

## 2. The Logic of Lenin's Polemics

### 1. Introduction

In this paper<sup>1</sup> I present an empirical-logical analysis of one of the central sections of the book *What is to be done* (1902),<sup>2</sup> which was written by V.I. Lenin, *nom de plume* of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, known as the founder of Soviet Socialism.

First, the significance of the book will be discussed from various possible points of view. Then something must be said about the composition of the book in order to understand how the section that is being analysed relates to the rest of the book.

After that, some remarks about the method of empirical-logical analysis will be made. Then the actual analysis will be presented.

<sup>1</sup> This paper is a revised version of a paper presented at the symposium in Ghent (1987). In this version the dialogical point of view is more explicitly developed. I like to thank Prof. Dr. E.M. Barth, Prof. Dr. M.A. Finocchiaro, Dr. E.C.W. Krabbe, and Prof. Dr. Ch. Roig for their very helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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<sup>2</sup> This title is a translation of the Russian *chto delat*, which according to the editor of the revised English 1988 Pelican-edition of the book, R. Service, perhaps would more accurately but less elegantly be translated as 'How to act' or 'What to do'.

The words refer to Chernyshevsky's famous novel that is known to have been a great inspiration to Lenin.

## 2. The Significance of Lenin's *What is to be done?*

In the scholarly literature, the significance of the book — a classical text — has in fact been pointed out from historical, political, strategic, ideological, organizational and *Weltanschauung* perspectives, among others.<sup>3</sup>

From the point of view of *politics* one can agree with the editors of the Standard Scholarly Edition of the Collected Works (third edition, 1972) of Lenin, who in their preface to Volume 5 remark: 'This volume also contains Lenin's *What is to be done?* the theoretical premises of which laid the foundations of the ideology of the Bolshevik Party' (11).

From a *historical* point of view it is the first book in which Lenin systematically discusses what he calls '*The burning questions of our movement*' (subtitle of the book). These questions and the solutions which Lenin presented became central in the historical development of Russian socialism.

From the point of view of *political tactics and strategy* the book can be said to deal with the controversy over the primacy of either (i) improving the economic situation of the workers in their local towns (which sometimes implied collaborating with the tsarist autocracy), or (ii) organizing comprehensive political action to overthrow the autocracy.

From an *ideological* point of view *What is to be done?* had a tremendous influence: as a political document it was accorded crucial ideological importance. It provided a stock of arguments with which to justify one's statements and policies.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There is a tremendous amount of literature on Lenin, Leninism, communism, bolshevism and related subjects. For a valuable overview of the field, see (for the Netherlands) J.W. Bezemer (1988) and (for foreign readers) N. Riasanovsky (1969).

<sup>4</sup> The book influenced the polemical attitudes of the party-members, as Service, in the editor's introduction to the 1988 edition of

From a *political organizational* perspective the book merits attention because it is the first systematic document in which Lenin elaborates on the structure of a revolutionary Social-Democratic Party Organization in contrast to a totally democratic organization.

From the point of view of *public opinion* the book merits attention because it constitutes the foundations of Leninist ideology. It is this ideology to which Gorbachev refers in his book on *Perestrojka* (1987), in which a section is titled:

*"Back to Lenin as an ideological source of Perestrojka"* (27).

According to Gorbachev his book on *Perestrojka* was written with the main goal of reaching the world population (9).

### 3. A New Perspective

Of course, these perspectives are fruitful and demand ongoing study. But besides these, there is another perspective that has

Lenin's book, explains: 'Bolsheviks were meant to be obedient and active. They were to respect discipline. There had to be centralism and a hierarchical system of command, and procedures of election and even discussion were to be suspended if conditions outside the party demanded it. No wonder that *What is to be done?* was reprinted in the 1920s' (Service, 1988, 61).

It is known that Stalin used several passages from *What is to be done?*, as Service explains, '...to invest his statements and methods with a legitimate Leninist lineage. (...) In this way Stalin helped to bolster the notion that the Soviet Union of his day was merely the result of a literal application of pre-revolutionary Bolshevik ideology' (Service, 1988, 64).

What is interesting here is not the fact that Stalin had a great sense for textual selectivity, but that he would never have been able to apply that gift to Bernstein's written documents, if *those* documents — instead of those of Lenin — had been used as a foundation for party-formation in the years from 1902 onwards.

until now hardly been noticed.<sup>5</sup> This is a discussion-oriented or debate-oriented or polemic-oriented perspective.

When one reads *What is to be done?* this perspective seems very natural to pursue, for the following reasons.

First of all, the book is crowded with *polemics*: Lenin presents the standpoints of Bernstein, Martynov, Martov, the Rabocheye Dyelo, etc. one after the other in order to attack these standpoints severely.

Secondly, Lenin himself explains in the preface of the book why it proved wholly impracticable to set forth his views in a positive, constructive form, '...without, or almost without, entering into polemics...' (350). The explanation is that 'it became clear beyond doubt that the differences regarding the solution of the (burning) questions mentioned were explainable to a far greater degree by the basic antithesis between the two trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement than by differences over details' (350). In his book, Lenin tries to show that 'the basic antithesis between the two trends' is the main reason why the burning questions of the socialist movement are not effectively dealt with.

Against this background it seems highly appropriate (both with respect to the book's polemical character, as well as with respect to improving our understanding of the book) to choose a perspective in which each separate polemical discussion in the book is identified, analysed and evaluated. One can do this by formulating the contested thesis of a discussion, identifying parties confronting each other vis-à-vis that thesis, noticing concessions or commitments if there

<sup>5</sup> An interesting exception must be mentioned here: Ch. Roig's book *La Grammaire Politique de Lénine. Formes et Effets d'un Discours Politique* (1980). This book, though it does not coincide with the point of view that I have chosen in this paper, is an encouraging step in the same direction.

are any, and registering the arguments<sup>6</sup> put forward in defense of or as an attack on the thesis of the discussion.<sup>7</sup>

After this descriptive part, an analysis of each discussion can be given, the results of which render an evaluation of the discussion possible. Such an evaluation can have the following ingredients: (i) the construction of an inventory of the characteristics of the argumentation in the discussion; (ii) a scrutiny of those argument-lines in the discussion that result in a winning-strategy for one of the parties; (iii) registering actual flaws in the discus-

<sup>6</sup> It may be useful to explicate some terms that are used to designate the activity which is loosely called argumentation. According to Finocchiaro (1980, 311) *reasoning* '... is the activity of the human mind consisting of the giving of reasons for conclusions, or the reaching of conclusions on the basis of reasons.... Reasoning is linguistically expressed in what are called *arguments*. An argument is a basic unit of reasoning in the sense that it is a piece of reasoning sufficiently self-contained as to constitute by itself a more or less autonomous instance of reasoning.

The occurrence of reasoning is normally indicated, and can always be explicitly indicated, by the use of what may be called *reasoning indicators*. These are words like the following (...): therefore, thus, so, hence, consequently, because, since, for' (ibid. 311).

'Reasoning indicators serve to interconnect what may be called the *propositional components* of an argument. A *propositional component of an argument* is any part of an argument which is capable of being accepted or rejected by itself. A *proposition* is any propositional component stated as a complete sentence so that it can stand by itself' (ibid. 312).

'An argument may thus be conceived as a series of propositions some of which are being based on others, where the interconnections are expressed by means of reasoning indicators' (ibid. 313).

Finocchiaro also explains what he means by *simple arguments* and *complex arguments* (ibid. 313-314).

*critical or counter-argument*: term designating the opponent's argument against the thesis or some argument of the proponent's, or the proponent's argument — a counter-counter-

sions (like noticing fallacious reasoning processes, logical shortcomings and, in general, argumentative foreclosures).<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Outline of the Composition of the Book

*What is to be done?* was written between the autumn of 1901 and February 1902 and was first published as a separate book in March 1902. The written text contains approximately 180 pages and has 5 chapters.<sup>9</sup> Each chapter can be said to deal with a central question. In

argument — directed against an argument — a counter-argument — of the opponent.

There is a slight distinction between the continental everyday use of the words 'argument' and 'argumentation' and the English everyday use of these words. See for example, Føllesdal *et al.* (1986, 245n1) where the German translator explains: 'Man beachte: Indem wir *Argument* i.f. hauptsächlich für vollständige Argumente im eben charakterisierten Sinne (d.h. für Prämissen und Konklusion umfassende Satzfolgen) verwenden, weichen wir von dem im deutschen Sprachbereich üblicheren Gebrauch, wonach 'Argument' eher für einzelne Sätze — also für das, was wir oben als *Enthymeme* bezeichnet haben — reserviert ist, etwas ab. Probleme dürfen daraus aber, nachdem wir diese Abweichung deutlich gemacht haben, i.f. nicht resultieren'.

Our use of the words 'argument' and 'argumentation' basically agrees with the description of Finocchiaro mentioned above, but the word 'argument' is also used to refer to 'propositions functioning as reasons.'

<sup>7</sup> These technical terms are discussed and illustrated in: E.M. Barth and J.L. Martens (1977) and E.M. Barth and E.C.W. Krabbe (1982).

<sup>8</sup> This is an aim of my current research-project of which this paper is an interim report.

There are still other possible aspects in the evaluation of a conflict of avowed opinion according to the formal-dialectical method. See for example Barth and Martens (1982).

<sup>9</sup> I have made use of two different editions of *What is to be done?*: (i) the Standard Scholarly Edition of the *Collected Works* (third edition, 1972, Volume 5) and (ii) the revised edition of 1988, by Fineberg and Hanna and edited by Service.

representing these questions here I shall formulate them so that the polemical context in which they are situated is given credit.

Chapter 1: Why the defenders of '*freedom of criticism*' are mistaken and why we have to combat this new critical trend within Social-Democracy;

Chapter 2: Why the defenders of the *spontaneous* development of political consciousness of the working masses from *within, from their economic position* in the local factories, are mistaken, and why the *revolutionary* consciousness can be brought to the working masses only from the *outside, by a disciplined organization of revolutionaries*;

Chapter 3: Why the people who defend merely *local* agitation (of factory workers through revolutionary consciousness raising) and exposures of merely *local economic* factory conditions, are wrong, and why it is necessary to *expand* political agitation to the organization of *comprehensive political exposures*; that is, to train the workers to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression etc., from a *Social-Democratic* point of view;

Chapter 4: Why the defenders of a *democratic* party organization are wrong, and why the *only* serious organizational principles should be *centralization and strictest secrecy of political functions* (so that the police has no way of knowing which party member is responsible for which political activities);

Chapter 5: Why the defenders of *local* newspapers with news on *local economic* factory problems are wrong, and why we need a *central* newspaper as a *collective* propagandist, a *collective agitator*, and a *collective* organizer (compared to the scaffolding erected round a building under construction).

I hope to show that an empirical approach to the study of political logic may be fruitful, by an analysis of two examples of polemical reasoning taken

from the first chapter of Lenin's book.

The remaining analyses will be presented on another occasion.<sup>10</sup>

## 5. Some Suggestions for a Method of Argument-Reconstruction

Finocchiaro, in his book *Galileo and the Art of Reasoning* (1980) and in his (1987), presents some suggestions as to how a reconstruction of arguments within a polemical context could be executed.

Because his suggestions seem very relevant to the present undertaking, I shall mention them here:

1. All data should consist of reconstructed arguments. Finocchiaro writes: 'In general, a reconstruction of an argument is a restatement of it such that no logical extraneous propositions are included and such that all logical interconnections among the stated propositions are explicitly and clearly indicated, by means of reasoning indicators' (1980, 319).

2. Also, '...an argument should be reconstructed with the primary aim of exhibiting its propositional structure, that is, the inferential and ratiocinative interrelations among the various statements or propositions that are its constituent parts' (1987, 85).

3. The propositional structure of an argument may be pictured in a *structure diagram*, in combination with a numbering system that assigns to each proposition a sequence of numbers which uniquely defines its place in the network of propositions.

4. An author's critiques of arguments should be interpreted as arguments *about* arguments and reconstructed in the same way as stated in step 3. When a particular argument A has the function of serving to criticize some other argument B contained in the passage, A is an argument about argument B.

<sup>10</sup> See my doctoral dissertation (forthcoming).

5. Finocchiaro's notion of *latent propositional structure*: a latent structure '...consists of those propositions which are not explicitly stated in the argument but are implicitly assumed or taken for granted by the giver of the argument' (1980, 327).<sup>11</sup>

## 6. Comment

All this and especially criterion 4 seems to be in line with the perspective already presented in section 3. However, from an empirical-logical point of view, it seems even more realistic to reformulate criterion 4 by relating the notions of 'argument' and 'critiques of arguments' to the following notions:

'Thesis T in discussion D', 'the Proponent P of the thesis T', 'the Opponent O of the thesis T', 'lines of attack for P or O in D in relation to T', etc.

So, instead of merely talking about plain 'arguments' and 'arguments about arguments', I would prefer to interpret the argumentative structure of the text also in terms of discussion-roles, theses, attack-lines etc. and see how this approach works out.<sup>12</sup>

It should be noted that this approach is not altogether different from Finocchiaro's. It can be seen as a pragmaticized version of his *practice* of argumentation-analysis as a whole as we find it in his book on Galileo's dialogues.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Finocchiaro discusses more recommendations (like the important principle of charity, the notion of active involvement, complex and simple arguments, etc.), which might be of interest to the argumentation-analyst. See for an excellent discussion, Finocchiaro (1980, resp. pp. 240-241, 378-379, 425, 430; 145-166; 311-312, 313-314).

<sup>12</sup> These terms are defined in Barth and Krabbe (1982).

<sup>13</sup> I refer to Chapter 16 of Finocchiaro (1980): **Galileo as a Logician: A Model and a Data Basis**. Each section of this chapter begins with an outline of the object-argument, i.e., that Aristotelian argument which is criticized by Galileo in an argument which is subsequently

## 7. Conclusions Concerning a Method of Argument-Reconstruction

The method of argument-reconstruction discussed so far goes back partly to Næss (1969, 1982) and, for a smaller part, to Barth and Krabbe (1982). Within the context of this approach, I have benefited greatly from the methodological suggestions of Finocchiaro (1980 and 1987).<sup>14</sup>

On the basis of the discussion so far, six steps may be formulated with which an empirical logical analysis can be executed. The preliminary step of identifying the specific discussion is made superfluous here, since two examples have already been selected from Lenin's book.

The steps are the following:

(i) identification of the initial thesis (T1);  
(ii) identification of the party that is in defense of T1. This is the proponent and his/her arguments are the pro-arguments. Pro-arguments are formulated as P1T1, P2T1, etc.;

(iii) if possible and necessary, discernment of the propositional structures of the pro-arguments and interrelationships among the propositions of these pro-arguments;<sup>15</sup>

(iv) identification of the party that is opposing the thesis T1. This is the opponent and his/her arguments are the counter-arguments. Counter-arguments are formulated as C1T1, C2T1, etc.; Of course,

presented by Finocchiaro as Galileo's argument *about* the Aristotelian argument: a 'meta-argument'. Finocchiaro then comments on the discussion. Finocchiaro's *practice* of analysis could very well be rendered by the dialogical tableau method. Whether or not his theoretical expositions could be treated in the same way, is a question too complicated to be answered here. There are important dialogical suggestions and ideas throughout his book (for example on pp. 418-431).

<sup>14</sup> For a condensed summary of some of the methodological suggestions in his (1980), see his (1987).

<sup>15</sup> As we are mainly interested in the logic of Lenin's argumentation, we will not make a detailed propositional analysis of the arguments on the other's side. Of course, we may have to include such an analysis at a later point.



there may also be arguments — put forward by the opponent — in favour of these counter-arguments. They will be formulated as P1C1T1, P2C1T1, etc.;

(v) if possible and necessary, discernment of the propositional structures of the counter-arguments and interrelationships among the propositions of these counter-arguments;

(vi) depiction of the dialogical exchange (for example — if that is possible — in the form of a dialogue tableau) and presentation of comment on this dialogical exchange.

Two discussions will now be analysed by means of these steps. First the analysis itself is presented without further ado. Next a short comment is given to direct attention to remarkable details in the analysis.

## 8. First Example: The Discussion about 'Freedom of Criticism' and 'Opportunism'

*Step i:* Thesis T1: In order to have unity (in practical but also in theoretical matters) in international Social-Democracy, there must be freedom of criticism within the Social-Democratic movement. This means that through freedom of criticism, theoretical controversies can openly be discussed and brought to a solution (there is no foreclosure of argumentative exchange). This thesis is advanced by Bernstein and attacked by Lenin.

*Step ii:* Bernstein's pro-arguments:

P1T1: it is not possible to put socialism on a scientific basis, without freedom of criticism;

P2T1: it is not possible to demonstrate the necessity and inevitability of socialism from the point of view of the materialist conception of history, without freedom of criticism;

P3T1: one should be free to criticize Marxism on each of the following ideas: (A) the presumed fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianization, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions;

(B): the concept of 'the ultimate aim' of socialism;

(C): the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat;

(D): the presumed principal antithesis between liberalism and socialism;

(E): the theory of the class-struggle has to be criticized, because this theory cannot be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority.

Lenin summarizes this passage by stating: 'Thus, the demand for a decisive turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social reform was accompanied by a no less decisive turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism' (353).

*Step iii:* does not apply here.<sup>15</sup>

*Step iv:* Lenin offers three counter-arguments, of which only the last one will be discussed, for it seems to me the most extensive and relevant counter-argument.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For this note, see p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> The other two counter-arguments of Lenin are:

(i). It is not surprising that the new critical trend in the Social Democratic movement springs up, because the criticism of Marxism has had a long history of preparation and that is so, because this criticism has long been directed from the political platforms, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a series of learned treatises. Moreover, the entire younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically reared for decades on this criticism.

(ii). The cry 'long live freedom of criticism' is too strongly reminiscent of the fable of the empty barrel, because just as in the old times, the modern use of the term contains the same inherent falsehoods. This is so because, under the banner of freedom for industry the most predatory wars were being waged and under the banner of freedom of labour the working people were robbed. Moreover, those who are really convinced that they have made progress in science (by criticizing the traditional views) would not demand freedom for the new views to continue to exist side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new for the old.

I shall use capitals in parentheses to depict the key expressions in this stretch of argumentation.

C3T1: Freedom of criticism (F) in Social-Democracy is nothing more nor less than freedom for opportunism (O) in Social-Democracy;

P1C3T1: Advocating freedom of criticism (F) in Social-Democracy leads to stating that Social-Democracy is merely a party of reform (R);

P2C3T1: If Social-Democracy is in essence merely a party of reform (R), then not only has a socialist the right to join a bourgeois cabinet (Q), but he must always strive to do so (S);

P3C3T1: But if a socialist joins a bourgeois cabinet (Q), this joining leads to utter humiliation and self-degradation of socialism in the face of the whole world (H);

P1P3C3T1: For if a socialist joins a bourgeois cabinet (Q), this joining leads to pompous projects for miserable reforms (T);

P2P3C3T1: And if this joining leads to pompous projects for miserable reforms (T), then the socialist consciousness of the working masses is corrupted (W);

latent: P3P3C3T1: as a consequence of (W), (H) will result.

P4C3T1: as a consequence of (W), all freedom for opportunism will be present in Social-Democracy (O).

(As a consequence of the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working masses, there would no longer be a united disciplined line of revolutionary thought, which according to Lenin amounts to opportunism)

*Step v:* the propositional structure of the third counter-argument:

C3T1: (F) is nothing more nor less than (O);

P1C3T1: if (F) then (R);

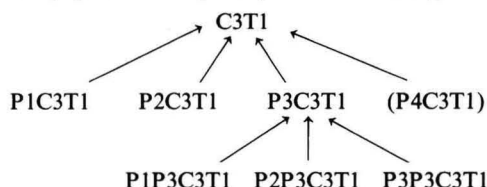
P2C3T1: if (R), then not only (Q), but also (S);

P3C3T1: but if (Q) then (H);

P1P3C3T1: for if (Q) then (T);

P2P3C3T1: and if (T) then (W);  
latent (P3P3C3T1): if (W) then (H);  
(P4C3T1): if (W) then (O).

The interrelationships between the propositions in this argument can be clearly pictured by way of a tree-diagram:



*Step vi. comment:*

1. In this strong transitive reasoning-form Q plays a major role. The joining of a socialist in a bourgeois cabinet is the link between on the one hand advocating freedom of criticism and on the other hand opportunism.

2. Under the assumption that T is an instance of R, there is a circle in the whole argument, though not a vicious one:

P1C3T1: if F then R; P2C3T1: if R then not only Q but also S; P1P3C3T1: but if Q then T. The least we can conclude from this is, that Lenin is not unambiguously clear about the presumed causal link between stating reforms and joining a bourgeois cabinet and this damages the argument. That is, on the basis of Lenin's counter-argument, we have no way of knowing whether or not a socialist can join a bourgeois cabinet without becoming an opportunist.

3. In order to make proposition P2C3T1 more acceptable to the reader, Lenin in fact uses the following rhetorical intensifiers:<sup>17</sup>

i. in order to prove 'if R then Q', Lenin intensifies his statement by saying 'if R, then not only Q but also S'. Here S rhetorically intensifies the connection

<sup>17</sup> The term 'intensifiers' came to my attention through J.F. Burrows (1987), who says that 'Their chief value resides in the *rhetoric* of dialogue, whether as words to eschew, words to enforce a genuine need for emphasis, or words to devalue in an emphasis so unremitting that it becomes no emphasis at all' (68).

between R and Q. Even when the link between R and Q and between R and S is rather weak, acceptance of the link R/Q will be facilitated by emphasizing the connection between Q and S in one and the same statement. Moreover, T seems to be merely a rhetorical intensification of R. But, by introducing this intensification, the otherwise circular character of the reasoning passage seems less obvious. By substitution of T by R one gets: if R then Q and if Q then R. The plausibility of the logical connection between R and Q is rhetorically enhanced by introducing T: if R then Q, if Q then T, if T then W and if W then O.

ii. Lenin gives the following statement to summarize his conclusion. In this statement I have emphasized all the intensifications he uses to overrule any possible doubt in the minds of his readers: *'He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new critical trend is nothing more nor less than a new variety of opportunism. And if we judge people, not by the glittering uniforms they don or by the high-sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that 'freedom of criticism' means freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy...'* (354-355).

4. It is interesting to observe that Lenin does not attack any of the pro-arguments of Bernstein. Lenin's criticism is focused directly on Bernstein's initial thesis T1, in order to show the reader that this thesis has very dire *consequences* from a revolutionary point of view. Of course, Lenin in his role of opponent must have the right to test every argument of the proponent for its tenability, just as the proponent must have the opportunity to defend the initial thesis in every possible way. But Lenin actually attacks the same proposition (i.e. T1) again and again, so that this proposition receives the status of contested thesis in a long series of several discussions. Just as in his other two counter-arguments, which we didn't discuss here, Lenin neglects Bernstein's pro-arguments. The point is that by doing so,

Lenin fails to fulfill his own purpose, which was as we have seen: to show why the defenders of 'freedom of criticism' are mistaken.

## 9. Second Example: The Discussion about 'Opportunism in the Russian Social-Democratic Organization'

*Step i:* Thesis T2: For a durable unity in the Russian Social-Democratic organization, there must be freedom of criticism.

*Step ii:* Pro-argument of the Rabocheye Dyelo:<sup>18</sup>

P1T2: The unity of the German Socialist Party and the disunity of the French Socialist Party can be explained by the fact that the first recognized complete freedom of criticism, whereas the latter did not.

*Step iii:* does not apply here.<sup>15</sup>

*Step iv:* Lenin's counter-arguments:

C1T2: The Rabocheye Dyelo's pro-argument P1T2 is not relevant for the thesis and by stating the thesis anyhow, this results in freedom for opportunism in Russian Social-Democracy;

P1C1T2: The Rabocheye Dyelo says nothing about freedom of criticism in Russia, about a practical application of it in Russian conditions. Instead the Rabocheye Dyelo proposes to copy the German variety of criticism. But:

P2C1T2: The German variety of criticism cannot be copied in Russian conditions, because:

P1P2C1T2: The positions of the opportunists in relation to the revolutionary Social-Democratic movement in Russia are diametrically opposed to those in Germany, i.e.:

P1P1P2C1T2: Whereas in Germany the

<sup>15</sup> For this note, see p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Rabocheye Dyelo* means *Workers' Cause*, the name of the Organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad. The Organ appeared in Geneva from April 1899 to February 1902.



revolutionary Social-Democracy wants to preserve that what exists (the program and the tactics) and the Critics want to introduce changes, in Russia the situation is just the other way around. The explanation for this is:

P1P1P2C1T2: The Russian condition was marked by the combination of manifestly heterogeneous elements under a common flag to fight the common enemy (the autocracy), and as a consequence:

P2P1P2C1T2: In Russia an alliance between people of extreme and of very moderate views was necessary.

P3P1P2C1T2: An essential condition for an alliance between Social-Democracy and the bourgeois democrats (to which the critical trend belonged) was, that the socialists had the opportunity to reveal to the working class that its interests were diametrically opposed to the interest of the bourgeoisie; but:

P4P1P2C1T2: The critical trend deprived the socialists of this opportunity and demoralized the socialist consciousness by criticizing the fundamental tenets of Marxism; and:

P5P1P2C1T2: Depriving the socialists of the opportunity to reveal to the working class the conflict of interests vis-à-vis the bourgeoisie is synonymous with denying the socialist's right to existence.

P3C1T2: To talk about freedom of

criticism and of Bernsteinism as a condition for uniting the Russian Social-Democratic movement and not to explain how Russian Bernsteinism has manifested itself and what particular fruits it has borne, amounts to talking with the aim of saying nothing, and this amounts to nothing else than opportunism;

P1P3C1T2: Because freedom of criticism, with its high sounding phrases against the ossification of thought etc. conceals unconcern and helplessness with regard to the development of theoretical thought and implies freedom from all integral theory: it implies eclecticism and lack of principle;

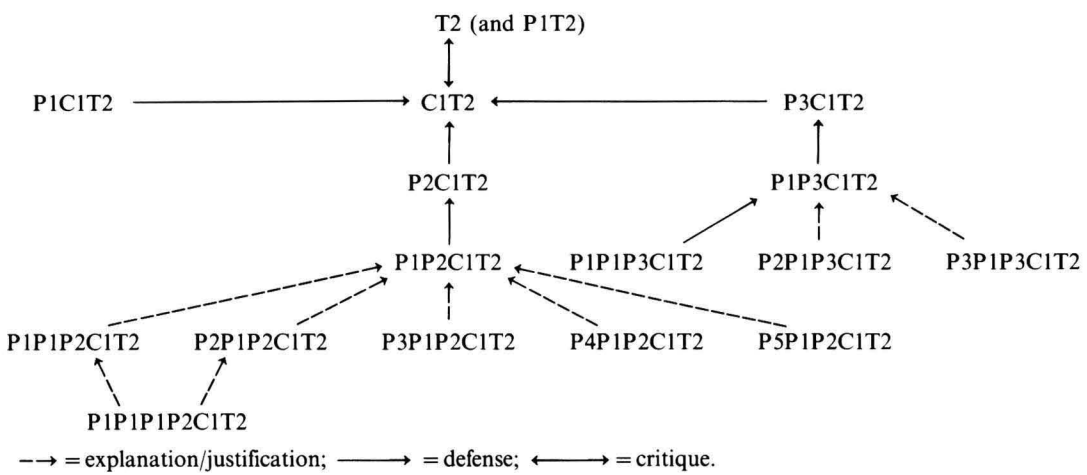
P1P1P3C1T2: Because not a word is said in programmatical periodicals of the Rabocheye Dyelo about theoretical questions; and

P2P1P3C1T2: Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement, and

P3P1P3C1T2: The role of the vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.

The second counter-argument (C2T2) of Lenin (namely that the Rabocheye Dyelo has taken under its wing the opportunist trend in international Social-Democracy), will be analysed on another occasion.

*Step v:* The propositional interrelationships between all the arguments that Lenin formulated are as follows:



Here, Lenin's counter-arguments are directed primarily at the relevance of pro-argument P1T2 to the thesis and, of course, thereby against T2 itself.

Many of Lenin's counter-arguments can be seen as explanatory propositions in order to back up a direct counter-argument. For example: P1P1P2C1T2 is an explanation for argument P1P1P2C1T2 and for P2P1P2C1T2. P3P1P2C1T2 and P4P1P2C1T2 can also be seen as explanatory statements. For completeness sake, these explanations have been included in the reconstruction. Some of these statements can also be interpreted as justifications. A discussion of the problem of explanation versus justification will be left aside for the moment.

Important to note, their function in the context of this argument is a defensive one of building up the criticism directed at T2.

*Step vi:* the discussion can be rendered in a table with two roles, an opponent and a proponent in relation to a thesis. Of course, this depiction is not identical with the formal representation as developed in formal-dialogue logic.

Lenin		Rabocheye Dyelo	
concessions: (there must be unity in SD)		T2	
1. (?)T2 2. 3. A: P1 not relevant for T2; B: T2 amounts to opportunism		P1T2	
4.		A: ...?	B: ...?
5. A: ...	B: ...		

The point of this depiction is to illustrate two features of this discussion:  
1. In step 3 the discussion splits into two different though related discussions: discussion (A) is about the relevance of the pro-argument of the Rabocheye Dyelo in relation to T2, and discussion (B) is about the presumed opportunism to which T2 leads. It is important to see that such a split is present and that the tableau can be developed for each line of discussion.

2. On the face of it we have here an example of a *mixed* discussion, in the sense that not only the proponent but the opponent as well, appears to *argue for* his/her point of view (namely at step 3 in the discussion where the former opponent now actually puts forward two statements of his own).<sup>19</sup>

One can deal with this situation in the following possible ways:  
(i). one can decide that the proponent has the right to pose questions which the opponent has to answer. These answers can be used as new concessions which the opponent delivered for argument's sake.(This suggestion was in fact offered by Krabbe (1988)). The opponent does not argue for or against his concessions, he only makes concessions in answering the questions of the proponent. As soon as the opponent would argue for or against his concessions it simply would no longer be possible to designate him as *the* opponent.  
(ii). one can also decide to treat the pro-counter-arguments of the opponent (i.e. P1C1T2 etc.) as attempts at precization (clarifying reformulation) of his original counter-argument. This is the case in statements like P1P1P1P2C1T2, where an explanation is given of the previous proposition. That is, the precized arguments narrow down the room for interpretation of the original counter-argument. The proponent has the right to request a precization, in order to be able to defend his own thesis as strongly as possible, and also in order to counter-attack the counter-arguments of the oppo-

<sup>19</sup> Such a choice would seem somewhat arbitrary. As soon as the counter-argument becomes the new thesis and the former opponent starts to argue in defense of this thesis, we have a whole new discussion with a new distribution of rights and obligations. This means that as soon as the opponent wants to argue for a certain point of view, he/she must inform the proponent that he/she wants to start a new discussion in which he/she will be the proponent.

nent as strongly as possible.<sup>20</sup>

Possibilities i. and ii. are not incompatible with each other. Also, both render the discussion in terms of simple conflicts of opinion and not as mixed discussions. Mixed discussions are very hard to analyse. We do not always know who is arguing for what: who is the proponent and who is the opponent of what?

Let us return to our example. When we scrutinize Lenin's argumentation from the perspective of possibilities (i). and (ii). (which implies that we do not interpret Lenin's role as the proponent-role), the following details about Lenin's logic come to the fore.

(a). First, what are Lenin's critical arguments about? Counter-arguments P1C1T2, P2C1T2, and P1P2C1T2 are about the accusation of *misplaced extrapolation* of the German example to Russian conditions; counter-argument P3C1T2 is about the accusation of *insufficient explanation* (not explaining how Russian Bernsteinism has manifested itself) and *opportunism* (talking with the aim of saying nothing); counter-arguments P3C1T2, P1P3C1T2, P1P1P3C1T2, P2P1P3C1T2, P3P1P3C1T2 are about *opportunism*, *ecclecticism*, *theoretical unconcern* and *ossification* (these are Lenin's own words). (b). An important constant ingredient in Lenin's criticism is his claim that one cannot criticize the fundamental tenets of Marxism unless one is in the possession of a complete and advanced revolutionary theory. The lack of such a theory is a fundamental reason why the Rabocheye Dyelo just translates the German variety of criticism into Russian conditions

(i.e. P1C1T2-P1P1P2C1T2), and why they were not sensitive to strategical opportunities (i.e. P3P1P2C1T2). (c). Words like opportunism, ecclecticism, theoretical unconcern, lack of principle, have a heavy role to play here. For example: opportunism plays the role of undesired consequence in argument P3C1T2. Ecclecticism and lack of principle play the role of the implication of the lack of theoretical thought in P1P3C1T2. As such these words form a part of the explanation of proposition P3C1T2, which was about opportunism. One could say that the argumentative duties that Lenin bestows on these rhetorical words are rather heavy. These words are used in a context in which the critical reader would like to have an independent proof as to the causal link between claiming freedom of criticism of fundamental Marxist tenets and unconcern as to theoretical thought. In other words, why can't the Rabocheye Dyelo be granted the right to criticize without delivering an advanced revolutionary theory of its own making? Besides, the fact that the fundamental Marxist tenets are the focus of many criticisms shows that these tenets themselves are not as integral, complete or advanced as Lenin would have it.

## 10. Concluding Remarks

So far we studied how the specific features of the argumentative structure of a central part of Lenin's book *What is to be done?* contributed to its main purpose. That purpose was to show the reader why the visions of the authors whose texts he discusses are mistaken and why there is '...a basic antithesis between the two trends in the Russian Social-Democratic movement', i.e., the revolutionaries and the opportunists. This antithesis is the main reason for the differences of opinion about how to solve the burning question of the Social-Democratic movement.

The topic of 'freedom of criticism' was

<sup>20</sup> The following papers are interesting illustrations of this 'dialectical' approach: (i) E.C.W. Krabbe (1982) especially pp. 238-241, in which one party, White, does not doubt the philosophical system of the other party, Black, and rejects no statement of it *within* the game of immanent criticism, but instead asks questions to get more information about Black's system; (ii) W.P.A. Haans (1988); (iii) R.W. van Nues (1988)

selected, not only because of its intrinsic significance, but also because this topic is introduced right at the beginning of the book. This book contains the ideological foundations of a revolutionary party-organization that would soon strike roots in about twenty-two countries or parts of countries all over the world.<sup>21</sup>

An empirical-logical approach to the argumentation of Lenin's polemics provides us with a new type of data that may help us explain the enormous influence and stability of this conceptual system. Such data can be used diagnostically and in the future perhaps prophylactically as well.

This approach, of which this paper is a short illustration, could be used to construct surveys and inventories of political logics, in historical and in actual use.

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<sup>21</sup> For a detailed documentation of this spread of communism and sovietization, see T. Hammond (1975), especially pp. 1-60.

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