

Lenin was frank in admitting that the situation that had developed by the end of 1920 was not at all what he had anticipated in 1918 and 1919:

It is very strange for those of us who have lived through the revolution from its inception, who have experienced and observed our incredible difficulties in breaching the imperialist fronts, to see how things have now developed. At that time probably none of us expected or could have expected that the situation would turn out as it did.¹⁰

Similarly, in a speech on December 23, 1921, Lenin remarked:

But is the existence of a socialist republic within capitalist encirclement at all conceivable? It seemed inconceivable from the political and military aspects. That it is possible both politically and militarily has now been proved; it is a fact.¹¹

Here, then, was an unexpected situation crying out for systematic analysis and explication. Yet Lenin's speeches simply called attention to this situation with a few glancing remarks and then quickly passed on to more pressing matters. In defiance of all earlier expectations, a socialist government was peacefully existing side by side with capitalist governments, yet Lenin never worked out even the rudiments of a theory of coexistence, despite the politically-inspired claims that Soviet spokesmen were to make in later years.

Lenin's published speeches and writings comprise more than fifty thick volumes, but the total space devoted to peaceful coexistence constitutes less than a page of scattered and generally trivial remarks. In fact, it appears that during his entire political career, Lenin publicly employed the terms "coexistence" or "peaceful coexistence" on only five occasions.¹² Were it not for the Soviet regime's anxious search for ideological legitimacy, these brief remarks would long since have been forgotten.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XLIV, pp. 291-292.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

¹² *Ibid.*, XL, p. 145; XLI, p. 133; XLIII, p. 199; XLV, pp. 239, 241; *The Christian Science Monitor*, 17 December 1919, p. 1.