put forward by Trotsky in his *Results and prospects* (1906). That is the contention of the Trotsky of 1924 in his *Lessons of October*.

## Origins

*Lessons of October* began life as the introductory chapter to volume 3 of Trotsky’s never-to-be-completed *Collected works*.<sup>15</sup> However, it had nothing to do with dispassionate self-reflection. *Lessons of October* was a polemic ... and needs to be understood as such. It triggered, as doubtless Trotsky intended, the hard-fought ‘literary discussion’. Of course, this was no obscure dispute with the literati. A better term might be ‘literary wars’. Trotsky threw down a gauntlet and other prominent members of the Russian Communist Party - not least those on the politburo and central committee - duly piled in against him: Grigory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, Joseph Stalin, Alexei Rykov, Nikolai Bukharin, Nadezhda Krupskaya, etc.

Incidentally, because I refuse to declare myself a fully signed-up devotee of Leon Trotsky, comrade Creegan concludes that my writings on the Russian Revolution (and those of Lars T Lih) “succeed in adding to historical fictions a little too close for comfort to Stalinist hagiography”.<sup>16</sup> Strange and not a little eccentric. Actually, I can readily imagine myself siding with Trotsky’s 11th-hour call to combat bureaucracy and restore party democracy in 1924. Yet, having said that, it has to be admitted that when he was in a position of real power, when he was the prophet armed - say, between 1917 and 1922 - Trotsky showed precious little sympathy for democracy: eg, his proposal to militarise the trade unions. I am not standing in Olympian judgement. A civil war had to be won. But without the European revolution communists in Russia faced an impossible situation. Socialism in one isolated country inevitably turns into its opposite. By the way, anyone who wants to seriously engage with my ideas on the Soviet Union, I would advise having a look at my *Weekly Worker* supplement, ‘The place of the Soviet Union in history’ (the final chapter of a planned book).<sup>17</sup> Needless to say, the reader will find not a shred, not a trace of “Stalinist hagiography”.

Anyway, what concerns us here is Lenin, the standing programme of Bolshevism and the record of Lenin’s closest lieutenants. Though in *Lessons of October* Trotsky fulsomely praised the dead Lenin and spoke about “we Bolsheviks”, his main objective was to attack the standing programme of Bolshevism and demean Lenin’s closest lieutenants. As I have argued before, they were hardly going to take

that lying down. And, besides defending the standing programme of Bolshevism and their own sense of honour, they feared that Trotsky might well be contemplating a Bonapartist military coup. He had certainly set his sights on replacing, or at the very least augmenting, Leninism with Trotskyism.

Trotsky knew that his claim to be one of the “we Bolsheviks” were weak. The fact of the matter is that, though he managed to get back into Russia in May 1917, he did not join the Bolshevik Party till the August of that year. Understandably, Trotsky plays down the importance of the pre-1917 political struggles between the Bolsheviks and their rivals, crucially the Mensheviks. His whole account pivots on the concentrated 12 months of February 1917 to February 1918.

Naturally, all contributions to the literary discussion are marked by factional calculation. And, of course, that includes Trotsky’s *Lessons of October* (and his subsequent articles: eg, ‘Our differences’). However, what is notable is that even cold-war warriors have gladly echoed Trotsky. Not with any intention of glorifying him, obviously, but with the intention of dismissing, deriding and diminishing the Bolsheviks in general and Stalin in particular (albeit for entirely different reasons, compared with the anti-Stalin left).

Take Leonard Schapiro: he refers to the Bolsheviks’ all-Russian conference held in March 1917 (the first since the fall of tsarism). Schapiro quotes, *very sparingly*, the agreed resolution on the Bolsheviks’ attitude towards the Provisional government (the reporter for the central committee happened to be Stalin). That resolution called for “vigilant control” over the Provisional government and celebrated the Petrograd soviet as the “beginning of revolutionary power”. Schapiro then, taking his cue from Trotsky, proceeds to claim that Stalin’s approach was “based on the assumption, which no-one questioned, that a long period of bourgeois middle class democratic government had now begun, and that the dictatorship of the proletariat only related to the distant future”.<sup>18</sup> In other words, Schapiro, like Trotsky, accuses the Bolsheviks of *de facto* Menshevism.

With the *Lessons of October*, Trotsky launched a battle of ideas. In effect he sought to win the Russian Communist Party and the Communist International to what had long been called Trotskyism. His main targets were Zinoviev and Kamenev. Note, Trotsky rather foolishly dismissed Stalin as little more than a grey blur. He chose not to mention him in *Lessons of October*. Stalin was, in Trotsky’s eyes, a nonentity who was far less dangerous to the prospects of the revolution than, firstly, Zinoviev and Kamenev and, then, Bukharin. Of course, later in 1926 there was a Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev rapprochement. Together they formed the United Opposition. However, even in the late 1920s, Trotsky’s slogan was: “With Stalin against Bukharin? Yes. With Bukharin against Stalin? Never.”<sup>19</sup>

Although Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, Rykov, Bukharin, Krupskaya, etc lacked Trotsky’s natural brilliance as a writer, when it came to the burgeoning Lenin cult, he - that is, Trotsky - was objectively at a distinct disadvantage. Prior to 1917 he had been a dogged, albeit annoyingly talented, opponent of Lenin’s. Hence his unavoidable admission that he had “made real and major organisational mistakes”. However, the Trotsky of 1924 insists, Zinoviev and Kamenev committed their “real and major organisational mistakes” when it really mattered: in the revolutionary year of 1917, when the tactics appropriate to the underground, to the needs of surviving tsarism, gave way to the much more demanding tasks of preparing for an insurrection. Here - and it is true - Lenin and Trotsky proved audacious; Zinoviev and Kamenev cautious.

However, Trotsky’s non-Bolshevik past cannot so easily be disposed of. Certainly not if Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin, Rykov, Bukharin, Krupskaya, etc had anything to do with it. One after the other, they listed off and duly denounced Trotsky’s numerous anti-Bolshevik schemes and pronouncements.

eg, having belligerently sided with the Mensheviks, Trotsky broke with them in 1904, but remained on friendly terms. Indeed Trotsky dismissed the Bolshevik-Menshevik split as entirely needless. But he blamed “Maximilien Lenin” for the disunity.<sup>20</sup> In that semi-Menshevik spirit he became an inveterate unity-monger. In 1912 Trotsky famously brought together a motley crew of Bundists,

Menshevik liquidators and Bolshevik boycottists - the August bloc - in an attempt to sabotage the 6th (Prague) Conference of the Russian Socialist Democratic Labour Party. A move which an infuriated Lenin denounced as an attempt to “destroy the party”.<sup>21</sup>

Needless to say, when it came to the two really sizable factions of the RSDLP, it was the “uncultured”, “barbaric”, “sectarian-frenzied”, “Asiatic” Bolsheviks whom the thoroughly “European” Trotsky considered the biggest obstacle to the unprincipled unity he was desperately seeking. Not surprisingly then, he denounced Leninism as “being built on lies and falsification” and containing the “seeds of its own destruction”.<sup>22</sup> Phrases eagerly pounced upon in the literary discussion by Trotsky’s opponents.

By contrast, of course, since 1903, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin were Lenin’s loyal disciples and co-workers. During the struggle of *Iskra* to form the party; the bitter fallout after the RSDLP’s 2nd Congress; the 1905 revolutionary dress rehearsal; the election campaigns of 1906, 1907 and 1912; they were at Lenin’s side. And naturally Lenin trusted and valued them. Not that Lenin’s loyal disciples and co-workers were mere instruments of his will. While Lenin was admired, maybe even hero-worshipped by some as the “ultimate inspired and inspiring leader”,<sup>23</sup> they, the loyal disciples and co-workers, were in and of themselves capable, intelligent and opinionated. That meant different assessments, sharp arguments ... and minorities becoming majorities, and majorities becoming minorities.

In April 1917, Lenin clashed with Kamenev and Stalin (though I believe there was a genuine Lenin-Kamenev convergence too - more of this below). And in October 1917, there can be no doubt, Zinoviev and Kamenev (and a few others, such as Rykov and Nogin) disagreed with - took fright over - Lenin’s increasingly agitated demands that the Bolsheviks had to seize power. Much to their later shame, Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the central committee vote to support *in principle* the call for an insurrection (the timing being left open). Zinoviev’s motion flatly ruling out an insurrection before the 2nd Congress of the Soviets was defeated, 15 votes against six (there were three abstentions). Nonetheless, as I understand things, under Trotsky’s calming influence, Lenin was persuaded to abide by soviet ‘legality’ and time the Bolshevik insurrection to coincide with the 2nd Congress of the Soviets (which did indeed endorse the second revolution).

Yet just a couple of weeks before the insurrection actually happened, Kamenev and Zinoviev issued their protest letter to leading party organisations, ‘On the current situation’, which included this passage:

We are deeply convinced that to call for an armed insurrection at the present moment ... is an inadmissible step ruinous to the proletariat and the revolution. To stake everything on insurrection ... would be an act of despair. And our party is too strong, it has too great a future before us, to take such a step.<sup>24</sup>

The letter immediately fell into the hands of *Novaya Zhizn* (a daily paper associated with the leftwing writer, Maxim Gorky). It was published with much glee. Enraged, Lenin branded Zinoviev and Kamenev “strike-breakers” and demanded their expulsion from the party.<sup>25</sup> Stalin, still a joint editor of *Pravda*, urged restraint.

Though the Zinoviev-Kamenev letter was couched in suitably vague terms, it appeared obvious to outside observers that there were deep divisions amongst top Bolsheviks. Many contemporaries concluded that this made the prospect of a Bolshevik insurrection *less* likely! Reportedly, the insurrection thereby became far easier to carry through. Not that this absolves Zinoviev and Kamenev.

However, their fears were not without foundation. Seizure of power by one party, the Bolsheviks, could easily split the worker-peasant bloc and see a loss of support from wavering soldiers. Counterrevolution would surely take full advantage of such a situation and unleash its Cossacks and cadet forces in Petrograd and maybe succeed in bringing in fresh, uncontaminated, forces from the frontline. If that happened there would be a horrendous loss of life.

Though the Bolsheviks commanded a

clear majority in the workers’ and soldiers’ soviets, the attitude of the peasant soviets remained altogether less certain (the Left Socialist Revolutionaries had still to carry out their decisive split with the Right Socialist Revolutionaries). Hence Zinoviev and Kamenev urged patience. Energetic campaigning in the countryside would see the peasant masses soon catch up with the workers and soldiers.

Zinoviev and Kamenev also banked on elections to the Constituent Assembly. They predicted that the rapidly expanding influence of the Bolsheviks would ensure a “third and even more of the seats”. From that position of strength the party would be well placed to form a coalition government with the Left SRs and Menshevik Internationalists. Russia therefore arrives at a different sort of dual power. A “combined type of state” with both soviets and a parliament.

But Zinoviev and Kamenev were indulging in wishful thinking. Firstly, as things turned out, the Bolsheviks gained no more than a quarter of the seats. Secondly, SR lists were firmly controlled by the right. Though the number of delegates elected to the peasant soviets showed the Left SRs surging ahead of the Right SRs, when it came to the Constituent Assembly, they hardly got a look in. Thirdly, the Mensheviks (of all factions) got nowhere.

More than all that, though, the Zinoviev-Kamenev perspective relied on the Provisional government and the army high command playing fair. Would the Provisional government really call free and fair elections? Would the generals and admirals really allow the revolution to go forward unmolested? Surely not. Lavr Kornilov had already attempted a military coup in August 1917.

So, on the one hand, Zinoviev-Kamenev warned that counterrevolutionary forces *could* drown the revolution in blood - if the revolution acted in haste. On the other hand, they promised that counterrevolution would *not* drown the revolution in blood - if the revolution acted with sufficient moderation. Of course, with mass support draining to the Bolsheviks and Left SRs, the Provisional government was always going to use every trick in the book to delay elections. Failing that, there was outright sabotage. Reactionary voices were already *openly* stating that they preferred German occupation to the chaos of revolution. Meanwhile, Kerensky ominously talked of abandoning Petrograd.

Unwilling to take responsibility for the consequences of *making the revolution* - and that is what the objective circumstances of impending collapse on the military front and economic collapse on the home front demanded - Zinoviev and Kamenev resigned from the central committee. They were, however - and this is surely important - soon back on side ... Zinoviev and Kamenev stood shoulder to shoulder with Lenin at the 2nd Congress of the Soviets. Zinoviev, in particular, doing what he was brilliant at: harassing, stirring, rousing.

But, then again, there was the regrettable role the pair played in the immediate period post-October 1917. The railworkers union, the *Vikzhel*, demanded a socialist coalition - minus Lenin and Trotsky. Note, the 2nd Congress of the Soviets voted for a socialist coalition - including Bolshevik delegates. Zinoviev and Kamenev were prepared to countenance negotiations on that basis and for a brief moment their viewpoint had a central committee majority. Not an unreasonable position to take. Negotiation does not equal agreement.

However, victory for the hard-fought Bolshevik insurrection in Moscow swung opinion round on the central committee back in Lenin’s favour. He wanted negotiations rejected out of hand. In response, once again, Zinoviev and Kamenev resigned from the central committee (this time joined by Alexei Rykov, Vladimir Milyutin and Victor Nogin). Lenin denounced them as “deserters”.<sup>26</sup> Matters were really decided, though, by the Menshevik and Right SR rejection of any compromise ... after a few days away the “deserters” returned to the central committee.

While the Trotsky of 1924 makes everything of such brief episodes, the same cannot be said of Lenin. When the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Giacinto Serrati, attempted to excuse his refusal to abide by Comintern resolutions demanding a split with the centrists, he cited the position upheld by Zinoviev and Kamenev in October 1917. Lenin would have none of it:

# SUPPLEMENT

On the eve of the October revolution in Russia, and immediately after it, a number of very good communists in Russia committed an error, one which our people are now loath to recall. Why are they loath to recall it? Because, unless there is particular reason for it, it is wrong to recall mistakes which have been completely set right.<sup>27</sup>

However, the overall problem with Trotsky's account is that to all intents and purposes it threw out the whole of pre-1917 Bolshevism in the attempt to turn the post-Lenin membership of the Russian Communist Party against Lenin's most trusted lieutenants. Even at the level of a literary discussion Trotsky was bound to lose. He did.

No less to the point, leftwingers who dogmatically repeat Trotsky's 1924 version of 1917 blind themselves - mostly unintentionally, but always stupidly - to the significance of Bolshevism: its enduring commitment to a minimum-maximum programme; its worker-peasant alliance; its stress on the demand for a democratic republic; its opposition to all forms of economism; its profound internationalism; its robust, open polemics; its unproblematic acceptance of factions; its deep social roots and accompanying constellation of trained and tested local, regional and national leaders.

It amounts to false-memory syndrome. Instead of aiming for a programmatically guided, mass revolutionary party, the contemporary left is quite content with life as one of the "many" barely noticed "grouplets".<sup>28</sup> The belief being that their 1917 will come ... the confessional sect will rise from the depths of obscurity to lead the masses and storm the citadels of power. A perspective that sees the left discount the patient strategy of Marxism for an unacknowledged version of Bakuninism: worship of street protests and economic strikes is combined with fostering illusions in most crass forms of opportunism: eg, Respect, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, Scottish Socialist Party, Workers Party in Brazil, Syriza in Greece and acting as an echo chamber for the likes of Jeremy Corbyn, Hugo Chávez, George Galloway and Alexis Tsipras.

## Dual power

Let me briefly outline the situation in early 1917. As everyone knows, tsarism ignominiously collapsed with the February revolution. Political strikes by engineering workers, mass demonstrations on International Women's Day, army mutinies, the seizing of police arsenals, the arming of the people ... and high-command panic forced the abdication of Nicholas II.<sup>29</sup> Self-selected members of the pseudo-democratic fourth duma - there was a constitutionally inbuilt landlord-capitalist majority - then agreed a rotten deal with Menshevik and Socialist Revolutionary leaders. A Provisional government was put together and placed in the safe hands of prince Georgy Lvov - a Cadet and potential prime minister under Nicholas II. Other top ministers included Pavel Milyukov, another Cadet, and Alexander Guchkov of the Octobrists. Needless to say, the Octobrists were loyal monarchists and the traditional party of the big capitalists and landlords. As for the Cadets, they too represented capitalist interests, but advocated a constitutional monarchy along the lines of a Britain or a Sweden. And behind these parties, behind the Provisional government, there stood the directing might of Anglo-French imperialism. The Provisional government felt compelled to declare for press freedom, a republic and a just peace, but - and this was decisive - it remained firmly committed to tsarism's secret treaties with Britain and France (including gaining Constantinople for Russia). The Russian army would have to continue fighting therefore.

However, the Provisional government needed a left face. Alexander Kerensky agreed to become minister of justice, then minister of war (in July he was made prime minister). He is described as either a Trudovik or an SR, depending on which source one reads. Other 'socialists' soon joined him around the cabinet table: eg, Victor Chernov, an SR, and Irakli Tsereteli of the Mensheviks. This shift to the left happened both in response to mass pressure and in order to deceive the masses, who were moving to the left. The war with the Central Powers was cynically dressed up as a defence of the gains of the revolution - not the continuation of tsarist foreign policy.



After the Bolshevik revolution: Trotsky, Lenin and Kamenev

But the Provisional government was not the sole centre of authority. From the start there was dual power. Years of education provided by the leftwing press ensured that memory of 1905 lived on. Workers needed little prompting, therefore, when it came to (re)establishing soviets in their factories, local districts and cities. Members of the armed forces quickly followed suit - especially those stationed in Petrograd and Moscow. In due course the peasants too formed soviets. Moreover, in many ways, the soviets - in particular the Petrograd soviet - is where real power resided. Eg, soldiers and sailors would only obey orders if countersigned by the Petrograd soviet - a form of popular control over the military. Adding to the complexity of the situation, however, the SR and Menshevik majority in the Petrograd soviet was determined to enhance the authority of the Provisional government. So there was a dual power which channelled power in the direction of the Provisional government (ie, away from the masses to the bourgeoisie).

What of the Bolsheviks? They were no confessional sect, no grouplet. Historically, in fact, they were the *majority party* of the working class (as proven by 1905, the mass readership of *Pravda*, trade union elections and the last, 1912, elections to the tsarist duma, where their candidates won the entire workers' curia). So the Bolsheviks were deeply rooted amongst the proletarian masses.

However, tsarist oppression, unleashed with particular severity with the onset of World War I, saw the Bolsheviks targeted in particular. All their duma deputies were arrested (Mensheviks were left untouched). Members of their central committee based in Russia were put on trial - Siberian exile quickly followed. Rank-and-file members were rounded up, often drafted into the army, and those who retained their liberty kept their distance out of fear ... that or they were forced into semi-invisibility to avoid detection by the *okhrana* (the tsarist secret police). All this being punishment for Bolshevik opposition to the imperialist war in the duma and Lenin's uncompromising demands from abroad to turn imperialist war into civil war. In comparative terms social pacifists and social chauvinists were tolerated. Indeed the activities of Georgy Plekhanov and his right Menshevik group were "secretly subsidised" by the tsarist authorities.<sup>30</sup> So, in February 1917, the Bolsheviks were considerably weakened. Membership was down to some 40,000-45,000.<sup>31</sup> And their committees were debilitatingly cash-strapped - many barely functioned. And, whereas even the small centrist faction, the RSDLP (Internationalist) - or the Inter-district Organisation, the *Mezhraiontsy*, as they were commonly called - had, already, in January, obtained a printing press<sup>32</sup> (probably due to German finances, supplied via the 'merchant of revolution', Alexander Parvus), the Bolsheviks only began publishing *Pravda* in Petrograd, and *Sotsial Demokrat* in Moscow, after the February revolution. Making matters worse, in terms of leadership, the Bolsheviks *within Russia* had to make do with the politically limited abilities of Alexander Shliapnikov and Vyacheslav Molotov.

Hence, almost certainly, there were considerable problems with the presentation of Bolshevik politics.<sup>33</sup> Language wielded in factional polemics is not going to be readily understood by workers fresh from the countryside, by soldiers new to politics, by peasants who could barely read or write. In other words, the Bolsheviks had to make the shift from the politics of factional conflict to the politics of mass democracy. The ongoing war being pivotal. From the first shots in August 1914, Lenin insisted on the hardest of hard lines against centrists such as Karl Kautsky, Jules Martov and Leon Trotsky. Where they called for peace, Lenin demanded revolutionary defeatism. He wanted to separate off the genuine left from those who wanted to maintain some kind of unity with the pro-war right (the social patriots and social imperialists). But revolutionary defeatism was never going to be a popular slogan amongst rank-and-file soldiers. Nor their parents, wives, sweethearts, sisters, friends, etc. A total of 15 million men "passed through the 'grinding mill'" during World War I.<sup>34</sup> So they and their kith and kin constituted an enormous constituency. Doubtless tsarist oppression plus a failure to present political principles in a popular manner explains why Bolshevik delegates to the Petrograd soviet constituted such a disappointingly small bloc, at least to begin with. Bolshevik leaders, it should be noted, were genuinely shocked by their minority status.

Like the Cadets, the Mensheviks and SRs united around the slogan, 'Defend the revolution'. In other words, defend the wealth and privileges of the landlords and capitalists and defend the alliance with Anglo-French imperialism. Tsarism in a republican guise. Nevertheless, bizarrely, according to the proponents of Bolshevism being 'rearmed' by Lenin's April theses, the "existence of dual power" and the eminently predictable behaviour of the Mensheviks and SRs exposed the "bankruptcy" of the 'old Bolshevik' programme.<sup>35</sup> Hence, we are seriously told by Tony Cliff, that Lenin was forced to carry out "a complete break" with what he had written up to 1917.<sup>36</sup> Sadly, this sort of drivel still passes for truth amongst too many leftwingers. Comrade Creegan has the "average Bolshevik" and "even the party's other top leaders" meeting the April theses with bewilderment and blank incomprehension.<sup>37</sup> We are expected to believe that they never really understood what Lenin had been writing and speaking about since 1905! Nor what they themselves had been debating, amending, voting on ... and fighting for, at the risk of their liberty and their lives, since 1905! The "average Bolshevik" and "even the party's other top leaders" must have been dumber than dumb (except they weren't).

## Democratic revolution

Let us take the argument forward by going back. From the outset - yes, from the foundation of the Emancipation of Labour group in 1883 - Russian Marxists (eg, Georgy Plekhanov, Vera Zasulich and Pavel Axelrod) were agreed, contra the anarchists and

narodniks, that the country was not yet ripe for socialism. The autocratic state, the lack of capitalist development, the domination of the economy by a woefully backward peasant agriculture - all explain why the coming Russian Revolution was envisaged by *all* Marxists as having two stages.

The "first task" of the working class was to lead in the struggle "against absolutism" and for a "democratic constitution" (*Second draft programme of the Russian social democrats - 1887*).<sup>38</sup> There can be no "jumping-over of the democratic stage of the revolution or any of its specific steps" (Lenin).<sup>39</sup> Trotsky - well, at least before November-December 1905 - being no exception: the "national revolution", the "popular revolution" must unite workers, peasants, all societies and professional and learned bodies, corporations and the liberal press under the banner of the "National Constituent Assembly".<sup>40</sup> Indeed in March 1905 Trotsky can be found frankly admitting that the democratic republic he is struggling for will be "bourgeois" and could only see the "temporary" dominance of "our party".<sup>41</sup>

It was the narodniks, and following them the SRs, who raised the call for a "socialist Russia". A nonsense in Lenin's view. In 1905 he writes with characteristic aggression: "Only the most ignorant people can ignore the bourgeois nature of the democratic revolution which is now taking place."<sup>42</sup> Note, the SRs, formed in 1902, advocated a programme that included the "expropriation of capitalist property and the reorganisation of production and the entire social system on socialist foundations" (in truth a utopian peasant socialism).<sup>43</sup>

What about the Menshevik (minority) wing of the RSDLP? According to the Mensheviks, the overthrow of tsarism *had* to be crowned by the class rule of the bourgeoisie and a western-style parliamentary government. If the forthcoming revolution against tsarism was bourgeois, then, agreed the Mensheviks, in a conference resolution of April-May 1905, the working class and its party "must not aim at seizing or sharing power in the provisional government, but must remain the party of the extreme revolutionary opposition".<sup>44</sup> So, for mainstream Menshevik thinking, the immediate task of the working class was to edge, push, help lift the bourgeois parties into their predetermined position as leaders of the anti-tsarist revolution.

Participating in a provisional revolutionary government was ruled out for two main reasons (obviously violated after February 1917 despite the Provisional government embodying the rule of capitalists and landlords). Firstly, if the working class succumbed to the temptation of power, it would cause the bourgeoisie to "recoil from the revolution and diminish its sweep".<sup>45</sup> Secondly, without an already established European socialism, attempts by the working class party in Russia to satisfy the economic demands of its social base would inevitably end in disaster.

If the anti-tsarist revolution proved successful, the workers' party should, argued the Mensheviks, exit the centre stage, so as to allow the bourgeoisie to assume power. Obeying the iron 'laws of history', the workers' party then bides its time in the wings till capitalism has carried out its preordained historic mission of developing the means of production. Hence, for the Mensheviks there had to be two revolutions, the one separated from the other by an entire epoch.

While not including socialist measures in their minimum programme, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were resolutely opposed to meekly accepting bourgeois power as the inevitable outcome of the 'bourgeois revolution'. As argued above, the shift from the prevailing orthodoxy seems to have come about during the summer of 1905. The possibility of a "bourgeois republic" was never discounted - how could it be? - but it ceased being any kind of goal for the Bolsheviks. The bourgeoisie in Russia had proved both cowardly and treacherous. Despite occasional leftist flourishes, their parties sought a compromise with tsarism, not a people's revolution. Eg, the Cadet Party, the flag-bearer of the liberal bourgeoisie, sought a constitutional monarchy. Russia therefore had no Cromwell, no Washington, no Robespierre. As shown by the experience of 1905, the only force capable of scoring a *decisive victory* over tsarism and pushing through the most radical changes objective

# SUPPLEMENT

circumstances permitted was the proletariat, in alliance with the peasant masses.

Naturally, because Russia was overwhelmingly a peasant country, the Bolsheviks paid particular attention to their agrarian programme. In fact, peasant interests set the limit on how far their revolution could go. Aristocratic power could certainly be destroyed and the land nationalised and then allotted according to the wishes of the peasants. Needless to say, the Bolsheviks preferred cooperatives and middle-to-large state farms. But Lenin was quite prepared to accept a 'black redistribution'. The break-up of landlord estates into pocket-sized peasant plots. That would destroy feudal social relationships ... and allow capitalism in the countryside to develop along an "American path".<sup>46</sup>

Trotsky's *Results and prospects* (1906) programme was not limited by the interests of the peasants. While a hegemonic working class could take the peasantry along with it in the overthrow of tsarism, a split between these two popular classes was bound to happen. The peasants were, for Trotsky, "absolutely incapable of taking an independent political role". The idea of them setting up their own party was categorically discounted due to their "political barbarism, social formlessness, primitiveness and lack of character".<sup>47</sup> Peasants would gravitate towards either the rule of the proletariat or the rule of the bourgeoisie.

However, because working class political domination is incompatible with "its economic enslavement", Trotsky reasoned that the workers' party would find itself "obliged to take the path of socialist policy" ... though that would end in bloody "civil war" with the peasantry.<sup>48</sup> In short, Trotsky proposed to "take the path" of abolishing commodity production, ending wage labour and introducing production for need - because only that path can end the "economic enslavement" of the working class. Nonetheless, Trotsky is convinced that his policy will be opposed by the vast majority of the population. After all, in the absence of the European revolution, he proposed to embark on the tasks of the maximum programme *in the countryside*. Collectivism and refusing to break up the big estates will enrage the land-hungry peasants. Notions of democracy had to go. Economic dislocation and civil war follows. Socialist policy turns out to be a hell on earth, not a heaven. Without revolution in Europe coming to the rescue, the "defeat of the proletariat" is inevitable, admits Trotsky. As we have seen, one of the reasons why the Mensheviks wanted to avoid the temptation of entering government. But they were far from alone in rejecting Trotsky's scenario. Vladimir Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Kautsky, Alexander Parvus can all be quoted.<sup>49</sup>

Thankfully, by the summer of 1917, Trotsky underwent his Leninist conversion. If one reads him when he was leader of the Left Opposition, it is obvious, despite accusations to the contrary, that he was painfully aware of the vital importance of keeping the peasantry onside. Eg, in the early 1930s he roundly condemned Stalin's drive to forcibly collectivise agriculture.

## Time

The fact of the matter is that the Bolsheviks were determined that the anti-tsarist revolution would see the fulfilment of the party's *entire* minimum programme - a democratic republic, the election of judges, free universal education, abolition of the police and standing army, a popular militia, separation of church and state, economic reforms, such as workers' commissions to inspect factories, an eight-hour day, democratic rights, including unrestricted free speech, etc. Such a package could only be delivered by establishing a revolutionary government, which embodied the interests of the great mass of the population.

Lenin coined a famous algebraic formulation to sum up the majoritarian regime envisaged by the Bolsheviks: the 'democratic (majority) dictatorship (rule) of the proletariat and peasantry'. Such a hybrid regime could not abolish classes and bring full liberation for the working class. That was impossible. Economically Russia would have to progress, at least in good measure, capitalistically - under the armed rule of the working class and peasants. That meant the continuation of wage-labour (albeit with workers taking over

abandoned factories, the nationalisation of banks, etc).

How long was the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry going to last? There are those who reckon that prior to 1917 Lenin envisaged nothing more than a "temporary interlude between tsarism and a bourgeois democratic republic".<sup>50</sup> After the *provisional* revolutionary government had carried out its radical package of measures there would be Constituent Assembly elections that would see the bourgeoisie come to power with the support of peasant votes.<sup>51</sup> However, in truth, far from that being "Lenin's major prognosis", as fatuously claimed by comrade Creegan, such an outcome was to be avoided. Yes, Lenin admitted the *possibility* that the first genuinely free and fair national elections might see the return of the workers' party to being a party of extreme opposition. It is also true, however, that from the summer of 1905 onwards, Lenin wrote about the *uninterrupted* revolution bypassing bourgeois rule entirely.

Lenin seems to have seriously contemplated revolutionary war in order to spread the revolution to Europe. One of his key slogans was for a "revolutionary army".<sup>52</sup> This and the fact that the tasks of *their* workers' and peasants' government included uprooting every last vestige of tsarism, enacting sweeping reforms and defeating bourgeois counterrevolution, explains why I have argued that such a government would have been expected, certainly after July-August 1905, to last not a few brief months, but a good number of years.

However, my main point is that the Bolsheviks were not committed to meekly handing political power to the bourgeoisie, as were the Mensheviks. Of course, for the Bolsheviks, the international dimension was crucial. The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry in Russia could not survive in isolation. It would - it had to - "rouse Europe" and the socialist proletariat of Europe to carry through the "socialist revolution".<sup>53</sup> The United Socialist States of Europe would then, in turn, help Russia move in the direction of socialism (which requires definite material conditions in terms of the development of the productive forces). And a revolution uniting Europe and half of Asia had a realistic chance of rapidly spreading to every corner of the globe.

Inevitably, there would, within Russia, be a differentiation between the proletarianised rural masses and the emerging class of capitalist farmers. But *not* necessarily a specifically socialist revolution: ie, the violent overthrow of the state. Put another way, for the Bolsheviks there would not necessarily be a democratic or bourgeois stage and then a socialist stage at the level of regime. Democratic and socialist tasks are categorically distinct, premised as they are on different material, social and political

conditions. But certain features can evolve and assume dominance. The revolution could, given favourable internal and external conditions, proceed *uninterruptedly* from democratic to socialist tasks through the proletariat fighting not only from below, but from above: ie, from the salient of state power. The revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry thereby *peacefully grows over* into the dictatorship (rule) of the proletariat. As the size, consciousness and organisation of the urban and rural working class increased, so would the ranks, voting strength and strategic capabilities of the workers' party. The necessity of a coalition government would at some point disappear. The tasks of the maximum programme then decisively come onto the agenda.

Lenin mapped out the Bolshevik programme for the democratic revolution in painstaking detail in *Two tactics* (June 1905).<sup>54</sup> A seminal pamphlet running to over a hundred pages that armed the Bolsheviks with the political weapons needed, first to lead the "whole people" for a republic, and then to lead "all the toilers and exploited" for socialism.<sup>55</sup> In the context of the rural sea: first with the entire peasantry, then with the poor and middle peasantry against the kulak exploiters, in the struggle for socialism.

Nonetheless, comrade Creegan, despite his claim to have submitted *Two tactics* to a "careful exegesis", continues to insist that, in this, Lenin's "principal 1905 programmatic work", all we have is the perspective of the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry providing "a temporary interlude between tsarism and a bourgeois republic". Frankly, I'm flabbergasted. I have to conclude that either comrade Creegan has not read *Two tactics* at all - that or he is incapable of reading what is there in black and white. Comrade Creegan is in the main an intelligent writer. Yet, when it comes to Lenin, the Bolsheviks and *Two tactics*, he is simply embarrassing. Dogma blinds him, clouds his brain. He comes over like a Mormon, not a Marxist.

By any objective assessment, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had arrived at their own version of permanent revolution in the summer of 1905. A programmatic approach defended, refined and applied from then onwards.

## Permanent

Too often comrades who should know better associate permanent revolution exclusively with Trotsky. Of course, the phrase long predates him, going back to the "literature of the French Revolution".<sup>56</sup> From there it spread far and wide, becoming a common "programmatic slogan" of European radicals, socialists and communists, including Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.<sup>57</sup> And, as Hal Draper helpfully explains, for Marx, the word 'permanent' in 'permanent revolution'

describes a situation where there is "more than one stage or phase" in the revolutionary process. He usefully adds that the expression "retains its specifically French and Latin meaning". It does not mean perpetual or never-ending. It is employed by Marx to convey the idea of "continuity, uninterrupted".<sup>58</sup> Bearing this in mind, consider Lenin's "uninterrupted revolution". A few samples from 1905. Lenin declares: "We stand for uninterrupted revolution. We shall not stop halfway" (September 1 1905).<sup>59</sup> He wants to take the anti-tsarist revolution to the socialist stage through a process that does not halt at some artificial boundary. No, the Bolsheviks will push the revolution forward both from below and above (ie, employing state power). In support of the boycott of duma elections, he writes how Bolshevik "tactics are governed by the idea of the complete victory of the revolution, the idea of uninterrupted revolution" (September 27 1905).<sup>60</sup> Terrified by political strikes and street fighting in Moscow, the "spectre of 'uninterrupted revolution'", the liberal bourgeoisie turns "openly to the right" (October 4 1905).<sup>61</sup> The "liberal bourgeoisie's fundamental interests as a class incline it towards the monarchy, a two-chamber system, law and order, and moderation, towards a struggle against the 'horrors' of an 'uninterrupted revolution', the 'horrors' of a revolution after the French model ... " (October 31 1905).<sup>62</sup>

Not without interest in this respect, when it came to Russia, Kautsky too can be cited as an advocate of permanent revolution. He was, remember, a close ally of the Bolsheviks in the years before World War I. Almost an honorary Bolshevik. Here is Trotsky's own - albeit rather jaundiced and self-serving - description of Kautsky's approach "when he was a Marxist":

At that time (true, not without the beneficial influence of Rosa Luxemburg) Kautsky fully understood and acknowledged that the Russian Revolution could not terminate in a bourgeois-democratic republic, but must inevitably lead to the proletarian dictatorship, because of the level attained by the class struggle in the country itself and because of the entire international situation of capitalism. Kautsky then frankly wrote about a workers' government with a social democratic majority. He did not even think of making the real course of the class struggle depend on the changing and superficial combinations of political democracy.

At that time, Kautsky understood that the revolution would begin for the first time to rouse the many millions of peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie - not all at once, but gradually, layer by layer, so that, when the struggle between the proletariat and the capitalist bourgeoisie reached its climax, the broad peasant masses would still be at a very primitive level of political development and would give their votes to intermediary political parties, reflecting only the backwardness and the prejudices of the peasant class.

Kautsky understood then that the proletariat, led by the logic of the revolution toward the conquest of power, could not arbitrarily postpone this act indefinitely, because by this self-abnegation it would merely clear the field for counterrevolution. Kautsky understood then that, once having seized revolutionary power, the proletariat would not make the fate of the revolution depend upon the passing moods of the least conscious, not yet awakened masses at any given moment, but that, on the contrary, it would turn the political power concentrated in its hands into a mighty apparatus for the enlightenment and organisation of these same backward and ignorant peasant masses. Kautsky understood that to call the Russian Revolution a bourgeois revolution and thereby to limit its tasks would mean not to understand anything of what was going on in the world.

Together with the Russian and Polish revolutionary Marxists, he rightly acknowledged that, should the Russian proletariat conquer power before the European proletariat, it would have to use its situation as the ruling class not for the rapid surrender of its positions to the bourgeoisie, but for rendering powerful assistance to the proletarian revolution in Europe and throughout the world.<sup>63</sup>



Joseph Stalin in 1919: dismissed as a non-entity by Trotsky

# SUPPLEMENT

I do not deny in the least that Bolshevik ideas, perspectives and aspirations underwent change. Nevertheless, I insist on continuity. Like a river, Bolshevism was added to by tributaries, had its rapids and becalming eddies, but it broadened and continued to flow. There was no break. Yes, during the course of World War I Lenin and other Bolsheviks began to talk about the “commune state” and taking “steps towards socialism” in the aftermath of the anti-tsarist revolution. Remarks later culled by the Stalin-Bukharin duumvirate to pharisaically justify their theory of socialism in one country.

Of course, we need to understand what Lenin and the pre-October 1917 Bolsheviks meant by socialism. It had nothing to do with a government programme of nationalisation - though nationalisation is necessary for socialism. It certainly did not equate with welcome reforms such as the welfare state and full employment. No, socialism, for Marxists, including the Bolsheviks, represents the rule of the working class and beginning the transition to stateless, moneyless, classless communism. Crucially, given the world market and the world division of labour, socialism has to have a global reach; therefore has to be, as a movement, international in organisation, spirit and effect. Hence, when Lenin arrived at the Finland Station and addressed the eager crowd from the rooftop of the armoured car, he denounced the lies of the Provisional government, demanded peace, bread and land and finished by declaring: “We must fight for the social revolution, fight to the end, until the complete victory of the proletariat. Long live the worldwide socialist revolution!”<sup>64</sup>

Such a peroration undoubtedly horrified the ministers of the Provisional government who came to greet Lenin (after years of exile he undoubtedly counted as what would now be called a celebrity). They wanted to crown the revolution with a stable bourgeois government. However, amongst Bolshevik cadre, there was a general conviction that Europe stood on the cusp of the socialist revolution. For them the overthrow of tsarism represented the harbinger of greater things to come. What Lenin said was fully within their thought world.

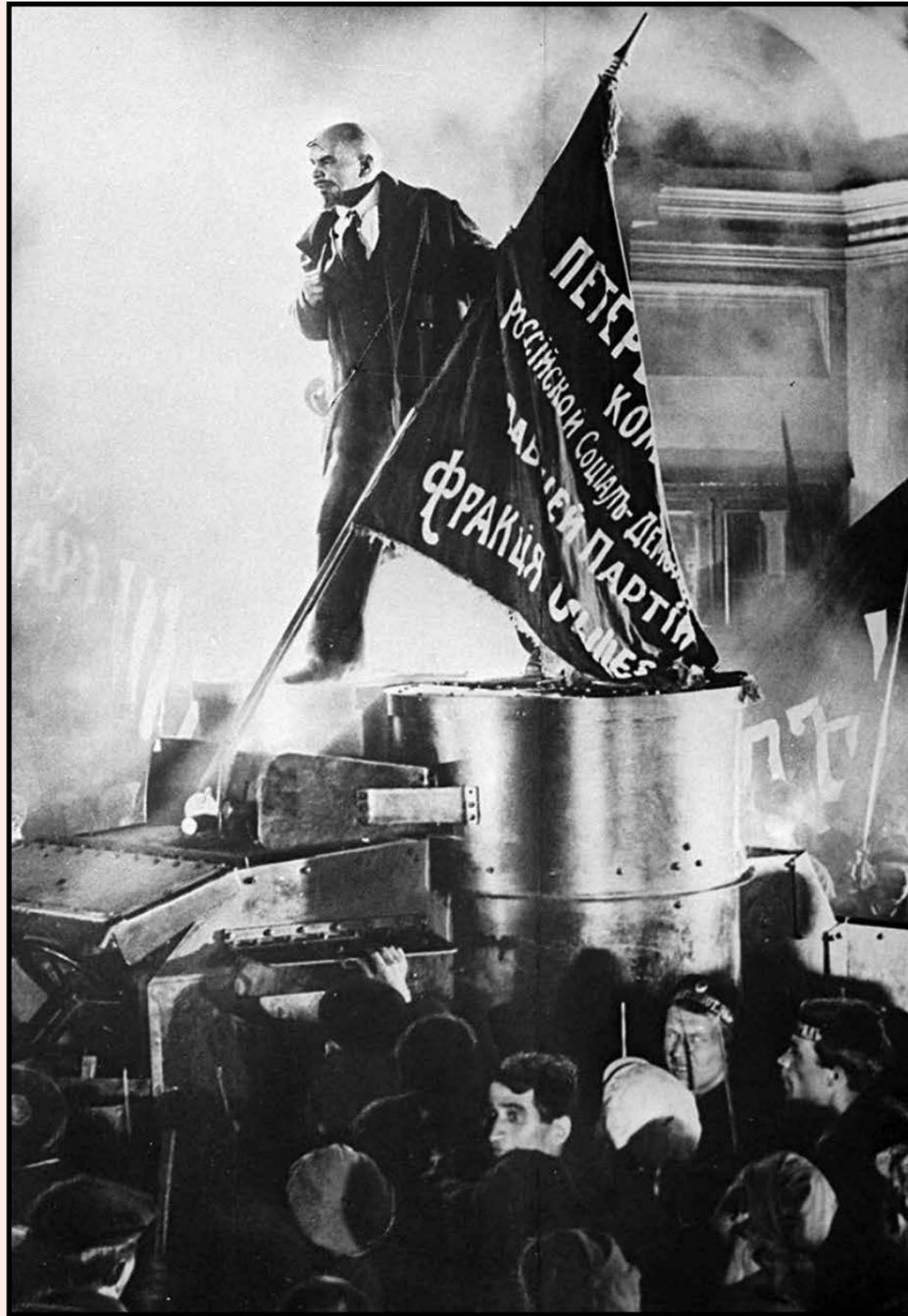
## Lenin vs Trotsky

All in all, to any objective observer Trotsky's differences with Lenin are clear. Lenin wanted working class leadership of a majoritarian regime. Trotsky wanted a working class regime that would have to risk alienating the majority. Both perspectives relied on the European socialist revolution. Maybe Trotsky's perspectives had greater foresight. With the failure of the European revolution the Bolsheviks became a minority regime ... and had to feed the cities using non-economic, forceful means. But ends determine means as much as means determine ends. Trotsky's perspectives possessed less purchase than Lenin's. Certainly, for peasants and peasants in uniform, what Lenin presented was appealing, positively attractive. Therefore his perspectives were far more likely to succeed.

So Lenin and Trotsky had different programmes, different versions of uninterrupted revolution, but the differences should not be exaggerated. True, in *Results and Prospects* and in Lenin's so-called replies there was a fierce polemic between the two men. However, factional interests often produced more heat than light. Eg, in 1906 Trotsky dismissed out of hand any suggestion of a “special form of the proletarian dictatorship in the bourgeois revolution”. He was intent on rubbishing the Bolsheviks. On the other hand, Lenin attacked Trotsky for “underestimating” the importance of the peasantry by raising the slogan, ‘Not a tsar's government, but a workers' government’.

Not least, on the basis of this evidence, Trotsky is perhaps right when he says that Lenin had “never read my basic work”. That slogan was proclaimed not by Trotsky, but his one-time friend and collaborator, Alexander Parvus (yes, the ‘merchant of revolution’, who arranged the ‘sealed train’ that took Lenin and co from their Swiss exile to Petrograd in April 1917). “Never did Lenin anywhere analyse or quote,” says Trotsky, “even in passing, *Results and Prospects*.”<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he goes on to cite the “solidarity” that existed between himself and the Bolsheviks during and immediately after the 1905 revolution. Manifestoes, joint leaflets, articles in the Bolshevik press, etc.

And for the benefit of those idiots who demonise the term ‘stage’, who sneer at Lenin



Eisenstein's romantic version of Lenin speaking from roof of an armoured car

because of his use of the word, Trotsky can be quoted boasting that he “formulated the tasks of the successive stages of the revolution in exactly the same manner as Lenin”. This should provide food for thought - to those who permit themselves such a luxury. The same can be said for Trotsky's proud affirmation that “Lenin's formula” closely “approximated” to his own “formula of permanent revolution”.<sup>66</sup> Despite that, we are told time and again that Trotsky's version of uninterrupted revolution was far superior to Lenin's. Maybe as the prognosticator of disaster, but not as the most rational, least costly and, therefore, the best road for the working class to take. Civil war with the peasantry was always going to be a loser in an overwhelmingly peasant country.

Undoubtedly, Trotsky's decision to invent the “complete break” narrative in 1924 was a bold move. By pretending, in effect, that Lenin had become a Trotskyite in April 1917, Trotsky could pump up his own standing and at the same time target the role played by those who in 1924 constituted the ruling triumvirate: Stalin, Kamenev and Zinoviev. We have already mentioned Kamenev and Stalin in March 1917, and Zinoviev and Kamenev in October and November 1917. However, in 1924 Trotsky directly - and, at least in my view, outrageously - dismissed Lenin's formula, the ‘democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’. He even claimed Lenin's authority for this. As already quoted, in his *Lessons of October* Trotsky maintains that in 1917 Lenin “came out furiously against the old slogan of the ‘democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’”.<sup>67</sup> In point of fact, Lenin attacked not the formula, but rather those who he thought were misusing it - those who he thought were showing a willingness to compromise with the dishonest Menshevik and SR ‘revolutionary defencists’.

## March to April

The Provisional government acted in the interests not of the proletariat and peasantry, but of the capitalists and landlords (and behind them Anglo-French imperialism). *Ipsa*

*facto* Lenin concluded that the proletariat and peasantry (in the form of the Petrograd soviet) had “placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie”. And, though Kerensky's ministry, formed in July 1917, contained many who had been hunted by the tsarist secret police - Matvey Skobelev, Irakli Tsereteli, Victor Chernov, Nikolai Avksentiev, Boris Savinkov, Alexei Nikitin, etc - no Marxist will find Lenin's designation at all strange. Programme, policy and practice determines class content. Not only did the Provisional government continue Russia's involvement in World War I: it cynically prevaricated over peasant demands for land redistribution and fearfully delayed elections to the Constituent Assembly.

What was Lenin's approach during this “first stage of the revolution”? Did he junk his old call for the replacement of tsarism by a workers' and peasants' republic? Yes, of course he did ... in the same way as Trotsky junked his ‘Not a tsar's government, but a government of the people’, and Parvus junked his ‘Not a tsar's government, but a workers' government’. Nor were the Mensheviks, the SRs or anyone else on the left unaware that one of their key demands had been realised. The Romanovs had fallen. Tsarism was no more. Russia now counted as a republic.

It did not take a cover-to-cover study of Hegel's *Logic*, or the “recovery of the dialectic”, to recognise such a qualitative development. If Trotsky had not made a “complete break” from his ‘Not a tsar's government’ slogan, his close friends would have been well advised to seek out suitable psychological treatment for the poor fellow. Ditto Lenin's friends, or anyone else's for that matter.

Obviously the demand to overthrow the tsar was now totally obsolete. Future progress lay in combating the “honest” popular illusions in revolutionary defencism, exposing the true nature of the Provisional government and raising sights. The Bolsheviks were a minority in the soviets. Their task was to become the majority ... by agitating for ending the war, seizing landlord estates, introducing workers'

control, replacing the police with Red Guard units, demanding elections to a Constituent Assembly, etc.

This would prepare for the “second stage of the revolution” and with it the transfer of all power into “the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants”. The “only possible form of revolutionary government” was a “republic of soviets of workers', agricultural labourers' and peasants' deputies”, writes Lenin. Surely, a concrete application of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry’ slogan. Lenin made no claims that the party's “immediate task” was to “introduce” socialism. In fact, he vehemently, denied such accusations (made by the Mensheviks). There was to be rule not by workers alone, but rule by workers, soldiers and peasants (Lenin envisaged some kind of coalition government throughout most of 1917). Introducing socialism against the wishes of the majority was dismissed as outrageous. Banks should be nationalised and production and distribution put under workers' control. Such measures might be classified as “taking steps towards socialism”. But - and this is the key point - they would not meet with objections from the peasantry (quite the contrary: peasants would be assured by the Bolshevik's determination to save the country).

Not that the standing programme went without modification. Until 1917 the assumption had been that the insurgent power of workers and peasants would overthrow and replace tsarism with their own regime. The reality, whereby the victorious power of workers and peasants siphoned off power to the bourgeoisie and landlords, that was totally unexpected. I make no excuse for once again turning to Lenin. In the article, ‘The dual power’, he says the following:

The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power*. This fact must be grasped first and foremost: unless it is understood, we cannot advance. We must know how to supplement and amend old ‘formulas’ - for example, those of Bolshevism - for, while they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realisation *has turned out to be* different. *Nobody* previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power.<sup>68</sup>

The Bolsheviks were not the majority. They were the minority. That necessitated tactical innovation. Hence Lenin's April theses and the clash with Kamenev and Stalin (the chief editors of *Pravda*). There are all manner of reports of Lenin angrily berating Kamenev and other top leaders on his arrival back in Petrograd. He was certainly unhappy with what he had been reading in *Pravda*. However, the idea that when he presented the April theses he was met with widespread hostility, even utter bewilderment and incomprehension, by his Bolshevik comrades does not stand up to serious examination. Lenin was never an isolated figure within the ranks of Bolshevism. Far from it. He was the accepted *vozhd*. His writings, resolutions and speeches provided Bolshevism with its spinal cord. Bolshevik leaders, cadre and rank-and-file members alike would carefully study every word. That did not mean bovine acceptance of everything had to Lenin say. There were differences. But not over vital principles. The only significant exceptions I can think of being, firstly, Alexander Bogdanov and co's boycottism of the tsarist duma; secondly, opposition to the right of nations to self-determination mounted by Nikolai Bukharin and Georgy Piatikov. Mostly, differences involved tactical choices, assessments the popular mood, questions of presentation - not unimportant in and of themselves - but were, as such, usually quickly resolved. April 1917 provides the perfect illustration. Lenin's April theses saw the Bolsheviks debate five closely related issues: (1) attitude to the Provisional government; (2) revolutionary defencism; (3) unity with the Mensheviks; (4) peasants; (5) socialism.

Lenin feared that under the direction of Kamenev and Stalin *Pravda* had gone soft on the Provisional government. He intransigently demanded that the Bolsheviks should offer no support whatever. Politically the Provisional government was pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist ... and counterrevolutionary. And it is certainly true that Kamenev did give the Provisional government *critical support* in his first *Pravda* editorial (March 14 1917) - the words “critical” and “support” both appear in the text. However, as Lars T Lih explains, what Kamenev's editorial

# SUPPLEMENT

was designed to achieve had nothing to do with strengthening the Provisional government. On the contrary, he sought to expose the Provisional government and ready the masses for an "inevitable clash".<sup>69</sup> So the emphasis was on 'critical' rather than 'support'. A judgement surely confirmed by the March All-Russian Conference of the RSDLP - ie, before Lenin's return - where Kamenev is minuted as saying this:

In Steklov's resolution [Yuri Steklov's resolution had been chosen by conference as the alternative to the one being supported by Kamenev - JC] the point dealing with support is absolutely unacceptable. It is impermissible to have any expression of support, even to hint at it. We cannot support the government because it is an imperialist government, because, despite its own declaration, it remains in an alliance with the Anglo-French bourgeoisie.

In the *Communist manifesto* there is a statement to the effect that we give support to the liberal bourgeoisie, but only in the event of its being attacked. But from Steklov's report it is obvious that it is not they who are being attacked, but rather it is they themselves who are attacking the soviet of workers' deputies.

In yesterday's amendments to the resolution we stated that support at the present time is impossible. In view of the dual power, the will of the revolutionary people is embodied not in the Provisional government, but in the Soviets of Workers' Deputies [as we have seen, a proposition that needs qualifying]; and also that the latter must be strengthened and that they must come to a clash with the Provisional government. Our task is to point out that the only organ worthy of our support is the soviet of workers' deputies. The task of the Congress [of the soviets] is to proclaim to all Russia that the sole expresser of the will of the revolutionary people is the soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies, and that we must strengthen and support them and not the Provisional government.<sup>70</sup>

So there was a Bolshevik right wing which wanted to express, even if only in the mildest of terms, support for the Provisional government. But they found themselves opposed by Kamenev, who thought that even such a hint would be impermissible. Also note that Kamenev speaks of the necessity of strengthening the soviets and of an inevitable clash coming with the Provisional government.

What of Stalin? Opening the debate at the March 1917 conference, he began by speaking on behalf of the central committee, but then, in closing, expressed himself as being more inclined towards the resolution of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Cossacks' Deputies: "Support the Provisional government in its activities only in so far as it follows a course of satisfying the demands of the working class and the revolutionary peasantry in the revolution that is taking place." Suffice to say, the Provisional government showed not the least sign of "satisfying the demands of the working class and the revolutionary peasantry". As Kamenev himself tellingly stated, the "full satisfaction of their demands [those of the workers and peasants] is possible only when full and complete power is in their own hands".

Of course, what Lenin objected to was that such attempts to expose the Provisional government would, in fact, foster illusions in the Provisional government. That was a matter of political judgement, not political principle, of course. So, on the question of the attitude towards the Provisional government, there is certainly a difference of emphasis, even temperament, but not of substance. Kamenev-Stalin were advocating flexibility, appearing reasonable and patient; Lenin hostility, intransigence and eagerness to fight.

It should, however, be pointed out, that the small rightwing Bolshevik faction at the March conference, which did indeed coalesce over the question of defencism, found itself isolated. Having been provided with the time needed to present their position, they lost the vote ... and seven delegates then walked out.

True, Kamenev had written of Russian soldiers exchanging shot for shot with the Germans. Understandably, that went down badly with the Bolshevik cadre. Stalin had to pen an immediate corrective. The *Pravda* editors were seeking to shed their party's defeatist image. Without doing that they feared that the Bolsheviks would remain a minority. Hence *Pravda* called for a democratic peace, a peace without annexation, and in the

meantime for soldiers staying at their posts and not heading off back to their villages - a perfectly orthodox Bolshevik position, which only a fool would use as evidence of going over to social chauvinism. Lenin himself spoke out against deserting. In fact, of course, Kamenev-Stalin wanted to engage with the 'honest' revolutionary defencists - in the army and the population as a whole - and unite with other socialists who militantly opposed the war.

Once again, we return to the March conference (and this time to the joint session with the Mensheviks). Kamenev says this:

To pose here the question of defencism and anti-defencism is to repeat the discussion which we have already had. We have come to the conclusion that it is impermissible to vote for the [social-pacifistic] resolution of the executive committee [of the SR-Menshevik-dominated Petrograd soviet]. It is not a socialist resolution. The executive committee assumes in it the viewpoint of Henderson and Thomas [the Labour Party's war ministers in Britain]. It is impossible to vote for a resolution which says nothing about peace, about the abrogation of the secret treaties left over from tsarism. Another resolution must be counterposed to it. Our task is to fuse the socialist-internationalists around the resolution.

Here we see Kamenev-Stalin advocating peace without annexations and targeting the secret treaties agreed between Russia and Anglo-French imperialism (in other words, the real war aims of the Provisional government had nothing to do with defending the revolution).

What about unity between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks? Firstly, it needs to be appreciated that in the provinces the majority of party committees were joint committees - a situation that lasted beyond the October revolution in the remoter places. No less to the point, what Kamenev and Stalin had in their sights was not unity with right Mensheviks such as Irakli Tsereteli (as alleged by Trotsky). These people were of the same stripe as Henderson and Thomas in Britain. No, the aim was to unite with left Mensheviks on the basis of the Zimmerwald-Kienthal conferences. In short a Bolshevik-Menshevik Internationalist unification.

However, not surprisingly, Lenin would have none of it. He had already organised a distinct Zimmerwald left (with a view to establishing a Third International). Jules Martov and the Menshevik Internationalists wanted a democratic peace, but also continued unity with the right Mensheviks. That was their price for unity with the Bolsheviks. What Lenin feared is not winning the Menshevik Internationalists to unity with the Bolsheviks, but moving the Bolsheviks in the direction of the Menshevik Internationalists. Phrases about unity and supporting the Provisional government - if it does this and then does that - genuinely worried him.

We now come back to the question of peasant limits and the possibilities of socialism. Kamenev had his own worries. Because of exile in Switzerland, Lenin failed to fully grasp the actual state of play in Russia. Not an entirely baseless assessment. Initially, in his 'Letters from afar', Lenin pictured the Cadet ministers, and Kerensky, as mere decorations in the Provisional government. They were no such thing. The Lvov's ministry was, in fact, a *left* Cadet administration. And, of course, Kerensky represented the Petrograd soviet. Lenin thought that the soviets and the government stood in opposition the one to the other. Nor did Lenin know anything about the mood of rank-and-file soldiers or their soviets. He also appeared to be saying that the peasants were a lost cause and that the working class had to seize power with a view to introducing a socialist policy.<sup>71</sup> Hence in *Pravda* Kamenev responded to the April theses as follows:

As for comrade Lenin's general scheme, it appears unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois democratic revolution is *completed*, and builds on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution.<sup>72</sup>

Clearly, Kamenev was upholding the necessity of winning the peasants and thus preparing the conditions for a second revolution. The peasants could not be "skipped". The idea of playing at the seizure of power by the workers' party *without the support of the peasantry* was not Marxism, he said, but Blanquism. Power had to be exercised by the majority. And Lenin, in the April theses, and associated writings, seemed to be implying

that the peasantry had gone over to social chauvinism and defence of the fatherland (not 'honest' revolutionary defencism). Therefore, perhaps, he had concluded that the peasantry had joined the reactionary camp.

While Kamenev feared that Lenin was demanding an immediate transition to a socialist revolution, Lenin pointed out that he had explicitly warned against such a perspective: "It is *not* our immediate task to 'introduce' socialism ..."<sup>73</sup> Obviously there were misconceptions on both sides, but - and this is surely what counts - unity was quickly re cemented. In the case of *critical* support, Kamenev was clearly right. Lenin wrong. The Bolsheviks continued to use this weapon post-April 1917. And to good effect. Once again, in the case of the peasantry, Kamenev was clearly right. Lenin wrong. The peasants were the hidden reserve of the revolution.

Subsequently, Lenin talks of the differences being "not very great", because Kamenev had come round to his viewpoint. Unfair - if anything, Lenin had come round to Kamenev's viewpoint, at the very least on the peasantry. But what we are really dealing with is the *vozhd* asserting his authority, taking back the reins of leadership. To do that he had to reassure, clarify and if need be correct statements that had been hastily written or wrongly informed.

Comrade Creegan rests his "case" on the April debates on the basis of various snippet accounts provided by that "outstanding scholar of Bolshevism and the October Revolution" [sic], Paul Le Blanc (an all-round nice guy, who actually knows very little Russian and very little Marxism). Nonetheless, because of Paul Le Blanc, he, comrade Creegan, is able to place the Menshevik, Boris Sukhanov, the sailor-Bolshevik, Felix Raskolnikov, Leon Trotsky, Angelica Balabanova, Alexandra Kollontai, AF Ilyin-Zhenevsky, Nadezha Krupskaya, VM Molotov and Stalin in the "witness box". They duly testify to Bolshevik doubts, questioning ... and demands for clarification. But Lenin answered those doubts, questions and demands for clarification ... to the satisfaction of the great majority of Bolsheviks. Kamenev remains in a minority, true. But then we find, soon afterwards, Lenin and Kamenev joining together in opposing the leftist slogan of 'Down with the provisional government', as raised by the Petrograd committee of the RSDLP (a continuation of the crude politics of the Alexander Shliapnikov and Vyacheslav Molotov type). Circumstances were not yet ripe for the overthrow of the Provisional government in April-May 1917. Hence, together with Kamenev, Lenin insisted that the "correct slogan" was "Long live the soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies".<sup>74</sup>

Things were, though, exceedingly complex. Firstly, while state power had been transferred, that did not by any way meet the immediate programmatic aims of the Bolsheviks. The Romanovs had been overthrown. To that extent, argued Lenin, the Bolshevik programme had been fulfilled. But the 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants' in the form of the SR-Menshevik majority in the soviets had *voluntarily* handing power to the bourgeoisie. Instead of coming to power, the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry existed side by side with, and had subordinated itself to, a weak government of the bourgeoisie and landlords (ie, the Provisional government). Only once the Bolsheviks had won a majority could they finish with dual power and complete the democratic revolution.

The dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry had therefore become interwoven with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and landlords. The Russian Revolution had gone further than the classical bourgeois revolutions of Holland (1568), England (1645), America (1776) and France (1789), but, in Lenin's pregnant words, it "has not yet reached a 'pure' dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"<sup>75</sup> ●

## Notes

1. *Weekly Worker* December 20 2018.
2. Commission of the CC of the CPSU (B) (eds) *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* Moscow 1939, pp184, 187, 207.
3. L Trotsky *The challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25)* New York 1980, p207.
4. *Ibid*.
5. *Ibid* p205.
6. *Weekly Worker* December 20 2018.
7. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 8, Moscow 1977, pp299, 303.
8. *Ibid* pp534-35.
9. "[I]t is clear ... from all Lenin's writings up to 1917" that he expected a substantial interval to elapse between "the coming bourgeois revolution and the proletarian revolution" (Tony Cliff *Lenin* Vol 2, London 1975, p124). Supposedly, Lenin envisaged that the overthrow of tsarism would be followed by a "prolonged period of bourgeois democracy and capitalist economic development, after which a second socialist revolution would be possible" (Neil Davidson *How revolutionary were*

- the bourgeois revolutions? Chicago 2012, p228). In a similar fashion we are told that Lenin merely aimed for a "bourgeois republic", which, after a suitable time lapse, would constitute "a democratic prerequisite of the struggle for socialism" (Paul Le Blanc, 'The Bolsheviks and socialist revolution' *Weekly Worker* October 26 2017). Le Blanc is quoting Lenin's *Two tactics of social democracy*, but he does so in a manner that grossly misrepresents both Lenin and the Bolsheviks (see *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1972, pp49, 83).
10. L Trotsky, 'The character of the Russian Revolution', August 1917. For a translation see LT Lih, 'Trotsky 1917 vs Trotsky 1924' *Weekly Worker* November 2 2017.
11. L Trotsky *The challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25)* New York 1980, p211.
12. *Ibid* p209.
13. *Ibid* p216.
14. M Davis, 'Why was there a revolution in Russia in 1917?' *Morning Star* November 4-5 2017. Not that Davis's version of 1917 come directly from Trotsky - no, of course not: it comes via the *Short course*.
15. Between 1924 and 1927, 12 volumes of Trotsky's *Collected works* were published in Moscow and/or Leningrad by the State Publishing House. Volume 3, issued in two parts, contained his writings and speeches for the year 1917 (see [https://archive.org/details/Trotsky\\_CollectedWorks](https://archive.org/details/Trotsky_CollectedWorks)).
16. J Creegan, 'Re-examining the record' *Weekly Worker* November 1 2018.
17. J Conrad 'The place of the Soviet Union in history' *Weekly Worker* August 16 2018.
18. L Schapiro *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* London 1964, p162.
19. Quoted in SF Cohen *Bukharin and the Bolshevik revolution* Oxford 1980, p269.
20. L Trotsky *Our political tasks* (1904), London nd, p125.
21. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 17, Moscow 1977, p23.
22. L Kamenev, 'Trotskyism or Leninism?', quoted in F Corney (ed) *Trotsky's challenge: the 'literary discussion' of 1924 and the fight for the Bolshevik revolution* Leiden 2016, p217.
23. LT Lih *Lenin* London 2011, p210.
24. I have had to rely on Trotsky's fragmented rendition - see L Trotsky *The challenge of the Left Opposition (1923-25)* New York 1980, pp227-30. If anyone knows where to access the full text, please let me know.
25. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 26, Moscow 1977, p216.
26. *Ibid* p303.
27. *Ibid* p216.
28. S Grainger, 'The Russian Revolution' *The Clarion* November 2017.
29. For the role of the army high command see R Service *The last of the tsars* chapter 4, London 2017.
30. SH Baron *Plekhanov in Russian history and Soviet historiography* London 1995, p148.
31. Figures from *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* Moscow 1939, p183.
32. See the 2017 *Weekly Worker* series translated and introduced by John Riddell and Barbara Allen, beginning with the Petrograd *Mezhrayonka* leaflet of January 1917.
33. Here, in this paragraph, I am repeating the argument of Lars T Lih - see 'Biography of a sister slogan' *Weekly Worker* April 5 2018.
34. P Gatrell *Russia's First World War: a social and economic history* Abingdon 2005, p1.
35. T Cliff *Lenin* Vol 2, London 1975, p127.
36. *Ibid* p124.
37. *Weekly Worker* December 20 2018.
38. [www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1887/xx/sdelg2.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/plekhanov/1887/xx/sdelg2.htm).
39. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1977, p32.
40. L Trotsky *The proletariat and the revolution* (1904) - see [www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1918/ourrevo/ch02.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1918/ourrevo/ch02.htm).
41. Quoted in LT Lih, 'Democratic revolution in permanenz' *Science and Society* October 2012, p444.
42. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1977, pp28-29.
43. <https://community.dur.ac.uk/a.k.harrington/srprog.html>.
44. Quoted in T Dan *The origins of Bolshevism* New York 1964, pp211-12.
45. Quoted in VI Lenin *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1977, p128.
46. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 13 Moscow 1977, p239.
47. Quoted in LT Lih, 'Democratic revolution in permanenz' *Science and Society* October 2012, p455.
48. Quoted in *ibid* p458.
49. See R Day and G Daniel (eds) *Witnesses to permanent revolution: the documentary record*, Leiden 2009.
50. J Creegan, 'Democratic dictatorship vs permanent revolution' *Weekly Worker* May 21 2015.
51. See J Creegan, 'April in Petrograd' *Weekly Worker* April 16 2015.
52. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1977, p128.
53. *Ibid* p82.
54. See *ibid* pp15-130.
55. *Ibid* p114.
56. "Kautsky describes the policy of the *sans-culottes* in 1793-94 as one of 'Revolution in Permanenz'" - quoted in RB Day and D Gaido (eds) *Witnesses to permanent revolution* Leiden 2009, p537.
57. H Draper *Karl Marx's theory of revolution* Vol 2, New York 1978, p204.
58. *Ibid* p201. Marx's most famous use of 'permanent revolution' can be found in his 1850 'Address of the Central Authority of the Communist League' (K Marx and F Engels *CW* Vol 10, New York 1978, pp277-87). A document which Lenin not only knew by heart, but "used to delight in quoting" (AH Nimitz *Lenin's electoral strategy from 1907 to the October Revolution of 1917: the ballot, the streets - or both* New York 2014, p146).
59. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 9, Moscow 1977, p237.
60. *Ibid* p321.
61. *Ibid* p347.
62. *Ibid* p400.
63. L Trotsky *The permanent revolution* New York 1978, pp33-34.
64. [russiapedia.rtc.com/on-this-day/april-16](http://russiapedia.rtc.com/on-this-day/april-16).
65. L Trotsky *The permanent revolution* New York 1978, p166.
66. *Ibid* p168.
67. *Ibid* p198.
68. VI Lenin *CW* Vol 24, Moscow 1977, p38.
69. LT Lih, 'Bolshevism was fully armed' *Weekly Worker* February 26 2015.
70. Trotsky included the surviving minutes of the March conference in his *The Stalin school of falsification* London 1974, pp181-237. Provisional government thugs ransacked the Bolshevik HQ in July 1917. Though fragmentary, and meant to provide damning evidence against Stalin, they make fascinating reading.
71. See LT Lih, 'Corrections from up close' *Weekly Worker* August 29 2017.
72. Quoted in VI Lenin *CW* Vol 24, Moscow 1977, p50.
73. *Ibid* p52.
74. *Ibid* p244-45.
75. *Ibid* p61.