

Lenin clearly articulated his position in 1918 during the debate over the Treaty of Brest Litovsk. He stated:

[T]he interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength.<sup>16</sup>

A year later, he declared: "Can we smash world imperialism today? It would be our duty to do it if we could, but you know that we cannot do it today any more than we could have overthrown Kerensky in March 1917."<sup>17</sup> In Lenin's succinct words: "... for an internationalist the question of state frontiers is a secondary, if not a tenth-rate question. ..."<sup>18</sup>

Although the Bolsheviks were later to learn the value of diplomatic deception, their initial pronouncements were marked by refreshing candour. On 26 December 1917, *Pravda* openly published a decree, signed by Lenin and Trotsky, indicating that the Soviet government would promote the subversion of capitalist regimes by placing "at the disposal of the representatives abroad of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs for the needs of the revolutionary movement two million rubles."<sup>19</sup> In addressing the delegates at the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918, Lenin made clear his determination to continue to promote revolution in Germany despite the treaty of Brest-Litovsk recently concluded with that country: "Yes, of course, we are violating the treaty; we have already violated it thirty or forty times."<sup>20</sup>

Lenin's revolutionary orientation is thus indisputable. His goal was the overthrow of the existing capitalist order and not the achievement of stable and long-term coexistence with it. However,

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<sup>16</sup> Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXV, p. 403 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, XXXVIII, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, XL, pp. 19-20.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Edward Hallett Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, Baltimore: Penguin, 1966, III, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXVI, p. 22.