

V I Lenin

The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution

An article on pacifism written in German in 1916 (published 1917)^[4]

Among the Dutch, Scandinavian and Swiss revolutionary Social-Democrats who are combating the social-chauvinist lies about “defence of the fatherland” in the present imperialist war, there have been voices in favour of replacing the old Social-Democratic minimum-programme demand for a “militia”, or “the armed nation”, by a new demand: “disarmament”. The *Jugend-Internationale*^[2] has inaugurated a discussion on this issue and published, in No. 3, an editorial supporting disarmament. There is also, we regret to note, a concession to the “disarmament” idea in R. Grimm’s latest theses.^[3] Discussions have been started in the periodicals *Neues Leben*^[4] and *Vorbote*.

Let us take a closer look at the position of the disarmament advocates.

I

Their principal argument is that the disarmament demand is the clearest, most decisive, most consistent expression of the struggle against all militarism and against all war.

But in this principal argument lies the disarmament advocates’ principal error. Socialists cannot, without ceasing to be socialists, be opposed to all war.

Firstly, socialists have never been, nor can they ever be, opposed to revolutionary wars. The bourgeoisie of the imperialist “Great” Powers has become thoroughly reactionary, and the war *this* bourgeoisie is now waging we regard as a reactionary, slave-owners’ and criminal war. But what about a war *against* this bourgeoisie? A war, for instance, waged by peoples oppressed by and dependent upon this bourgeoisie, or by colonial peoples, for liberation. In §5 of the *Internationale* group theses we read: “*National wars are no longer possible in the era of this unbridled imperialism.*” That is obviously wrong.

The history of the twentieth century, this century of “unbridled imperialism”, is replete with colonial wars. But what we Europeans, the imperialist oppressors of the majority of the world’s peoples, with our habitual,

despicable European chauvinism, call “colonial wars” are often national wars, or national rebellions of these oppressed peoples. One of the main features of imperialism is that it accelerates capitalist development in the most backward countries, and thereby extends and intensifies the struggle against national oppression. That is a fact, and from it inevitably follows that imperialism must often give rise to national wars. *Junius*,^[5] who defends the above-quoted “theses” in her pamphlet, says that in the imperialist era every national war against an imperialist Great Power leads to the intervention of a rival imperialist Great Power. Every national war is thus turned into an imperialist war. But that argument is wrong too. This *can* happen, but does not always happen. Many colonial wars between 1900 and 1914 did not follow that course. And it would be simply ridiculous to declare, for instance, that after the present war, if it ends in the utter exhaustion of all the belligerents, “there can be no” national, progressive, revolutionary wars “of any kind”, waged, say, by China in alliance with India, Persia, Siam, etc., against the Great Powers.

To deny all possibility of national wars under imperialism is wrong in theory, obviously mistaken historically, and tantamount to European chauvinism in practice: we who belong to nations that oppress hundreds of millions in Europe, Africa, Asia, etc., are invited to tell the oppressed peoples that it is “impossible” for them to wage war against “our” nations!

Secondly, civil war is just as much a war as any other. He who accepts the class struggle cannot fail to accept civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions inevitable, continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. That has been confirmed by every great revolution. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, is to fall into extreme opportunism and renounce the socialist revolution.

Thirdly, the victory of socialism in one country does not at one stroke eliminate all war in general. On the contrary, it presupposes wars. The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different

countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously *in all* countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This is bound to create not only friction, but a direct attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie of other countries to crush the socialist state's victorious proletariat. In such cases a war on our part would be a legitimate and just war. It would be a war for socialism, for the liberation of other nations from the bourgeoisie. Engels was perfectly right when, in his letter to Kautsky of 12 September 1882, he clearly stated that it was possible for *already victorious* socialism to wage "defensive wars". What he had in mind was defence of the victorious proletariat against the bourgeoisie of other countries.

Only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not merely of one country, will wars become impossible. And from a scientific point of view it would be utterly wrong – and utterly unrevolutionary – for us to evade or gloss over the most important thing: crushing the resistance of the bourgeoisie – the most difficult task, and one demanding the greatest amount of fighting in the *transition* to socialism. The "social" parsons and opportunists are always ready to build dreams of future peaceful socialism. But the very thing that distinguishes them from revolutionary Social-Democrats is that they refuse to think about and reflect on the fierce class struggle and class wars needed to achieve that beautiful future.

We must not allow ourselves to be led astray by words. The term "defence of the fatherland", for instance, is hateful to many because both avowed opportunists and Kautskyites use it to cover up and gloss over the bourgeois lie about the present predatory war. This is a fact. But it does not follow that we must no longer see through to the meaning of political slogans. To accept "defence of the fatherland" in the present war is no more nor less than to accept it as a "just" war, a war in the interests of the proletariat – no more nor less, we repeat, because invasions may occur in any war. It would be sheer folly to repudiate "defence of the fatherland" *on the part* of oppressed nations in their wars *against* the imperialist Great Powers, or on the part of a victorious proletariat in its war against some Galliffet^[6] of a bourgeois state.

Theoretically, it would be absolutely wrong to forget that every war is but the continuation of policy by other

means. The present imperialist war is the continuation of the imperialist policies of two groups of Great Powers, and those policies were engendered and fostered by the sum total of the relationships of the imperialist era. But this very era must also necessarily engender and foster policies of struggle against national oppression and of proletarian struggle against the bourgeoisie and, consequently, also the possibility and inevitability, first, of revolutionary national rebellions and wars; second, of proletarian wars and rebellions *against* the bourgeoisie; and, third, of a combination of both kinds of revolutionary war, etc.

II

To this must be added the following general consideration.

An oppressed class which does not strive to learn to use arms, to acquire arms, only deserves to be treated like slaves. We cannot, unless we have become bourgeois pacifists or opportunists, forget that we are living in a class society from which there is no way out, nor can there be, save through the class struggle. In every class society, whether based on slavery, serfdom, or, as at present, on wage-labour, the oppressor class is always armed. Not only the modern standing army, but even the modern militia – and even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, Switzerland, for instance – represent the bourgeoisie armed *against* the proletariat. That is such an elementary truth that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it. Suffice it to point to the use of troops against strikers in all capitalist countries.

A bourgeoisie armed against the proletariat is one of the biggest, fundamental and cardinal facts of modern capitalist society. And in face of this fact, revolutionary Social-Democrats are urged to "demand" "disarmament"! That is tantamount to complete abandonment of the class-struggle point of view, to renunciation of all thought of revolution. Our slogan must be: arming of the proletariat to defeat, expropriate and disarm the bourgeoisie. These are the only tactics possible for a revolutionary class, tactics that follow logically from, and are dictated by, the whole *objective development* of capitalist militarism. Only *after* the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historic mission, to consign all armaments to the scrap-heap. And the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but *only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before*.

If the present war rouses among the reactionary Christian socialists, among the whimpering petty bourgeoisie, only horror and fright, *only* aversion to all use of arms, to bloodshed, death, etc., then we must say: Capitalist society is and has always been *horror without end*. If this most reactionary of all wars is now preparing for that society a *horrific ending*, we have no reason to fall into despair. But the disarmament “demand”, or more correctly, the dream of disarmament, is, objectively, nothing but an expression of despair at a time when, as everyone can see, the bourgeoisie itself is paving the way for the only legitimate and revolutionary war – civil war against the imperialist bourgeoisie.

A lifeless theory, some might say, but we would remind them of two world-historical facts: the role of the trusts and the employment of women in industry, on the one hand, and the Paris Commune of 1871 and the December 1905 uprising in Russia, on the other.

The bourgeoisie makes it its business to promote trusts, drive women and children into the factories, subject them to corruption and suffering, condemn them to extreme poverty. We do not “demand” such development, we do not “support” it. We fight it. But *how* do we fight? We explain that trusts and the employment of women in industry are progressive. We do not want a return to the handicraft system, pre-monopoly capitalism, domestic drudgery for women. Forward through the trusts, etc., and beyond them to socialism!

With the necessary changes that argument is applicable also to the present militarisation of the population. Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarises the youth as well as the adults; tomorrow, it may begin militarising the women. Our attitude should be: All the better! Full speed ahead! For the faster we move, the nearer shall we be to the armed uprising against capitalism. How can Social-Democrats give way to fear of the militarisation of the youth, etc., if they have not forgotten the example of the Paris Commune? This is not a “lifeless theory” or a dream. It is a fact. And it would be a sorry state of affairs indeed if, all the economic and political facts notwithstanding, Social-Democrats began to doubt that the imperialist era and imperialist wars must inevitably bring about a repetition of such facts.

A certain bourgeois observer of the Paris Commune, writing to an English newspaper in May 1871, said: “If the French nation consisted entirely of women, what a terrible nation it would be!” Women and teen-age

children fought in the Paris Commune side by side with the men. It will be no different in the coming battles for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian women will not look on passively as poorly armed or unarmed workers are shot down by the well-armed forces of the bourgeoisie. They will take to arms, as they did in 1871, and from the cowed nations of today – or more correctly, from the present-day labour movement, disorganised more by the opportunists than by the governments – there will undoubtedly arise, sooner or later, but with absolute certainty, an international league of the “terrible nations” of the revolutionary proletariat.

The whole of social life is now being militarised. Imperialism is a fierce struggle of the Great Powers for the division and redivision of the world. It is therefore bound to lead to further militarisation in all countries, even in neutral and small ones. How will proletarian women oppose this? Only by cursing all war and everything military, only by demanding disarmament? The women of an oppressed and really revolutionary class will never accept that shameful role. They will say to their sons: “You will soon be grown up. You will be given a gun. Take it and learn the military art properly. The proletarians need this knowledge not to shoot your brothers, the workers of other countries, as is being done in the present war, and as the traitors to socialism are telling you to do. They need it to fight the bourgeoisie of their own country, to put an end to exploitation, poverty and war, and not by pious wishes, but by defeating and disarming the bourgeoisie.”

If we are to shun such propaganda, precisely such propaganda, in connection with the present war, then we had better stop using fine words about international revolutionary Social-Democracy, the socialist revolution and war against war.

III

The disarmament advocates object to the “armed nation” clause in the programme also because it more easily leads, they allege, to concessions to opportunism. The cardinal point, namely, the relation of disarmament to the class struggle and to the social revolution, we have examined above. We shall now examine the relation between the disarmament demand and opportunism. One of the chief reasons why it is unacceptable is precisely that, together with the illusions it creates, it inevitably weakens and devitalises our struggle against opportunism.

Undoubtedly, this struggle is the main, immediate question now confronting the International. Struggle against imperialism that is not closely linked with the struggle against opportunism is either an empty phrase or a fraud. One of the main defects of Zimmerwald and Kienthal^[7] – one of the main reasons why these embryos of the Third International may possibly end in a fiasco – is that the question of fighting opportunism was not even raised openly, let alone solved in the sense of proclaiming the need to break with the opportunists. Opportunism has triumphed – temporarily – in the European labour movement. Its two main shades are apparent in all the big countries: first, the avowed, cynical, and therefore less dangerous social-imperialism of Messrs. Plekhanov, Scheidemann, Legien, Albert Thomas and Sembat, Vandervelde, Hyndman, Henderson, et al.; second, the concealed, Kautskyite opportunism: Kautsky-Haase and the Social-Democratic Labour Group in Germany;^[8] Longuet, Pressemane, Mayéras, et al., in France; Ramsay MacDonald and the other leaders of the Independent Labour Party in England; Martov, Chkheidze, et al., in Russia; Treves and the other so-called Left reformists in Italy.

Avowed opportunism is openly and directly opposed to revolution and to incipient revolutionary movements and outbursts. It is in direct alliance with the governments, varied as the forms of this alliance may be – from accepting ministerial posts to participation in the war industries committees (in Russia).^[9] The masked opportunists, the Kautskyites, are much more harmful and dangerous to the labour movement, because they hide their advocacy of alliance with the former under a cloak of plausible, pseudo-“Marxist” catchwords and pacifist slogans. The fight against both these forms of prevailing opportunism must be conducted in all fields of proletarian politics: parliament, the trade unions, strikes, the armed forces, etc. The main distinguishing feature of both these forms of prevailing opportunism is that the concrete question of the *connection between the present war and revolution, and the other concrete questions of revolution*, are hushed up, concealed, or treated with an eye to police prohibitions. And this despite the fact that before the war the connection between *this* impending war and the proletarian revolution was emphasised innumerable times, both unofficially, and officially in the Basle Manifesto.^[10] The main defect of the disarmament demand is its evasion of all the concrete questions of revolution. Or do the advocates of disarmament stand for an altogether new kind of revolution, unarmed revolution?

To proceed. We are by no means opposed to the fight for reforms. And we do not wish to ignore the sad possibility – if the worst comes to the worst – of mankind going through a second imperialist war, if revolution does not come out of the present war, in spite of the numerous outbursts of mass unrest and mass discontent and in spite of our efforts. We favour a programme of reforms directed *also* against the opportunists. They would be only too glad if we left the struggle for reforms entirely to them and sought escape from sad reality in a nebulous “disarmament” fantasy. “Disarmament” means simply running away from unpleasant reality, not fighting it.

In such a programme we would say something like this: “To accept the defence of the fatherland slogan in the 1914-16 imperialist war is to corrupt the labour movement with the aid of a bourgeois lie.” Such a concrete reply to a concrete question would be more correct theoretically, much more useful to the proletariat and more unbearable to the opportunists, than the disarmament demand and repudiation of “all and any” defence of the fatherland. And we could add: “The bourgeoisie of all the imperialist Great Powers – England, France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy, Japan, the United States – has become so reactionary and so intent on world domination, that *any* war waged by *the bourgeoisie of those countries* is bound to be reactionary. The proletariat must not only oppose all such wars, but must also wish for the defeat of its ‘own’ government in such wars and utilise its defeat for revolutionary insurrection, if an insurrection to prevent the war proves unsuccessful.”

On the question of a militia, we should say: We are not in favour of a bourgeois militia; we are in favour only of a proletarian militia. Therefore, “not a penny, not a man”, not only for a standing army, but even for a bourgeois militia, even in countries like the United States, or Switzerland, Norway, etc. The more so that in the freest republican countries (e. g., Switzerland) we see that the militia is being increasingly Prussianised, particularly in 1907 and 1911, and prostituted by being used against strikers. We can demand popular election of officers, abolition of all military law, equal rights for foreign and native-born workers (a point particularly important for those imperialist states which, like Switzerland, are more and more blatantly exploiting larger numbers of foreign workers, while denying them all rights). Further, we can demand the right of every hundred, say, inhabitants of a given country to form voluntary military-training associations, with free election of instructors paid by the state, etc. Only under these conditions could

the proletariat acquire military training for *itself* and not for its slave-owners; and the need for such training is imperatively dictated by the interests of the proletariat. The Russian revolution^[14] showed that every success of the revolutionary movement, even a partial success like the seizure of a certain city, a certain factory town, or winning over a certain section of the army, inevitably *compels* the victorious proletariat to carry out just such a programme.

Lastly, it stands to reason that opportunism can never be defeated by mere programmes; it can only be defeated by deeds. The greatest, and fatal, error of the bankrupt Second International was that its words did not correspond to its deeds, that it cultivated the habit of hypocritical and an scrupulous revolutionary phrase-mongering (note the present attitude of Kautsky and Co. towards the Basle Manifesto). Disarmament as a social idea, i.e., an idea that springs from, and can affect, a certain social environment, and is not the invention of some crackpot, springs, evidently, from the peculiar “tranquil” conditions prevailing, by way of exception, in certain small states, which have for a fairly long time stood aside from the world’s path of war and bloodshed, and hope to remain that way. To be convinced of this, we have only to consider the arguments advanced, for instance, by the Norwegian advocates of disarmament. “We are a small country,” they say. “Our army is small; there is nothing we can do against the Great Powers [and, consequently, nothing we can do to resist forcible involvement in an imperialist *alliance* with one or the other Great-Power group]. . . . We want to be left in peace in our backwoods and continue our backwoods politics, demand disarmament, compulsory arbitration, permanent neutrality, etc.” (“permanent” after the Belgian fashion, no doubt?).

The petty striving of petty states to hold aloof, the petty bourgeois desire to keep as far away as possible from the great battles of world history, to take advantage of one’s relatively monopolistic position in order to remain in hidebound passivity – this is the *objective* social environment which may ensure the disarmament idea a certain degree of success and a certain degree of popularity in some of the small states. That striving is, of course, reactionary and is based entirely on illusions,

for, in one way or another, imperialism draws the small states into the vortex of world economy and world politics.

In Switzerland, for instance, the imperialist environment objectively prescribes two courses to the labour movement: the opportunists, in alliance with the bourgeoisie, are seeking to turn the country into a republican-democratic monopolistic federation that would thrive on profits from imperialist bourgeois tourists, and to make this “tranquil” monopolistic position as profitable and as tranquil as possible.

The genuine Swiss Social-Democrats are striving to use Switzerland’s relative freedom and her “international” position to help the victory of the close alliance of the revolutionary elements in the European workers’ parties. Switzerland, thank God, does not have “a separate language of her own”, but uses three world languages, the three languages spoken in the adjacent belligerent countries.

If twenty thousand Swiss party members were to pay a weekly levy of two centimes as a sort of “extra war tax”, we would have twenty thousand francs per annum, a sum more than sufficient periodically to publish in three languages and distribute among the workers and soldiers of the belligerent countries – in spite of the bans imposed by the general staffs – all the truthful evidence about the incipient revolt of the workers, their fraternising in the trenches, their hope that the weapons will be used for revolutionary struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie of their “own” countries, etc.

That is not new. It is being done by the best papers, like *La Sentinelle*, *Volksrecht* and the *Berner Tagwacht*,^[12] although, unfortunately, on an inadequate scale. Only through such activity can the splendid decision of the Aarau Party Congress^[13] become something more than merely a splendid decision.

The question that interests us now is: Does the disarmament demand correspond to this revolutionary trend among the Swiss Social-Democrats? It obviously does not. Objectively, disarmament is an extremely national, a specifically national programme of small states. It is certainly not the international programme of international revolutionary Social-Democracy.

Notes

[1] *The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution* (in a letter Lenin refers to it as an article “On Disarmament”) was written in German and meant for publication in the Swiss, Swedish and Norwegian Left Social-Democratic press. However, it was not published at the time. Lenin somewhat re-edited it for publication in Russian. The article “The ‘Disarmament’ Slogan” appeared in *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata* No. 2, December.

The original, German text appeared in *Jugend-International*, organ of the International League of Socialist Youth Organisations, Nos. 9 and 10, September and October 1917 under the heading “Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution”. The article was printed with this editorial foreword: “*In our day, when Lenin is one of the most spoken-of leaders of the Russian revolution, the following article by this veteran revolutionary stalwart in which he sets out a large part of his political programme, is of especial interest. We received it shortly before his departure from Zurich in April 1917.*” The heading was apparently given by the editors of *Jugend-International*.

[2] *Jugend-Internationale (The Youth International)* – organ of the International League of Socialist Youth Organisations, published in Switzerland; it spoke for the Left forces in the Swiss Social-Democratic Party. Issue No. 3 of the magazine carried an editorial “*Volksheer oder Entwaffnung?*” (“A People’s Army or Disarmament?”).

[3] The reference is to Robert Grimm’s theses on the war question published in the *Grütliener*, Nos. 162 and 164, July 1916.

With the growing danger of Switzerland being drawn into the war, a discussion on the war issue arose in the Social-Democratic Party. In April 1916, the Executive instructed Grimm, Müller, Naine, Pflüger and several other prominent party leaders to state their views in the press and their articles were published in the *Berner Tagwacht*, *Volksrecht* and *Grütliener*.

[4] *Neues Leben (New Life)* – a monthly journal of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party published in Berne from January 1915 to December 1917. It expressed the views of the Zimmerwald Right and early in 1917 took up a social-chauvinist position.

[5] *Junius* – pen name of Rosa Luxemburg. See *The Junius Pamphlet*, written in the early months of 1915.

[6] *Gaston Alexandre Auguste, Marquis de Galliffet*, (1830-1909) – a French general who was notorious for his role in suppressing the Paris Commune of 1871. He was Minister of War in Waldeck-Rousseau’s cabinet at the turn of the century, which caused a controversy in the working-class movement since the ‘socialist’ renegade Alexandre Millerand also took part in the same government (the first ‘socialist’ to enter a bourgeois government), and was thus side by side with the *Fusilleur de la Commune* (“Commune’s executor”).

[7] Lenin is referring to the international socialist conferences at Zimmerwald and Kienthal.

The first Zimmerwald Conference met on 5-8 September 1915 and was attended by 38 delegates from 11 European countries – Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Norway, Holland and Switzerland. Lenin led the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee delegation.

The Conference adopted the Manifesto “To the European Proletariat”, in which, at the insistence of Lenin and the Left Social-Democrats, several basic propositions of revolutionary Marxism were included. It also adopted a joint declaration by the German and French delegations, a message of sympathy with war victims and fighters persecuted for their political activities, and elected the International Socialist Committee (I.S.C.).

The Zimmerwald Left group was formed at this Conference.

It included representatives of the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee headed by Lenin, the Regional Executives of the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, the Central Committee of the Lettish Social Democratic Party, the Swedish Left (Karl Zeth Hoglund), the Norwegian Left (Ture Nerman), the Swiss Left (Fritz Platten), and the “International Socialists of Germany” group (Julius Borchardt). The Zimmerwald Left waged an active struggle against the Centrist majority at the Conference. But it was only the Bolsheviks among the Left who advocated a fully consistent policy.

The second International Conference was held between 24 and 30 April 1916 in *Kienthal*, a village near Berne, and was attended by 43 delegates from 10 countries – Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Poland,

Norway, Austria, Serbia, Portugal. In addition there was a fraternal delegate from Britain and a representative of the Youth International Secretariat.

Representatives of the British Independent Labour Party, the U.S. socialists, and delegates from Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Sweden were denied passports and could not therefore attend. Some Left groups were represented by delegates of other parties: the Latvian Social-Democrats transferred their mandate to the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee. Henriette Roland-Holst, delegated by the Dutch Lefts, gave her mandate to the Polish and Lithuanian Social-Democratic representative. The R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee was represented by Lenin and two other delegates.

The Conference discussed: (1) the struggle to end the war; (2) attitude of the proletariat on the peace issue; (3) agitation and propaganda; (4) parliamentary activity, (5) mass struggle; and (6) convocation of the International Socialist Bureau.

Led by Lenin, the Zimmerwald Left was much stronger, both in influence and representation, than at the earlier, Zimmerwald Conference. At Kienthal it united 12 delegates and some of its proposals obtained as much as 20 votes, or nearly half of the total. This was indicative of how the relation of forces in the world labour movement had changed in favour of internationalism.

The Conference adopted a Manifesto to the “Peoples Suffering Ruination and Death” and a resolution criticising pacifism and the International Socialist Bureau. Lenin regarded the Conference decisions as a further step in uniting the internationalist forces against the imperialist war.

The Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences helped to unite the Left elements in the West-European Social-Democratic movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Subsequently these Left elements took an active part in founding communist parties in their countries and in organising the Third, Communist International.

[8] *The Social-Democratic Labour Group (Arbeitsgemeinschaft)* – an organisation of German Centrists founded in March 1916 by Reichstag members who had broken with the Social-Democratic Reichstag group. Its leaders were Hugo Haase, Georg Ledebour and Wilhelm Dittmann. It published *Lose Blätter (Leaflets)* and up to April 1916 dominated the editorial board of *Vorwärts*. Expelled from the editorial

board, the group started its own publication, *Mitteilungsblätter (Information Leaflets)*, in Berlin.

It had the support of the majority of the Berlin organisation and became the backbone of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany, founded in April 1917. The new party sought to justify avowed social-chauvinists and advocated preservation of unity with them.

[9] *The war industries committees* were established in Russia in May 1915 by the imperialist bourgeoisie to help the tsarist government in the prosecution of the war. The Central War Industry Committee was headed by one of Russia’s biggest capitalists, Guchkov, leader of the Octobrists, and included manufacturer Konovalov, banker and sugar king Tereshchenko and other big capitalists.

In an attempt to bring the workers under their influence, foster chauvinist sentiments, and create the impression that a “civil peace” had been achieved, the bourgeoisie decided to organise “workers’ groups” in these committees. The Bolsheviks declared a boycott of the committees and successfully carried it out with the support of the majority of workers.

At a worker delegates’ meeting in Petrograd on 27 September (10 October) 1915 the Bolshevik resolution calling for a boycott and for a revolutionary withdrawal from the war obtained 95 votes to the Mensheviks’ 81. Only at the second meeting, held without the pro-Bolshevik delegates, were the Mensheviks able to elect a “workers’ group” of ten, led by K. A. Gvozdyov.

As a result of Bolshevik propaganda, elections to the “workers’ groups” were held in only 70 out of a total of 239 regional and local committees, and workers’ representatives were actually elected in only 36 of them.

[10] *The Basle Manifesto* on the war issue was adopted at the emergency International Socialist Congress held in Basle, Switzerland, on 24-25 November 1912, to discuss the struggle against the imminent danger of a world imperialist war, heightened by the first Balkan War. The Congress was attended by 555 delegates. The R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee had six delegates. A huge anti-war demonstration and international anti-war rally were held on the opening day.

The Manifesto was unanimously endorsed on 25 November. It warned the peoples against the mounting danger of world war. It said that “*the great nations of Europe are always on the point of being driven at each other, without the slightest reason of real national interests for such attempts on reason and humanity. . . .*”

It would be madness if the governments did not comprehend that the mere notion of a world war will call forth indignation and passion among the workers. The latter consider it a crime to shoot each other in the interest and for the profit of capitalism, for the sake of dynastic honour and of diplomatic secret treaties."

The Manifesto disclosed the predatory aims of the war the imperialists were preparing and urged workers everywhere resolutely to combat the war danger, "to pit against the might of capitalist imperialism the international solidarity of the working class" and in the event of imperialist war breaking out, to take advantage of the economic and political crisis to hasten the socialist revolution.

Kautsky, Vandervelde and the other Second International leaders voted for the Manifesto, but as soon as the world war broke out, they went back on it, as on other anti-war decisions of international socialist congresses, and sided with their imperialist governments.

[11] The revolution referred to here is the Russian Revolution of 1905-07, which was ultimately defeated, but which brought into being the first Russian workers' councils (soviets). As early as November 1905, Lenin was writing of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies – formed spontaneously during the course of the mass political strikes that were sweeping Russia – as being the embryonic form of a new revolutionary government.

[12] *La Sentinelle* – organ of the Social-Democratic organisation of Neuchâtel Canton, French Switzerland, published at La Chaux-de-Fonds from 1890 to 1906 and resumed in 1910. It followed an internationalist policy in the First World War and in its 13 November 1914 issue (No. 265) carried an abridged version of the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee Manifesto. "The War and Russian Social-Democracy".

Volksrecht (*People's Right*) – daily Social-Democratic newspaper founded in Zurich in 1898 and edited during the First World War by Ernst Nobs. It published articles of Left Zimmerwaldists, and Lenin's "Twelve Brief Theses on H. Greulich's Defence of Fatherland Defence", "Tasks of the R.S.D.L.P. in the Russian Revolution", "Tricks of the Republican Chauvinists" and others. At present, *Volksrecht's* policy on principal home and international issues is practically identical with that of the bourgeois press.

Berner Tagwacht – Social-Democratic newspaper founded in 1893 in Berne. It published articles by

Liebknecht, Mehring and other Left socialists in the early days of the First World War. In 1917 it came out in open support of the social-chauvinists.

[13] *The Aarau Congress* of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party met on 20-21 November 1915. The central issue was the party's attitude towards the Zimmerwald internationalist group, and the struggle developed between the three following trends: (1) anti-Zimmerwaldists (H. Greulich, P. Pflüger and others); (2) supporters of the Zimmerwald Right (R. Grimm, P. Grab and others); and (3) supporters of the Zimmerwald Left (F. Platten, E. Nobs and others).

Robert Grimm tabled a resolution urging the party to affiliate with the Zimmerwald group and endorse the political programme of the Zimmerwald Right. The Left forces, in an amendment moved by the Lausanne branch, called for mass revolutionary struggle against the war, declaring that only a victorious proletarian revolution could put an end to the imperialist war. Under Grimm's pressure, the amendment was withdrawn, but it was again proposed by M. M. Kharitonov, a Bolshevik with the right to vote delegated by one of the party's branches. Out of tactical considerations, Grimm and his supporters were obliged to approve the amendment and it was carried by 258 votes to 141.