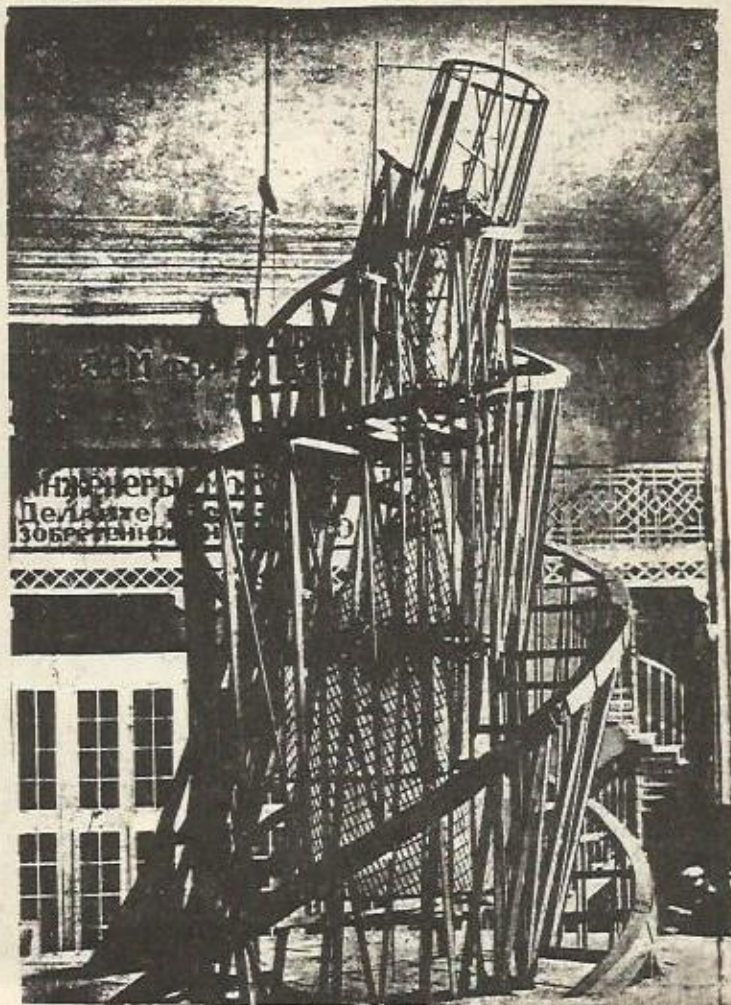


Statutes of the THIRD INTERNATIONAL



& The 21 Conditions

an IMG publication

10p

Lenin



Cover

The Tatlin Tower - Monument for
the Third International.

Statutes of the Third International

&

The Twenty-One Points

These are the Twenty-One conditions for
admission into the Communist International

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* Usually referred to as the Third International

Introduction

These two not-so-well known articles are interesting illustrations of Lenin's flexibility in the matter of party organisation. Popular myth, much aided by the perversions of Stalinism, portrays Lenin as having a single model for party organisation. This model is a completely rigid one - independent of time, space or circumstance. According to this myth Lenin split with Mensheviks at the 2nd. Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party solely on the issue of a few words in the rules of membership (which is factually inaccurate - the split was on another issue). Therefore Leninism is synonymous with "hardness" in organisation and a strong centralised party in which the members blindly carry out orders from above. The organisation is naturally hard to join. Like all myths, this particular misrepresentation takes one aspect of the truth and presents it as the whole truth.

However obviously inaccurate this myth may be it has been used to justify monstrous inner party regimes - and not only Stalinist ones.

These two articles show, on the contrary, that Lenin's concepts were above all concrete. In 1905, a revolution in Russia was in process. Weakened by its disastrous war against Japan, the Tsarist aut-

ocracy was not strong enough to completely suppress the revolutionary movement; as Lenin said, "Tsarism is no longer strong enough to defeat the revolution, the revolution is not yet strong enough to defeat tsarism."

The vast mass of workers were extremely combative, ready to engage in mortal combat. But the marxist vanguard was relatively weak, and mainly led by people who had been forced into exile, thus being isolated from the mass movement.

Under these circumstances the crying need was to win into the party large numbers of the revolutionary workers. The Menshevik argument that this would mean diluting the party was met by Lenin arguing: (1) that firm party principles had been established which would assist the assimilation of large numbers of workers; and (2) workers joining the party in a period of revolutionary struggle would learn marxist principles extremely quickly.

The second of the two articles shows another aspect of Lenin's views - formulas for adopting the press of the party to the new "legal" conditions. As such, it is rich with Lenin's basic concepts on the relationship of party organisation and party literature.

It should be noted that the term "social-democrat" is used by Lenin in its pre-1914 sense, as synonymous with revolutionary socialist.

Statutes of the

Communist

International

1

Adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, July - August 1920

In 1864 the International Working Men's Association, the First International, was founded in London. Its provisional rules¹ ran as follows:

That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves; that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule;

'That the economical subjection of the man of labour to the monopolizer of the means of labour, that is the sources of life, lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence;

'That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

'That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each

country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

'That the emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries;

'That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, give solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements.'

The Second International, founded in Paris in 1889, undertook to carry on the work of the First International. But in 1914, at the beginning of the world slaughter, it suffered complete breakdown. Undermined by opportunism and shattered by the treachery of its leaders, who went over to the side of the bourgeoisie, the Second International collapsed.

The Communist International, founded in March 1919 in the capital of the Russian Federal Soviet Republic,² Moscow, solemnly declares before the entire world that it undertakes to continue and to carry through to the end the great work begun by the First International Working Men's Association.

The Communist International was formed after the conclusion of the imperialist war of 1914-18, in which the imperialist bourgeoisie of the different countries sacrificed twenty million men.

'Remember the imperialist war!' These are the first words addressed by the Communist International to every working man and woman, wherever they live and whatever language they speak. Remember that because of the existence of cap-

italist society a handful of imperialists were able to force the workers of the different countries for four long years to cut each other's throats. Remember that the war of the bourgeoisie conjured up in Europe and throughout the world the most frightful famine and the most appalling misery. Remember that without the overthrow of capitalism, the repetition of such robber wars is not only possible, but inevitable.

It is the aim of the Communist International to fight by all available means, including armed struggle, for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and for the creation of an international Soviet³ republic as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the State. The Communist International considers the dictatorship of the proletariat the only possible way to liberate mankind from the horrors of capitalism. And the Communist International considers the Soviet power the historically given form of this dictatorship of the proletariat.

The imperialist war bound the destinies of the proletariat of each country very closely to the destinies of the proletariat of all other countries. The imperialist war once again confirmed what was written in the Statutes of the First International: the emancipation of the workers is not a local, nor a national, but an international problem.

The Communist International breaks once and for all with the traditions of the Second International⁴, for whom in fact only white-skinned people existed. The task of the Communist International is to liberate the working people of the entire world. In its ranks, the white, the yellow, and the black-skinned peoples - the working people of the entire world - are fraternally united.

The Communist International supports to the full

the conquests of the great proletarian revolution in Russia, the first victorious Socialist revolution in world history, and calls on the proletariat of the entire world to take the same path. The Communist International undertakes to support every Soviet republic, wherever it may be formed.

The Communist International recognizes that in order to hasten victory, the Working Men's Association, which is fighting to annihilate capitalism and create Communism, must have a strongly centralized organisation. The Communist International must, in fact and in deed, be a single Communist party of the entire world. The parties working in the various countries are but its separate sections. The organizational machinery of the Communist International must guarantee the workers of each country the opportunity of getting the utmost help from the organized proletariat of other countries at any given moment.

For this purpose the Communist International ratifies the following Statutes:

1. The new international association of workers is established to organize joint action by the proletariat of the different countries which pursue the one goal: the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of an international Soviet republic which will completely abolish all classes and realize Socialism, the first stage of Communist society.⁵
2. The new international association of workers is called "The Communist International".
3. All parties belonging to the Communist International bear the name "Communist party of such and such a country (Section of the Communist International)".
4. The supreme authority in the Communist In-

ternational is the world congress of all the parties and organizations which belong to it. The world congress meets regularly once a year. The world congress alone is empowered to change the programme of the Communist International. The world congress discusses and decides the most important questions of programme and tactics connected with the activities of the Communist International. The number of votes to which each party or organization is entitled shall be fixed by special congress decision.

5. The world congress elects the Executive Committee of the Communist International, which is the directing body of the Communist International in the period between its world congresses. The Executive Committee is responsible only to the world congress.

6. The seat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International shall be determined on each occasion by the world congress of the Communist International.

7. An extraordinary world congress of the Communist International may be convened either by a decision of the Executive Committee or at the request of half the parties which belonged to the Communist International at the time of its preceding world congress.

8. The chief work of the Executive Committee falls on the party of that country where, by decision of the world congress, the Executive Committee has its seat. The party of the country in question shall have five representatives with full voting powers on the Executive Committee. In addition the ten to thirteen most important Communist parties, the list to be ratified by the regular world congress, shall each have one representative with full voting powers on the Executive Committee. Other organizations and parties accepted by the Communist International have the right to dele-

gate to the Executive Committee one representative each, with consultative voice.

9. The Executive Committee conducts the entire work of the Communist International from one congress to the next, publishes, in at least four languages, the central organ of the Communist International (the periodical COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL), issues any necessary appeals in the name of the Communist International, and issues instructions which are binding on all parties and organizations belonging to the Communist International. The Executive Committee of the Communist International has the right to demand that parties belonging to the International shall expel groups or persons who offend against international discipline, and it also has the right to expel from the Communist International those parties which violate decisions of the world congress. These parties have the right to appeal to the world congress. Should the need arise the Executive Committee shall set up in the various countries its technical and other auxiliary bureaux, which are wholly subordinate to the Executive Committee. The representatives of the Executive Committee shall carry out their political tasks in closest contact with the party centre of the country concerned.

10. The Executive Committee of the Communist International has the right to co-opt on to the committee, with consultative voice, representatives of organizations and parties which, while not belonging to the Communist International, sympathize with and stand near to it.

11. The press organs of all parties and all organizations which belong to the Communist International, and those which are recognized as sympathizing parties and organizations, are bound to publish all official decisions of the Communist International and its Executive Committee.

12. The general situation all over Europe and America compels Communists throughout the world to create illegal Communist organizations side by side with the legal organization.⁶ The Executive Committee is obliged to see that this is put into effect everywhere.

13. As a rule political communication between the individual parties belonging to the Communist International will be conducted through the E.C.C.I. In urgent cases communications may be direct, but the E.C.C.I. shall be simultaneously informed.

14. Trade unions adhering to the Communist platform and organized internationally under the leadership of the Communist International, shall form a trade-union section of the Communist International. These trade unions shall send their representatives to the world congresses of the Communist International throughout the Communist parties of the countries concerned. The trade-union section of the Communist International shall have one representative with full voting powers on the E.C.C.I. The E.C.C.I. has the right to send one representative with full voting powers to the trade-union section of the Communist International.

15. The Communist Youth International is, like all other members of the Communist International, subordinate to the Communist International and its Executive Committee. The Executive Committee of Communist Youth International has one representative with full voting powers on the E.C.C.I. The E.C.C.I. has the right to send one representative with full voting powers to the Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International.

16. The E.C.C.I. confirms the appointment of the international secretary of the Communist women's movement and shall organize the women's section of the Communist International.

17. When moving from one country to another every member of the Communist International shall receive the fraternal help of the local members of the Communist International.



2

The Twenty-One Points

Adopted at the Second Congress of the Communist International, Moscow, July-August 1920

The First Congress of the Communist International did not draw up any precise conditions for the admission of parties to the Third International. When the first congress was convened there were in the majority of countries only Communist TRENDS and GROUPS.

The Second Congress of the Communist International is meeting in different circumstances. At the present time there are in most countries not only Communist trends and tendencies, but Communist PARTIES and ORGANIZATIONS.

Application for admission to the Communist International is now frequently made by parties and groups which up to a short time ago still belonged to the Second International, but which have not in fact become Communist. The Second International has finally broken down. The in-between parties and the centrist groups, seeing the utter hopelessness of the Second International, are trying to find a support in the Communist International, which is growing steadily

stronger. But in doing so they hope to retain enough "autonomy" to enable them to continue their former opportunist or "centrist" policy. The Communist International is becoming, to some extent, fashionable.

The desire of some leading "centrist" groups to join the Communist International indirectly confirms that it has won the sympathies of the overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers of the entire world, and that with every day it is becoming a more powerful force.

The Communist International is threatened by the danger of dilution by unstable and irresolute elements which have not yet completely discarded the ideology of the Second International.

Moreover, in some of the larger parties (Italy, Sweden, Norway, Yugoslavia, etc.) where the majority adhere to the Communist standpoint, there still remains even today a reformist and social-pacifist wing which is only waiting a favourable moment to raise its head again and start active sabotage of the proletarian revolution and so help the bourgeoisie and the Second International.

No communist should forget the lessons of the Hungarian revolution.⁷ The Hungarian proletariat paid a high price for the fusion of the Hungarian Communists with the so-called "left" Social Democrats.

Consequently, the Second Congress of the Communist International thinks it necessary to lay down quite precisely the conditions of admission of new parties, and to point out to those parties which have already joined the duties imposed on them.

The Second Congress of the Communist International puts forward the following conditions of adherence to the Communist International:

1. All propaganda and agitation must be of a genuinely Communist character and in conformity with the programme and decisions of the Communist International. The entire party press must be run by reliable Communists who have proved their devotion to the cause of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat is to be treated not simply as a current formula learned by rote; it must be advocated in a way which makes its necessity comprehensible to every ordinary working man and woman, every soldier and peasant, from the facts of their daily life, which must be systematically noted in our press and made use of every day.

The periodical press and other publications, and all party publishing houses, must be completely subordinated to the party Presidium, regardless of whether the party as a whole is at the given moment legal or illegal. Publishing houses must not be allowed to abuse their independence and pursue a policy which is not wholly in accordance with the policy of the party.

In the columns of the press, at popular meetings, in the trade unions and co-operatives, wherever the adherents of the Communist International have an entry, it is necessary to denounce, systematically and unrelentingly, not only the bourgeoisie, but also their assistants, the reformists of all shades.

2. Every organization which wishes to join the Communist international must, in an orderly and planned fashion, remove reformists and centrists from all responsible positions in the workers' movement (party organizations, editorial boards, trade unions, parliamentary fractions, co-operatives, local government bodies) and replace them by tried Communists, even if, particularly at the beginning, "experienced" opportunists have to be replaced by ordinary rank and file workers.

3. In practically every country of Europe and

America the class struggle is entering the phase of civil war. In these circumstances Communists can have no confidence in bourgeois legality. They are obliged everywhere to create a parallel illegal organisation which at the decisive moment will help the party to do its duty to the revolution. In all those countries where, because of a state of siege or of emergency laws, Communists are unable to do all their work legally, it is absolutely essential to combine legal and illegal work.

4. The obligation to spread Communist ideas includes the special obligation to carry on systematic and energetic propaganda in the army. Where such agitation is prevented by emergency laws, it must be carried on illegally. Refusal to undertake such work would be tantamount to a dereliction of revolutionary duty and is incompatible with membership of the Communist International.

5. Systematic and well-planned agitation must be carried on in the countryside. The working class cannot consolidate its victory if it has not by its policy assured itself of the support of at least part of the rural proletariat and the poorest peasants, and of the neutrality of part of the rest of the rural population. At the present time Communist work in rural areas is acquiring first-rate importance. It should be conducted primarily with the help of revolutionary Communist urban and rural workers who have close connections with the countryside. To neglect this work, or to leave it in unreliable semi-reformist hands, is tantamount to renouncing the proletarian revolution.

6. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose not only avowed social-patriotism, but also the insincerity and hypocrisy of social-pacifism; to bring home to the workers systematically that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism no international court of arbitration,

no agreement to limit armaments, no "democratic" reorganization of the League of Nations, will be able to prevent new imperialist wars.

7. Parties which wish to join the Communist International are obliged to recognize the necessity for a complete and absolute break with reformism and with the policy of the "centre", and to advocate this break as widely as possible among their members. Without that no consistent Communist policy is possible.

The Communist International demands unconditionally and categorically that this break be effected as quickly as possible. The Communist International is unable to agree that notorious opportunists, such as Turati, Modigliani, Kautsky, Hilferding, Hilquit, Lonquet, MacDonald⁸, etc., shall have the right to appear as members of the Communist International. That could only lead to the Communist International becoming in many respects similar to the Second International, which has gone to pieces.

8. A particularly explicit and clear attitude on the question of the colonies and the oppressed peoples is necessary for the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of "its" imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement not merely in words but in deeds, to demand the expulsion of their own imperialists from these colonies, to inculcate among the workers of their country a genuinely fraternal attitude to the working people of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and to carry on systematic agitation among the troops of their country against any oppression of the colonial peoples.

9. Every party which wishes to join the Com-

unist International must carry on systematic and persistent Communist activity inside the trade unions, the workers' councils and factory committees, the co-operatives, and other mass workers' organizations. Within these organizations Communist cells must be organized which shall by persistent and unflagging work win the trade unions, etc., for the Communist cause. In their daily work the cells must everywhere expose the treachery of the social-patriots and the instability of the "centre". The Communist cells must be completely subordinate to the party as a whole.

10. Every Party belonging to the Communist International is obliged to wage an unyielding struggle against the Amsterdam "International"⁹ of the yellow trade unions. It must conduct the most vigorous propaganda among trade unionists for the necessity of a break with the yellow Amsterdam International. It must do all it can to support the International Association of Red Trade Unions, adhering to the Communist International, which is being formed.

11. Parties which wish to join the Communist International are obliged to review the personnel of their parliamentary fractions and remove all unreliable elements, to make these fractions not only verbally but in fact subordinate to the party Presidium, requiring of each individual Communist member of parliament that he subordinate his entire activity to the interests of genuinely revolutionary propaganda and agitation.

12. Parties belonging to the Communist International must be based on the principle of DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM. In the present epoch of acute civil war the Communist party will be able to fulfil its duty only if its organization is as centralized as possible, if iron discipline prevails, and if the party centre, upheld by the confidence of the party membership, has strength and authority and is equip-

ped with the most comprehensive powers.

13. Communist parties in those countries where Communists carry on their work legally must from time to time undertake cleansing (re-registration) of the membership of the party in order to get rid of any petty-bourgeois elements which have crept in.

14. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to give unconditional support to any Soviet republic in its struggle against counter-revolutionary forces. Communist parties must carry on unambiguous propaganda to prevent the dispatch of munitions transports to the enemies of the Soviet republics; they must also carry on propaganda by every means, legal or illegal, among the troops sent to strangle workers' republics.

15. Parties which still retain their old Social Democratic programmes are obliged to revise them as quickly as possible, and to draw up, in accordance with the special conditions of their country, a new Communist programme in conformity with the decisions of the Communist International. As a rule the programme of every party belonging to the Communist International must be ratified by the regular congress of the Communist International or by the Executive Committee. Should the programme of a party not be ratified by the E.C.C.I., the party concerned has the right to appeal to the congress of the Communist International.

16. All the decisions of the congresses of the Communist International, as well as the decisions of its Executive Committee, are binding on all parties belonging to the Communist International. The Communist International, working in conditions of acute civil war, must be far more centralized in its structure than was the Second International. Consideration must of course be given by the Communist International and its Executive Committee in all

their activities to the varying conditions in which the individual parties have to fight and work, and they must take decisions of general validity only when such decisions are possible.

17. In this connection, all parties which wish to join the Communist International must change their names. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International must be called COMMUNIST party of such and such a country (section of the Communist International). This question of name is not merely a formal matter, but essentially a political question of great importance. The Communist International has declared war on the entire bourgeois world and on all yellow Social Democratic parties. The difference between the Communist parties and the old official "Social Democratic" or "Socialist" parties, which have betrayed the banner of the working class, must be brought home to every ordinary worker.

18. All leading party press organs in all countries are obliged to publish all important official documents of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

19. All parties belonging to the Communist International and those which have applied for admission, are obliged to convene an extraordinary congress as soon as possible, and in any case not later than four months after the Second Congress of the Communist International, to examine all these conditions of admission. In this connection all party centres must see that the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International are made known to all local organizations.

20. Those parties which now wish to join the Communist International, but which have not radically changed their former tactics, must see to it that, before entering the Communist International, not less than two thirds of the

members of their central committee and of all their leading central bodies consist of comrades who publicly and unambiguously advocated the entry of their party into the Communist International before its second congress. Exceptions can be made with the consent of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. The E.C.C.I. also has the right to make exceptions in the case of representatives of the centre mentioned in paragraph 7.

21. Those members of the party who reject in principle the conditions and theses put forward by the Communist International are to be expelled from the party.

The same applies in particular to delegates to the extraordinary congresses.

Notes

- (1) These rules were drafted by Karl Marx.
- (2) This was before the U.S.S.R. (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) had been formed.
- (3) Soviet - the Russian word for committee. Soviet Republic means a state power based upon mass democracy resting on the Soviet form of organisation, i.e. continuously meeting bodies based upon work-units, which elect recallable representatives who receive no more pay than the average skilled worker.
- (4) The Second International was overwhelmingly dominated by the mass Social Democratic parties of West Europe. These parties adopted a more and more chauvinist attitude towards the empires of "their" bourgeoisies.

(5) Communist here is used in its social and economic, not political, sense. See "Critique of the Gotha Programme" by Marx for an examination of this concept.

(6) This concept of having an illegal organisation existing side by side with a legal one was related to extreme condition of repression existing in many countries. The main purpose of this was to ensure that there was no break-down of the organisation if there were mass arrests.

(7) This refers to the short-lived Hungarian revolution of 1919. The unassimilated social democrats acted as a "Trojan horse" when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was under attack by a reactionary coalition.

(8) Turati, Modigliani, Kautsky, Hilquit, Longuet and MacDonald were former leaders of the 2nd. International who at that time were in organisations seeking affiliation to the Third International. Consummate centrists and in most cases pacifists, they were vacillating because of the growing popularity of the Comintern.

(9) The Amsterdam Trade Union International was associated with attempts to re-establish the 2nd. International after the first World War.

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