

Revolution and the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat'

Vanessa Walilko
DePaul University
March 2004

V.I. Lenin has been accused of being “power-crazed” and “a fanatic believer in a Communist utopia” (Getzler: 464).¹ To others, Lenin is considered to be the “greatest thinker to have been produced by the revolutionary working class movement since Marx” (Lukacs: 10). By still others, he is considered a “cynical authoritarian” or a “revolutionary idealist”² (*Rereading*: 19). It has also been proposed that Lenin “had a compulsive need to dominate” and that he “was indeed a revolutionary fanatic” (ibid: xvii). Yet Lenin identified one reason for his writings: to clear up those aspects of Marx’s and Engels’ theories which had been “ignored and distorted³ by the opportunists” (*State and Revolution*: 384, *Rereading*: 5).⁴ Despite the fact that Marx and Lenin agreed on many points regarding revolution and the role the proletariat would play after they had secured power for themselves, many of Lenin’s ideas are at the same time quite distinct from the theories that Marx put down in *The Communist Manifesto* and *The Class Struggles in France 1848-1850*. This paper will address their similarities and differences in views regarding the necessity of the revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx understood that the material conditions of life, particularly the political economy determined human consciousness (*Theory and Revolution*: 34). Marx believed that history was driven by the class struggle.⁵ This class antagonism eventually evolved into an open fight which “either ended in a large revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes” (*Manifesto*: 1).⁶ The revolution,⁷ therefore, was the catalyst for radical social change. Lenin recognized the importance that Marx placed on revolution,⁸ and just as Marx used the historical class struggles in France as one basis for his analysis of capitalism, Lenin formed assessments of revolutionary traditions in the course of history based upon the

historical experience of Russia (Gusev 75, Page: 3).⁹ Based upon his analysis of Russian culture, Lenin believed that the revolution of the proletariat was “within reach” (Getzler 464).¹⁰

Though the bourgeoisie “played a revolutionary role in history” with its establishment of capitalism (*Manifesto*: 5), the proletariat was the true revolutionary class (*Manifesto*: 20). Only the proletariat was capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie (Lukacs: 20). In fact, Marx stated that in France, the revolutionary potential of the proletariat was so great that “it was necessary to have done with the workers” (*Class Struggle*: 49-50). Lenin agreed with Marx that the proletariat alone is really a revolutionary class, and the socialist movement was “the independent movement of the immense majority working in the interests of the immense majority” (Townshend 82, Page: 35).¹¹ Just as Marx stated that the proletariat is the weapon to destroy capitalism (*Manifesto*: 13), to Lenin, the proletariat was the only class that was consistently revolutionary, the only class that had the ability unite all the workers against the bourgeoisie and to completely abolish capitalism (*State and Revolution*: 403, *What is to be Done*: 30).¹²

Marx believed that universal suffrage not only undermined “the bourgeoisie’s guarantee of power,” but was also a tool which gave the exploited classes the political power necessary to overthrow capitalism (*Class Struggles*: 69-70). However, Lenin saw universal suffrage as “an instrument of bourgeois rule” (*State and Revolution*: 393). To Lenin, the only possible means of achieving socialism was through violent revolution (*State and Revolution*: 400).¹³ Though Marx himself was not opposed to the parliamentary system (Townshend: 76), Lenin stated that the belief in the possibility of a peaceful takeover of government from within the parliamentary system was based on a “fundamental theoretical error”¹⁴ and was a distortion of Marx’s conception of the state (*Marxism-Leninism*: 18). To Lenin, revolution was the core of Marxist thought (Lukacs: 12). “Lenin, it is clear, wanted no peace short of revolution” (Page: 24).¹⁵

Revolution was necessary due to the nature of the bourgeois democracy. Democracy has been defined as a system which “completely or almost completely responsive to all its citizens” (Dahl: 2). The responsiveness of a government can be assessed by whether citizens are granted three opportunities: whether they are allowed to formulate their preferences, whether they are able to indicate their preferences to their fellow citizen and government through individual and collective action, and whether their preferences are weighed equally in regards to the conduct of government (ibid: 3). There should be no discrimination against preferences by their source or content, even if it runs in opposition to the ruling powers. Opposition is necessary in order to have a “good” government (*Theory and Revolution*: 43). Liberal opposition illustrates the extent of freedom in a particular society, for “no democratic right can be rejected without impugning every democratic right” (ibid: 38). The state is in a healthy condition only “if law is the conscious expression of the will of the people, and therefore is made with the will of the people and by it” (ibid: 46). Elected representatives must express the will of the people.

Bourgeois democracy, however, differs from this Weberian ideal-type. Robert Lynd stated that “liberal democracy has never dared face the fact that industrial capitalism is an intensely coercive form of organization” (Miliband: 74). He further states that liberal democracy forces the institutions and individuals in society to work for the minority of people that wield economic power. Furthermore, limits on the celebrated political competition in liberal-democratic societies are illustrated through governmental hostility to socialist competition (ibid: 82). This hostility towards socialism is justified through claims of the “love of freedom, concern for democracy, the hatred of dictatorship, their fear of aggression.” Yet in the capitalist context, freedom is defined as the ability to engage in capitalist enterprise (ibid: 86)

“In all advanced capitalist countries, there are certain parties which are the favored, chosen vehicles or instruments of the business classes and of the dominant classes generally” (Miliband: 184). The economically dominant class rules through the democratic institutions, rather than by way or a dictatorship (ibid: 22). The term “democracy” assumes that no class or group is able to assert political predominance. The state in class societies is a “guardian and protector of the economic interests” of the dominant class (ibid: 265-6). Marx argued that democratic freedoms must not be degraded into a mere instrument for advancing the interests of the bourgeoisie (*Theory and Revolution*: 43). All should participate in government because the affairs of the state are the concern of all. People must always form the determining power in society.

Marx was highly critical of the bourgeois democracy, because it tied the exercise of freedom to the possession of money. Thus, under the bourgeoisie, the exercise of freedom is limited. “The greater the conflict between government and opposition, the more likely that each will seek to deny opportunities to the other to participate effectively in policy making” (Dahl: 15). Political equality is a myth for “when economic life cannot be separated from political life,” unequal economic power produces political inequality (Miliband: 91). For the state to acquire a new form, Marx maintains that “an outright revolution was always needed” (ibid: 91).

Marx asserted the importance of the “gradual, spontaneous class organization of the proletariat” (*Manifesto*: 56).¹⁶ Marx identified the mass strike and armed uprising as the first spontaneous actions of the masses which were so important to revolution (Lukacs: 40, 52). Marx saw trade unions as a sign of growing revolutionary power of the proletariat (*Manifesto*: 16). Lenin recognized the power of the spontaneous working class movement in social change (*What is to be Done*: 17). However, Lenin believed that spontaneity led to trade unions, which

were actually the bourgeoisie's tools of "ideological enslavement of the proletariat" (*What is to be Done*: 41, McLellan: 87).¹⁷ In fact, Lenin called for a "fierce struggle against spontaneity" (*What is to be Done*: 42). To combat this enslavement, the proletariat needed to be guided by the "party."¹⁸ As "the proletariat is the leader of the revolution," the party is the leader of the proletariat (Lukacs: 28). The party serves the role as vanguard of the proletariat and exists for the purpose of "teaching, leading, guiding, directing, and organizing the laboring people in socialism" (*Rereading*: 16).¹⁹

Just as Marx saw the Communists as leading and organizing the proletariat (*Manifesto*: 26), the Bolsheviks were Lenin's party for organizing the workers.²⁰ Lenin emphasized that the proletariat needed "a centralized organization of force" (*Rereading*: 10). The key to the revolution was that of organized military force (*Marxism-Leninism*: 18). Spontaneity required guidance by the party in regards to theoretical, political and organizational work (*What is to be Done*: 53).²¹ The party must take an active role in the revolution of the proletariat, because the "spontaneous revolutionary self-education" of the masses along with "party agitation and propaganda" is not enough to ensure that the revolution can take place (Lukacs 25).²² The proletariat needed to be trained in order to properly overthrow the government (*What is to be Done*: 34).

Like Marx, Lenin believed that classes were split irreconcilably²³ and that the open fight would evolve into revolution (*State and Revolution*: 390).²⁴ Marx viewed the revolution as the physical manifestation of the working class achieving class consciousness (Getzler: 464). However, influenced by a passage in *The Communist Manifesto*,²⁵ Lenin saw the proletarian movement as civil war (*Marxism-Leninism*: 18). Marx believed that capitalism was going to create such a miserable existence for the proletariat that the workers would rise up against the

capitalists and establish socialism (*Manifesto*: 11-14). Lenin observed that as the people became increasingly subjected to the “crushing” rule of the bourgeoisie, they would create a new society for themselves (*State and Revolution*: 416).²⁶ As Lenin began to formulate his theory about the revolution, he predicted that the “final destruction of tsardom” would stem from a “full-scale civil war” (Getzler: 465, Gusev: 75).

To Lenin, civil war was the only way to achieve communism.²⁷ Unlike “opportunists” of his day, Lenin felt that he truly understood Marx’s concept that revolution is class war.²⁸ Civil war is the proletariat’s only possible resistance to its own destruction and the world revolution is the only way to win this war (Lukacs: 50, 59).²⁹ To Lenin, revolution was defined narrowly in terms of civil war. In addition, he found that “the ideal of the party of the proletariat is that of the *belligerent party*” (Getzler 466). The revolution turned the soviet state into an instrument of class struggle, civil war and dictatorship, whose ultimate goal was to “crush the bourgeoisie” (Getzler: 471).

Marx had stated that the proletarian struggle was first a national struggle (*Manifesto*: 22). Lenin agreed, stating that after the proletariat had organized socialism and did away with the capitalists, other countries would see their example and help with the cause (Page: 16).³⁰ Lenin believed that the Russian revolution would be a spring board for world revolution (Page: 1, 4, 24).³¹ Furthermore, the world revolution was impossible unless it started in Russia with the overthrow of the tsar (Page: 9-10). Social-democracy was an international movement after all (*What is to be Done?*: 25). Lenin, however, believed that the Russian revolution would fail without the support of Western Europe (Getzler: 466).

Lenin put a great deal of importance on the destruction of the bourgeois state³² in the revolution, calling for the “destruction of the old machine” (*Rereading*: 15).³³ As Marx had

stated, “the proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation” (*Manifesto*: 22). Marx had identified the modern state as the “committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (*Manifesto*: 5). The task of the revolution was to abolish the bourgeois state (McLellan: 98, *Rereading*: 5). The proletariat could not merely take control of the capitalist system and use it for itself, it needed “to smash” the entire bourgeois system (*State and Revolution*: 406, 409, 414, 415, 425). This “smashing” of the state was necessary to prevent the bourgeoisie from reestablishing political and economic dominance (Lukacs: 67).³⁴

Yet despite Lenin’s repeated call to smashing the capitalist state entirely, he states that bureaucracy would still exist in socialism. Lenin felt that “abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely is out of the question” so instead, Lenin believed that the the proletariat ought to replace the old bureaucracy with a new one (*Rereading*: 12, *State and Revolution*: 425, 486). This new bureaucracy would serve to inaugurate socialism, and would eventually lead to the end of bureaucracy (*State and Revolution*: 488).³⁵

Lenin stated that the goal of the proletarian revolution was to abolish the bourgeois state and that only through revolution can the bourgeois state be abolished (*State and Revolution*: 396-7). He believed, as Marx did, that the proletariat must “seize the revolutionary dictatorship” (*Class Struggles*: 92). However, Lenin sought to explain the form of government that would occur after the revolution. From Marx’s declaration of “Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!” (*Class Struggles*: 58) and in the tradition of Plekhanov (*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 81),³⁶ Lenin took up the idea of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat.’

Lenin sought to interpret what Marx meant by “dictatorship of the working class.” Marx had stated that the first step in the revolution of the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, “to win the battle of democracy” (*Manifesto*: 39). Marx had originally used the term to describe a truly revolutionary regime of a class (*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 8, 11). Lenin felt that Marx meant an actual dictatorship (Page: 18).³⁷ However, Lenin’s unique definition of ‘dictatorship’ appears to have “come out of his own head” (*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 80). To Lenin, dictatorship meant “unlimited power based on force, and not on law” and “rule based directly on force and unrestricted by any laws” (*Marxism-Leninism*: 24, Getzler 466).³⁸ The dictatorship of the proletariat would exercise authority for the purpose of suppressing the resistance of the bourgeoisie. (*Rereading*: 10).

After defining the meaning of Marx’s few hints of the “dictatorship of the proletariat,” Lenin sought to create the “revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry” (Getzler 465). While Marx identified the industrial proletariat as the modern revolutionary class (*Class Struggles*: 73), Lenin included the peasantry into his definition in order to compensate for the fact that the Russian proletariat was economically small and weak (*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 84). The “civil war” which Lenin identified brought the peasants and the proletariat together (Getzler 465).³⁹ This led to Lenin’s initial definition of ‘dictatorship of the proletariat,’ which he called the ‘two-class dictatorship.’ The proletariat and peasantry would form the ‘dictatorship’ of the state which existed in the transition from capitalism to communism (*Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 84, *Rereading*: 16).⁴⁰

Lenin stated that the class struggle “necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat” (*State and Revolution*: 411).⁴¹ The revolutionary class, after they had seized state power, would create a series of measures to undermine the economic rule of the capitalists and

render them completely harmless politically and would create an open offer of peace that “would bring about an attitude of complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries toward each other” (Page: 42). Lenin wanted to give the proletariat a role in determining the fate of Russia (Lukacs: 16-7).

Marx contended that this “dictatorship was the class of the revolution,” which led to the end of class differences (*Class Struggles*: 126).⁴² Lenin saw this ‘dictatorship’ as freeing the people from oppression.⁴³ While under capitalism, democracy had been restricted, government would now be open to all the people (*State and Revolution*: 486).⁴⁴ Each person would play “an independent part” in the role of government, not only in elections and voting, but also in sharing the tasks of everyday administration (*State and Revolution*: 487-8, *Dictatorship of the Proletariat*: 98).⁴⁵

“Democracy” soon changed to “democratic republic.” The workers and the peasants would elect representatives to councils, or soviets who would run the important affairs of the state (Evans: 12). In fact, Lenin called for the transfer of all governmental power into the hands of the Soviets, because they had the power to clarify the proletarian class consciousness (Page: 39). Lenin stated that Marx was a centralist, and consequently, power needed to be placed in the hands of a party (Evans: 10). This party would rule as long as it needed to fight the war to keep the proletariat free from imperialist government (*Marxism-Leninism*: 43). However, Lenin emphasized that this state that the proletariat creates of itself is only temporary (*State and Revolution*: 436), and serves its purpose only until the remnants of the bourgeoisie state “wither away.”

Taking the few references from Marx’s work regarding the rule of the workers, Lenin defined his concept of the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Also, unlike his contemporaries,

Lenin recognized the dialectic of history and the actuality of the revolution (Lukacs 19). While it appears as though Lenin sought to establish Marx's vision of socialism,⁴⁶ Lenin's emphasis on the party illustrates the "socialism from above" mentality of pre-Marx socialists. Marx emphasized "socialism from below," for he understood that the people needed to be given the reigns of control to learn how to govern themselves. People can never be ready to govern themselves if they are denied the democratic rights on the argument that they are not mature enough to rule themselves. (*Theory and Revolution*: 48).

Bibliography

- Dahl, Robert A. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971.
- Draper, Hal. The "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" from Marx to Lenin. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987.
- Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution. Vol. 1. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977.
- Evans, Alfred B. "Rereading Lenin's *State and Revolution*." Slavic Review 46 (1987): 1-19.
- Evans, Alfred B. Soviet Marxism-Leninism: The Decline of an Ideology. London: Praeger Publishers, 1993.
- Getzler, Israel. "Lenin's Conception of Revolution As Civil War." Slavonic & East European Review 74 (1996): 464-72.
- Gusev, Kirill. "The Abiding Significance of Lenin's Lessons: The 70th Anniversary of the February 1917 Revolution in Russia." World Marxist Review 30 (1987): 75-81.
- Lenin, V.I. What is to be Done? New York: International Publishers, 1969.
- Lenin, V.I. "The State and Revolution." V.I. Lenin Collected Works v. 25. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964. 381-492.
- Lukacs, George. Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1970.
- Marx, Karl. Class Struggles in France 1848-1850. New York: International Publishers, 1997.

Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. The Communist Manifesto. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1998.

McLellan, David. Marxism After Marx. New York: Harper Row Publishers, 1979.

Miliband, Ralph. The State in Capitalist Society. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969.

Page, Stanley W. Lenin and World Revolution. New York: New York University Press, 1959.

Townshend, Jules. "Lenin's *The State and Revolution*: An Innocent Reading." Science and Society 63(1999): 63-82.

¹ It is odd that *State and Revolution* is so often viewed as utopian. Evans even goes to far as to claim that *State and Revolution* reveals Lenin's "ideals for a more humane world." Yet how can it be considered more humane when the work is so preoccupied with smashing the opposition with violence and denying the rights to the minority? In fact, *State and Revolution* contains numerous references to violent overthrow and opposition by force. Lenin's vision of society was anything but ideal. His constitution called for "merciless crushing of the exploiters." (Getzler 469). When he was criticized as "undemocratic" for forcibly crushing opposition, Lenin told his detractors that their view of democracy was too "formal and abstract" (*Marxism-Leninism*: 24). As long as the "class content" served the proletariat, it didn't matter if the action was undemocratic. (*Rereading* : 2).

² Most likely these differences of opinion are due to the fact that Lenin's writings themselves are often so inconsistent.

³ As Lenin observed, "it is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital* and especially its first chapter without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *logic*. Consequently, a half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!"

⁴ Of course, Lenin did a bit of "ignoring" and "distorting" in pursuit of his own interests as well, particularly after he came into power.

⁵ "Historical materialism is the theory of the proletarian revolution. It is so because its essence is an intellectual synthesis of social existence which produces and fundamentally determines the proletariat; and because the proletariat struggling for liberation finds its clear self-consciousness in it. The stature of a proletarian thinker, of a representative of historical materialism, can be therefore measured by the depth and breadth of his grasp of this and the problems arising from it; by the extent to which he is able to accurately to detect beneath the appearances of bourgeois society those tendencies towards proletarian revolution which work themselves in and through it to their effective being and distinct consciousness" (Lukacs 9).

⁶ Unlike other Marxists of his day, Lenin saw that there were other causes besides economic which drew people into the revolution. "It is not only the economic struggle which draws the people into revolution. It is every manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only connection with economic struggle which draws in the masses... The flogging of peasants, the corruption of the officials and the police treatment of the common people in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes and the persecution of the religious sects, the humiliating treatment of soldiers and the barrack methods in the treatment of the students and liberal intellectuals" (*What is to be Done?*: 58).

⁷ Real revolution "is only possible in the periods when these two factors, the modern productive forces and the bourgeois production forms, come into collision with one another" (*Class Struggles*. 135).

⁸ For he agreed with Marx's statement that "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point, however, is to change it" (Lukacs: 38).

⁹ However, it is ironic that the proletarian revolution occurred in Russia, considering that Marx stated that he believed that Russia was precisely the country where it could not happen.

¹⁰ “The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people’s position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing” (*State and Revolution*: 383).

¹¹ As Marx said: “All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority” (*Manifesto*: 22).

¹² For the goal of the proletariat was “to overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism, for a democratic republic” (*State and Revolution*: 490).

¹³ Regarding the Paris commune, Lenin remarked that “it ought to have annihilated its enemies rather than attempt to influence them morally” (Getzler 465), perhaps lending more credence to the notion that Lenin had a “compulsive need to dominate.”

¹⁴ For Lenin argued that “without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement” (*What is to be done?*: 25).

¹⁵ However, as Gusev points out, this was not always the case. Lenin once stated that “by seizing full power, the Soviets could still today... ensure the peaceful development of the revolution, peaceful elections of deputies by the people, and a peaceful struggle of parties inside the soviets; they could test the programs of the various parties in practice, and power could pass peacefully from one party to another” (80).

¹⁶ “The tremendous force of the spontaneous revolutionary element cannot, of course, be denied, and spontaneous movements are bound to occur in any revolution. The indignation and anger of the exploited masses, which had been building up for decades, inevitably breaks out on the surface at such historical movements. But that alone is not enough. For a revolution to triumph, there is a need for long preparatory effort by the society’s forward-looking revolutionary forces. No revolution can win unless the masses come to realize the need to struggle against war, against the social and national oppression, and the obsolete reactionary order” (Gusev: 77).

¹⁷ McLellan quotes Lenin: “There is much talk of spontaneity. But the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism and the trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. The task of Social-Democracy is to combat spontaneity, to divert the working class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving” (87). However, Evans viewed *The State and Revolution* as advocating the dominance of unrestrained, spontaneous mass initiative (3).

¹⁸ Lukacs stated that the party is the “centralized organization of the proletariat’s most conscious efforts” as well as “the tangible embodiment of proletarian class consciousness” (26-7).

¹⁹ Because “Lenin maintained that the proletariat, left to itself, would inevitably follow bourgeois ideology” (McLellan: 87).

²⁰ As Evans points out, the party was all-important to Lenin (*Marxism-Leninism*: 24). Yet isn’t “the party” just another way of having a ruling minority, worst of all, under the guise of supporting the majority? In fact, McLellan states that the “dictatorship of the proletariat soon became the “dictatorship of party,” after the revolution, and all actions were performed under the leadership of the party” (100).

²¹ “The revolutionaries can only fight if they are guided by an advanced theory” (*What is to be Done?*: 26).

²² The party must prepare the revolution by “accelerating the maturing of revolutionary tendencies” (Lukacs 32).

²³ The state is a “product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And conversely, the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable” (*State and Revolution*: 386-7).

²⁴ “Civilized society is split into antagonistic, and moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes whose “self-acting” army would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organization of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters” (*State and Revolution*: 390).

²⁵ “In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie, lays at the foundation for the sway of the proletariat” (*Manifesto*: 18).

²⁶ “The majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution their own demands, their attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed” (*State and Revolution*: 416).

²⁷ However, in his *Farewell* letter, one of Lenin’s three points was that Russia cannot achieve socialism (Page: 20).

²⁸ In fact, Lenin was one of the few people calling for a universal proletarian revolution (Page: 13).

²⁹ As Lenin said, “In answer to all reproaches and accusations of terror, dictatorship and civil war, we say: yes, we have openly proclaimed what no other government in the world would ever proclaim: we are the first government in the world which openly speaks of civil war; yes, we started and continue to wage war against the exploiters” (Getzler 465).

³⁰ “The proletariat of that country, having expropriated the capitalists and organized socialist production, would stand up against the capitalist rest of the world, attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries. It would stir up among them revolt against their capitalists, and it necessary, even advance with military might against the exploiting classes and their states.”

³¹ As Lenin stated: “history has now placed us before an immediate task which is far more revolutionary than the immediate tasks of the proletariat of any other country. The completion of this task, the destruction of the strongest bulwark of European, and we may even say Asiatic, reaction would make of the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international proletarian revolution” (Page: 1).

³² For though the state is a weapon of class struggle, it is also a tool of repression (Lukacs: 60,69).

³³ Lenin stated, “the proletariat must never forget that in certain conditions the struggle turns into armed struggle and civil war and that there are times when the interests of the proletariat demand the merciless annihilation of the enemy in open military engagements” (Getzler 466).

³⁴ The proletariat must “destroy the bourgeoisie economically, isolate it politically, and undermine it ideologically” (Lukacs: 67). This is because, “The class struggle exists on three sides--theoretical political, and practical-economic (which is the resistance to the capitalists)” (*What is to be Done?*: 28).

³⁵ “The proletariat seizes state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with. But thereby, it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes also the state as state.” The state does not need to exist if the class antagonisms are abolished (*State and Revolution*: 395).

³⁶ Although when Engels heard about Plekhanov’s theory of ‘dictatorship of the proletariat,’ he said that it would ruin the socialist movement.

³⁷ “A revolution is the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries” (*State and Revolution*: 437).

³⁸ This was his justification for excluding or taking down all opposition.

³⁹ Lenin called this alliance the “guarantee of our invincible strength.”

⁴⁰ However, Lenin’s ideal of “dictatorship of the proletariat,” soon transformed into the dictatorship of one-party Bolshevik government. In fact, Lenin believed that those who desired a multi-party, broadly-based socialist government were sabotaging the “dictatorship of the proletariat” (Getzler 468).

⁴¹ “Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of revolutionary transformation of one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat” which occurs because of the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (*State and Revolution*: 459).

⁴² “This socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the revolution. The class dictatorship of the proletariat the inevitable transit point to the abolition of class differences generally, to the abolition of all the productive relations on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social connections” (*Class Struggles*: 126).

⁴³ Despite the fact that he also indicated that “what dictatorship implies and means is a state of simmering war, a state of military measures of struggle against the enemies of the proletariat in power.”

⁴⁴ Although Lenin’s definition of freedom and democracy excludes the capitalists.

⁴⁵ However, Lenin showed his true colors after the revolution when he referred to the idea of workers administering to a state as a “fairy tale”: “Can every worker know how to administer to a state? Practical people know this is a fairy tale.”

⁴⁶ Though, as Evans points out, “Those who study Lenin are aware that simple logic could never sway him from a theoretical position, however irrational, as long as he had politically practical motives for holding to it” (*Marxism-Leninism*: 17).