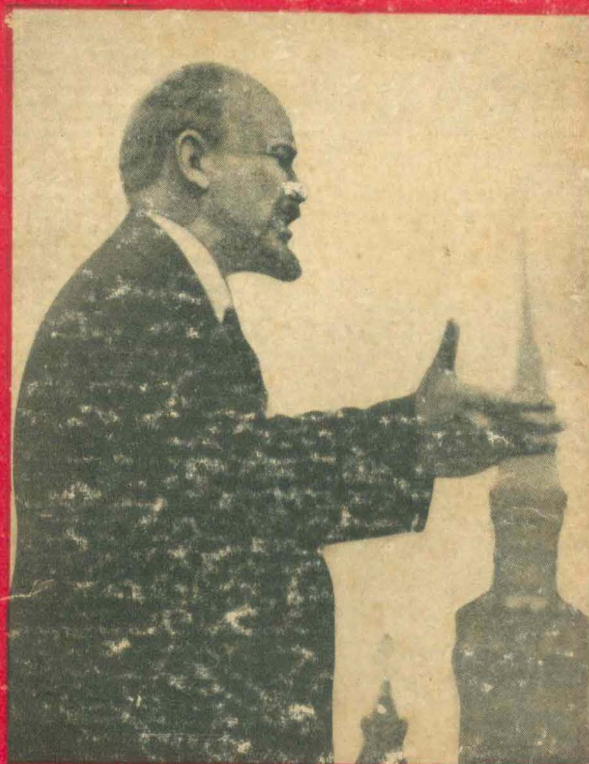


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**SPEECHES OF LENIN**

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**VOICES OF REVOLT**

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**VOLUME VIII**



***SPEECHES OF***  
**V. I. LENIN**

*WITH A*  
**CRITICAL INTRODUCTION**



**NEW YORK**

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS have undertaken the publication of the writings and speeches of V. I. Lenin. The first volume of the "Collected Works," which altogether will number thirty volumes, has already appeared under the title *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*—a discussion of the philosophic foundations of Marxian Socialism. Volumes containing Lenin's writings dealing with the period of the World War and the Russian Revolution will be published in 1928. The translation of the volumes is made from revised and edited texts supplied by the Lenin Institute of Moscow.

The speeches included in this selection are a part of a larger volume, which will be published in 1928 under the title *Lenin Speaks*, and which will contain the most important speeches delivered by Lenin from the time he stepped on Russian soil in April, 1917, until his fatal illness in 1923.

A. T.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	9
THE IMMEDIATE SITUATION . . . . .	19
TO THE SOLDIERS . . . . .	27
WE MUST HAVE PEACE . . . . .	30
THE LAND TO THE TILLERS OF THE SOIL . . . . .	33
THE NATIONALIZATION OF THE BANKS . . . . .	36
THE DISPERSION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY . . . . .	39
WE MUST HAVE A RESPITE . . . . .	45
THE DECISIVE STRUGGLE . . . . .	50
WE SHALL CARRY ON . . . . .	52
THE CAUSES OF THE WORLD WAR . . . . .	54
ON EQUALITY . . . . .	61
OUR RELATION TO THE PEASANTS . . . . .	64
FROM NEP RUSSIA TO SOCIALIST RUSSIA . . . . .	80
EXPLANATORY NOTES . . . . .	91

## FOREWORD

THERE are no speeches that could interest us more than the speeches delivered by the man who was the head, the heart and the leader of the revolution in which we are now living, the speeches of the orator of the proletarian revolution whose heart, head and leader Lenin not only *was*, but *is* and *will be*, until the great work has been completely accomplished and we enter into the "empire of liberty," namely, that of socialism.

It would be difficult for any one to feel the vividness and timeliness of the ideas of our great master Lenin at any time more than when one passes in review the hundreds of speeches delivered by him.

Lenin is not an "orator," a manipulator of artful phrases, a master of deliberate rhetorical devices. The element that attracts us most about his speeches and that moves us again and again is the content of the words, their truth, the convincing power of his ideas.

But it is a truth of a quite special type which is brought to bear in Lenin's speeches, it is a creative truth; each of these speeches is not only a piece of history, but we feel—and, if we have been so fortunate as actually to have heard them delivered, we remember—that each of these words has had its influence in history.

It was the great soul and will of Lenin, who united in himself all the best forces of the incipient proletarian revolution, which constantly gathered strength from the living powers of history, lent an attentive ear to the voices and the pace of the masses, observed the enemy, tirelessly gathered facts, and thus constructed for himself the image of that which really is, or is in process of becoming, which read—ever animated by the view of the great goal—from the masses of the workers that which they aspired to and could not help aspiring to, which formulated this will in words, informed the unclearly and unconsciously,



but impetuously advancing revolutionary class with a consciousness of its will and goal through his words, and thus released the acts, the performances of the organized mass, which have determined the history of our times.

Nowhere better than in his speeches do we find this process so clearly illustrated, in the case of Lenin. These speeches permit us to pass again through the history of their times, by placing us in the very center of the whirlpool of events in all the great turning points of the history of the proletarian revolution, in the point of history which saw the decision taken.

After a preparation that lasted not years but decades, a preparation conducted chiefly by the Bolsheviks, the second revolution broke out in Russia early in March, 1917, and swept away Tsarism. At this moment Lenin was far from home and from his party. Only a few weeks later, having barely received more than the first data concerning the events that have passed, he delivered his judgment, his system, his instruction, all in the same words:

"The Tsarist monarchy has been broken up, but by no means definitely destroyed.

"The bourgeois government of the Octobrists-Cadets, which wished to continue the imperialist war 'to the bitter end,' because this government was in reality the representative of the financial firm of 'England & France,' hastened to promise to the people the greatest possible number of liberties and gifts, as long as these promises were of any avail in maintaining this government's authority over the people and affording an opportunity for the continuation of the war.

"The Workers' and Soldiers' Council, the germ of the workers' government, represents the interests of the most impoverished masses of the population, *i.e.*, about nine-tenths of the population. Its slogan is; *Peace, Bread, and Liberty.*

"It is the struggle between these three forces that determines the situation that has now arisen and that constitutes the transition from the first to the second stage of the revolution.

"In the actual struggle against the Tsarist monarchy, in order to secure a true realization of liberty, not only in words, it is not the *workers* that must support the new government, but the *new government* that must 'support' the workers! For the real guarantee of liberty and of the complete annihilation of Tsarism is the *arming* of the *proletariat*. The solidification, extension, and development of the rôle,

the significance, and the power of the Workers' and Peasants' Councils.

"Any other statement would be a mere phrase, a lie, and is a deception practiced by petty politicians from the camp of the Liberals and the Radicals.

"Help the workers arm themselves, or at least do not disturb this process, and liberty will be indomitable in Russia; it will be impossible to reëstablish the monarchy; the republic will be made secure.

"Any other procedure will deceive the people. Promises are cheap; promises are worth nothing. In all bourgeois revolutions, all the bourgeois petty politicians have always 'fed' the people with promises and stupefied the workers.

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution—just for this reason the workers must support the bourgeoisie—such is the declaration of the worthless politicians from the camp of the liquidators.

"Our revolution is a bourgeois revolution—so say we Marxists—and precisely for this reason the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deceptions practiced by the bourgeois politicians, must teach them to believe not in empty words, but to trust only in their own strength, in their own organization, in their own union, and in their weapons.

"Who are the allies of the proletariat in the present revolution?

"The proletariat has *two* allies: In the first place, it has the great majority of the population, tens of millions of persons, representing the semi-proletarian and, to a certain extent, the petty peasant sections of the people. These masses *need* peace, bread, liberty, land. These masses will inevitably be influenced to a certain extent by the bourgeoisie, and particularly, by the petty bourgeoisie, whom they most closely resemble in the conditions of their lives, since they fluctuate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The terrible lessons of the war, which will be the more terrible, the more energetically the war is pushed by Guchkov, Lvov, Milyukov and Company, will force these masses over to the proletariat, will oblige them to march by the side of the latter. It must be our aim now, making use of the liberties afforded by the new régime and the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, to instruct and clarify, as well as organize, particularly these masses. Councils of Peasants' Delegates, Councils of Farm Laborers—these are our most urgent tasks.

"In the second place, the proletariat of *all* the belligerent and all other countries is the ally of the Russian proletariat. At present the proletariat suffers terribly from the war in all countries. In its name, unfortunately, many pronouncements are being uttered everywhere in Europe, and in Russia by men like Plekhanov, Gvosdyev, Potresov, all

of whom are social-chauvinists who have deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of these men has made enormous strides in every month that has intervened since the war began, and the Russian Revolution will accelerate this process, inevitably, and on an enormous scale.

"With these two allies, the Russian proletariat, making use of the peculiarities of the present transition period, can and will advance, first, to the conquest of a democratic republic and to a complete victory of the peasants over the large landed proprietors and then, to *socialism*, the only system that can give *Peace, Bread and Liberty* to the nations that have been crucified by the war."

These are the counsels uttered by Lenin from abroad, and first published in *Pravda* of March 27 and 28 and April 3 and 4, 1917.

Soon, however, Lenin has an opportunity to state his opinion from closer home. He arrives in Russia. Hardly has he trod the soil of Petrograd than he feels the urge to impart to the beloved workers of this city, whose teacher he has been, the things that are in his mind. Standing on the top of an armored car, illuminated by the light of torches, he delivers his first speech on Russian soil after the March Revolution—the text of this speech has unfortunately not been preserved—and in it he expresses the thoughts that become decisive for the later course of the second revolution and for the victory of the third revolution in November, 1917. All the months that intervene are months spent in the service of these ideas. We find Lenin as a speaker addressing the delegates of the First Soviet Congress, or in soldiers' meetings, or addressing the Petrograd Party functionaries, or the delegates of the peasantry, and finally, we find him addressing the Party Conference. Everywhere his mighty words are leaders in the struggle against confusion, misunderstanding, opportunism, stupidity.

And here we find him in his full stature as an orator; this man never made use of beautiful tirades or rhetorical delicacies. No, his strength is rather in his ability to adjust himself on each occasion, by the use of the proper words, by the adducing of new facts, to his specific group of hearers, in his gradual intensification and expansion of his thoughts and his bringing them home to his hearers, until not he alone, but the entire party

and thousands and thousands of workers, peasants and soldiers share these ideas!

After severe struggles, the soviets, organized and led by the party, under the leadership of Lenin, carry off the victory over the Provisional Government. The watchword: "All Power to the Soviets!" has been fulfilled.

And Lenin sees the time coming in which the program drawn up during the first days of the March Revolution may actually be realized. Very concise and penetrating are the words with which he introduces the reading of the proposed decree of peace and the distribution of land, submitted by him to the Second Congress of Soviets. The decisive steps have been taken!

But the Revolution has only begun. The principal battle has been fought, but counter-revolution is again raising its menacing head.

Lenin now shows himself to be the iron revolutionist. A mighty strength breathes from the short speeches, embodying the full energy and self-consciousness of the proletarian revolution, which Lenin delivers on the subjects of the removal of General Dukhonin from his post, on the declaration of the Cadets (Constitutional Democrats) as enemies of the people, and on the dissolving of the Constituent Assembly.

In the interior of the country, the Bolsheviks are in control; but peace has not yet been concluded. The continuation of the war threatens to burst the bonds uniting the peasants with the soviet power. Peace must be created, but how? Lenin has grasped the situation. He knows there is no solution at this moment, but to conclude peace with Germany at any price. And he begins his campaign of words to secure this end. His first statement is delivered in the Central Committee of the Party. Lenin speaks with a sobriety that makes us tremble when we read the words to-day: "We cannot afford to wage war in any case; our strength is exhausted; the masses will not go to war any more." But he at once adds: for the time being. We shall recover again and shall again win the general confidence.

But the execution of these ideas is beset with difficulties. Lenin encounters serious resistance in his own party. Again

and again he is obliged to expound and amplify his ideas in further speeches. Again and again his thought conquers. Again a portion of his speech becomes the fact; again a word makes history.

The conclusion of the Peace of Brest-Litovsk on March 16, 1918, marks the end of a chapter of the Russian Revolution. Revolutionary Russia has definitely left the battlefield into which it had been hurled by the Tsar's government. Russia's participation in the imperialist war is at an end. The soldiers sent into the field by the Tsar return to their fields and to their factories. But the war is not over. It begins in the new form of a civil war. In Siberia the Czecho-Slovak corps, after having been transported eastward, with all its equipment, from the Ukraine, organizes an insurrection, allies itself with the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries (the former members of the Constituent Assembly) and with the "All-Russian Democratic Government," formed by this faction, and in the course of the summer of 1918 they capture the Urals and the Volga region. On July 6, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries organize a revolt at Moscow, which is quickly put down, however. The Socialist-Revolutionary Directorate on the Volga is soon replaced by General Kolchak, who is supported by the Entente, and who assumes the control of the entire active struggle waged by the counter-revolution.

There ensues a civil war on the largest possible scale.

And the soviets have no army! An army has to be made, created, out of the ranks of the very workers and peasants who have just been demanding peace.

It becomes necessary to inaugurate an enormous program of agitation and organization. It is important to convince the masses of the inevitability of the civil war and of the necessity for the creation of a Red Army.

Again Lenin can be seen among the numerous agitators of the party, addressing mass meetings from many platforms. In the workers' quarters, in gatherings of the people, in factories and shop yards, his voice rings forth.

As a result of the unparalleled exertions of the entire Party, it is made possible to establish the Red Army, and with its aid

to annihilate the hydra-headed monster of the counter-revolutionary White Army.

But this struggle drags the country to the brink of exhaustion. There is no possibility at this era of engaging in any planful socialist reconstruction. All the forces of the country are concentrated at the task of securing a victorious conclusion of the civil war, and this period was rightly later termed "the period of military communism"; all resources were consumed to the last available penny, in order to make possible a dependable feeding, equipping and transporting of the fighting armies.

The last enemy has been defeated by the Red Army. But the burden of the civil war has weighed upon all layers of the population, and particularly the peasantry, in so severe a manner, that insurrections arise within the country. These troubles, the best known of which is the insurrection at Kronstadt, from March 2 to March 17, 1921, threaten to afford new starting points for the activities of the counter-revolution. It is necessary to take decisive steps looking to the elimination of the fundamental causes of these troubles.

The Party was then convulsed with a new discussion. There was a dispute as to the rôle of the trade unions in the transition to the peaceful work of revolutionary reconstruction. This discussion assumed extremely acute formulations; Lenin took very active and enthusiastic part in the discussion.

But Lenin was aware that this dispute, and particularly its uncommon acerbity, were only the expression of contradictions of profounder nature, and very objective in character, and that these contradictions would have to be disposed of, if one should aim at a proper solution of a subsidiary question such as that represented by the trade union policy.

And for Lenin, the central problem of the moment was the elimination of the tension between the proletariat and the peasantry, arising from the policy of the peasantry, a policy that had been rendered inevitable by the conditions of the civil war.

The civil war had obliged the Soviet power to relinquish the policy of slow and gradual transition into a unified, centralized, and planful economic organization, which had been followed since 1918. Particularly, the Soviet power was obliged to take

measures opposing the agricultural classes, in the form of a declaration of a grain monopoly, a rescinding of the former requisitions of grain, and the direct administrative interference of national authorities in the cultivation of the soil, measures which, owing to the peculiar conditions of Russian agriculture, necessarily brought the peasants into opposition with the state power that was headed by the proletariat.

Lenin proposed now to undertake decisive steps in this matter. The central measure, the measure he declared absolutely necessary, was the substitution of a *tax in kind* for the requisitions of grain, and the motive assigned by Lenin for the change was the necessity of restoring the peasant's free right to dispose of his own production in grain.

It was to this question that Lenin devoted his great speech delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party on March 15, 1921, a speech pronounced at the very moment that the cannons thundered at Kronstadt. This speech shows with particular clearness the splendid combination of a great theoretician with a tactician and popular leader that was incorporated in Lenin. The thought expounded in the course of this speech was destined to play a particularly decisive part in the further course of the revolution.

In this speech, Lenin pointed out that it was necessary to abandon the methods of the period of military communism not only in the economic field, in which they had been forced upon the party by the civil war, but also in the field of ideology. The military communism had favored the development of tendencies of an ultra-Left, semi-anarchistic character within the communist movement. These tendencies necessarily expressed themselves more emphatically in the moment of the "temporary retreat" which was signified by the introduction of the "New Economic Policy." Thus we still find Lenin, at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and, a little later, at the Third Congress of the Communist International, speaking to oppose the Anarcho-Syndicalist vagaries and the "Leftist excesses."

Lenin's attention during his later years, in fact, up to the time of his death, is now given to the most essential details of

the execution and development of the New Economic Policy as adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. Lenin mercilessly criticizes the defects and shortcomings which are evident in great numbers as a result of an insufficient understanding of this policy on the part of party members who are incapable of liberating themselves from old methods or who go to excess in their application of the new.

And Lenin is found on the job as soon as it becomes necessary to declare that the retreat to the new tactical front has been concluded and that no further concessions are to be made. The speech delivered to the Communist faction of the Metal Workers' Union on March 6, 1922, represents as important a turning point as does the speech on the Tax in Kind, or that on the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. Among the masses of the workers a certain unrest had subsequently arisen, due to the proportions of the far-reaching consequences of the retreat. This restlessness had been encouraged by the tactics assumed by the Soviet delegation to the Genoa Conference of the Great Powers. Those sentences in Lenin's speech in which he declares that "the retreat begun by us can and will be stopped" ran like wildfire through the country and cemented the working class more firmly to the Party and to its leader Lenin than ever before.

Even then, Lenin was already fighting his hard struggle with the disease that was to conquer him two years later (1924). His opportunities for public appearance became rarer and rarer, but the result was that his infrequent speeches became all the more concentrated and pregnant with significance. It is in this spirit that we may regard the last speech of Lenin delivered before a plenary session of the Moscow Soviet. In this speech, Lenin draws a balance sheet of one and one-half years of operation of the New Economic Policy. In the simple language which he selects in order to address this audience, Lenin renders an account of what has been achieved, and turns the attention of the Workers' and Peasants' Delegates, who guide the destinies of the capital of the Soviet territory, to the weak points that still remain.

His last words are not without their tragic element. The task formulated by Lenin, namely, that of making the socialist



work of construction the order of the day, has now been begun, and we are all convinced that we shall solve this task. But we are not privileged to solve it "together" with Comrade Lenin. Socialist Russia, which will grow out of "Nep Russia," will find us without our great leader.

A. KURELLA.