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# A Lenin Library in America.

by John Pepper

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The Central Executive Committee of our Party made an important decision to publish a Lenin library.

The Lenin library will contain ten volumes, together about 1,600 pages, ten volumes of uniform size.† Each volume will have an explanatory preface and notes. Seven of these volumes have never been published before in the English language, and three exist only in incomplete editions.

A Lenin library! Ten volumes of Lenin's writings! One hundred thousand copies of Lenin's works in English! A hundred thousand soldiers of Leninism! A hundred thousand Communist fighters in the United States — not native-born, but English speaking. It is a great, an enormous undertaking. It is the surest sign of the growth and strengthening of our Party that we can venture it. It is a sign of strength and it will be a source of strength.

The ten volumes of the Lenin library will be the following:

1. *Marx and Marxism.*
2. *Imperialism, the Final Stage of Capitalism.*
3. *The Agrarian Question in America.*
4. *State and Revolution.*
5. *The Shaping of Bolshevism.*
6. *The Struggle Against the Second International.*
7. *"Leftism" — An Infantile Malady of Communism.*
8. *The Organization of the Revolution.*
9. *The Working Class and the Farmers.*
10. *The Suppressed Peoples and the Social Revolution.*

What was the governing principle in my selection (our Central Executive Committee has honored me with the editorship of the Lenin library) of precisely these writings of Lenin as his representative works?

Lenin's complete writings would make up not 1,600 pages, but ten times as much. The task in the selection was a double one. On the one hand, to give a good picture of Leninism. On the other hand, to omit everything which would not be understandable to American workers.

The chief aim of the Lenin library is to give a complete picture of Leninism for intelligent workingmen. Lenin was not only the greatest statesman of our period, but at the same time the greatest scholar in social science. Lenin was the only Marxist who added a new story to the magnificent edifice of Marxism. The guiding spirit of the working class in the 19th Century was Marxism. In the 20th Century, Leninism. Leninism is Marxism applied to the present imperialistic period of capitalist society.

Lenin was an orthodox Marxist. During his whole life he fought against eclecticism which wanted to "complete" Marxism from various philosophical systems, such as Kantism, Machism, Dietzgenism, or in the latest period Freudism. Lenin considered Marxism as a complete outlook on life. Marxism was for Lenin the method of analysis and interpretation of society. If we want to understand Leninism it is necessary to learn to know Lenin's interpretation of the

†- Only one volume of this "Lenin Library" project saw print: *Vol. 1: Lenin on Organization.* (Chicago: Daily Worker Publishing Co, 1926). The CP-affiliated International Publishers began a second Lenin project in 1927, *Collected Works* in 30 volumes. This second project, which sputtered along throughout the 1930s, was itself terminated before completion. The 1927 *Collected Works* project was supplemented and superseded by an Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute produced, International Publishers published 12 volume edition of *Selected Works* in the early 1930s (green bindings); later reprinted in 1943 (blue bindings).

Marxist method of inquiry. The volume *Marx and Marxism* of our library will complete Lenin's essays on Marx and the Marxist method.

With this weapon of the Marxist method in hand, Lenin carried out the fundamental task of Marxists, the concrete analysis of the concrete facts. Marx for the first time discovered the essence of capitalism. Lenin for the first time discovered the essence of imperialism, the final stage of capitalism. In *Capital*, Marx analyzed for the first time the revolution of agriculture through the capitalist method of production. Karl Kautsky in his *Agrarian Question* explained the revolutionary effect of American competition on European agriculture. But Lenin was the first who gave a concrete Marxist analysis of Russian and American agriculture in two of his works: *The Agrarian Question in America* and *Agriculture in Russia*. Marx and Engels for the first time analyzed the role of state power in a class society, and showed that by the development of capitalist society, inevitable necessity goes through the dictatorship of the proletariat to a classless and stateless society. The decadents forgot and passed in silence over this basic fact. Lenin's inquiries then again brought the questions of the state and dictatorship of the proletariat to the consciousness of the working class. Our Lenin library will have three volumes which give Lenin's concrete analysis of these basic facts of our period. The volume *Imperialism, the Final Stage of Capitalism...* was never printed in English completely. Only the first half has appeared. The volume *The Agrarian Question in America* is especially timely for us today in the midst of the agricultural crisis in the United States. Lenin's analysis is based upon the 1910 census, but we will bring it up to date by using the 1920 census as well as the new congressional investigation and reports of the government. The volume *State and Revolution* will comprise the most important studies of Lenin on this theme: *The State and Revolution*; *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*; and "Material on the Question of the Proletarian Dictatorship."

The concrete analysis of our imperialist period led Lenin to the conclusion that the working class must conduct the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat. But at the same time Lenin recognized that the working class itself is not and cannot be entirely uniform, that imperialism itself has the tendency to divide the working class through buying one part and suppress-

ing the other. The fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat can be waged by the working class only if it is led by a revolutionary party which, against the sectional, regional, national, and temporary interests of the working class represents the common, general, international, and permanent interests of the working class as an entity. No one has had a clearer view of the Communist Party in the revolution than Lenin. The book *Shaping of Bolshevism* will present the writings of Lenin which crystallized and made conscious the Party of the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks.

Lenin from the beginning saw clearly the two dangers which the revolutionary party of the proletarians faces: opportunism and sectarianism. The volume *The Struggle Against the Second International* will present selections from brilliant essays and articles of his which appeared under the title *Against the Stream*. (It is a pity that we cannot print in our Lenin library the masterly articles of Zinoviev which appeared in the same period and in the same book). The volume of our library entitled "*Leftism*" — *An Infantile Malady of Communism* gives Lenin's ruthless struggle against revolutionary phrases and for revolutionary realism.

The party of the proletariat, cleansed of opportunism as well as of revolutionary phrase, must begin its difficult march towards seizure of power. The Party must in the first place win the confidence of the majority of the working class and then it must organize the armed revolution itself. The volume of our library *The Organization of the Revolution* will give those writings of Lenin which he wrote during the period of masterly maneuvering from March to November, 1917, and his analysis of the lessons of the armed uprising of 1905.

But Lenin saw clearly that the revolution of the working class does not take place in a vacuum, that the revolution is never the achievement of a single class, but that it is always a mighty mass movement of the various classes of the suppressed and exploited. With wonderful clearness Lenin recognized — and this recognition is one of the chief pillars of Leninism — that the proletarian revolution in our imperialist period is accompanied by the revolt of the lower middle class, the rebellion of exploited farmers as well as by uprisings of suppressed nations and oppressed colonies. Lenin again and again repeated — and that is another principal pillar of Leninism — that the victory of the

social revolution is impossible if the proletariat does not form an alliance with all non-capitalist elements, especially farmers, and with the masses of the oppressed nations and races. The volume *The Working Class and the Farmers* will give the most important writings of Lenin on this theme, such as “The Attitude of the Communists to the Middle Farmers,” “The Working Class and the Farmers,” and *The New Economic Policy in Soviet Russia (The Tax in Kind)*.† The volume *The Suppressed Peoples and the Social Revolution* will contain those pioneer essays of *Against the Stream* in the self-determination of nations and Lenin’s other studies on the question of nationalities.

That will be the contents of the Lenin library. It is only a part of the tremendous riches of Lenin. But we hope it is a picture of Leninism. It mirrors the train

of thought of Leninism.‡

Our Party, the Workers Party, is today in the midst of the political struggle. We are forced to maneuver. We are forced again and again to grant concessions to the great masses of the workers and exploited farmers who are today not yet Communists. Our Party is facing great dangers in this maneuvering. One danger is that we see only the masses and forget the revolution: the danger of opportunism. The other danger is that we see only the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat and dogmatically turn away from the masses: the danger of sectarianism. Only a Communist education can obviate these dangers for our Party. The Lenin library will be a means to this Communist education.

†- The latter is the precise rendering of *The Tax in Kind* used by Charles H. Kerr & Co. in 1921.

‡- One might argue that the selection is rather more indicative of the thinking of Pepper than that of Lenin. Following Lenin’s death on Jan. 21, 1924, there was an absolute explosion of titles “On Lenin and Leninism” published in Soviet Russia. The concept of a specific “Leninism” gained mass currency and a mad rush began to systematize this new —ism. Here is the way that one training manual of this period, a collection of speeches and articles published “for Schools of Political Literacy and Soviet Party Schools,” outlined the body of Lenin’s work (compare and contrast to Pepper’s systematization of Lenin):

1. Fundamental Moments in the History of Bolshevism.
2. The Years of Preparation of the First Revolution (1902-1905) and the Years of Revolution (1905-1907).
3. The Years of Reaction (1907-1910) and the Years of the New Ascent (1911-1914).
4. The Imperialist War.
5. The February Revolution and Preparations for October.
6. The Decrees of October.
7. The Brest Peace.
8. Civil War and War Communism.
9. The End of the Civil War and Transition to Peaceful Construction.
10. The New Economic Policy.
11. On the Proletarian Dictatorship and Soviet Construction.
12. The National Question.
13. The Comintern and World Revolution.
14. The Struggle for the Party.

[N. Lenin (V.I. Ul’ianov): *Rechi i stat’i: Khrestomatiia dlia skol politgramoty i sovpartshkol*. Edited by K. Popov and S. Shul’man. (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Krasnaia Nov’,” 1924). Edition of 120,000.]

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