

the Soviet state, and the cause of international revolution would be neglected. Principles would soon be sacrificed, and concessions would be offered in an attempt to buy off the imperialist powers. In April 1918, the Left Communists issued a truly prophetic warning on the consequences of Lenin's tactics:

In foreign policy aggressive tactics of exposure of the imperialist powers will be replaced by a policy of diplomatic manoeuvre by the Russian state amidst the imperialist powers. The Soviet republic will not only conclude trade agreements with them, but will also develop organic economic and political bonds with them, [and will] use their military and political support.²¹

Thus, it was not just a strong utopian streak, but shrewd realism as well, that motivated the Left Communists.

Lenin, who was a supreme voluntarist and optimist, dismissed both these objections. He said that anything that served to protect and strengthen the Russian Revolution was morally permissible. He was unafraid of the consequences of close economic and political ties between Soviet Russia and capitalist governments. In fact, Lenin went so far as to declare that under appropriate circumstances even a military alliance with imperialist governments would be acceptable, a stance that presaged Stalin's response to the Fascist threat in the 1930s and 1940s. Lenin stated: "[W]e have often said that an alliance with one imperialist state against another to consolidate the socialist republic is not objectionable in point of principle."²² Lenin expected the eventual demise of international capitalism. But until this came to pass, he advocated a delicate policy of attempting to encourage foreign revolution while simultaneously seeking better relations with the West. Lenin was supremely self-confident, and he was unafraid of the negative side effects that expanded relations with capitalist nations might bring.

²¹ Cited in Leonard Schapiro, *The Origin of the Communist Autocracy*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966, p. 136.

²² Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XLII, p. 125. Also see, *ibid.*, XXXVI, p. 323 and XLII, p. 123.