

First of all I must apologise to the reader for being late with this reply. It could not be helped; circumstances obliged me to work in another field, and I was compelled to put off my answer for a time; you yourselves know that we cannot dispose of ourselves as we please.

I must also say the following: many people think that the author of the pamphlet Briefly About the Disagreements in the Party was the Union Committee and not one individual. I must state that I am the author of that pamphlet. The Union Committee acted only as editor.

And now to the point.

My opponent accuses me of being "unable to see the subject of the controversy," of "obscuring the issue,"² and he says that "the controversy centres around organisational and not programmatic questions" (p. 2).

Only a little observation is needed to reveal that the author's assertion is false. The fact is that my pamphlet was an answer to the first number of the Social-Democrat—the pamphlet had already been sent to the press when the second number of the Social-Democrat appeared. What does the author say in the first number? Only that the "majority" has taken the stand of idealism, and that this stand "fundamentally contradicts" Marxism. Here there is not even a hint of organisational questions. What was I to say in reply? Only what I did say, namely: that the stand of the "majority" is that of genuine Marxism, and if the "minority" has failed to understand this, it shows that it has itself retreated from genuine Marxism. That is what anybody who understands anything about polemics would have answered. But the author persists in asking: Why don't you deal with organisational questions? I do not deal with those questions, my dear philosopher, because you yourself did not then say a word about them. One cannot answer questions that have not yet been raised. Clearly, "obscuring the issue," "hushing up the subject of the controversy," and so forth, are the author's inventions. On the other hand, I have grounds for suspecting that the author himself is hushing up certain questions. He says that "the controversy centres around organisational questions," but there are also disagreements between us on tactical questions, which are far more important than disagreements on organisational questions. Our "critic," however, does not say a word about these disagreements in his pamphlet. Now this is exactly what is called "obscuring the issue." What do I say in my pamphlet?

Modern social life is built on capitalist lines. There exist two large classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and between them a life-and-death struggle is going on. The conditions of life of the bourgeoisie compel it to strengthen the capitalist system. But the conditions of life of the proletariat compel it to undermine the capitalist system, to destroy it. Corresponding to these two classes, two kinds of consciousness are worked out: the bourgeois and the socialist. Socialist consciousness corresponds to the position of the proletariat. Hence, the proletariat accepts this consciousness, assimilates it, and fights the capitalist system with redoubled vigour. Needless to say, if there were no

capitalism and no class struggle, there would be no socialist consciousness. But the question now is: who works out, who is able to work out this socialist consciousness (i.e., scientific socialism)? Kautsky says, and I repeat his idea, that the masses of proletarians, as long as they remain proletarians, have neither the time nor the opportunity to work out socialist consciousness. "Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge," 3 says Kautsky. The vehicles of science are the intellectuals, including, for example, Marx, Engels and others, who have both the time and opportunity to put themselves in the van of science and work out socialist consciousness. Clearly, socialist consciousness is worked out by a few Social-Democratic intellectuals who possess the time and opportunity to do so. But what importance can socialist consciousness have in itself if it is not disseminated among the proletariat? It can remain only an empty phrase!

Things will take an altogether different turn when that consciousness is disseminated among the proletariat: the proletariat will become conscious of its position and will more rapidly move towards the socialist way of life. It is here that Social-Democracy (and not only Social-Democratic intellectuals) comes in and introduces socialist consciousness into the working-class movement. This is what Kautsky has in mind when he says "socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without." 4

Thus, socialist consciousness is worked out by a few Social-Democratic intellectuals. But this consciousness is introduced into the working-class movement by the entire Social-Democracy, which lends the spontaneous proletarian struggle a conscious character.

That is what I discuss in my pamphlet.

Such is the stand taken by Marxism and, with it, by the "majority."

What does my opponent advance in opposition to this?

Properly speaking, nothing of importance. He devotes himself more to hurling abuse than to elucidating the question. Evidently, he is very angry! He does not dare to raise questions openly, he gives no straight answer to them, but cravenly evades the issue, hypocritically obscures clearly formulated questions, and at the same time assures everybody: I have explained all the questions at one stroke.

Thus, for example, the author does not even raise the question of the elaboration of socialist consciousness, and does not dare to say openly whose side he takes on this question: Kautsky's or the "Economists'." True, in the first number of the Social-Democrat our "critic" made rather bold statements; at that time he openly spoke in the language of the "Economists." But what can one do? Then he was in one mood, now he is in a "different mood," and instead of criticising, he evades this issue, perhaps because he realises that he is wrong, but he does not dare openly to admit his mistake. In general, our author has found himself between two fires. He is at a loss as to which side to take. If he takes the side of

the "Economists" he must break with Kautsky and Marxism, which is not to his advantage; if, however, he breaks with "Economism" and takes Kautsky's side, he must subscribe to what the "majority" says — but he lacks the courage to do this. And so he remains between two fires. What could our "critic" do? He decided that the best thing is to say nothing, and, indeed, he cravenly evades the issue that was raised above.

What does the author say about introducing consciousness?

Here, too, he betrays the same vacillation and cowardice. He shuffles the question and declares with great aplomb: Kautsky does not say that "intellectuals introduce socialism into the working class from without" (p. 7). Excellent, but neither do we Bolsheviks say that, Mr. "Critic." Why did you have to tilt at windmills? How is it you cannot understand that in our opinion, the opinion of the Bolsheviks, socialist consciousness is introduced into the working-class movement by Social-Democracy, 5 and not only by Social-Democratic intellectuals? Why do you think that the Social-Democratic Party consists exclusively of intellectuals? Do you not know that there are many more advanced workers than intellectuals in the ranks of Social-Democracy? Cannot Social-Democratic workers introduce socialist consciousness into the working-class movement?

Evidently, the author himself realises that his "proof" is unconvincing and so he passes on to other "proof."

Our "critic" continues as follows: "Kautsky writes: 'Together with the proletariat there arises of natural necessity a socialist tendency among the proletarians themselves as well as among those who adopt the proletarian standpoint; this explains the rise of socialist strivings.' Hence, it is obvious"—comments our "critic" —"that socialism is not introduced among the proletariat from without, but, on the contrary, emanates from the proletariat and enters the heads of those

who adopt the views of the proletariat" ("A Reply to the Union Committee," p. 8).

Thus writes our "critic," and he imagines that he has explained the matter! What do Kautsky's words mean? Only that socialist strivings automatically arise among the proletariat. And this is true, of course. But we are not discussing socialist strivings, but socialist consciousness! What is there in common between the two? Are strivings and consciousness the same thing? Cannot the author distinguish between "socialist tendencies" and "socialist consciousness"? And is it not a sign of paucity of ideas when, from what Kautsky says, he deduces that "socialism is not introduced from without"? What is there in common between the "rise of socialist tendencies" and the introducing of socialist consciousness? Did not this same Kautsky say that "socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without" (see What Is To Be Done?, p. 27)?

Evidently, the author realises that he is in a false position and in conclusion he is obliged to add: "It does indeed follow from the quotation from Kautsky that socialist consciousness is introduced into the class struggle from without" (see "A Reply to the Union Committee," p. 7). Nevertheless, he does not dare openly and boldly to admit this scientific truth. Here, too, our Menshevik betrays the same vacillation and cowardice in the face of logic as he did before.

Such is the ambiguous "reply" Mr. "Critic" gives to the two major questions. What can be said about the other, minor questions that automatically emerge from these big questions? It will be better if the reader himself compares my pamphlet with our author's pamphlet. But one other question must be dealt with. If we are to believe the author, our opinion is that "the split took place because the congress . . . did not elect Axelrod, Zasluch and Starover as editors . . ." ("A Reply," p. 13) and, consequently, that we "deny the split, conceal how deeply it affects principle, and present the entire opposition as if it were a case of three 'rebellious' editors" (ibid., p. 16).

Here the author is again confusing the issue. As a matter of fact two questions are raised here: the cause of the split, and the form in which the disagreements manifested themselves.

To the first question I give the following straight answer: "It is now clear on what grounds the disagreements in the Party arose. As is evident, two trends have appeared in our Party: the trend of proletarian firmness, and the trend of intellectual wavering. And this intellectual wavering is expressed by the present 'minority'." (see Briefly, p. 46).⁶ As you see, here I attribute the disagreements to the existence of an intellectual and a proletarian trend in our Party and not to the conduct of Martov-Axelrod. The conduct of Martov and the others is merely an expression of intellectual wavering. But evidently, our Menshevik failed to understand this passage in my pamphlet.

As regards the second question, I did, indeed, say, and always shall say, that the leaders of the "minority" shed tears over "front seats" and lent the struggle within the Party precisely such a form. Our author refuses to admit this. It is, nevertheless, a fact that the leaders of the "minority" proclaimed a boycott of the Party, openly demanded seats on the Central Committee, on the Central Organ and on the Party Council and, in addition, declared: "We present these terms as the only ones that will enable the Party to avoid a conflict which will threaten its very existence" (see Commentary, p. 26). What does this mean if not that the leaders of the "minority" inscribed on their banner, not an ideological struggle, but "a struggle for seats"? It is common knowledge that nobody prevented them from conducting a struggle around ideas and principles. Did not the Bolsheviks say to them: Establish your own organ and defend your views, the Party can provide you with such an organ (see Commentary)? Why did they not agree to this if they were really interested in principles and not in "front seats"?

We call all this the political spinelessness of the Menshevik leaders.

Do not be offended, gentlemen, when we call a spade a spade.

Formerly, the leaders of the "minority" did not disagree with Marxism and Lenin on the point that socialist consciousness is introduced into the working-class movement from without (see the programmatic article in *Iskra*, No. 1). But later they began to waver and launched a struggle against Lenin, burning what they had worshipped the day before. I called that swinging from one side to another. Do not be offended at this either, Messieurs Mensheviks.

Yesterday you worshipped the centres and hurled thunderbolts at us because, as you said, we expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee. But today you are undermining not only the centres, but centralism (see "The First All-Russian Conference"). I call this lack of principle, and I hope you will not be angry with me for this either, Messieurs Mensheviks.

If we combine such features as political spinelessness, fighting for seats, vacillation, lack of principle and others of the same kind, we shall get a certain general feature known as intellectual wavering, and it is primarily intellectuals who suffer from this. Clearly, intellectual wavering is the ground (the basis) on which "fighting for seats," "lack of principle," and so forth, arise. The vacillation of the intellectuals, however, springs from their social position. That is how we explain the Party split. Do you understand at last, dear author, what difference there is between the cause of the split and the forms it assumes? I have my doubts.

Such is the absurd and ambiguous stand taken by the Social-Democrat and its queer "critic." On the other hand, this "critic" displays great daring in another field. In his pamphlet of eight pages, he manages to tell eight lies about the Bolsheviks, and such lies that they make you laugh. You do not believe it? Here are the facts.

First lie. In the author's opinion, "Lenin wants to restrict the Party, to convert it into a narrow organisation of professionals" (p. 2). But Lenin says:

"It should not be thought that Party organisations must consist solely of professional revolutionaries. We need the most diversified organisations of every type, rank and shade, from extremely narrow and secret organisations to very broad and free ones" (Minutes, p. 240).

Second lie. According to the author, Lenin wants to "bring into the Party only committee members" (p. 2). But Lenin says: "All groups, circles, sub-committees, etc., must enjoy the status of committee institutions, or of branches of committees. Some of them will openly express a wish to join the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and, provided that this is endorsed by the committee, will join it" (see "A Letter to a Comrade," p. 17). 7 8

Third lie. In the author's opinion, "Lenin is demanding the establishment of the domination of intellectuals in the Party" (p. 5). But Lenin says: "The committees should contain . . . as far as possible, all the principal leaders of the working-class movement from among the workers themselves" (see "A Letter to a Comrade," pp. 7-8), i.e., the voices of the advanced workers must predominate not only in all other organisations, but also in the committees.

Fourth lie. The author says that the passage quoted on page 12 of my pamphlet: "the working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism," etc. — is "entirely a fabrication" (p. 6). As a matter of fact, I simply took and translated this passage from *What Is To Be Done?* This is what we read in that book, on page 29: "The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism, but the more widespread (and continuously revived in the most diverse forms) bourgeois ideology nevertheless spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class still more." This is the passage that is translated on page 12 of my pamphlet. This is what our "critic" called a fabrication! I do not know whether to ascribe this to the author's absent-mindedness or chicanery.

Fifth lie. In the author's opinion, "Lenin does not say anywhere that the workers strive towards socialism of 'natural necessity'" (p. 7). But Lenin says that the "working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism" (*What Is To Be Done?*, p. 29).

Sixth lie. The author ascribes to me the idea that "socialism is introduced into the working class from without by the intelligentsia" (p. 7), whereas I say that Social-Democracy (and not only Social-Democratic intellectuals) introduces socialist consciousness into the movement (p. 18).

Seventh lie. In the author's opinion, Lenin says that socialist ideology arose "quite independently of the working-class movement" (p. 9). But such an idea certainly never entered Lenin's head. He says that socialist ideology arose "quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement" (*What Is To Be Done?*, p. 21).

Eighth lie. The author says that my statement: "Plekhanov is quitting the 'minority,' is tittle-tattle." As a matter of fact, what I said has been confirmed. Plekhanov has already quit the "minority." . . . 9

I shall not deal with the petty lies with which the author has so plentifully spiced his pamphlet.

It must be admitted, however, that the author did say one thing that was true. He tells us that "when any organisation begins to engage in tittle-tattle—its days are numbered" (p. 15). This is the downright truth, of course. The only question is: Who is engaging in tittle-tattle—the Social-Democrat and its queer knight, or the Union Committee? We leave that to the reader to decide.

One more question and we have finished. The author says with an air of great importance: "The Union Committee reproaches us for repeating Plekhanov's ideas. We regard it as a virtue to repeat the ideas of Plekhanov, Kautsky and other equally well-known Marxists"(p. 15). So you regard it as a virtue to repeat the ideas of Plekhanov and Kautsky? Splendid, gentlemen! Well, then, listen : Kautsky says that "socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without and not something that arose out of it spontaneously" (see passage quoted from Kautsky in *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 27). The same Kautsky says that "the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat with the consciousness of its position and the consciousness of its

task" (ibid.). We hope that you, Mr. Menshevik, will repeat these words of Kautsky's and dispel our doubts. Let us pass to Plekhanov. Plekhanov says: ". . . Nor do I understand why it is thought that Lenin's draft, 10 if adopted, would close the doors of our Party to numerous workers. Workers who wish to join the Party will not be afraid to join an organisation. They are not afraid of discipline. But many intellectuals, thoroughly imbued with bourgeois individualism, will be afraid to join. Now that is exactly the good side about it. These bourgeois individualists are, usually, also representatives of opportunism of every sort. We must keep them at a distance. Lenin's draft may serve as a barrier against their invasion of the Party, and for that reason alone all opponents of opportunism should vote for it" (see Minutes, p. 246).

We hope that you, Mr. "Critic," will throw off your mask and with proletarian straightforwardness repeat these words of Plekhanov's.

If you fail to do this, it will show that your statements in the press are thoughtless and irresponsible.

Notes

1. J. V. Stalin's article "A Reply to Social-Democrat," published in No. 11 of Proletariatis Brdzola, met with a lively response in the Bolshevik centre abroad. Briefly summing up the gist of the article, V. I. Lenin wrote in Proletary: "We note in the article 'A Reply to Social-Democrat' an excellent presentation of the celebrated question of the 'introduction of consciousness from without.' The author divides this question into four independent parts :

"1) The philosophical question of the relation between consciousness and being. Being determines consciousness. Corresponding to the existence of two classes, two forms of consciousness are worked out, the bourgeois and the socialist. Socialist consciousness corresponds to the position of the proletariat.

"2) 'Who can, and who does, work out this socialist consciousness (scientific socialism)?"

"Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge' (Kautsky), i.e., 'it is worked out by a few Social-Democratic intellectuals who possess the necessary means and leisure.'

"3) How does this consciousness permeate the minds of the proletariat? 'It is here that Social-Democracy (and not only Social-Democratic intellectuals)

comes in and introduces socialist consciousness into the working-class movement.'

"4) What does Social-Democracy meet with among the proletariat when it goes among them to preach socialism? An instinctive striving towards socialism.

'Together with the proletariat there arises of natural necessity a socialist tendency among the proletarians themselves as well as among those who adopt the proletarian standpoint. This explains the rise of socialist strivings.'

(Kautsky.)

"From this the Mensheviks draw the following ridiculous conclusion: 'Hence it is obvious that socialism is not introduced among the proletariat from without, but, on the contrary, emanates from the proletariat and enters the heads of those who adopt the views of the proletariat!'" (See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 9, p. 357.)

2. See "A Reply to the Union Committee," 2a p. 4.

2a. "A Reply to the Union Committee" was published as a supplement to No. 3 of the Social-Democrat of June 1, 1905. It was written by N. Jordania, the leader of the Georgian Mensheviks, whose views had been subjected to scathing criticism by J. V. Stalin in his pamphlet Briefly About the Disagreements in the Party and in other works.

3. See K. Kautsky's article quoted in What Is To Be Done?, p. 27.

4. Ibid.

5. See Briefly About the Disagreements in the Party, p. 18. (See present volume, p. 104. — Ed.)

6. See present volume, p. 132.— Ed.

7. As you see, in Lenin's opinion, organisations may be accepted into the Party not only by the Central Committee, but also by local committees.

8. See V. I. Lenin, Works, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. 6, p. 219.

9. And yet the author has the audacity to accuse us, in No. 5 of the Social-Democrat, of having distorted the facts concerning the Third Congress!

10. Plekhanov is discussing Lenin's and Martov's formulations of §1 of the Rules of the Party.