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How Lenin Studied Marx

Written: Unknown - 1933(?)

First Published: Unknown

Source: Nadezhda Krupskaya, How Lenin Studied Marx, Labour Monthly pamphlet no. 2, (1933?)

Translated: Unknown

Transcription/Markup: Ted Crawford, Steve Palmer

Proofread: Unknown

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OWING to the backwardness of industry in Russia, the workers' movement only began to develop in the nineties, when the revolutionary struggle of the working class was already taking place in a number of other countries. There had already been the experience of the great French Revolution, the experience of the revolution of 1848, the experience of the Paris Commune in 1871. The great ideological leaders of the workers' movement-Marx and Engels-were forged out in the fire of the revolutionary struggle. The teachings of Marx showed the direction taken by social development, the inevitability of the disintegration of capitalist society, the replacement of this society by Communist society, the paths which will be taken by the new social forms, the path of the class struggle; they disclosed the role of the proletariat in this struggle, and the inevitability of its victory.

Our workers' movement developed under the banner of Marxism. It did not grow blindly, groping its way, but its aim and its path were plain.

Lenin did a tremendous amount to illuminate the path of struggle of the Russian proletariat with the light of Marxism. Fifty years have passed since the death of Marx, but for our Party Marxism is still the guide to action. Leninism is merely a further development of Marxism, a deepening of it.

It is therefore obvious why it is of so great an interest to illuminate the question of Lenin's study of Marx.

Lenin had a wonderful knowledge of Marx. In 1893, when he came to St. Petersburg, he astonished all of us who were Marxists at the time with his tremendous knowledge of the works of Marx and Engels.

In the nineties, when Marxist circles began to be formed, it was chiefly the first volume of "Capital" which was studied. It was possible to obtain "Capital," although with great difficulties. But matters were extremely bad with regard to the other works of Marx. Most of the members of the circles had not even read the "Communist Manifesto." I, for example, read it for the first time only in 1898, in German, when I was in exile.

Marx and Engels were absolutely prohibited. It is sufficient to mention that in 1897, in his article "The Characteristics of Economic Romanticism" written for the *New Word*, Lenin was compelled to avoid using the words "Marx" and "Marxism." and to speak of Marx in a roundabout way so as not to get the journal into trouble.

Lenin understood foreign languages, and he did his best to dig out everything that he could by Marx and Engels in German and French. Anna. Ilyinishna tells how he read "The Poverty of Philosophy" in French together with his sister, Olga. He had to read most in German. He translated into Russian for himself the most important parts of the works of Marx and Engels which interested him.

In his first big work, published illegally by him in 1894, "Who are the Friends of the People?" there are quotations from the "Communist Manifesto," the "Critique of Political Economy," the "Poverty of Philosophy," "German Ideology," "The Letter of Marx to Ruge " in 1843, Engels' books "Anti-Dühring" and "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State."

The "Friends of the People " tremendously widened the Marxist outlook of the majority of the then Marxists, who as yet had very little acquaintance with the works of Marx. It dealt with a number of questions in an entirely new way and was tremendously successful.

In the next work of Lenin, "The Economic Content of the Teachings of the Narodniki and a Criticism of Them in the Book of Struve" we find already references to "The Eighteenth Brumaire" and the "The Civil War in France," to the "The Criticism of the Gotha Programme" and the second and third volumes of "Capital."

Later, life in emigration made it possible for Lenin to become acquainted with all the works of Marx and Engels and to study them.

The biography of Marx written by Lenin in 1914 for "Granat: Encyclopaedia" illustrates better than anything else the wonderful knowledge of the works of Marx by Lenin.

This is also shown by the innumerable extracts from Marx which Lenin constantly made when reading his works. The Lenin Institute has many notebooks with extracts from Marx.

Lenin used these extracts in his work, read them over and over and made notes on them. *Lenin not only knew Marx, but he also thought deeply on all his teachings.* In his speech at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Y.C.L. in 1920, Lenin said to the youth that it was necessary "to

take the whole sum of human knowledge and to take it in such a way that Communism will not be something learned by heart but something which you have thought out yourselves, something which forms the inevitable conclusion from the point of view of modern education." (Volume XXV.) "If a Communist were to boast of Communism on the basis of ready-made conclusions, without doing serious, big and difficult work, without thoroughly understanding the facts towards which he must take a critical attitude, such a Communist would be a very poor one." (Volume XXV.)

Lenin not only studied the works of Marx but he studied what was written about Marx and Marxism by the opponents from the camp of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. In a polemic with them he explains the basic positions of Marxism.

His first big work was "Who are the Friends of the People" and how they fight against the Social-Democrats (a reply to an article in "Russian Wealth" against the Marxists), where he drew a contrast between the point of view of the Narodniki (Mikhailovsky, Krivenko, Yushakova) and the point of view of Marx.

In the article, "The Economic Content of the Teachings of the Narodniki, and the Criticism of Them in the Works of Struve," he pointed out in what way the point of view of Struve was different from the point of view of Marx.

When examining the agrarian question, he wrote a book, "The Agrarian Question and the Criticism of Marx" (Volume IV.), where the petty-bourgeois point of view of the Social-Democrats David, Hertz, and the Russian critics, Chernov and Bulgakov was contrasted with the point of view of Marx.

"*De choc des opinions jaillit la verite*" (Truth arises from a conflict of opinions), says the French proverb. Lenin loved to carry it out. He constantly brought to light and contrasted class points of view on the basis of the questions of the workers' movement.

It is very characteristic how Lenin set forth various points of view side by side. A great deal of light is thrown on this by Volume XIX. or works, where the extracts, conspects, plans for essays, &c., on the agrarian question for the period preceding 1917 are collected.

Lenin carefully recapitulates the *statements of the "critics,"* selects and copies out the clearest and most characteristic phrases and counter-poses them to the statements of Marx. In carefully analysing the statements of the "critics," he tries to show the class essence of their statements, putting forward the most important and urgent questions in prominent relief.

Lenin very frequently *deliberately sharpened a question.* He considered that the tone was not the important thing. You may express yourself coarsely and bitingly. What is important is that you speak to the point. In the preface to the correspondence of F. A. Sorge, he gives a quotation from Mehring from his Correspondence with Sorge : " Mehring is right in saying that Marx and Engels

gave little thought to a 'high tone.' They did not stop long to think before dealing a blow, but they did not whine about every blow they received." (Volume XI.) Incisiveness of form and style were natural to Lenin. He learned it from Marx. He says "Marx relates how he and Engels fought constantly against the miserable conducting of this "Social-Democrat" and often fought *sharply (wobei oft scharf hergeht)* (Volume XI.). Lenin did not fear sharpness, but he demanded that objections should be to the point. Lenin had one favourite word which he frequently used: "quibbling." If a polemic began which was not to the point, if people began to pick at trifles or juggle with facts, he used to say: "that is mere quibbling." Lenin expressed himself with still greater force against polemics which had not the aim of bringing clearness into the question but of paying off small factional grudges. This was the favourite method of the Mensheviks. Concealing themselves behind quotations from Marx and Engels, taken out of their context, out of the circumstances in which they were written, they served factional aims entirely. In the preface to the correspondence of F. A. Sorge, Lenin wrote: "To imagine that the advice of Marx and Engels to the Anglo-American workers' movement can be simply and directly adapted to Russian conditions means to utilise Marxism, not to elucidate his method, not to study the concrete historic peculiarities of the workers' movement in definite countries, but for petty factional grudges of the intelligentsia." (Volume XI.)

Here we arrive directly at the question of *how Lenin studied Marx*. This can partly be seen from the previous quotation: It is necessary to elucidate the method of Marx, to learn from Marx how to study the peculiarities of the workers' movement in definite countries. Lenin did this. For Lenin the teachings of Marx were a guide to action. He once used the following expression: "Who wants to consult with Marx ?" . . . It is a very characteristic expression. He himself constantly "consulted with Marx." At the most difficult turning points of the revolution, he once again turned to the reading of Marx. Sometimes when you went into his room, when everyone around was excited, Lenin was reading Marx and could hardly tear himself away. It was not to quieten his nerves, not to arm himself with belief in the power of the working class, belief in its ultimate victory. Lenin had sufficient of this faith. He buried himself in Marx so as to "consult" with Marx, to find a reply from him to the burning questions of the workers' movement. In the article "F. Mehring, on the Second Duma," Lenin wrote : "The argumentation of such people is based on a poor selection of quotations. They take the general position on the support of the big bourgeoisie against the reactionary petty-bourgeoisie and without criticism adapt it to the Russian Cadets and the Russian Revolution. Mehring gives these people a good lesson. *Anyone who wants to consult with Marx* (my italics, N.K.) on the tasks of the proletariat and the bourgeois revolution must take the reasoning of Marx which apply *precisely* to the epoch of the German bourgeois revolution. It is not for nothing that our Mensheviks so fearfully avoid this reasoning. In this reasoning we see the fullest and clearest expression of the merciless struggle against the *conciliatory* bourgeoisie which was carried on by the Russian 'Bolsheviks' in the Russian revolution." (Volume XI.)

Lenin's method was to take the works of Marx dealing with a *similar situation* and carefully analyse them, compare them with the current moment, discovering resemblances and differences.

The adaptation to the revolution of 1905 to 1907 illustrates best of all, how Lenin did this.

In the pamphlet, "What is to be Done?" in 1902, Lenin wrote

"History now puts before us an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks of the proletariat of any other country. The carrying out of this task the destruction of the most powerful support not only for European but also (we may now say) Asiatic reaction would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat." (Volume IV.)

We know that the revolutionary struggle of 1905 raised the international role of the Russian working class, while the overthrow of the Tsarist Monarchy in 1917, really made the Russian proletariat into the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat, but this took place only 15 years after "What is to be Done?" was written. When in 1905, after the shooting of the workers on January 9th, the revolutionary wave from the Dvortsoff Square began to rise higher and higher, the question urgently arose as to where the Party must lead the masses, what policy it must follow. And here Lenin consulted with Marx. He quotes with special attention the works of Marx dealing with the French and German bourgeois democratic revolutions of 1848: "The Class Struggle of 1848-50" and the third volume of The Literary Heritage of Marx and Engels," published by F. Mehring and dealing with the German revolution.

In June-July, 1905, Lenin wrote a pamphlet, "The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy and the Democratic Revolution," where the tactic of the Mensheviks, who took the line of conciliation with the liberal bourgeoisie was contrasted to the tactics of the Bolsheviks, who called on the working class to carry on a most determined and irreconcilable struggle against the Monarchy to the point of armed rebellion.

It was necessary to put an end to Tsarism, wrote Lenin in "Two Tactics." "The conference (of the New Iskra-ites) also forgot that as long as the power remains in the hands of the Tsar, any decisions of any representatives remain empty talk and just as pitiful as the 'decisions' of the Frankfurt parliament which are famous in the history of the German Revolution of 1848. For this very reason Marx, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, mercilessly poured sarcasm on the liberal Frankfurt 'liberators' because they spoke excellent words, adopted all kinds of democratic 'decisions,' 'established' all kinds of freedom, but in reality left the power in the hands of the Monarchy, and did not organise the armed struggle against the troops of the monarchy. And while the Frankfurt liberators chattered, the monarchy bided its time, strengthened its military forces, and counter-revolution, relying on real force, overthrew the democrats with all their beautiful decisions." (Volume VIII.)

Lenin raises the question whether it would be possible for the bourgeoisie to destroy the Russian Revolution by an agreement with Tsarism, "or," as Marx said at one time, "settling with Tsarism in a 'plebeian' manner." "When the revolution decisively conquers, we shall settle with Tsarism in a

Jacobine, or if you will, in a plebeian, manner." The whole of French terrorism, wrote Marx in the famous *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848, was nothing else but the plebeian manner of settling with the enemies of the bourgeoisie with absolutism, feudalism, respectability. (See Marx's Literary Heritage -- published by Mehring.)

Did those people who frightened the Social-Democratic Russian workers with the bogey of "Jacobinism" in the epoch of the democratic revolution ever think of the meaning of these words of Marx ? (Volume VIII.)

The Mensheviks said that their tactics were "to remain the Party of the extreme revolutionary opposition." And that this did not exclude partial seizures of power from time to time and the formation of revolutionary communes in one town or another. What do "revolutionary communes" mean, asks Lenin, and replies:

The confusion of revolutionary thought leads them (the new Iskra-ites), as often happens, to *revolutionary phrases*. The use of the words, "Revolutionary commune" in the resolution of representatives of social-democracy is a revolutionary phrase and nothing more. Marx more than once condemned such phrases, when the tasks of the future are concealed behind soothing terms of the *dead past*. The fascination of terms which have played a rôle in history is converted in such cases into an empty and harmful tinsel, into a rattle. We must give to the workers and to the whole people a clear and unmistakable idea of *why* we want to establish a provisional revolutionary government, *what changes exactly* we shall carry out if we decisively influence the power, even to-morrow, if the national revolt which has commenced is victorious. These are the questions which face the political leaders. (Volume VIII.)

These vulgarisers of Marxism never gave thought to the words of Marx on the necessity of replacing the weapon of criticism by criticism with weapons. Using the name of Marx everywhere, they in reality draw up a tactical resolution entirely in the spirit of the Frankfurt bourgeois cacklers, freely criticising absolutism, deepening democratic consciousness, and not understanding that the time of revolution is a time of action, above and below. (Volume VIII.)

"Revolutions are the locomotives of history," says Marx. By this reference to Marx, Lenin appraises the role of the revolution that was breaking out.

In his further analysis of the sayings of Karl Marx in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Lenin makes clear what the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry means. But in drawing the analogy, Lenin dwells also on the question in what way our bourgeois democratic revolution differs from the German bourgeois democratic revolution of 1848. He says:

Thus it was only in April, 1849, after the revolutionary newspaper, *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (which had been published since June 1, 1848) had existed almost a year, that Marx and Engels expressed themselves in favour of a separate labour organisation. Hitherto they simply conducted the "organ of democracy," which was not connected by any organisational link with an independent labour party. This fact -- monstrous and improbable from our contemporary point of view -- shows us clearly what an enormous difference there was between the then German and the present Russian social-democratic Labour Party. This fact shows us how much weaker (owing to the backwardness of Germany in 1848, economically and politically -- absence of state unity) were the proletarian features of the movement in the German democratic revolution, the proletarian streak in it.

Particularly interesting are Vladimir Ilyitch's articles which refer to 1907 and are devoted to the correspondence and activity of Marx.

They are "The Foreword to the Translation of Marx's Letters to K.L. Kugelmann," "Mehring on the Second Duma," and "The Foreword to the Letters to F.A. Sorge." These articles throw a particularly vivid light on the method by which Lenin studied Marx. The last article is of exceptional interest. It was written in the period when Lenin had taken up once more seriously the study of philosophy, in connection with his divergencies with Bogdanov, when the issues of dialectical materialism called for his special attention.

While studying simultaneously also the sayings of Marx that referred to questions analogous to those which sprang up among us in connection with the breakdown of the revolution, and questions of dialectical and historical materialism, *Lenin learned from Marx how to apply to the study of historical development the method of dialectical materialism.*

In the "Foreword to the Correspondence with F.A. Sorge" he wrote:

"A comparison of what Marx and Engels had to say on questions of the Anglo-American and German labour movements is very instructive. If one takes into consideration that Germany, on the one hand, and Great Britain and America, on the other, represent different stages of capitalist development, different forms of the rule of the bourgeoisie as a class in the whole political life of these countries, the said comparison assumes special significance. From the scientific point of view we have here a sample of materialist dialectic, ability to bring forward and emphasise different points, different sides of the question in their application to the concrete peculiarities of various political and economic conditions. From the point of view of practical politics and tactics of the worker's party, we have here a sample of the manner in which the creators of the "Communist Manifesto" defined the task of the struggling proletariat as applied to the various phases of the national labour movement of the various countries" (free translation).

The revolution of 1905 brought to the fore a whole series of new essential questions during the solution of which Lenin went more deeply into the works of Karl Marx. The Leninist method (Marxist through and through) of studying Marx was forged in the fire of the revolution.

This method of studying Marx armed Lenin for struggle against the distortions of Marxism with their emasculation of its revolutionary essence. We know what an important part Lenin's book " State and Revolution " has played in the organising of the October Revolution and the Soviet Power. This book is entirely based on a deep study of Marx's revolutionary teachings about the state. There Lenin writes :

Marx's doctrines are now undergoing the same fate which, more than once in the course of history, has befallen the doctrines of other revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes struggling for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes have invariably meted out to them relentless persecution, and received their teaching with the most savage hostility, most furious hatred, and a ruthless campaign of lies and slanders. After their death, however, attempts are usually made to turn them into harmless saints, canonising them, as it were, and investing their name with a certain halo by way of "consolation" to the oppressed classes, and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating and vulgarising the real essence of their revolutionary theories and blunting their revolutionary edge. At the present time the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement are co-operating in this work of adulterating Marxism. They omit, obliterate, and distort the revolutionary side of its teaching, its revolutionary soul, and push to the foreground and extol what is, or seems, acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the Socialist Chauvinists are now " Marxists " - save the mark[1]! And more and more do German bourgeois professors, erstwhile specialists in the demolition of Marx, now speak of the "National-German" Marx, who, forsooth, has educated the splendidly organised working class for the present predatory war. In these circumstances, when the distortion of Marxism is so widespread, our first task is to resuscitate the real nature of Marx's teachings on the subject of the State. (First page in " The State and Revolution.")

In "The Foundations of Leninism " Comrade Stalin wrote :

Not until the next phase, the phase of direct action, of proletarian revolution, when the overthrow of the bourgeoisie had become a question of practical politics, did the problem of finding reserves for the proletarian army (strategy) become actual, and the problem of the organisation of that army whether on the parliamentary or the extra-parliamentary field (tactics) clearly demand a solution. Not until this phase had begun, could proletarian strategy be systematised and proletarian tactics be elaborated. *It was now that Lenin disinterred Marx's and Engels' masterly ideas*

on strategy and tactics, ideas which the opportunists of the Second International had buried out of sight. (The italics are mine. - N.K.)

But Lenin did not confine himself to re-establishing individual tactical propositions of Marx and Engels. He developed them further and supplemented them by new ideas and propositions, creating out of all this a system of rules and leading principles for the conduct of the class struggle of the proletariat. Such pamphlets of Lenin as "What is to be Done," "Two Tactics," "Imperialism," "State and Revolution," "Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," and "Left-Wing Communism," will no doubt be a most valuable contribution to the common treasure-house of Marxism, to its revolutionary arsenal. The strategy and tactic of Leninism is a science regarding the leadership of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat." (J. Stalin, "Questions of Leninism.") Marx and Engels said that their teaching "is not a dogma, but a guide to action." These words of theirs were continually repeated by Lenin. The method by which he studied the works of Marx and Engels, and revolutionary practice, all the circumstances of the epoch of proletarian revolutions, helped Lenin to convert just the revolutionary side of Marx into a real guide to action.

I shall dwell on a question which is of decisive significance. Not so long ago we celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the Soviet Power. And in this connection we recalled how the seizure of power was organised in October. it wasn't a spontaneous act, it was deeply thought out by Lenin who was guided by Marx's direct instructions regarding the organising of an uprising.

The October Revolution, by placing dictatorship into the hands of the proletariat, radically changed all the conditions of struggle, but only because Lenin was guided not by the letter of the teachings of Marx and Engels, but by their revolutionary essence, because he knew how to apply Marxism also to the building up of Socialism in the epoch of proletarian dictatorship.

I shall only dwell on a few points. Thorough research work is necessary here: select everything that was taken by Lenin from Marx and Engels, indicating in what periods and in connection with what tasks of the revolutionary movement. I have not even mentioned such important questions as the national question, imperialism, &c. The publication of Lenin's complete collected works makes this work easier. *Lenin's way of studying Marx in all the phases of revolutionary struggle from beginning to end will help us to understand better and go deeper not only into Marx, but into Lenin himself, into his method of studying Marx and the method of converting Marx's teachings into a guide to action.*

There is one more side of Lenin's study of Marx which must be mentioned owing to its great significance. Lenin did not only study what Marx and Engels wrote as well as what Marx's "critics" wrote about him, *he also studied the way which led Marx to his various views, and the works and books which stimulated Marx's thoughts and drove them in a definite direction.* He studied, so to speak, the sources of Marxist philosophy, what and how precisely Marx took from this or that writer. He was specially concerned in making a deep study of the method of dialectical materialism. In 1922, in the article "Meaning of Militant Materialism," Lenin said that it was up to

the contributors to the periodical "Under the Banner of Marxism " to organise the work for a systematic study of Hegel's dialectics from the materialist point of view. He believed that without a serious philosophical basis it is impossible to hold out in the struggle against the pressure of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of bourgeois philosophy. It was on the basis of his own experience that Lenin wrote about the manner of studying Hegel's dialectics from the materialist point of view. We give here the corresponding paragraph from Lenin's article "On the Meaning of Militant Materialism."

But in order to avoid reacting to such a phenomenon unintelligently, we must understand that no natural science, no materialism whatever, can hold out in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of bourgeois philosophy without a solid philosophical basis. In order, to give aid to this struggle and help to carry it out to its successful conclusion, the natural scientist must be a modern Materialist--a conscious adherent of that Materialism which Marx--represents that is, he must be a *dialectical* Materialist. To achieve this the staff of *Under the Banner of Marxism* must organise a systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from the Materialist point of view, i.e., the dialectics which Marx applied concretely in his *Capital* and used in his historical and political works. . . .

. . . Basing ourselves on the manner in which Marx applied the materialist conception of Hegelian dialectics we can, and must, work out these dialectics from all sides. The magazine must publish excerpts from the principal works of Hegel; must interpret them materialistically, and give examples of how Marx applied dialectics, as well as examples of dialectics from the field of economic and political relations. Modern history, particularly modern imperialist war and revolution, provide innumerable examples of this kind. The editors and staff of *Under the Banner of Marxism* should, I think, represent a sort of "Association of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Philosophy." Modern natural scientists will find (if they will seek and if we can learn to help them) in the materialist interpretation of Hegelian dialectics a number of answers to those brought forward to the front and which cause the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashions to "slip" into the reactionary camp. (P. 41, *Lenin on Religion*, Little Lenin Library, Volume VII.)

The IX. and XII. volumes of Lenin's collected works have already been published in the Soviet Union. They divulge the whole process of Lenin's thought when he was working through Hegel's chief works, they show how he applied the method of dialectical materialism to the study of Hegel, how closely he connected this study with a deep study of Marx's sayings, with the ability of converting Marxism into a guide to action in the most varied circumstances.

But Hegel was not the only object of Lenin's study. He read Marx's letter to Engels of November 1859, in which he criticises severely Lassalle's book, " The Philosophy of Heraclitus, the Dark, of Ephesus " (two volumes), and calls this work "amateurish." Lenin gives, to begin with, a brief

formulation of Marx's criticism: "Lassalle simply *repeats* Hegel, he *describes* him, *ruminates* millions of times on certain sayings of Heraclitus, embellishing his work with a surfeit of Most learned Gellertian ballast." But, nevertheless, Lenin plunges into the study of this work of Lassalle, makes conspects and extracts of it, writes notes to it, and sums it up thus: "Marx's criticism is on the whole correct. It isn't worth while to read Lassalle's book." But the work over this book gave Lenin himself a deeper understanding of Marx : he understood why this book of Lassalle displeased Marx to such an extent.

In conclusion, I will mention one more form of Lenin's work over Marx - the popularisation of Marx's teachings. If the populariser takes his work "seriously," if his aim is to give in a very simple and intelligible form an explanation of the very essence of this or that theory, this work will help him very much.

Lenin treated this work very seriously indeed. "There is nothing I would like so much as being able to write for the workers," he wrote from exile to Plekhanov and Axelrod.

He wanted to explain and bring near to the masses the teachings of Marx. In the nineties, when he worked in workers' circles, he endeavoured to explain to them first of all the first volume of "Capital," and illustrated the propositions brought forward there by examples from the life of his hearers. In 1911, in the Party school in Lonjumeau (near Paris), where Lenin was working hard for the preparation of cadres of leaders for the budding revolutionary movement, he lectured to the workers on political economy, and tried to bring home to them as simply as possible the foundations of Marx's teachings. In his articles to *Pravda*, Ilyitch -tried to popularise various points from Marx's teachings. A sample of Leninist popularisation is his characterisation during the 1921 disputes on trade unions of the manner of studying the subject with the application of the dialectical method. Lenin said :

To know the subject thoroughly, one must take hold of and study all its sides, all the connections and its proper place in the given situation. We shall never fully attain this, but the demand of many-sidedness will make us steer clear of errors and inertia. This comes first. Secondly, dialectical logic demands that the subject be taken in its development, in its "self-motion" (as Hegel says) and its changes. Thirdly, human practice must concentrate on full "definition" of the subject, as a criterion of truth, as well as a practical indicator of the connection of the subject with what man needs. Fourthly, dialectical logic teaches us that "There is no abstract truth, that truth is always concrete," as the late Plekhanov, who was a follower of Hegel, liked to say.

These few lines are the quintessence of what Lenin came to as a result of long years of work over philosophical questions, in which he always made use of the method of dialectical materialism, " consulting " all the time, Marx. In a compressed form, these lines indicate all that is essential, that must be a guide to action, while studying phenomena.

The way in which Lenin worked over Marx is a lesson in how to study Lenin himself. His teaching is inseparably connected with the teaching of Marx, it is Marxism in action, it is the Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions.

Footnotes

[1] "Don't laugh!"

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