

**Charles
Bettelheim**

**Class
Struggles
in the
USSR**



First Period: 1917-1923

[Section 4 -- Part 4]

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of "war communism" and the beginning of the
NEP

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Key to abbreviations, initials, and Russian words used in the text

Artel	A particular form of producers' cooperative
Cadet party	The Constitutional Democratic Party
CLD	See STO
Cheka	Extraordinary Commission (political police)
Glavk	One of the chief directorates in the Supreme Council of the National Economy or in a people's commissariat
Gosplan	State Planning Commission
GPU	State Political Administration (political police)
Kulak	A rich peasant, often involved in capitalist activities of one kind or another, such as hiring out agricultural machinery, trade, moneylending, etc.
Mir	The village community
Narkomtrud	People's Commissariat of Labor
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKhSSSRv	National Economy of the USSR in (a certain year or period)
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
OGPU	Unified State Political Administration (political police)
Orgburo	Organization Bureau of the Bolshevik Party
Politburo	Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party
Rabfak	Workers' Faculty
Rabkrin	See RKI
RCP(B)	Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik): official

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	name of the Bolshevik Party, adopted by the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918
RKI	Workers' and Peasants' Inspection
RSDLP	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
RSDLP(B)	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (Bolshevik)
RSFSR	Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic
Skhod	General assembly of a village
Sovkhoz	State farm

Sovnarkhoz	Regional Economic Council
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
SR	Socialist Revolutionary
STO	Council of Labor and Defense
Uchraspred	Department in the Bolshevik Party responsible for registering the members and assigning them to different tasks
Uyezd	County
Volost	Rural district
VSNKh	Supreme Economic Council
VTsIK	All-Russia Central Executive Committee (organ derived from the Congress of soviets)
Zemstvo	Administrative body in country areas before the Revolution

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Part 4

The ideological and political struggles inside the Bolshevik Party

Analysis of the ideological and political struggles which took place in the Bolshevik Party enables us to appreciate the ideological foundations of the party's line and activity, and the nature of the help that the party was able to give to the struggles of the masses -- the latter being the determining factor in all historical transformations.

This analysis is not merely of "retrospective" interest. It helps us not only to understand the ideological trends which clashed in Lenin's time and had an influence on all the revolutionary struggles of this period, but also to understand better the significance and implications of the ideological struggles which took place subsequently in the Bolshevik Party, in the Communist International, and in the international labor movement, immediately after Lenin's death and much later, and which are still going on today. With such an analysis one can see the conflict between the ideas of revolutionary Marxism -- ideas which are always open to enrichment by practical experience and theoretical reflection -- and bourgeois or petty bourgeois conceptions "presented" in "Marxist" language, that are one of the "sources" of modern revisionism.

Analysis of the ideological and political struggles that went on in the Bolshevik Party in Lenin's time also enables us to see more distinctly the exceptional position occupied in the party by Lenin, his vital role in the adoption of a revolutionary line. The term "exceptional" is appropriate for emphasizing the fact that, on certain crucial questions, Lenin took up positions that proved to be correct, but was often the only one, or almost the only one, to defend these positions. There was indeed a considerable gap between Lenin's living Marxism

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and the tendency of most of the other Bolshevik leaders to be content with repeating formulas which had already been overtaken by the course of history. To quote only one example, it is

well known that Lenin, while still in exile, denounced all policies of "support," even "conditional support," for the Provisional Government formed after the February 1917 revolution. He put forward the slogan of direct struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat at a time when nearly all the Bolshevik leaders were taking up a much more "cautious" attitude. Only gradually did they rally to the position which had been Lenin's from the outset. It is not easy to explain the special place held by Lenin in the party, even though this place -- which put him not merely at the head of the party but ahead of it -- was confirmed every time that life called for an important reformulation of strategy and tactics or a rectification of the line that had been followed down to that moment. It can be said, however, that the two essential factors which account for it are his distinctive capacity for listening to the masses and the solidity of his theoretical training. These two elements, combined with his political courage, which enabled him to dare to go against the tide, not to be afraid of being momentarily isolated, explain why Lenin was generally in advance of his party -- including in his acknowledgment of mistakes made by the party and by himself.

Analysis of the ideological and political struggles that developed inside the Bolshevik Party also enables us to appreciate the magnitude of the rectifications which Lenin began to undertake from late 1920 onward, continuing right down to 1923, and which opened up new vistas which the other party leaders accepted only to a very partial extent (this point will be given special consideration in Part Five).

Before analyzing the most significant aspects of these ideological and political struggles, we must recall some of the changes that took place in the party's relations with the masses. This will be done very briefly, as the fundamental aspects of the matter have already been examined.

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1. The changes in the Bolshevik Party's relations with the masses

The transformations that took place in the relations between the masses and the Bolshevik Party had their roots in the transformation of social relations and relations between classes. Directly, however, they resulted from the political line followed by the party, the correct or incorrect orientation it gave to its activity, and so from its analysis of the contradictions and its ability to deal correctly with the principal contradiction at each stage of the revolution. A study of the changes in relations between the party and the masses must therefore be linked with a study of the principal tasks facing the party at different moments.

When we look at the Bolshevik Party's relations with the masses, what is most difficult is to define the principal aspect of these relations. The latter were necessarily very complex. Indeed, these relations were always strongly differentiated. They were not the same with the working class as with the peasantry. And where each of these classes was concerned, relations were different depending on whether advanced elements were involved, or backward elements

(more or less dominated by bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology), or intermediate elements. As a general rule, during the years following the October Revolution, the advanced and intermediate elements of the masses supported the Bolshevik Party: if this had not been so, the Soviet power could not have resisted the military offensives of the Whites and the imperialists, and the huge economic difficulties due to the different forms of resistance and sabotage practiced by the bourgeoisie and to the economic chaos caused by six years of war.

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What was at stake, however, in the relations between the party and the masses, was the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the party's ability to expand the ranks of the advanced elements by gradually winning support from those who at the outset had been intermediate or backward elements. This was a continuous struggle, a struggle aimed at wresting from bourgeois influence the fraction of the masses still subject to this influence. It was also a struggle which had its ups and downs, for the mistakes made by the party or by some of its members were reflected in a decline in the backing given to it by part of the masses. Studying the relations between the party and the masses means, therefore, above all, throwing light not upon the support given to the Bolsheviks by the advanced and combative elements, a support without which the Soviet power would have collapsed, but upon the attitude of the intermediate elements; their hesitations and fluctuations (themselves connected with changes in living conditions and with the decisions taken by the Bolshevik Party) determined the greater or lesser degree of solidity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its aptitude for developing from its initial transitory form to a higher form. It is therefore from this angle that we must study the changes in the party's relations with the masses.

I shall not go over again the period between February 1917 and May 1918, except to recall that during those months the Bolshevik Party's influence over the masses was developing rapidly. Between February and October of 1917, an increasing number of working people, especially in the towns, came to support the Bolshevik Party, participating in the activity of the revolutionary organizations and backing up the initiatives taken by the Bolsheviks. In October, the relation of class forces became such that the power of the bourgeoisie collapsed and gave way to the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the months that followed, the deeds of the Bolshevik Party in power (especially its help to the democratic revolution of the peasantry and the signing of the treaty of Brest Litovsk) brought it an increased basis of support among the masses, especially among the peasantry, even though the dif-

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ficulties of everyday life -- difficulties connected with the consequences of the war and the maneuvers of the capitalists -- were, of course, exploited by the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties, that is, in the main, by the Mensheviks and SRs. These parties had been so badly discredited by their conduct in the period of the Provisional Government that their influence was not then such as seriously to embarrass the Soviet power -- though this did not apply in certain sectors which, although restricted, were important from the economic standpoint: thus, the Menshevik leaders of the railroad workers' union helped aggravate the disorganized state of transportation.

After the civil war began, relations between the party and the masses entered a more difficult phase, owing, first of all, to the party's overestimation of the extent to which socialist ideas had penetrated the peasantry, and also to mistakes made in assessing the conditions under which socialist transformation of production relations was possible in the rural areas at that time.

I. From the attempted "proletarian offensive" in the countryside to the orientation on the middle peasant

In connection with the mass mobilization undertaken by the Bolshevik Party, in and after the second half of 1919, to cope with the White rebellions and foreign intervention, the illusion arose that the situation had become favorable for the launching of a "proletarian offensive" among the peasantry. This was the period when the party thought that the time had already arrived to begin "the real work of building socialism," because it believed that "the majority of the working peasants are striving towards collective farming."^[1]

At that time the party thought it could stir up a revolutionary movement among the poor peasants, and organize them in separate committees, distinct from the soviets. As we know,

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these attempts at a "proletarian offensive" failed. The situation was not yet ripe for it. The revolution in the countryside could not then proceed beyond the democratic stage.

The first attempt, to be abandoned later, involved the formation of the poor peasants' committees. Launched in June 1918, at the time of the split between the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs (who controlled many village soviets), this attempt did not result in a movement with firm foundations among the mass of poor peasants. Only a minority of the latter took part in the movement, and these peasants often pursued narrowly personal aims and attacked the middle peasants. Where the poor peasants' committees became active, they set themselves in opposition to the peasant soviets and sought to form a "second ruling authority," dividing the peasantry at a moment when, in the face of the onslaught of the White and imperialist armies, it was necessary to unite the working class and the peasantry in the same fight.

Already in November 1918, hesitation and anxiety regarding the consequences of the development of the poor peasants' committees arose in the Bolshevik Party and in the VTsIK. When a congress of the poor peasants' committees of the Petrograd region was held, at which the representatives of these committees asked for all the political powers of the soviets to be transferred to their own committees, Zinoviev (apparently with the agreement of the party leadership) tabled a resolution declaring that, though the committees had fought against the kulaks, in carrying out their task, they "were inevitably obliged to go beyond the limits of the decree of 11 June," with the result that "a dual power was created in the countryside leading to fruitless dispersal of energy and confusion in relations."^[2]

A week later, the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets unanimously adopted a similar resolution.

On December 2, 1918, the VTsIK decided to dissolve the poor peasants' committees, because of the situation of "dual power" which had developed in the countryside.^[3] Actually, the uneven development of the class struggle as between regions meant that at the moment when the poor peasants'

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committees were being suppressed in Russia, they were developing in the Ukraine, which had then been reconquered by the Soviet power after the collapse of German imperialism.

The decision to dissolve the poor peasants' committees was not a "concession" to the kulaks. It was dictated by a desire to avoid a split between the proletarian power and the middle peasants. The weakness of the Bolshevik Party in the rural areas prevented it from being able to give proper guidance to the poor peasants' committee movement, and safeguard it from becoming isolated from the middle peasants. In principle, the latter should have been included in the poor peasants' committees (instructions to this effect were sent out several times by the party leadership) but, in practice, the middle peasants were often treated as though they were kulaks.

After December 1918, the Bolshevik Party increasingly sought to widen its influence among the middle peasants and, more generally, among the petty bourgeoisie. At the end of November, Lenin had published his article "[Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin](#)," in which, writing of the least proletarian and most petty bourgeois strata of the working people who were turning toward the Soviet power, and of the hesitating and neutral elements, he said: "The slogan of the moment is to make use of the change of attitude towards us which is taking place among them." In this connection he emphasized the need for "agreement with the middle peasant, with the worker who was a Menshevik yesterday and with the office worker or specialist who was a saboteur yesterday."

While declaring that there was no question of departing from the line of building socialism, or forgetting the past vacillations of the petty bourgeois democrats, Lenin concluded: "When profound world-historic changes bring about an inevitable turn in our direction among the mass of non-Party, Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary democrats, we must learn and shall learn to make use of this change of front, to encourage it, to induce it among the various groups and sections of the population, to do everything possible to reach agreement with them . . ."^[4]

The decisions made between December 1918 and March

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1919 were the preconditions for a new attempt at direct alliance with the middle peasants which was launched in March 1919.

We know that at the Eighth Party Congress, held in that month, Lenin tried to define a new attitude toward the middle peasants, "a numerous and strong section of the population." On this occasion, he said that it was not enough, at the stage then reached by the Soviet revolution, to "neutralise the peasantry," but that it was necessary to "place our relations with the middle peasants *on the basis of a firm alliance* and so preclude the possibility of a repetition of those mistakes and blunders we have repeatedly made in the past. Those blunders estranged the middle peasants from us, although we of the Communist Party, the leading party, were the first who helped the Russian peasants to throw off the yoke of the landlords and establish real democracy, which gave us every ground for counting on their complete confidence."^[5]

The new party program adopted by the Eighth Congress was clearly oriented toward an alliance with the middle peasants. It expressly recalled that the middle peasants were not part of the exploiting classes, and that therefore no coercion must be used toward them. It called for measures to be taken to help the middle peasants to increase the productivity of their holdings, and said that they should be taxed only to a moderate extent.

II. Requisitioning and the development of the contradictions between the Soviet

power and the peasantry

During 1919, and still more during 1920, it proved impossible to put into effective practice the principles laid down at the beginning of 1919 and ratified by the Eighth Party Congress, owing to the increasing disparity between production, agricultural deliveries, and the needs of the front and the towns for agricultural products. In order to cope with this

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disparity, the Soviet power was led, as we have seen, to increase requisitioning, which meant striking, often in an indiscriminate way, at the middle peasants (who were the most numerous body of producers).

During the civil war, the mass of the peasantry felt the objective necessity of this requisitioning and endured it as a necessary evil. Matters changed markedly after the middle of 1920, when victory became certain. At that moment, the continuation of requisitioning, and even its aggravation in the face of declining agricultural production, provoked serious discontent among many of the peasants, and serious tension developed between them and the Bolshevik Party.

From June 1920 onward, this tension increased all the more rapidly because the party thought it could pursue the policy of requisitioning indefinitely, seeing in it even a necessary instrument for the "building of socialism," which seemed an immediate task.

Some of Lenin's writings testify to the illusions that prevailed in those days. Thus, during the Second All-Russia Conference of Organizers Responsible for Work in the Rural Areas, on June 12, 1920, he said that "the proletarian dictatorship should display itself primarily in the advanced, the most class-conscious and most disciplined of the urban and industrial workers . . . educating, training and disciplining all the other proletarians, who are often not class-conscious, and all working people and the peasantry." Discipline must be imposed upon them from outside, without any "sentimentality," for "the working man, as we have inherited him from capitalism, is in a state of utter benightedness and ignorance, and does not realise that work can be done not only under the lash of capital but also under the guidance of the organised worker."^[6]

At that time Lenin looked upon the requisitioning measures as not merely temporary, having to be applied because of war conditions, but as measures that were inherent in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the nature of the relations existing between the proletariat in power and the peasant masses.

It was characteristic of the illusions associated with "war

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communism" that the Bolshevik Party viewed the requisitioning measures as an integral part of the "frontal attack" on capitalism which it thought it was then conducting. And so, after having been adopted provisionally as measures dictated by circumstances, the requisitioning measures came to be looked upon as normal "socialist measures," and not only by Bukharin -- who then advocated the use of coercion with regard to the peasants, as can be seen in his book *The Economics of the Transformation Period* ^[7] -- but also by Lenin.

When, during the summer of 1920, Lenin read Varga's analysis of the experience of the Hungarian revolution, which stated that "requisitions do not lead to the goal since they bring in their train a decrease of production," he put two question marks in the margin.^[8] Soon after

reading Varga's work, Lenin expressed approval of what Bukharin said in *The Economics of the Transformation Period*, where he asserted that the constraint exercised by the proletarian dictatorship with regard to the peasantry could not be considered as "pure constraint," since it "lies on the path of general economic development." Lenin noted in the margin: "Very good."^[9]

In November 1920 Lenin even thought that, as a result of the big increase in the amount of grain that the state had been able to obtain through requisitioning, "We have convinced the peasants that the proletariat provides them with better conditions of existence than the bourgeoisie did; we have convinced them of this by practice." He added: "His [the peasant's] is a wait-and-see attitude. From being neutrally hostile he has become neutrally sympathetic."^[10]

Actually, at that moment the peasants' discontent had been manifesting itself openly for two months already.^[11] In September 1920, with the demobilization of the army and the ending of the White Guard menace, there began to appear what was called "peasant banditry," which was simply the expression of profound discontent in the countryside. This "banditry" developed above all in the central and southeastern regions. The province of Tambov was especially affected by a movement of this kind.

During the winter of 1920-1921, the People's Commissariat

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for Food Supplies was finally obliged to suspend the requisitioning in thirteen provinces, as a result of the troubles that were developing in them.^[12] Thereafter, expressions of peasant discontent continued to occur until the official abandonment of requisitioning measures in March 1921.

Despite this situation, Lenin was still saying, in December 1920, that the constraint applied to the peasants was necessary, and a means of increasing agricultural production. At the Eighth Congress of Soviets, while emphasizing the need for efforts to convince the peasants, especially the working peasants, the poor and the middle sections, he nevertheless said that "in a country of small peasants, our chief and basic task is to be able to resort to state compulsion in order to raise the level of peasant farming," and he urged that "the apparatus of compulsion" be "activated and reinforced."^[13]

These statements were his last of the kind. Departing further and further from this favorable attitude toward the use of compulsion in dealing with the peasants, Lenin carried out an increasingly thorough rectification of his conception of the relations between the proletarian power and the peasantry. We shall see in Part Five how Lenin went about this rectification, its place in the balance sheet he drew up for the five years of the revolution, and the extent to which what he then said influenced the conceptions that prevailed in the Bolshevik Party. For the moment I shall give only a few indications of the beginning of a reevaluation of peasant policy which Lenin undertook in early 1921.

III. The peasants' discontent and the beginning of a reevaluation of the Bolshevik Party's peasant policy

In January 1921 Lenin met many peasant delegations. He became more and more aware of the mistakes that had been made in the countryside. In February he drafted some theses "concerning the peasants." He proposed to "satisfy the wish

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of the non-Party peasants for the substitution of a tax in kind for the surplus appropriation system (the confiscation of surplus grain stocks)," and to "reduce the size of this tax as compared with last year's appropriation rate." He also proposed to "give the farmer more leeway in using his after-tax surpluses in local trade, provided his tax is promptly paid up in full."^[14] On February 17 and 26, *Pravda* published two articles explaining the need for the measures proposed by Lenin, and the Central Committee appointed a special commission to work out a scheme along these lines. Thus, in the weeks leading up to the Kronstadt rising, Lenin had drawn the party on to a new path, which was to be that of the New Economic Policy.

On March 7, 1921, the Central Committee examined and approved the scheme worked out by the special commission. On March 8 and 15, Lenin spoke in support of the scheme at the Tenth Party Congress.^[15] These two speeches were presented in the form of reports in which Lenin gave a first reevaluation of the policy followed down to that time by the Bolshevik Party. They are of great importance. In them we find explicit admission of the mistakes made, and an explanation of their immediate source, namely, the party's earlier misunderstanding of the state of mind of the peasant masses.

In his report of March 8, Lenin spoke of the mistakes made not only in the party's "calculations" and "plans," but also "in determining the balance of forces between our class and those classes in collaboration with which, and frequently in struggle against which, it had to decide the fate of the Republic." He went on: "With this as a starting point, let us return to the results of the past."^[16]

The frankness and sharpness of the self-criticism which Lenin made at this time, and which he called on the whole party to take part in, were in accordance with the proletarian revolutionary character of Lenin's style of leadership. The way he oriented himself toward a new political line was typical of this style of leadership. Confronted with a difficult situation due to past errors (not only to these errors, moreover, but also to the exigencies of a military struggle which he had had to conduct under extremely complex conditions), Lenin

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sought and found the elements of a new political line (of a line adjusted to the requirements of a situation that was also new) in the demands of the peasants themselves, in their aspirations.

It was on that basis, and on that of an analysis, free from whitewashing, of a setback that was admitted to be such, and treated like a scientific experiment, as an objective process the outcome of which was being assessed, that Lenin took a decisive step in the rectification of the Bolshevik Party's relations with the peasantry. As we shall see, it was by carrying further his rigorous analysis of the mistakes made during "war communism" that, between 1921 and 1923, Lenin opened up radically new vistas for the peasant policy of the proletarian dictatorship. In doing this, Lenin effected, in a series of stages, a major rectification of part of his conceptions regarding relations between the proletariat and the peasantry. The thoroughness of this rectification was so great that it forbids us to consider Lenin's earlier writings on peasant problems as still expressing the conclusions at which Lenin had arrived when he drew up the balance sheet of five years of revolution.

The beginning of this rectification, in the first months of 1921, and its subsequent deepening, did not of course fall from heaven: they resulted from both a concrete and a theoretical analysis of the most serious crisis the proletarian dictatorship had experienced until that time.

Before discussing this crisis, which had repercussions inside the Bolshevik Party in the form of an ideological and political crisis of unprecedented seriousness, we must briefly recall the way relations had evolved between the Bolshevik Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, and the mass of the workers.

IV. The relations of the Bolshevik Party with the mass of the workers

The Bolshevik Party's relations with the mass of the workers were very different, and developed very differently, from its

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relations with the peasant masses. Not only was the Bolshevik Party organically present in the working class, at least in the cities and big industrial centers, where the most militant elements of the working-class masses were to be found, but its ideology, its theoretical conceptions, and its political practice were always closely linked to the proletariat, and especially to its most advanced elements.

The closeness of these links -- which, obviously, did not rule out the existence of contradictions between the party and more or less extensive sections of the working class, especially in a country like Russia where mistakes in policy toward the peasants inevitably produced negative effects among the proletariat -- corresponded to the Leninist principles regarding the party's style of leadership and its leading role in relation to the working class.

(a) The relations between the party and the proletariat

I have considered earlier the Leninist conception of the party, which insists on respect for certain principles where the party's relations with the working-class masses are concerned -- attention to the workers' initiative as a source of instruction for the party; confidence in the revolutionary energy of the proletariat; presence of the party amidst the proletariat and close links (going as far, in Lenin's words, as "merging") with its advanced elements; and the need to allow the working people to convince themselves by their own experience.

Lenin's revolutionary Marxism included other principles, connected with the party's role as the instrument for working out a political line and as the bearer of revolutionary theory. In this respect, what is essential is the party's role as political guide and theoretical educator. For Lenin, a party which does not fulfill this role is not a revolutionary party: it does not rise above the level of "economism" and "spontaneism," according to which absolutely any initiative or aspiration of the masses is revolutionary. This emphasis on the role of the party as educator and guide is found in the very first of Lenin's major political interventions, especially in [What Is to Be](#)

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[Done?](#) Bolshevism thereby radically distinguished itself from German Social Democracy, including the latter's revolutionary tendency, one of whose most outstanding representatives was Rosa Luxemburg.

Thus, in his article "[On the Junius Pamphlet](#)," Lenin wrote: "A very great defect in

revolutionary Marxism in Germany as a whole is its lack of a compact illegal organisation that would systematically pursue its own line and educate the masses in the spirit of the new tasks . . . "[17]

The party's appropriate role as educator and guide of the proletariat corresponds to the place which Leninism ascribes to revolutionary theory, and to the acknowledged need to struggle against bourgeois ideology as the dominant ideology. This role implies rejection of the "naive" conception according to which the proletariat is ready at any moment and on a mass scale to engage in revolutionary action. Leninism here links up with Marx's analyses which distinguish between the theory of the proletariat (a theory which draws scientific conclusions from the existence of the proletariat, from the *relations* in which the proletariat is involved, and from the *struggles* it wages) and what the proletarians *imagine* their role and their interest to be in any given situation. We recall what Marx wrote on this point: "The question is not what this or that proletarian, or even the whole of the proletariat *considers* as its aim. The question is *what the proletariat is*, and what, consequent on that *being*, it will be compelled to do." [18]

These Leninist principles, put into practice by the Bolshevik Party, enabled it to take the lead in the revolutionary movement of the masses, and help the masses to overthrow the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in October 1917.

(b) The leadership practice of the Bolshevik Party after the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship

After the dictatorship of the proletariat was established, the actual practice of the Bolshevik Party was far from always in strict conformity with the Leninist principles according to

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which the party should persuade the mass of workers, trust them, and allow them to become convinced of what is correct through their own experience.

The internal changes in the party, the necessity for rapid action, the disintegration of the proletariat (whose ranks were emptied of the most combative elements, while being penetrated by many bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements), the military emergencies, the disastrous economic situation, the hunger and cold that drove the less advanced section of the working-class mass to despair, did not allow these principles to be fully and constantly applied. They are, moreover, not "fetishes" but guides to action. It is essential that they be respected as fully as possible, but absurd to try to "apply" them in any and every situation. The Bolshevik Party rightly considered that the fact that it had driven the bourgeoisie from power in Russia was an event of world importance, and that, consequently, everything must be done to prevent the bourgeoisie and imperialism (then waging armed struggle) from restoring their dictatorship. This was the meaning of Lenin's slogan: "Everything for the Front!"

The advanced elements of the proletariat and of the broad proletarian masses were conscious of the objective necessities of the situation. They participated with extraordinary vigor in the struggles being waged on the military and production fronts, showing trust in the Bolshevik Party, and eventually winning victory in spite of extreme material difficulties. This political victory par excellence proves concretely that the most active elements of the proletariat and the popular masses (whose resistance to the imperialist war had, a few years earlier, brought about the downfall of tsardom) gave active support to the Bolshevik Party, and also that the political line and practice of the party were fundamentally correct.

This fundamental correctness does not mean that no mistakes were made. Once victory had been won over the White and imperialist armies, the mistakes which had been made -- and which were admitted by Lenin when he drew up his critical balance sheet of "war communism" -- entailed not only a worsening of the party's relations with the peasant masses, as has already been explained, but also a falling-off in its

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relations with part of the working class. This unfavorable evolution in relations between the party and the masses led to the political crisis of the winter of 1920-1921.

V. The political crisis of the winter of 1920-1921

The gravity of the political crisis of the winter of 1920-1921 resulted from the conjunction of discontent among a section of the peasantry, who were subjected to requisitioning, with a dramatic worsening of living conditions in the towns. Since the beginning of 1920, inflation had assumed enormous proportions. In April the food rations officially issued to the urban workers (representing that part of the requisitioned produce which did not go to the soldiers of the Red Army) accounted for only 30 to 50 percent of what was needed for survival, which explains the immense role played at that time by the black market.^[19]

On the black market the prices of many products were, as early as April 1920, forty or fifty times as high as the official prices. Subsequently, the currency was devalued still further, and workers more and more frequently received their pay in kind.^[20] This collapse of the currency was one of the factors which contributed to the development of the illusions of "war communism." One aspect of these illusions was, indeed, the identification of the "disappearance of money" with the building of entirely new economic relations leading to the abolition of wage labor.

The extreme shortage of goods condemned the towns people, and also many peasants, to hunger and cold, while the factories were paralyzed by the lack of fuel. This situation gave rise to serious discontent on the part of the petty bourgeoisie and the less advanced elements of the working class, who blamed the Bolshevik Party for their difficulties and refused to accept that these were the result of several years of imperialist war, civil war, and foreign intervention.

The worsening of the economic situation lay behind the

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peasant revolts that developed from the end of 1920 onward and the strikes that broke out in February 1921, in Petrograd, Moscow, and other industrial centers. These strikes were not directed against the Soviet power, but were essentially elementary expressions of the discontent of the workers who were suffering from very inadequate feeding. However, the workers' demands also included some anarchist, SR, or Menshevik slogans. Some of the leaders of these political movements thought, indeed, that the moment had come to launch once more an anti-Bolshevik operation. Their hopes actually collapsed very soon. Thus, in Petrograd, the stoppages of work began on February 24, and continued for two days. On February 26, the Petrograd Soviet and the defense committee headed by Zinoviev started a campaign of explanation. At the same time, measures were taken to improve the food supplies available to the factory workers (this was done, apparently, by "raiding" the Red Army's stocks), and suppress the activities of the SRs and Mensheviks who were trying to subvert the

Soviet power (a leaflet issued by the SRs called for the Constituent Assembly to be convened, while a Menshevik appeal demanded a "fundamental policy change"). The campaign of explanation undertaken by the Bolshevik Party and the Petrograd soviet clarified the situation: on February 28, the strikes in Petrograd ended, the signal for return to work having been given by the Putilov works, that "workers' strong hold."^[21] In the other towns affected, the course of events was similar -- which confirms that the discontent of the striking workers was not general and profound in character, but due essentially to the difficulties of everyday life.

In the countryside, however, a real political crisis developed early in 1921. It affected part of the armed forces, and had serious repercussions a few days after the Petrograd strikes had ended. The discontent which prevailed at that time in the Kronstadt naval base then took concrete form in the holding of a number of general meetings of the sailors and workers of the naval base, which elected a conference of about 300 delegates. On March 2, 1921, this conference elected in its turn a bureau of five members, presided over by Petrichenko, senior clerk on the battleship *Petropavlovsk*. Soon afterward,

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this bureau, having been enlarged to fifteen members, proclaimed itself a Provisional Revolutionary Committee and came out in opposition to the Kronstadt soviet.

Events then followed swiftly. By order of the committee, three Bolshevik leaders were arrested, including the deputy Vasilyev, a genuine revolutionary who had nothing about him of the "bureaucrat" type the committee claimed to be attacking. Pressure was brought to bear on the members of the Bolshevik Party to leave the party, and, in the confused atmosphere that prevailed in Kronstadt, at least one-third of them did this. Some days later, when tension was mounting between the Soviet power and the Revolutionary Committee, several hundred Communists were arrested.^[22]

The program of the leaders of the insurrection was a mixture of various slogans intended to mobilize as wide a degree of support as possible, with the aim of developing a movement that would dislodge the Bolsheviks from power throughout Russia. Certain features of this program were especially significant. It was demanded that the soviets be opened to the SRs and the Mensheviks -- many of whom had entered into arrangements with the counter-revolutionaries, or, where they had come to power locally and temporarily as a result of the retreats which the Red Army had been forced to make during the civil war, had served as "bridges" for the White Guards, whom they were unable to resist even if they had wanted to. The Kronstadt leaders also called for the establishment of "non-party soviets," which was a way of excluding Bolshevik candidates in the event elections should be held in conformity with this demand.

Among the significant features of the Kronstadt program was the demand for abolition of political commissars in the Red Army, though it was this institution which enabled control to be maintained over the ex-tsarist officers in the army. Not surprisingly, some high-ranking officers of the tsarist army served the Kronstadt rebels faithfully, even though they did not, of course, push themselves to the forefront: this was the case with General A. N. Kozlovsky and the officers under his command.^[23]

On the economic plane, the Kronstadt program called, es-

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entially, for freedom of trade and respect for peasant property.

Actually, the content of this program, though significant, was of secondary importance. What was decisive were the social and political forces that backed the Kronstadt movement.

In order to grasp the nature of these forces, we must distinguish between the leaders of the movement and the masses who were behind them. Relatively little is known about the former. We do know, however, that one of them, A. Lamonov, was a former SR Maximalist and, especially, that the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee, S. R. Petrichenko, had belonged to the Bolshevik Party for a few months. He had then left the party and engaged in counter-revolutionary activity, for which he was several times arrested. Later he had tried to join the Whites, but they had rejected his services because he had been a member of the Bolshevik Party.^[24]

As regards the social basis of the movement, it must be said that at the beginning of 1921 the sailors of former times who had been among the strongest supporters of the Bolsheviks during the October days were no longer more than a minority in Kronstadt. The bulk of the forces that supported the Revolutionary Committee consisted of young recruits from the Ukraine, without any political training, who responded readily to the "antiauthoritarian" slogans of the leaders of the Revolutionary Committee. The dominant ideological current among the Kronstadters was, in fact, anarcho-populist, anti-state, and strongly marked by Slavonic nationalism, anti-Semitism, and Orthodox religious feeling. More than once we find among them the "amalgam" propagated by the Whites: "Communist means Jew."^[25]

On the international plane, the Kronstadt movement was fully supported by all the counter-revolutionary tendencies. The actual relations between the Kronstadt leaders and the National Center formed in Paris, mainly by former Cadets, have never been clarified. Some things are certain, however. A few weeks before the revolt, the National Center had drawn up a plan, known as the Secret Memorandum, which assumed that Kronstadt could be used as the base for a new counter-revolutionary onslaught on Petrograd. During the revolt, all

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the forces of this Center, together with the SRs in exile, were mobilized to help it, millions of francs being collected for the purpose in a few days. Finally, when the revolt had been suppressed, eleven of the fifteen members of the Revolutionary Committee (whom the Bolsheviks suspected of being in contact with the National Center and its representatives in Finland) took refuge with counter-revolutionary elements.^[26]

In fact, contrary to the hopes entertained by the leaders of the revolt, it produced hardly any echo in Russia.^[27] In the eyes of the masses at large, the Bolshevik Party, regardless of the mistakes it might have made, was still the only bulwark against restoration of the bourgeois order.

The Bolshevik Party naturally did all it could to stop the revolt from spreading or even from continuing. The location of Kronstadt -- close to Petrograd, on the one hand, and to the counter-revolutionary forces in Finland, on the other -- did not permit protracted "negotiations." It was necessary to crush the revolt before the ice melted. Once the water was free of ice, Kronstadt could be reached by sea by the White and imperialist forces, and this would have meant a direct military threat to Russia's chief city.

After sending an ultimatum calling upon the rebels to surrender, and receiving a negative reply from the Revolutionary Committee, the Red Army took the offensive. On March 17, the main attack was launched, and by early morning of March 18 all resistance had ceased in the allegedly impregnable fortress of Kronstadt. So ended an especially sad episode of the crisis of the winter of 1920-1921 -- an episode which deserves attention from two standpoints.

First, the very fact that the revolt could occur confirms that discontent among a section of the masses, especially the peasants (or those who were of peasant origin, like the young recruits in Kronstadt), had then reached the pitch of explosion in some places, so that some of the peasantry were wide open to the petty bourgeois propaganda of the SRs, Mensheviks, and anarchists, or even of men who were supported de facto by the Cadet party, though they employed ultrarevolutionary language.

Secondly, the absence of any extension of the Kronstadt

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revolt despite the appeals that were issued, shows that in the eyes of the broadest masses, whatever tension there might have been where particular problems were concerned, such as requisitioning, the Bolshevik Party was still the party that had led the revolution and whose capacity for organization had ensured victory in the struggle against the landlords, the capitalists, and imperialism.

The Kronstadt episode led the Bolsheviks to harden their attitude more than ever against the former "Soviet parties," which now seemed to be conniving with the most reactionary political émigrés and with the Anglo-French imperialists (who backed the National Center). It was now more than ever out of the question to allow these parties to take part again in the work of the soviets. Inside the Bolshevik Party itself there was no hesitation regarding the line to be followed, in the given circumstances, toward the revolt. On this point the party showed remarkable unity. In other forms, however, the discontent that had arisen among the masses produced splits in the party and conflicts between different tendencies. Ideological and political struggle had always been part of the life of the Bolshevik Party, but the gravity of the crisis of the winter of 1920-1921 caused the party leadership to alter the conditions governing the conduct of this struggle. In order to understand the implications of the decisions taken on this point by the Tenth Party Congress, and to appreciate the Bolshevik Party's ideological vitality, it is necessary briefly to recall some aspects of the internal struggles that had taken place in the party; and it will be useful to carry our study of these struggles a little beyond the period of the Tenth Congress.

Notes

1. Lenin, *CW*, vol. 28, pp. 341-344. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Speech to the First All-Russia Congress of Land Departments, Poor Peasants' Committees and Communes](#)". -- DJR] [p. 349]
2. A report of this meeting in Petrograd was given by Zinoviev to the Sixth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the proceedings of which are quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution* vol. 2, p. 162. [p. 350]

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 163. [p. 350]
4. *CW*, vol. 28, pp. 192, 193-194. [p. 351]
5. Lenin's speech opening the Eighth Party Congress, March 18, 1919, in *CW*, vol. 29, pp. 143 ff.; quotation on pp. 144-145. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. 352]
6. *CW*, vol. 31, pp. 176-177. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Speech Delivered at the Second All-Russia Conference of Organizers Responsible for Rural Work](#)". -- DJR] [p. 353]
7. Bukharin, *The Economics of the Transformation Period*, p. 159. [p. 354]

8. Quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 173. [p. [354](#)]
9. *Leninsky Sbornik*, vol. 11, p. 369. See also Bukharin, *The Economics of the Transformation Period*, pp. 93 and 216. [p. [354](#)]
10. *CW*, vol. 31, p. 418. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Our Foreign and Domestic Position and the Tasks of the Party](#)". -- DJR] [p. [354](#)]
11. Lenin had noted this discontent in October 1920, but he ascribed it not to the system of requisitioning itself but only to the excesses committed in the way requisitioning was carried out. [p. [354](#)]
12. See the report of the Tenth Party Congress, p. 231, quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 173. [p. [355](#)]
13. *CW*, vol. 31, p. 505. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's [The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets](#). -- DJR] [p. [355](#)]
14. *CW*, vol. 32, p. 133. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Rough Draft of Theses Concerning the Peasants](#)". -- DJR] [p. [356](#)]
15. See Lenin, *CW* (3rd ed.), vol.26, for details regarding these main stages in the transition to the NEP. [p. [356](#)]
16. *CW*, vol. 32, p. 173. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's [Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#). -- DJR] [p. [356](#)]
17. *CW*, vol. 22, pp. 305-319; quotation on p. 307. [p. [359](#)]
18. Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*, p. 53. [p. [359](#)]
19. The inadequacy of wages and rations was often admitted: for example, by the Fourth Trade Union Congress, held in April 1920, and by the Tenth Party Congress (1921). See the reports of these congresses, pp. 119 and 237 respectively; quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 243, n. 2 and 3. [p. [361](#)]
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 260-261. [p. [361](#)]
21. *Pravda o Kronsthadte*, quoted in Anweiler, *Die Rätebewegung*, p. 311. [p. [362](#)]
22. Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921*, p. 186. [p. [363](#)]
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99. On March 2, 1921, Kozlovsky said to the Bolshevik commissar: "Your time is past. Now I shall do what has to be done" (*ibid.*, p. 100). [p. [363](#)]
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95. Avrich mentions some facts about other members of this committee. [p. [364](#)]
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 172-180. [p. [364](#)]
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-125 and 208-209. [p. [365](#)]
27. Only a few anarchist clubs in Moscow and Petrograd distributed leaflets calling for support of the revolt (Anweiler, *Die Rätebewegung*, p. 318). [p. [365](#)]

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2. The ideological and political struggles in the Bolshevik Party before the civil war

The tradition of Bolshevism is a tradition of ideological and political struggle. In 1903, when Bolshevism came into being as a distinct political trend, and one year after the publication of *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin said that it was essential to "hospitably throw open the columns of the Party organ for exchanges of opinion," and that the party must have at its disposal all, absolutely all, the material needed to form an independent judgment. He condemned those who had an exaggeratedly stern and stiff attitude toward so-called "anarchistic individualism," for he considered it preferable for the party's life to be tolerant, "even if it involves a certain departure from tidy patterns of centralism and from absolute obedience to discipline."^[1]

In 1904 Lenin reaffirmed his conviction that a broad exchange of views, and even battles between tendencies, were essential to party life.^[2] The existence of divergent views within the party was inevitable, being an effect of the class struggle, since the party was not an "isolated islet of socialism." It was inevitable that party members should at certain moments fall under the influence of bourgeois ideology: by discussion in the party one could fight to prevent ideological representatives of the bourgeoisie from taking over leadership of the proletarian movement; but in order to do this, one must remain on the terrain of Marxist analysis and not compromise on principles. Once decisions had been adopted, of course, these were obligatory upon everyone, since the party was not a discussion group but an organ of struggle which must be disciplined and obedient to its leading bodies.

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Lenin's line on ideological struggle was considered by the party as a whole as necessary to the functioning of democratic centralism and to respect for discipline in the application of decisions. This line prevailed not only until 1917 but also in the first years following the October Revolution. Discussions within the party were even exceptionally lively in that period, reflecting the magnitude of the class struggle that was going on in the country.

The conflicts that took place on the very eve of October and in 1917-1918 found expression in a number of documents, analysis of which enables us to bring out the chief conceptions that existed in the party at that time and to grasp their essential class content.

I. The ideological and political struggles in the party between February and October 1917

Between February and October, two lines became defined inside the Bolshevik Party. First, before Lenin's return from exile, there was the line of support for the Provisional Government. Whereas Lenin put forward the slogan of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie and refusal to fight under its orders, a section of the Bolshevik leaders gave conditional support to the Provisional Government.

This "defensist" line was maintained, from March 14, 1917 onward, by *Pravda*, which had just been taken over by Kamenev and Stalin. In the first issue of *Pravda* published under the new editorship, Stalin said that "the rights won must be upheld so as to destroy completely the old forces and, in conjunction with the provinces, further advance the Russian revolution."^[3] In the next day's issue, Kamenev expressed an even more clear-cut "defensist" attitude, and on March 16 said that it was necessary to "bring pressure on the Provisional Government to make it declare its consent to start peace negotiations immediately,"^[4] which amounted to adopt-

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ing the Menshevik standpoint of "pushing the bourgeoisie from behind," instead of a consistent Bolshevik line of standing at the head of the masses and ahead of them.

Seven years later, in a speech to a plenum of the Communist group in the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, Stalin referred to this period and admitted his mistake, but tried to justify it by showing that he had not been alone in the attitude he had taken up. "The Party (its majority)," he said, "adopted the policy of pressure on the Provisional Government through the Soviets on the question of peace and did not venture to step forward at once from the old slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to the new slogan of power to the Soviets."^[5]

Lenin's arrival on April 3, 1917, enabled the revolutionary line he advocated gradually to become victorious, but this did not happen without resistance. Kamenev still declared, the day after the publication of Lenin's "April Theses," which looked toward proletarian revolution: "In so far as concerns Lenin's general scheme, it appears to us unacceptable, since it starts from the assumption that the bourgeois revolution is finished and counts on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a socialist revolution."^[6]

Kamenev soon found himself isolated, with Stalin and Zinoviev rallying to Lenin's theses. Even so, the triumph of the revolutionary line was not yet complete. Thus, in September 1917, there was a majority in the Central Committee in favor of Bolshevik participation in a "democratic conference" formed independently of the soviets, whereas Lenin had put forward the slogan: "All Power to the Soviets." Only Lenin's threat to resign from the Central Committee induced the latter to revoke its decision.

Soon afterward, Lenin called on the Central Committee to prepare for insurrection. He was supported by a majority of 10 to the minority consisting of Zinoviev and Kamenev. These two waged a public campaign against Lenin's revolutionary line. At the time, Stalin -- who was, seven years later, to present these divergences as a mere matter of "different shades of opinion" -- pronounced the following judgment:

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"There are two policies: one is heading towards the victory of the revolution and looks to Europe; the other has no faith in the revolution and counts on being only an opposition."^[7]

Zinoviev and Kamenev were not expelled from the party, as Lenin had demanded. By a majority of 5 to 3 the Central Committee simply decided (on October 20) to accept their resignation. In practice, even this resignation did not take effect: immediately after the insurrection, Zinoviev and Kamenev were again participating in the work of the Central Committee and entrusted with important political responsibilities.

After October, the struggle between the two lines continued, of course, but the concrete problems it involved were different.

II. The struggles over the problem of a "coalition government"

Among the questions that gave rise to serious divergences was, as we have seen, that of forming a "coalition government." It arose in this way. After the formation, in the evening of the day of the insurrection, of a homogeneous Bolshevik government, the latter came under heavy pressure from the SRs and Mensheviks, who demanded that a "coalition government"

be formed, to be made up of all the parties represented in the soviets. The Central Committee agreed to enter into negotiations with the SRs and Mensheviks, but, whereas for Lenin these negotiations were merely a tactical operation (as he put it: "a diplomatic move to distract attention from operations of war"^[8]), for Kamenev and Zinoviev they were really intended to lead to the formation of a coalition government.

A fresh crisis broke out in the party leadership when Lenin proposed on November 1, 1917, to call off these talks. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Rykov opposed this move, which was nevertheless approved by the Central Committee. Kamenev

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and Rykov, who had been the Bolshevik Party's delegates for the negotiations, went so far as to violate the decision by failing to act in accordance with it.

During the winter of 1917-1918 and the spring of 1918, an extremely profound crisis occurred. Not only did it cause divergences in the Central Committee and in some of the party organizations, it developed on a much wider scale. The period saw the formation of the group of "left Communists." The ideological struggle that broke out at this time was concerned principally with the question of the peace of Brest-Litovsk and with the conception of "state capitalism."

III. The struggles in the Bolshevik Party and the peace of Brest-Litovsk

The crisis provoked by the peace negotiations held at Brest-Litovsk, and then by the treaty itself, opened on January 5, 1918, when, by decision of the Central Committee, peace negotiations were begun with German imperialism. It became apparent that the latter would sign a peace treaty with the Soviet power only if immense territories were ceded to it: Poland, Lithuania, Byelorussia, and the half of Latvia occupied by the German army.

Lenin declared for acceptance of these conditions and for the immediate conclusion of a treaty. He was aware of the country's desire for peace. He knew, too, that the disorganized state of the armed forces was such that they could not resist a renewed German offensive. Trotsky was for trying a delaying tactic ("neither peace nor war"). Bukharin favored "revolutionary war" (at a time when no force existed to wage such a war), but finding himself isolated, he supported Trotsky's line, so that Lenin was placed in a minority in the Central Committee (9 votes were cast for Trotsky's line and only 7 for Lenin's).

Following this decision by the Central Committee, the German army resumed its offensive on all fronts and penetrated deeply into Soviet territory. On January 17, Lenin put

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forward his proposal once more and was again defeated (Trotsky and Bukharin claimed that the German offensive would have the effect on the international labor movement of arousing a revolutionary wave of support for the Soviet power), this time by 6 votes to 5.

The German army advanced so rapidly that on January 18 the Central Committee held another meeting, and now Trotsky came round to Lenin's view, which was approved by the central committee -- though only by 7 to 5.

The position maintained for several days by the majority of the members of the CC -- a position which, while outwardly "left," was really nationalist and petty bourgeois -- and the defeats suffered during that period meant that Soviet Russia had now to accept additional demands from German imperialism. To the territories already listed for annexation were added the Ukraine, Livonia, and Estonia. As a result, in the area it controlled, the Soviet power would lose 26 percent of its population, 27 percent of the cultivated land, and 75 per cent of the capacity for producing iron and steel.

Lenin called for the peace treaty to be signed without further discussion. The Central Committee hesitated. Stalin proposed that the German demands be not accepted purely and simply, but that negotiations be reopened. However, Lenin's proposal was adopted by 7 votes to 4.^[9]

On March 3, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was formally signed -- but the weeks which had passed since the negotiations began showed how deeply the party was divided. Basically, this division counterposed those who agreed with Lenin that maintenance of a proletarian power in Russia was vital for the future of the world revolutionary movement to those who thought it would be better for this power to disappear rather than survive at the price of concessions they considered unacceptable. The signing of the treaty did not put an end to the crisis which had begun in the party, as was shown by the declarations issued by various regional party organizations (which at that time still expressed their disagreements publicly).

After the Central Committee's decision to sign the treaty,

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the party bureau of the Moscow region voted a resolution declaring that it would no longer recognize the authority of the CC until an extraordinary party congress had been held and a new CC elected.

The existing Central Committee formally acknowledged the right of those who did not agree with the decision it had taken to express their view. Commenting on the resolution of the Moscow regional bureau, Lenin wrote: "It is quite natural that comrades who sharply disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace should sharply condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable."^[10]

The day after the actual signing of the treaty, on March 4, 1918, the Petrograd party committee brought out the first issue of a daily paper entitled *Kommunist* -- the organ of the "left Communists," who formed an opposition moving openly to ward a split and the formation of a new party.

IV. The "left Communists" and state capitalism

After Brest-Litovsk, the "left Communists" directed their attacks increasingly not so much against the line on foreign policy and military problems, as against the concessions which the party leadership thought it necessary to make to that part of the bourgeoisie which agreed to collaborate with the Soviet power. These attacks reflected the pressure brought to bear on the party by a part of the working class wishing to retain the existing forms of organization of the factory committees and of "workers' control," and unwilling to let posts of responsibility or leadership be given to capitalists and bourgeois technicians, engineers, and administrators, in

the factories and in the various organs of the VSNKh.

At this time, as we have seen, the majority of the Central

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Committee decided to change the Soviet power's relations with a section of the bourgeoisie whose skill was considered indispensable for the management and administration of the state-owned factories and for coordinating economic activities. The former capitalist administration of the enterprises was thus partly maintained or reestablished, and concessions were granted in the matter of salaries to the bourgeois specialists and technicians, so as to ensure their collaboration. The principle of one-man management of enterprises was adopted, and it was decided to introduce a system of bonuses, under trade union control, in order to bring about an increase in the productivity of labor.

The "left Communists" denounced these measures. In the first issue of *Kommunist* they attacked "a labour policy designed to implant discipline among the workers under the flag of 'self-discipline,' the introduction of labour service for workers, piece rates, and the lengthening of the working day." According to *Kommunist*, "the introduction of labour discipline in connection with the restoration of capitalist management of industry cannot really increase the productivity of labour." It would only "diminish the class initiative, activity and organisation of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class. It will arouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat. In order to introduce this system in the face of the hatred prevailing at present among the proletariat against the 'capitalist saboteurs,' the Communist Party would have to rely on the petty-bourgeoisie as against the workers." Consequently, it would "ruin itself as the party of the proletariat."

The same issue of *Kommunist* denounced "bureaucratic centralisation, the rule of various commissars, the loss of independence for local soviets, and in practice the rejection of the type of state-commune administered from below." Bukharin recalled that Lenin had written in *The State and Revolution* that "each cook should learn to manage the State," and added: "But what happened when each cook had a commissar appointed to order him about?"

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The second issue of *Kommunist* carried an article by another member of the "left Communist" group, Osinsky, who wrote:

We stand for the construction of the proletarian society by the class creativity of the workers themselves, not by the ukases of the captains of industry . . . If the proletariat itself does not know how to create the necessary prerequisites for the socialist organisation of labour, no one can do this for it and no one can compel it to do this. The stick, if raised against the workers, will find itself in the hands of a social force which is either under the influence of another social class or is in the hands of the soviet power; but the soviet power will then be forced to seek support against the proletariat from another class (e.g., the peasantry) and by this it will destroy itself as the dictatorship of the proletariat. Socialism and socialist organisation will be set up by the proletariat itself, or they will not be set up at all: something else will be set up -- state capitalism.^[1]

Lenin answered these statements by showing that, at the actual stage of the Russian Revolution at that time, it was not a question of "building socialism," nor, therefore, of undertaking to change in depth the relations of production, but of coping as expeditiously as possible with the growing disorganization of the economy. It was in order to explain this immediate task that Lenin put forward the notion of "state capitalism under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Seventh Party Congress, held at the beginning of March 1918, condemned the line of

the "left Communists" and declared in favor of the measures proposed by Lenin. After this congress, the organizational forces which until then had been at the disposal of the "left Communists" in the party collapsed very quickly -- partly as a result of administrative measures, transfers of cadres, and so on. *Kommunist* ceased to appear every day. Its production was shifted to Moscow, where a few more numbers appeared; but the "left Communists" lost the majority they had held in that city, and also in the Ural region. They gave up the idea of founding a new Communist party, and decided to remain in the Bolshevik Party.

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A year later Lenin drew a positive conclusion from this crisis, saying: "The struggle that flared up in our Party during the past year was extremely useful. It gave rise to numerous sharp collisions, but there are no struggles without sharp collisions."^[12] By then the former "left Communists" had resumed their place in the party, and some were again holding leading positions.

The crisis experienced by the Bolshevik Party in early 1918 showed the capacity it then possessed for allowing an open ideological struggle to develop within it. The crisis also showed the coming together of ultra-left and petty bourgeois attitudes, in particular where problems of peace and war were concerned, with attitudes which undoubtedly reflected the aspirations of part of the party's working-class base. It was certainly no accident that it was in Moscow, Petrograd, and the Ural region -- that is, in the major industrial centers -- that the "left Communists" found their main support.

By the end of the spring of 1918, the group of "left Communists" had disappeared as such, but many elements of its political line -- for example, its opposition to administrative centralism, which it sought to replace by greater initiative on the part of the working people, both in the soviets and in the workplaces -- were to reappear again and again, giving rise to new oppositions. I shall return to this point.

In any case, the problems raised by the "platform" of the "left Communists" sank into the background when the principal contradiction shifted; the outbreak of the White revolt, backed by imperialist intervention, brought to the forefront the problems of armed struggle.

Before proceeding to analyze the period that opened then, I must emphasize once more the scale of the struggles that Lenin had to carry on, before and after October 1917, in order to win victory for his ideas. This needs emphasis because the extensiveness of the discussions and disputes, and the frequency with which Lenin was put in a minority, show that, contrary to what is alleged in the "official history" of Bolshevism, open ideological and political conflicts were particularly intense at this time. Emphasis is also called for because

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these conflicts show the pressure to which the Bolshevik Party was subjected by the class contradictions developing in Russian society as a whole.

The foregoing also shows -- and this is important for understanding what was to happen after Lenin's death -- that during the decisive period between February 1917 and June 1918 no group of leaders appeared in the Central Committee who firmly and constantly upheld the same views as Lenin -- at best, some of them rallied more easily or more quickly than others to his views.

While there was no group of leaders of whom it can be said that they took up more or less regularly the same attitude as Lenin, it is, however, possible to identify two successive

tendencies which had serious divergences with Lenin.

One of these was a "rightist" trend which manifested itself especially between February and December 1917. It included not only Kamenev and Zinoviev, but also, sometimes, Stalin -- that is, the men who were to form the leading nucleus of the party immediately after Lenin's death, what has been called the *troika*, the "triumvirate," that succeeded him.

The other tendency developed mainly from January 1918 onward. It included Trotsky, Bukharin, and also Stalin (who supported Lenin on the need to conclude the treaty of Brest Litovsk only at the last moment). This was, above all, the trend of the "left Communists." It commanded larger forces than the previous one, and lasted longer. Positions close to those of this tendency were to be advocated subsequently by various other oppositions.

With Soviet Russia's entry into a period of armed struggle against White revolt and foreign intervention, however, many problems presented themselves in new forms. We must now consider the principal aspects of the ideological struggles which developed in the Bolshevik Party during the civil war period.

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Notes

1. *CW*, vol. 7, pp. 115-116. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Letter to Iskra](#)". -- DJR] [p. [368](#)]
2. See, e.g., [One Step Forward, Two Steps Back](#), in *CW*, vol. 7, pp. 203 ff. [p. [368](#)]
3. Stalin's article in *Pravda* of March 14, 1917: "[The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies](#)" (Stalin, *Works*, English edition, vol. 3, p. 1). See also Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 85-86. [p. [369](#)]
4. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 3, p. 8. [p. [369](#)]
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 348. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[Trotskyism or Leninism?](#)". -- DJR] The idea that it would have been correct to "go against the tide" was not even mentioned. [p. [370](#)]
6. Quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 91. [p. [370](#)]
7. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 3, p. 407. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[Speech at a Meeting of the Central Committee](#)". -- DJR] [p. [371](#)]
8. Central Committee minutes, published in 1929, quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 118. [p. [371](#)]
9. It was characteristic of the petty bourgeois lack of realism of the "left Communists," whose chief representative at that time was Bukharin, that they refused, in the event of hostilities being resumed, to accept help from Russia's former "allies," France and Britain, whereas Lenin was ready to accept "potatoes and munitions from the hands of the imperialist bandits." [p. [373](#)]
10. *CW*, vol. 27, p. 68. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Strange and Monstrous](#)". -- DJR] [p. [374](#)]
11. Quoted in Brinton, *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*, pp. 38-39. [p. [376](#)]
12. *CW*, vol. 29, p. 74. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[The Achievements and Difficulties of the Soviet Government](#)". -- DJR] [p. [377](#)]

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3. The ideological and political struggles during "war communism"

During most of the "war communism" period, ideological and political struggles were less acute than in previous years, the party's attention and efforts being mainly concentrated on problems of defense. The Bolshevik Party was, on the whole, relatively united in its views on these problems, so that they did not give rise to major disputes, especially since those members who differed from the majority usually came into line quickly. There were, however, some acts of indiscipline amounting to a sort of "undeclared opposition" to the policy decided on by the congresses and the Central Committee, and some of the questions raised by the "left Communists" reappeared during this period. Most important, new divisions appeared from 1920 onward, when victory drew near and "post war" problems had to be faced. These new divisions became noticeable at the Ninth Party Congress, and more plainly still toward the end of 1920. Let us first, though, consider the period preceding that year.

1. The oppositions of 1918 and 1919

Even before the White revolt broke out, opposition to Lenin's policy on nationalities made itself apparent. It was not an open opposition, but it became manifest in the party's practical activity. Although this opposition had no immediate effects, it is important to recall it for it reasserted itself, with serious consequences, as soon as the civil war was over.

One of the first expressions of this trend occurred in April 1918, when a Soviet government for the Ukraine was formed

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under the leadership the Bolshevik N. A. Skrypnik. Although, on April 3, 1918, Lenin sent a message of support to the Ukrainian Soviet government, expressing his "enthusiastic solidarity with the heroic struggle being waged by the working and exploited people of the Ukraine, who now constitute one of the vanguard detachments of the world social revolution," Stalin, who was at that time People's Commissar for Nationalities, opposed the formation of this Soviet government of a Ukraine independent of Russia. Stalin's attitude produced the following reaction from Skrypnik: "We must protest in the strongest possible way against the statement of Commissar Stalin. We must declare that the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Soviet base their actions, not on the attitude of any Commissar of the Russian Federation, but on the will of the toiling masses of the Ukraine, as expressed in the decree of the Second All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets. Declarations like that of Commissar Stalin would destroy the Soviet regime in the Ukraine . . . They are direct assistance to the enemies of the Ukrainian toiling masses."□

Stalin's hostility to the formation of a Soviet republic which was not included within the Russian Soviet Republic did not remain an isolated episode. This was a manifestation of a

political conception that was to be reaffirmed on numerous occasions, and subsequently to be supported by the Russian bourgeoisie in emigration and by elements of this class in the Soviet state and the Bolshevik Party. It surfaced again in May 1918, for example, when Stalin sent to Stepan Shaumyan, the Soviet representative in Daghestan, where counter-revolutionary armed bands were then operating, instructions which made no distinction between the counter-revolutionary leaders and the peasant masses whom they had misled. These instructions were to act without hesitation and "make examples by reducing to ashes a certain number of villages."^[2]

(a) The "military opposition"

After the summer of 1918, another opposition developed which had a "left-wing" look about it, and was known as the

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"military opposition." Not many documents have been published regarding this tendency, although it existed relatively openly and included among its avowed supporters such men as Voroshilov, E. N. Yaroslavsky, A. Z. Kamensky and S. Milin, some of whom were at that time -- and in many cases remained -- very close to Stalin.^[3]

One of the points of the program of the "military opposition" was refusal to accept the recruitment of military specialists to the Red Army. Stalin, though he made no public declaration favorable to the "military opposition," took decisions in 1918 on the Tsaritsyn front, where he was in charge politically, which corresponded to the line of this group, removing a number of officers from their posts in violation of the instructions of the Revolutionary War Council of the Republic and those of the CEC and the CC. As a result of these measures, Stalin was eventually himself removed from his position on the Revolutionary War Council of the Southern Front, while S. N. Sytin, whom Stalin had wanted to deprive of his command, was confirmed in his appointment. It is known, too, that Lenin spoke out severely at the Eighth Party Congress (in an unpublished speech) against decisions of the Revolutionary War Council of the Tenth Army, taken at the instigation of the "military opposition," which had resulted in serious losses by the Red forces.^[4]

By and large, however, this opposition played only a comparatively minor role. Its importance was mainly symptomatic. The way it functioned shows that at that time there were, within the party apparatus, elements which were sufficiently well-organized to be able to oppose, for a certain period at least, the decisions of the CC and the Soviet government.

(b) The Eighth Congress and the new party program

During the preparations for the Eighth Congress some parts of the earlier "platform" of the "left Communists" continued to be defended by a small number of members who had belonged to that group. Among them was V. Smirnov.^[5]

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Other well-known Bolsheviks, such as Osinsky and Sapronov, defended similar positions.

At the Eighth Party Congress (March 18-23, 1919), Osinsky demanded that workers be brought on to the Central Committee in sufficient numbers to "proletarianize" it: four years

later, Lenin was to make a similar proposal. At the same congress, Saprnov and Osinsky called for the soviets to function more democratically, instead of being reduced to the role of mere organs of ratification ("rubber stamps"). These views were rejected by the congress which declared, on the contrary, for a high degree of administrative centralization. This was the congress which set up the Politburo, the Orgburo, and the Central Committee secretariat.

The Eighth Congress adopted a new party program, in which Point 5 of the economic section read:

The organised apparatus of social production must primarily depend upon the trade unions . . . Inasmuch as the trade unions are already (as specified in the laws of the Soviet Republic and as realised in practice) participants in all the local and central organs administering industry, they must proceed to the practical concentration into their own hands of the work of administration in the whole economic life of the country, making this their unified economic aim . . . The participation of the trade unions in the conduct of economic life, and the involvement by them of the broad masses of the people in this work, would appear at the same time to be our chief aid in the campaign against the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet Power.^[6]

Actually, this Point 5 had no concrete effect: managers of enterprises were unwilling to allow the trade unions to interfere in management at the very moment when the party was insisting on these managers taking personal responsibility. The adoption of Point 5 seems to have been mainly an echo of the discontent which existed at that time in part of the working class regarding the increasing role played by the bourgeois technicians, engineers, and administrators. The principle set forth in Point 5 was later, moreover, to be viewed as reflecting a "syndicalist distortion": it was to be the point of departure in a conflict between the majority of the Central Committee and

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one of the new oppositions, which demanded that this section of the party program be honored.

II. The year 1920 and the party crisis

It was in 1920, mainly from the time of the Ninth Party Congress (March 29-April 5), that an important political crisis broke out, a crisis that continued, growing more serious and assuming new aspects, until the Tenth Congress. March 1920 saw the appearance of a new "left" opposition in the group calling itself "Democratic Centralism." The composition of this group had little in common with that of the "left Communists," though Osinsky, Smirnov, and Saprnov were included. The "Democratic Centralism" group denounced what they saw as excessive centralization and abuse of authoritarian methods. In 1920-1921 they intervened actively in the discussion in which Trotsky and Bukharin maintained positions differing from those of Lenin, who opposed Trotsky's plan for complete subjection of the trade unions to the state machine.

(a) The position of Trotsky and Bukharin in 1920-1921

At the moment of the Ninth Congress, the majority of party members were still under the influence of the conceptions of "war communism"; they favored the adoption of measures for the "militarization of labor" and strict subordination of the trade unions to the administrative apparatus of the state. The measures in question did not, however, have the same significance or implications for all the different tendencies which existed in the Bolshevik Party and which

were generally represented even in the party leadership. For some, the measures taken at this time were essentially conjunctural, whereas others saw in them decisions of "principle" which should be adhered to even after the war. These divergences gave rise to conflicts which lasted until the Tenth Congress.

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In 1920 Trotsky was one of the "theoreticians" most resolutely in favor of "militarizing" labor and the trade unions. He denied that the measures discussed by the Ninth Congress were only circumstantial and provisional in character. He saw in them, on the contrary, the expression of lasting needs which pointed in the direction of transforming the trade unions into state organs strictly subordinate to the government, with their leaders appointed by the government and the party. Addressing the Ninth Congress, Trotsky said that "the mass of the workers must be bound to their jobs, made liable to transfer, told what to do, ordered about." "Before it disappears," he declared, "state compulsion will, in the period of transition, reach its highest degree of intensity in the organisation of labour." In a pamphlet written for the congress, he urged that "planned, systematic, persistent and stern struggle be waged against desertion from labour, in particular by the publication of black lists of labour-deserters, the formation of penal battalions made up of these deserters, and, finally, their confinement in concentration camps."^[7] At the same congress, Trotsky insisted that the "militarisation [of labor] is unthinkable without the militarisation of the trade unions as such, without the establishment of a regime in which every worker feels himself a soldier of labour who cannot dispose of himself freely; if the order is given to transfer him, he must carry it out; if he does not carry it out he will be a deserter who is punished. Who looks after this? The trade union. It creates the new regime. This is the militarisation of the working class."^[8] Radek concluded a speech to the congress with an appeal to organized labor "to overcome the bourgeois prejudice of 'freedom of labour' so dear to the hearts of Mensheviks and compromisers of every kind."^[9] He was, however, the only speaker to use such expressions.

The Ninth Congress did not adopt the line advocated by Trotsky and Radek. It refused to see in coercion and militarization of the workers the supreme form of socialist organization of labor, and declared that militarization of labor could be justified only by war conditions. Point 14 of the resolution on "The present tasks of economic construction" said that "the

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employment of entire labour armies, retaining their military organisation, can be justified only in so far as this is necessary in order to keep the army as a whole in being for military purposes."^[10]

The congress thus declined to follow Trotsky in his idea of the militarization of labor and of the trade unions as measures required for the transition from capitalism to socialism. It even adopted one of the proposals of the "Democratic Centralism" group, for the setting up of a control commission charged with publicizing abuses in the use of coercion, "without regard to the position or function of the persons so incriminated." This was actually a mere sop to the demands of the group: the commission seems never to have functioned.

Throughout 1920 and early 1921, Trotsky continued to advocate the same ideas, coming increasingly into conflict with the different ideas held by Lenin. Addressing the Third All-Russia Congress of Trade Unions, Trotsky even offered a sort of apologia for forced labor, asking, for example: "Is it true that compulsory labour is always unproductive? . . . This is the most wretched and miserable liberal prejudice: chattel slavery too was productive . . . Compulsory slave labour . . . was in its time a progressive phenomenon."^[11]

By this retrospective apologia for slavery, Trotsky claimed to show that resort to militarization of labor could be justified throughout an entire historical period -- provided it was decided upon by the Bolshevik Party, the instrument of the proletarian dictatorship. As an advocate of state compulsion, Trotsky opposed those who wanted to allow greater independence to the trade unions, in which they saw one of the forms of expression of proletarian democracy. It is not unjustified to anticipate events at this point by quoting a passage from one of Trotsky's speeches at the Tenth Party Congress (in which, rather than attack Lenin's line, he took the Workers' Opposition as his target):

They have come out with dangerous slogans. They have made a fetish of democratic principles. They have placed the workers' right to elect representatives above the Party. As if the Party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictator-

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ship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers' democracy . . . The Party is obliged to maintain its dictatorship . . . regardless of temporary vacillations even in the working class . . . The dictatorship does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principle of a workers' democracy.^[12]

The idea of an "infallible" party, situated outside the class struggle and by its mere existence guaranteeing the perpetuation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, was at that time common to Trotsky and Bukharin -- hence the latter's idea of "compulsory self-discipline."^[13]

According to Bukharin, the proletariat imposes discipline "on itself" through the party and the state. He represented the party as both "identical" with the proletariat and at the same time "superior" to it, which in his view justified the coercion exercised by the party upon the mass of the workers, this coercion being identified with "self-discipline." Bukharin argued along the same lines regarding state power, its various organs, and the authority of the technicians appointed by the state.

To a large extent, it will be seen, the theses of Trotsky and Bukharin were rooted in the idea of the infallibility of the party, of its superiority, "by its very nature," in relation to the masses, of the "guaranteed permanence" of its proletarian character and that of the state which it leads, whatever the party's ideological and political practices may be.

The theses of Trotsky and Bukharin implied also that the party had been assigned a new role: no longer was it a vanguard with the task of guiding the masses, while remaining alert to their initiatives and their criticisms -- it now had the role of controlling and coercing the masses.

It was in his book *The Economics of the Transformation Period* that Bukharin developed in a systematic way the non-dialectical conceptions on which he claimed to base his political views. Now the Bukharin who in 1918 had opposed the appointment in each enterprise of a single manager, personally responsible for the way it was run, saw in the establishment of one-man management "a form of proletarian administration of industry, compressed and consolidated", and

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for him "the militarisation of the population . . . constitutes a method of self-organisation of the working class and organisation of the peasantry by the working class" -- so that, in certain circumstances, the dictatorship of the proletariat can take the form of "a military-proletarian dictatorship."^[14]

Furthermore, Bukharin saw in the distribution of rations in kind, instead of wages in money form, the disappearance of wage labor, and this, for him, justified the conscription of labor. He considered that during the period of transition the monetary system would collapse, and, with it, the commodity system in general, this being made manifest through devaluation of the currency.^[15]

(b) The theses of the Workers' Opposition^[16]

Whereas Trotsky was expressing support for extremely accentuated centralization and militarization, a different tendency was developing in the party. This tendency extended the ideas of the former "Democratic Centralism" group which, enlarging its membership through the entry of party members like Shlyapnikov and Alexandra Kollontai, who had not belonged to "Democratic Centralism," now took its stand on Point 5 of the economic section of the program adopted in 1919 by the Eighth Party Congress. It denounced the development of authoritarian practices in the party and in the state machine, and also the ascendancy of many bourgeois elements.

Workers' Opposition advocated a radical alteration in the party line -- handing over the management of industry to the trade unions. (The expression "trade unionization of the state" was used to describe this policy.) The Workers' Opposition wanted the factory committees to play a big role, and it also called for a much more egalitarian policy on wages.^[17]

As Lenin saw it, the theses of the Workers' Opposition reflected a "trade-unionist" (that is, a "syndicalist-economist") outlook alien to Marxism, which ignored the leading role of the party of the proletariat.

The theses of the Workers' Opposition were widely dis-

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cussed in January and February 1921. They were published in *Pravda* on January 25, and circulated in pamphlet form by their supporters. On the eve of the Tenth Congress (March 8-16, 1921), the Workers' Opposition possessed seemingly firm footholds in the party organizations in a number of industrial areas -- Moscow, the Donets Basin, etc. -- but it was a minority in the party as a whole, and poorly represented at the congress.

(c) Lenin's fight against the ideas of Trotsky and Bukharin

During the months leading up to the Tenth Party Congress, a huge political battle was waged. One of the first episodes in this battle took place on November 8-9, 1920, at meetings of the Bolshevik faction at the Fifth Trade Union Conference and in the Central Committee. Trotsky said that it was necessary to continue applying the measure that had been taken during the civil war, and even to extend them, regardless of the fact that they had been emergency measures. He defended the view that the Soviet state should be able to remove from their posts, by a simple decision from "above," those trade-union leaders whose ideas on problems of discipline and wages differed from the ideas of the majority in the Central Committee. He thus declared in favor of "statization of the trade unions," aimed at turning the latter into instruments for increasing production and the productivity of labor. He wished to see reasserted, even in the new conditions that were emerging at the end of 1920, the right to replace any trade-union leaders who did not agree that the task of the trade unions was to serve production. On November 8, 1920, Trotsky clashed with Lenin, who recalled that the

measures adopted by the Ninth Congress had been exceptional in character and that the new features of the situation, which was no longer dominated by war emergencies, must be taken into account. Lenin's view carried the day by a narrow margin. By eight votes to six, Trotsky's view was defeated and Lenin's resolution adopted. This resolution de-

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clared that "a gradual but steady transition must be effected from urgency procedures to a more even distribution of forces," and that it was necessary to "extend to the entire trade union movement those methods of the broader application of democracy, the promotion of initiative, participation in the management of industry, the development of emulation, and so forth . . ."
[\[18\]](#)

The Central Committee adopted a resolution directed against the positions supported by Trotsky. This condemned "the degeneration of centralisation and the militarising of labour into bureaucracy, arrogance, petty functionarism and pestering interference in the trade unions." A commission was set up to study relations between the party and the trade unions, with Zinoviev as rapporteur.[\[19\]](#)

The divergences in the Central Committee reached such a pitch that it was decided, at the beginning of December 1920, to open a broad public discussion. The entire party leadership -- Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, Stalin, Shlyapnikov, and many others -- took part in the discussion.

Important episodes in the political battle included two meetings held in December 1920. On December 24, Trotsky spoke to a gigantic gathering of trade unionists and delegates to the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Six days later, a meeting took place at which several party leaders spoke, including Lenin, Zinoviev, Trotsky, Bukharin, and Shlyapnikov: the speeches were published in 1921 under -- the title *The Role of the Trade Unions in Production*. A week after this second great meeting, Zinoviev addressed another gathering in Petrograd.[\[20\]](#) Throughout January 1921, *Pravda* published nearly every day an article about the problems of militarizing labor and "statizing" the trade unions.

Gradually, Lenin's arguments (which were supported in this discussion by Zinoviev and Stalin), together with the evolution of the objective situation itself, weakened the position of the group represented by eight members of the Central Committee (Trotsky, Bukharin, Andreyev, Dzerzhinsky, Krestinsky, Preobrazhensky, Rakovsky, and Serebryakov). They found themselves no longer supported by more than a dwindling minority, while the Workers' Opposition took up attitudes

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which were radically opposed to Trotsky's -- but which were not in accordance with Lenin's views, either.

The battle of the winter of 1920-1921 provided the occasion for Lenin to denounce the dogmatic stereotypes which Trotsky and Bukharin were employing to "justify" their positions. Lenin thus broke openly with a problematic which was not merely that of Trotsky and Bukharin, but which had implicitly also been that of nearly the entire party, namely, the problematic which identified the Soviet state with a "workers' state."

In December 1920, without as yet carrying through this break to completion, and without using the formulations he was to produce later, Lenin set forth a certain number of basic propositions. The most important of these criticized the one-sided character of the theses of

Trotsky and Bukharin, which "reduced" the Soviet state to a "workers' state", whereas the real nature of the Soviet state was extremely complex.^[21]

The nature of this state was such as to oblige the workers to have organizations of their own which were sufficiently independent of the party in power to be able to "protect the workers from their state."^[22] About a year later, Lenin returned to this problem, when, on January 12, 1922, he put before the Central Committee a resolution (which was adopted unanimously) on "The role and functions of the trade unions under the New Economic Policy."^[23] The resolution pointed out that there could be an "antagonism of interest" between the working class and the management of Soviet state enterprises, and that "strike struggle" might be justified by the necessity facing the workers of combating bureaucratic distortions and survivals from the capitalist past.^[24]

Lenin's fight against the line of Trotsky and Bukharin (and of some other leaders of the Bolshevik Party) is of substantial importance. It shows that the divergences between Lenin and those two members of the Political Bureau were based on what he called "our different *approach* to the mass, the different way of winning it over and *keeping in touch* with it."^[25]

The discussion brought to light divergences that went even deeper, affecting, at bottom, the whole question of what was meant by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Trotsky and

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Bukharin conceived the Soviet state in a mistakenly abstract way, as being, so to speak, the "pure expression" of proletarian dictatorship, whereas, Lenin sought to elucidate the *dual nature* of the Soviet state, a "workers' state" insofar as it was led by a proletarian party (and insofar as this party remained proletarian), yet also a "bourgeois or petty-bourgeois state" by virtue of a number of its features -- its dependence on bourgeois administrators, technicians, and specialists, and the political relations that largely prevailed in the work of its administrative organs. Lenin did not shrink from adding that the "workers' state," in the true sense, was "an ideal we shall achieve in 15 or 20 years' time, and I am not sure that we shall have achieved it by then"^[26] -- the prospect of achieving it being dependent, of course, on the disappearance of those features which made it impossible to call the Soviet state of 1921 a workers' state.

This discussion gave Lenin the opportunity to recall that the fundamental problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat is that of the struggle to consolidate proletarian power -- and, therefore, the struggle to win the masses -- and not, as Trotsky maintained, the struggle for production. In his pamphlet *Once Again on the Trade Unions*, Lenin made this observation, the significance of which transcends by far the limits of the particular polemic of that period: "Trotsky and Bukharin make as though they are concerned for the growth of production, whereas we have nothing but formal democracy in mind. This picture is wrong, because the *only* formulation of the issue (which the Marxist standpoint *allows*) is: without a correct political approach to the matter the given class will be unable to stay on top, *and, consequently*, will be incapable of solving its *production problem* either."^[27]

Notes

1. This telegram was sent to the Soviet government by N. A. Skrypnik, head of the Soviet government of the Ukraine, on April 6, 1918. It was mentioned by the old Bolshevik A. V. Snegov during

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- a discussion organized by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism on June 26-28, 1966, and is quoted in Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 16. [p. 381]
2. Reproduced in *Pravda*, September 20, 1963. [p. 381]
 3. D. Yu. Zorina wrote, a few years ago, an article which has remained unpublished, "On the Problem of the Military Opposition." See Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p. 15. [p. 382]
 4. See Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, pp. 14-16, n. 26-28. [p. 382]
 5. Smirnov and other former "left Communists" were among the accused in the trials of 1936-1937 -- alongside others who in 1918-1920 were among the chief opponents of the views advocated by that group. [p. 382]
 6. *K.P.S.S. v Rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. I, p. 422 (translated in appendix to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, p. 447). [p. 383]
 7. Trotsky, *Sochineniya*, vol. 15, pp. 126, 132, 138. [p. 385]
 8. Report of the Ninth Party Congress, 1934 ed., p. 101; quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, pp. 214-215. [p. 385]
 9. This part of Radek's speech was published in *Izvestiya* of April 2, 1920. It is not without interest to note (as does Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 215) that Radek's speech was not included in the official report of the congress, on the pretext that it would be published as a separate pamphlet (see congress report, p. 277). Actually, no such pamphlet ever saw the light. [p. 385]
 10. *K.P.S.S. v Rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. I, pp. 487-488. [p. 386]
 11. Congress report, published in Moscow in 1920, pp. 84-97; quoted in Brinton, *The Bolsheviks & Workers' Control*, p. 64. [p. 386]
 12. Quoted in the footnotes of Kollontai, *The Workers' Opposition*. [p. 387]
 13. Bukharin, *Economics of the Transformation Period*, p. 156. [p. 387]
 14. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129. [p. 388]
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 146. [p. 388]
 16. Some of Lenin's criticisms of these theses are considered later. [p. 388]
 17. Report of the Tenth Party Congress, appendix 2, pp. 789-793 (Shlyapnikov, speech of December 30, 1920, on the organization of the economy and the tasks of the trade unions), quoted in Brinton, *The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control*, pp. 72-73. [p. 388]
 18. *CW*, vol. 31, pp. 374-375. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Draft Resolution on 'The Tasks of the Trade Unions, and the Methods of Their Accomplishment'](#)". -- DJR] [p. 390]
 19. Broué, *Le Parti bolchévique*, p. 141. [p. 390]
 20. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, pp. 224 ff. [p. 390]
 21. On this point see "[The Trade Unions, the Present Situation, and Trotsky's Mistakes](#)," in *CW*, vol. 32, pp. 19 ff., especially pp. 24-25. [p. 391]
 22. *Ibid.*, p. 25. [p. 391]

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23. *CW*, vol. 33, pp. 184 ff. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under the New Economic Policy](#)". -- DJR] [p. 391]
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 187. [p. 391]
25. *CW*, vol. 32, p. 22. [p. 391]
26. *Ibid.*, p. 24. [p. 392]
27. *Ibid.*, p. 84. [p. 392]

4. The ideological and political struggles at the end of "war communism" and the beginning of the NEP

The struggles that developed in the Bolshevik Party during the winter of 1920-1921 mark a turning point in the party's history, on two accounts. On the one hand, a certain way of seeing the problem of relations between the party and the trade unions, reflecting the practice of "war communism," which the groups headed by Trotsky and Bukharin wanted to treat as a "principle," ceased to be officially approved after the Tenth Congress. This did not mean that the practices underlying this conception disappeared altogether: nevertheless, they were now on the downgrade, and were no longer defended in the name of the alleged "demands" of the proletarian dictatorship. During the five year plans, however, ideas similar to Trotsky's were to reappear, especially those concerning the "productionist" and "disciplinary" tasks considered as the essential functions of the trade unions.

On the other hand, the Tenth Congress was the last to have been preceded by a broad, open discussion. At subsequent congresses, the various oppositions would not be allowed to express themselves with such freedom, which meant a break with the Bolshevik tradition. Increasingly, the means of expression were to be withdrawn from opposition tendencies, in the end disappearing altogether.

I. The Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party and the close of the debate with the two oppositions of 1920

The diversity of the tendencies which clashed in the period preceding the Tenth Congress testified to the magnitude of

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the ideological struggles in the Bolshevik Party and the depth of the crisis it was undergoing. When preparations for the congress began in December 1920, there were seven distinct "platforms," and at the congress two organized tendencies were still opposing the theses maintained by Lenin.^[1]

After extensive discussion, the Workers' Opposition succeeded in drawing up a document which received the support of related tendencies, while Trotsky and Bukharin, on their side, had also worked out a joint statement which was backed by eight members of the Central Committee (so that the motion they put before the congress was called "the motion of the eight"). The majority of the Central Committee held the same views as Lenin, and the motion reflecting their views was called "the motion of the ten": among its backers were Stalin,

Tomsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev.

The Tenth Congress put an end to the debate between the Central Committee majority and the two main opposition tendencies. Eighteen delegates voted for the Workers' Opposition motion, 50 for that of "the eight," while "the motion of the ten" received 336 votes.^[2] The hardest fight at the congress was waged against the Workers' Opposition, as the line of "the eight" had already been plentifully criticized in the previous months.

(a) The rejection of the Workers' Opposition theses

During the Tenth Congress, especially lively attacks were directed against the ideas of the Workers' Opposition, which up to that time had benefited to some extent from the criticism aimed at Trotsky's ideas, that is, at tendencies to authoritarianism, administrative solutions, and "productionism," and from the confusion caused by certain formulations of Bukharin's, which sought to build a bridge between Trotsky's line and that of the Workers' Opposition by calling both for "statization of the trade unions" and "trade-unionization of the state."^[3]

Originally, some of the Workers' Opposition theses represented, as Lenin acknowledged, a healthy reaction against the

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authoritarian tendencies which had developed during "war communism," and reflected the genuine aspirations of broad sections of the working class. But the Workers' Opposition systematized these aspirations in a one-sided way, ignoring the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry; and it carried its formulations beyond the point at which they squared with what was needed to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. This opposition also "forgot," no less than did Trotsky and Bukharin, the fundamental problem, that of power, which requires that maximum attention be paid to what Lenin rightly called "the revolutionary interest" to which "formal democracy must be subordinate."^[4] Despite appearances, the theses of Trotsky and those of the Workers' Opposition both advocated an orientation which, if adopted, would, in the given situation, have led "to the collapse of the Soviet power" through failure to take account of the totality of concretely existing class relations.^[5]

There were also other reasons for the severity of the defeat suffered at the Tenth Congress by the Workers' Opposition. The very preparations for the congress had been carried out in a highly "administrative" fashion; the weight in the party of bourgeois and "bureaucratized" elements was considerable, and was reflected in the number of votes cast for the theses of Trotsky and Bukharin; and many wavering delegates were anxious to contribute to party unity at a difficult moment by voting for the motion of the Central Committee majority.

The need to take account of "the revolutionary interest" was one of the chief arguments used by Zinoviev against that part of the program of the Workers' Opposition which called for the convening of an All-Russia Supreme Congress of Producers. Zinoviev pointed out that, at such a congress, "the majority *at this grave moment* will be non-party people, a good many of them S.R.s and Mensheviks,"^[6] and the task of the hour was to win over the non-party mass organizations in support of the Soviet power.

The platform of "the ten" recognized that, in principle, some of the demands included in that of the Workers' Opposition were correct -- for example, the point about the need for

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greater equality in wage levels -- but considered that these demands corresponded to long-term objectives which could not be regarded as immediate aims. The platform of "the ten" also rejected the statization of the trade unions called for by Trotsky. It reaffirmed the necessity for the party to play a leading role in trade-union work: "The Russian Communist Party continues unconditionally to direct, through its central and local organisations, all the ideological side of trade-union work . . . Selection of the leading personnel of the trade-union movement must take place under the Party's guiding supervision. However, the Party organisation must be especially attentive to the applying of normal methods of proletarian democracy in the trade unions, where the selection of leaders must, above all, be made by the organised masses themselves."^[7]

While the theses of the Workers' Opposition had been extensively discussed before the congress, this was no longer the case during its actual sessions. It was the moment when the Kronstadt crisis occurred, which revealed that the main task of the moment was to settle correctly the problem of relations with the peasantry. Lenin therefore spoke principally about this problem, confining himself, where the platform of the Workers' Opposition was concerned, to an essentially polemical attack, in which he compared it to the policies of the anarchists and syndicalists. He also seemed to threaten the Workers' Opposition in an indirect way, as when he said: "We have spent quite a lot of time in discussion, and I must say that the point is now being driven farther home with 'rifles' than with the opposition's theses. Comrades, this is no time to have an opposition. Either you're on this side or on the other, but then your weapon must be a gun, and not an opposition. This follows from the objective situation, and you mustn't blame us for it."^[8]

Soon afterward, Lenin had to explain that when he spoke of "countering it with rifles," he did not at all mean carrying on a "discussion" in that way with the Workers' Opposition, but with the declared enemies of the party. Furthermore, later on

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in the debate Lenin several times praised what he regarded as sound in some of the proposals of the Workers' Opposition.^[9]

(b) The resolution on party unity

As regards the subject of ideological conflict within the Bolshevik Party, the Tenth Congress was of major importance, for it passed a resolution laying down new rules which prohibited factions. In principle, this resolution forbade the formation within the party of groups organized on the basis of a "platform" and having their own internal discipline, that is, tending to constitute a sort of party within the party. The ban was adopted as a temporary measure justified by exceptionally difficult circumstances.^[10] Any party member, including any member of the Central Committee, who acted in violation of this resolution, could be expelled by decision of the Central Committee. This was an extremely severe penalty, putting exceptional power into the hands of the majority in the CC. Application of it would enable a CC, after being elected by a party congress, to alter its own composition.

Commenting on this provision of the "unity resolution," Lenin said: "Our Party has never allowed the Central Committee to have such a right in relation to its members. This is an extreme measure that is being adopted specially, in view of the dangerous situation. A special meeting is called: the Central Committee, plus the alternate members, plus the Control Commission, all having the same right to vote. Our rules make no provision for such a body or plenum of 47 persons; and never has anything like it been practised."^[11]

The circumstances in which the party was to function after Lenin's death would enable this resolution to be used as a means of preventing the expression of opinions diverging from those of the Political Bureau and the party secretariat, thereby completely altering the conditions under which ideological struggles could be carried on in the party.

This outcome contradicted a number of provisions contained in the resolution on party unity, which did not con-

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demn internal party disputes and even allowed for the publishing of a periodical, *Discussion Bulletin*. Lenin's speeches at the Tenth Congress show, too, that he recommended that in the event of "disagreement on fundamental issues," this should be settled by "appeal to the Party," and also that, when a party congress proved unable to arrive at a satisfactory degree of unity, elections to the Central Committee be carried out "according to platforms," so that the main rival tendencies should secure representation thereon.^[12]

In practice, despite what was said at the Tenth Congress, the "unity resolution" was to become the point of departure for increasing restrictions on open ideological struggles within the party: the *Discussion Bulletin* was never published. Gradually, after Lenin's death, the majority in the CC or the Politburo, or even the party secretariat, were to claim a monopoly of correct conceptions and the right to decide what might or might not be really discussed in the party.

In another way, too, the Tenth Congress limited the possibility of open ideological debate, for it considerably reduced the authority of the CC, which was precisely where extensive and thorough discussion took place. From this time onward, in fact, the Central Committee ceased to be the party's supreme body between congresses. The intervals between its meetings were made longer: henceforth, it was to meet only once every two months, and its powers were in practice delegated to the Political Bureau, which, beginning in 1921, had only seven members. Inside the Political Bureau itself the dominant position was increasingly held by representatives of the party's administrative apparatus, those who headed the secretariat, the assignments office, and so on. Thus, the Political Bureau, which had formerly been a mere executive organ of the Central Committee, was transformed into the supreme body of the party, closely linked with the administrative apparatus and the secretariat of the Central Committee, whose own powers were greatly increased.

The Tenth Congress thus marked in more than one way the close of the debates of the last phase of "war communism": by its condemnation of the theses of the two oppositions, and by

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the de facto restrictions it imposed on open discussion inside the Bolshevik Party. It was in a deeper sense, however, that this congress constituted the end of one period and the beginning of another, for it set in motion the New Economic Policy (NEP),^[13] the principal features of which were abandonment of the requisitioning of agricultural produce, a tax in kind being substituted for this, and the introduction of a certain amount of freedom of trade between agriculture and industry. Gradually, the application of the NEP altered the political atmosphere by enabling the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie to develop a variety of private activities which contributed, among other things, to aggravating an economic inequality which bore especially heavily upon the working class and the poor peasants.

Under the influence of the changed political atmosphere connected with the NEP, and also, and especially, as a result of the changes made in the Bolshevik Party, open ideological

struggle within the party gradually disappeared. Increasingly, these struggles took place only among the top leaders of the party, inside the Political Bureau -- in some cases, perhaps, in the Central Committee, but without the participation of the party members or cadres as a whole.

Before saying something about the "undeclared" ideological and political struggles which marked the early period of the NEP, before Lenin's death, it is desirable to indicate some of the limits to the disagreements between the party majority and the Workers' Opposition, and to recall the issues which at that time underlay all the ideological and political conflicts in the party.

I. The limited nature of the disagreements between the party majority and the Workers' Opposition

Of all the ideological struggles that took place in the Bolshevik Party between 1918 and 1921, the most significant, both

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in its implications and in its limitations, was the one aroused by the theses of the Workers' Opposition. The implications of these theses were considerable, in that they raised a number of absolutely fundamental questions. The Workers' Opposition pointed to the grave dangers threatening Russia's socialist future as a result of the increased powers enjoyed by bourgeois specialists and administrators. It fought for the granting of broad rights of initiative to the workers and for greater trust to be shown in relation to them, with the establishment of forms of organization such as would allow the workers really to develop their own initiative. It called for an effective struggle against the tendencies for the administrative apparatuses to acquire independence and to dominate the masses. It declared for freedom of criticism in the party, and for the working people as a whole, especially for the workers and their trade unions. It demanded that all party members engage regularly in productive manual labor and that in equality in wage levels, which had been intensified during "war communism," be reduced.

These theses of the Workers' Opposition repeated to a large extent the ideas expounded by Lenin in his "[April Theses](#)" and in [The State and Revolution](#). They voiced the aspirations of part of the Soviet working class and expressed some of the requirements for the revolution's progress toward socialism.

They were presented at a particularly difficult moment, during the social and political crisis of the winter of 1920-1921, the moment of Kronstadt -- that is, when forces objectively hostile to the dictatorship of the proletariat and liable to be directly used by imperialism were intervening openly in the political situation, and were formulating demands which seemed to coincide, partly at least, with the theses of the Workers' Opposition. It was undoubtedly this conjuncture which caused Lenin to take up a particularly stern attitude toward the Workers' Opposition and to refrain from according a thorough critical examination to its theses.

It is enough to read what Lenin said at the Tenth Congress to see how far this congress was overshadowed by the

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Kronstadt events, and the extent to which the Workers' Opposition was blamed for putting its theses forward precisely at that moment. Thus, in his speech of March 9, 1921, Lenin,

addressing his remarks to the Workers' Opposition, said: "You have come to the Party Congress with Comrade Kollontai's pamphlet which is entitled *The Workers' Opposition*. When you sent in the final proofs, you knew about the Kronstadt events and the rising petty-bourgeois counter-revolution. And it is at a time like this that you come here, calling yourselves a Workers' Opposition. You don't seem to realise the responsibility you are undertaking, and the way you are disrupting our unity!"^[14]

Shortly after saying this, Lenin went even further, practically identifying the Workers' Opposition with the anarchists and syndicalists, who did not accept the necessity for Communist leadership if the proletarian dictatorship was to be preserved. This certainly failed to correspond to anything actually said by the Workers' Opposition; but it did correspond to the conclusions that could be drawn from their theses, if the "logic" of these theses were pushed to its ultimate conclusion.

Independently of the conjuncture, however, other factors relative to the *content* of the theses considerably restricted their effective significance. In the first place, they lacked theoretical articulation. Even when they expressed fundamental concerns, and dealt with questions which must be answered if the revolution was to advance toward socialism, they were not argued in a well-grounded way. They were not founded upon a rigorous analysis of the relations between the economic base and the superstructure, between productive forces and production relations. Furthermore (like the theses of the majority), they practically ignored the decisive problem of the conditions for a genuine political alliance with the peasantry. In the case of the theses of the Workers' Opposition this was a particularly grave weakness, as the increased role which this opposition claimed for the workers' trade unions might easily lead, through giving priority to the satisfaction of

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the workers' demands, to a deep split with the peasantry. In this respect the Workers' Opposition took up an *ouvriériste* position which was incompatible with the leading role of the proletariat, especially in a country where the majority of the people were peasants.

On the whole, the theses of the Workers' Opposition voiced aspirations which were partly correct, but they did not constitute a break with the elements of economism that still remained in the Bolshevik Party's overall positions: this was their weakness in relation to defense of the proletarian dictatorship and the leading role that the party of the proletariat must necessarily play in that defense.

Concretely, the theses of the Workers' Opposition included contradictions which considerably reduced their impact. Thus, on the one hand, they demanded that the producers' trade unions should play a directing role in the economy (which opened the way to "syndicalist" practice that gave primacy not to the proletariat's overall policy but, instead, to the interests of separate sections or trades), while, on the other, they denounced, and with reason, the "bureaucratization" which had taken place in Soviet trade unionism during the period of "war communism." This caused Lenin to comment, when speaking of the Workers' Opposition theses presented by Sapronov: "The 'Sapronovites' have gone so far as to insist in the same thesis (3) on a 'profound crisis' and a 'bureaucratic necrosis' of the trade unions, while proposing, as being 'absolutely' necessary, the 'extension of the trade unions' *rights* in production' . . . probably because of their 'bureaucratic necrosis'? Can this group be taken seriously?"^[15]

The principal weakness of the theses of the Workers' Opposition lay, as has been said, in their failure to tackle the problem of the basic conditions for maintaining and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat -- the problem of the leading role of the proletarian party and that

of the specific relations between this party and the masses as a whole. This needs to be made clear by a closer examination of some of the concrete questions that were taken up during the discussion at the Tenth Congress.

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(a) The problem of the "mode of appointment" of cadres and functionaries

Implicit in the dispute between the Workers' Opposition and the CC majority was the question of the relations of mutual trust that ought to exist between the Bolshevik Party and the masses as a whole, if the party was to be able to fulfill its leading role correctly. Instead of taking up this problem in an explicit way, however, the CC majority and the Workers' Opposition argued about the mode of appointment of the leading personnel in the political, administrative, and economic spheres. As the CC majority saw it, the party could not really carry out its leading role unless a substantial proportion of the leading personnel, in the trade union as elsewhere, were appointed by the party. As the Workers' Opposition saw it, only the election of such personnel was in conformity with socialist principles and would guarantee the confidence of the masses in the leaders they had chosen.

By discussing the question in this way the Workers' Opposition refused to analyze, first of all, the actual situation. Moreover, by imprisoning itself in the ideological issue of "election versus appointment from above," it remained captive to the politico-juridical ideology of the bourgeoisie, and so was prevented from raising in a clear-cut way the true problem of the concrete relations which, in a given situation, ought to prevail between the party and the masses.

In order to understand what lay behind the proposals of the Workers' Opposition, it is helpful to recall that they continued the line of the various "left" oppositions which had appeared in the Bolshevik Party since early 1918. These oppositions commonly referred to Lenin's own words in defense of the "principle" of electing all functionaries, as when he said: "All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall at any time, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary 'workmen's wages' -- these simple and 'self-evident' democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism."^[16]

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Now, already at the Ninth Party Congress (March 29-April 5), Lenin had rejected the views of those who referred to his previous statements, as he considered the latter to be inapplicable in the existing conditions, and even incompatible with the lessons of two years in power. He said that after "two years of experience" it was impossible to discuss certain problems as if they were being encountered for the first time: "We committed follies enough in and around the Smolny period. That is nothing to be ashamed of. How were we to know, seeing that we were undertaking something absolutely new?"^[17]

In that same report presented to the Ninth Congress on behalf of the Central Committee (March 29, 1920), Lenin attacked those who advocated collective management and election of cadres and leading personnel, in the trade unions or other apparatuses, saying: "All these outcries against appointees, all this old and dangerous rubbish which finds its way into various resolutions and conversations must be swept away. Otherwise we cannot succeed. If we have failed to master this lesson in these two years, we are lagging, and those who lag get beaten."^[18]

In reality, what was concealed behind this pseudoproblem of "election versus appointment from above" was a real problem, namely, that of consulting the masses -- not only appealing for their suggestions but also, and above all, for their criticisms. Only such consultation and such seeking for criticism can enable the party to concentrate the initiatives and indications coming from the masses, so as to arrive at conclusions conforming to the general interests of the proletarian dictatorship.

The real problem, in fact, is not that of the "mode of appointment" but that of the actual, concrete relationship between the party, the machinery of state, and the masses. And the nature of this relationship is not basically determined by the "mode of appointment" of the persons making up the staff of the state machine. It depends upon a set of social practices, and the ideological relationships developing through these practices.

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At the beginning of 1921 Lenin was trying harder and harder to find a basis for considering this problem other than that defined by the contrast between appointment from above and election. He saw clearly the need to open up new opportunities of expression for the aspirations of the masses, and he knew very well that, if such expression was kept within the forms of bourgeois democracy, there was serious danger of a bourgeois political offensive developing by way of the activity of the Mensheviks, SRs, and anarchists. It was in order to change the basis on which the problem was approached, to get away from the issue of "appointment from above versus election," that Lenin envisaged numerous conferences of non-party people. These conferences were to enable the Bolsheviks to hear the criticisms of the masses, to *take account* of these criticisms, and to answer them in a practical way. Early in 1921, for example, Lenin wrote, replying to some Bolsheviks who were afraid that such conferences of non-party people might turn out to favor the Mensheviks and SRs: "Non-Party conferences are *not* an absolute political weapon of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries plus anarchists."^[19]

Actually, as a result of the worsening of the political and economic situation, especially through the famine of 1921, the final text of Lenin's pamphlet on the tax in kind was much more reserved than his first draft had been, when the question of conferences of non-party people was concerned -- precisely because of the continuing influence of the Mensheviks and SRs, especially among the peasant masses. Thus, Lenin said in this pamphlet:

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have now learned to don the "non-Party" disguise. This has been fully proved. Only fools now fail to see this and understand that we must not allow ourselves to be fooled. Non-Party conferences are not a fetish. They are valuable if they help us to come closer to the impassive masses -- the millions of working people still outside politics. They are harmful if they provide a platform for the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries masquerading as "non-party" men.^[20]

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In practice, then, owing to the extreme difficulties that marked the end of "war communism," and the recrudescence of the activities of the petty bourgeois parties which was facilitated by these difficulties, the Bolshevik Party in 1921 did not take the path of a broad campaign of discussion among the masses and systematic listening to their criticisms.

(b) *The acquisition of independence by the machinery of state and the concepts of efficiency and inefficiency*

Another ideological "pair of opposites" helped to define in the wrong way the ground on which discussion and thinking developed concerning the acquisition of independence by the machinery of state. This was "efficiency versus inefficiency." The conduct of the argument in these terms tended to reduce a problem that was fundamentally *political* to the level of a *technical* problem. In the main, the case for a certain degree of independence for the administrative apparatus of the state was based, more or less, on the concept of "technical efficiency," and most of those in the party who were opposed to this independence also put forward considerations relating to the concept of efficiency.

Outwardly, the Workers' Opposition tended to break through the circle in which discussion and thinking about these problems had been confined up to that time, when it declared that the political problem of the relations between the organs of power and the mass of the workers could not be solved either by absorbing the trade unions into the state machine (which was the proposal of Trotsky and Bukharin) or by saying that one must wait until the masses were sufficiently "educated" before it would be possible to restore life to the Soviet institutions.^[21]

The Workers' Opposition rightly denounced the illusions which postponed the return to Soviet democracy to a distant future -- to the day when the masses had become better "educated": educated by whom? -- but they were not able to show the road to self-education of the masses, to the training of the

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masses through their own mistakes, under conditions that would not lead to a rapid restoration of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and imperialist domination. In fact, the Workers' Opposition remained on the ground of "economism," the "spontaneist" form which suggests that the proletariat's position in production "generates" spontaneously proletarian class-consciousness in this class, thereby, in effect, "dodging" the whole problem of education and self-education. Contrary to certain appearances, here again the Workers' Opposition, by not abandoning a certain form of "economism," took its stand on the same ground as the CC majority, even though it came, at the given moment, to different practical conclusions.

At the end of "war communism," the Bolshevik Party hoped that the masses would be drawn back into the working of Soviet democracy in a spontaneous way, through the recovery of production and the development of exchange. This hope expressed a certain "economism" from which Lenin himself was not entirely free when, instead of explaining the acquisition of independence by the state machine and the development of bureaucracy by the totality of social relations and the bourgeois class struggle, he saw in it a result of the economic situation itself, that is, a consequence of the disorganization of exchange, of want,^[22] and so forth. Such an analysis could suggest that a "withering away" of bureaucracy would ensue from a recovery of production, centralization of production, a campaign against illiteracy, etc. This was not, of course, Lenin's point of view: he explicitly associated the existence of bureaucracy with petty commodity economy and the existence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements, and treated as "quacks" those who claimed to attack bureaucracy without attacking its social foundations.^[23] Nevertheless, some of Lenin's writings were interpreted subsequently in a narrowly "economist" sense, especially by the Trotskyists, who claimed to "explain" the existence of "bureaucracy" by the "low level of development of the productive forces."

To return to the Workers' Opposition, it can be said that its defeat resulted principally from the extreme limitedness of its proposals, its incapacity (due, no doubt, to "spontaneity-

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worshipping *ouvriérisme*," and to lack of sufficient experience) to open up a truly new road of

political struggle that would enter into the play of the contradictions and ensure a strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship. This limitedness and this incapacity, which were shared by other Bolshevik leaders, helped block the path to the attempts made later (especially by Lenin) to improve the party's practice in the direction of a mass line, so as to draw the peasants on to the road to socialism. The "left" oppositions which appeared later on showed themselves, in this respect, still more backward than the Workers' Opposition. The door was thus opened for an offensive by right opportunism, though this did not come forward in a clearly-defined shape.

Before considering this last point, let us recall what was ultimately at stake in the ideological and political struggles going on in the Bolshevik Party.

III. The issue involved in the ideological and political struggles in the Bolshevik Party

The historical experience of proletarian parties, especially of the Bolshevik Party and the Chinese Communist Party, shows that what is involved in the disagreements that arise in such parties (even when the differences seem to be concerned only with "shades of opinion") is the working out of a correct political line that can enable the working class to conquer and then to consolidate its ideological and political hegemony. In the long run, it is the proletarian character of the party itself that is at issue. And this character can be lastingly maintained only if the ideological unity of the party is based on the principles of revolutionary Marxism, and if the party, in its functioning, respects these principles, thus constituting a revolutionary vanguard supported by the working masses. The ideological unity of a proletarian revolutionary party cannot long survive mistakes in its political line: a party which over a

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long period follows a nonproletarian line must eventually be forced to deny the principles it swears by, and lose the support of the advanced elements of the proletariat and the masses.

However, a wide discussion aimed at drawing the lessons of the results practically achieved through actually applying the political line is essential in order to determine (especially when no previous experience is available) the more or the less correct aspects of the line that has been followed, and the rectifications the line requires in view of the experience acquired and the changes that have occurred in the objective situation. This discussion is needed because there is no "recipe" stating a priori that a certain measure or a certain slogan does or does not serve the basic interests of the proletariat -- except where obvious violations of the principles of revolutionary Marxism are concerned. Only a thorough study of reality, of practice, and of the contending theses enables the party to decide correctly how to solve the problems posed by the concrete elaboration of a correct line and by the practical application of this line. Only respect for democratic centralism -- provided that democracy is its dominant aspect -- can enable those who, though they uphold correct conceptions, are in the minority, to make themselves heard, if they themselves dare to "go against the tide."

A given political line is proletarian in character only if it does not violate the principles of revolutionary Marxism: but it must also correspond effectively to the needs of the actual situation, thus making it possible to deal correctly -- from the standpoint of the proletariat -- with the principal contradiction in the particular situation prevailing, and with the secondary contradictions which are subordinate to this one.

In a situation which is evolving quickly, a political line or slogan that was correct at a particular moment may become wrong quite soon afterward. For example, the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" was a correct slogan from February 27 until July 4, 1917, in a period when armed counter-revolution presented no threat. It ceased to be correct after July 4 when, as Lenin wrote, "the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, working hand in glove with the monarchists and the Black Hun-

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dreds, secured the support of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, partly by intimidating them, and handed over real power to the Cavaignacs, the military gang"^[24] What applies to a particular slogan or measure applies also to the concrete political line of a party. This line can be revolutionary and proletarian only if it corresponds to the needs of the actual situation. Accordingly, when the situation changes -- when, for example, a period of civil war gives way to a period of peaceful construction -- appropriate changes have to be made in the party line, in the measures the party takes, and in the slogans it issues.

In order to cope with the demands facing it, a proletarian party must be able to recognize and rectify in good time the mistakes it has made. A revolutionary party can make mistakes, even serious ones, without losing its proletarian character, but it loses this character when it becomes lastingly incapable of *recognizing* that it has made a mistake, and of correcting its political line accordingly.

The process of recognizing and rectifying mistakes can develop fully only under conditions of sufficiently open ideological struggle: without such a struggle it becomes more and more difficult to work out and apply a proletarian line, and, in the long run, to preserve the party's proletarian character -- and also, consequently, if the party is in power, the proletarian character of the state.

When, in a proletarian party, several political lines are in conflict, all of which seem to correspond to the needs of the revolution, it is only by applying theoretical analysis and concrete analysis (and so, also, by critically examining past and present practice) that it becomes possible to decide which of these lines really best serves the interests of the proletariat. Open discussion, criticism and self-criticism are thus of very great importance. They make it possible to carry out analyses which are as thorough as possible, to appreciate the significance of all the shades of difference, to draw up a detailed balance sheet, and to deduce lessons from past mistakes, and thus to rectify past errors.

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As long as social classes exist, *the class struggle going on in society is reflected in the party in the form of ideological and political struggle*. The proletarian line, the one which in the given situation is best calculated to serve the interests of the proletariat, is therefore inevitably confronted by a bourgeois line. The latter is the one which, in the given conditions, serves best the interests of the bourgeoisie. In relation to the bourgeois and proletarian lines, the other lines represent right or "left" opportunist orientations. In circumstances where it corresponds better to the interests of the bourgeoisie, an opportunist line may become a bourgeois line. At a given moment, the existence of a definite bourgeois line conceals the bourgeois content of a particular opportunist tendency, which thus seems to "blend" with the proletarian line, but will at a later stage come into open conflict with the latter. A correct ideological struggle requires that at each moment the principal target must be the bourgeois line, without losing sight of the opportunist tendency. Thus, in November-December 1920, Lenin's principal target was the Trotsky-Bukharin opposition: then, when that trend had been practically beaten, he took as his principal target the Workers' Opposition. There is no "recipe" for "spotting at first glance" the

bourgeois line of the moment. It is often a line which seems to be particularly "close" to the revolutionary line, for it is in this way that a great number of party members can be more easily misled. It may seem merely to take revolutionary orientations to their "logical conclusion." Only when its true class character has been exposed does the bourgeois line cease to seem "close" to the revolutionary line: but its place is then inevitably taken by another tendency which, in turn, seems to "blend" with (or be "indistinguishable from") the revolutionary line.

Those who defend a bourgeois line are, objectively, representatives of the bourgeoisie inside the proletarian party, but this does not imply that they are its "conscious agents." One has, therefore, to start from the assumption that they (and, a fortiori, those who have merely been influenced by a nonproletarian line) can be won over to the proletarian line: this is

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why it is important to "leave a way out" for those who oppose the proletarian line, provided that they are not splitting the party and are not playing a double game.

It is clear, and experience confirms this, that there is no "guarantee" that a proletarian party will always, at every moment, rally round the line which is correct from the standpoint of the interests of the proletariat, the revolutionary line.

The definition of the proletarian revolutionary line can therefore not be left to a mere "majority vote," whether in a popular (or workers') assembly, in a party congress, or in a meeting of the party's Central Committee. Experience shows that, faced with a profoundly new situation, it is usually only a minority that finds the correct path, even in an experienced proletarian party. This being so, to suppose that a majority vote can settle difficulties and decide the correct line would be quite illusory. Generally speaking, what is correct does not immediately appear as such: this clarification comes about only after struggle, free discussion, experience, and the test of time.

In order that what is new and true may make its way in the world without too much difficulty, there must be no claiming that what is true and what is false can be decided by the simplistic method of voting, when what is involved calls for analysis and discussion. (This does not rule out the possibility that, where immediate practical decisions are required, it may be necessary to resort to voting before a problem has been studied in all its aspects.)

It was not accidental that Lenin was more than once beaten when votes were taken in the Bolshevik party at crucial moments, so that he had to "go against the tide." Mao Tse tung has stressed that "going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle."^[25] It is therefore essential that new revolutionary ideas be given the possibility of being defended, and that those who are the bearers of these ideas possess the right, and the courage, to defend them.

The problem of what is true and what is false as regards the conditions for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat is all the more difficult to settle because the practice of pro-

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letarian rule is historically in its infancy, as compared with the thousands of years of experience of rule possessed by the exploiting classes. This is also why what might have seemed obvious fifty years ago, and which was indeed so on the basis of experience up to that time and the corresponding development of theory, may seem today only partly true. Every scientific truth is capable of developing and getting enriched, thereby becoming a new truth through the shedding of what, in the "former truth" was really false.

If the presence within a proletarian party of a majority favorable to a particular political line, or to certain measures, does not "guarantee" the proletarian character of this line or these measures, it is nonetheless necessary, when the moment comes to act and when the highest party bodies have declared for them, that the minority submit in action, even while reserving their own opinion so as to be better able subsequently to correct mistakes. It is only if there are profound divergences, and if there is no other way to correct the party orientation, that a split is to be preferred to unity^[26] -- and in this case, it is those who are violating party principles who bear responsibility for the split.

Naturally, the possibility of correcting mistakes of orientation becomes more restricted when these mistakes do not emerge openly but only in the form of a certain practice, that is of an undeclared opposition.^[27]

IV. The undeclared oppositions of 1921-1923

After 1921 a trend of undeclared opposition developed -- characterized by a tendency toward right opportunism -- which was able to make itself felt and to intervene practically in political decisions. This opposition was rooted in the administrative machinery of the party and the state, in the bourgeois practices and political relations which reproduced themselves within it. The bourgeois forces present in the

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administrative machinery used their positions to try to secure ascendancy for orientations favorable to their interests, by influencing those party leaders who, by virtue of their conception of what the party line should be, were susceptible to this influence.

During Lenin's illness,^[28] a political line different from his own showed itself on more than one occasion. This line can be regarded as that of an "undeclared" opposition in the sense that it did not usually clash head on with Lenin, even though it advocated measures in contradiction to those recommended by him. The term "opposition" bears, however, a special significance in this context, since it happened more than once that the measures advocated by this "opposition" -- which then had Stalin as its practical leader -- obtained the support of the majority of the Political Bureau or the Central Committee. This support was usually only momentary, however, for when Lenin intervened, the organs concerned more often than not went back on the decisions they had taken. Given the right-wing orientations toward which the majority of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau tended during the period of Lenin's illness, it is not surprising that these orientations deeply affected the line of the Bolshevik Party after Lenin's death.

(a) The question of the foreign-trade monopoly

It was in connection with the question of the state monopoly of foreign trade that right-wing attitudes (which, incidentally, did not reassert themselves later in the same form) found expression at the level of the Central Committee, at the time when Lenin was beginning to feel the first effects of his illness and had to withdraw from public work for a few weeks. The Riga Conference^[29] was then being held (late 1921), and Milyutin, the Soviet representative at this conference, went so far as to propose abolishing the foreign-trade monopoly.

Bukharin, Sokolnikov, and others supported Milyutin. They were convinced that the

Commissariat of Foreign Trade was incapable of properly organizing international economic ex-

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changes, and consequently they recommended either that the rules of the foreign-trade monopoly be mitigated or else that it be completely abolished. Stalin approved of these ideas, but Lenin looked on them as a treat to the future of the proletarian dictatorship. He pointed out that, if they were adopted, foreign exporters would be able to enter into direct contact with Nepmen, and this would entail danger that Soviet industry might be utterly ruined, since foreign big capital was certainly ready, if need be, to practice dumping and subsidize exports in order to paralyze Soviet industry.

For some time the Central Committee failed to agree with Lenin on this point. Only in March 1922 did he secure the adoption of a number of decrees which consolidated the foreign-trade monopoly. And even then, under the influence of those members of the Central Committee who were opposed to unqualified maintenance of the monopoly, the latter continued to be subject to question, to such an extent that foreign businessmen who were negotiating with Soviet representatives postponed signing contracts they had been about to clinch, in the hope that the monopoly was on the point of being abolished. On May 15, 1922, increasingly worried about the way things were going, Lenin wrote to Stalin urging that the principle of the foreign-trade monopoly be reaffirmed, and a formal ban be put on all talk of relaxing it.^[30] Under the text of Lenin's letter (which was not published until 1959), Stalin noted: "I have no objections to a 'formal ban' on measures to *mitigate* the foreign trade monopoly at the present stage. All the same, I think that *mitigation* is becoming indispensable."^[31]

After Lenin had intervened in this way, his point of view was approved by the Political Bureau at its meeting of May 22. Three days later, however, Lenin fell seriously ill: his right hand and right leg were paralyzed and it became difficult for him to speak.

It was symptomatic of the presence of a right-wing tendency in the party that the adversaries of the foreign-trade monopoly now resumed their offensive. On October 6, 1922, the Central Committee agreed to proposals by Sokolnikov which intro-

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duced important modifications in the state monopoly of foreign trade. Lenin was still sick, but he was able to follow public business, and, as a result, he intervened again with a letter dated October 13, in which he wrote: "The decision of the plenary meeting of the C.C. of 6 October (Minutes no. 7, point 3) institutes what seems to be an unimportant, partial reform . . . In actual fact, however, this wrecks the foreign-trade monopoly."^[32]

Following receipt of this letter, and taking account of the political authority enjoyed by Lenin, who seemed about to take charge of affairs once more, the CC revoked its decision.

These vicissitudes testify to the importance within the Central Committee of right-wing forces, or of forces susceptible to the influence of a right-wing line. The existence of a strong "economist" tendency was shown here by the weight given to the argument that the "inexperience" of those in charge of the foreign-trade monopoly might cause the Soviet power a momentary loss of some millions of roubles, and that this consideration "justified" abandoning such a vital political command post.

During this episode Stalin showed himself constantly in favor of "mitigation" of the foreign-

trade monopoly: he gave in, eventually, but only on Lenin's insistence. When he passed Lenin's letter on to the CC, Stalin accompanied it with a note in which he said: "Comrade Lenin's letter has not persuaded me that the decision of the C.C. Plenary Meeting of 6 October on foreign trade was wrong. Nonetheless, in view of Comrade Lenin's insistence that fulfilment of the C.C. Plenary Meeting be delayed, I shall vote *for* a postponement, so that the question may be again raised for discussion at the next Plenary Meeting which Comrade Lenin will attend." Finally, in December 1922, at a meeting at which Trotsky spoke in support of Lenin's attitude on the matter, the CC canceled the decision it had taken on October 6.^[33]

So ended "the affair of the foreign-trade monopoly." It throws much light on the relation of forces then prevailing in the Central Committee and the Political Bureau -- the relation

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which decided the orientation the party leadership would take when Lenin was no longer able to intervene.

(b) The problem of the nationalities

The problem of the relations between Soviet Russia and the independent non-Russian republics had revealed, as early as 1918, the existence within the Bolshevik Party of a tendency favoring a centralizing conception that would ensure dominance by the Russian government. At that time this tendency had striven to oppose the line of the CC majority and of Lenin. The attempt might have seemed a mere passing phenomenon, but this was not the case. In reality there were within the Bolshevik Party supporters of a political line strongly marked by bourgeois nationalism. After 1921 this line found ever clearer expression, and Lenin saw in it a manifestation of Great-Russian chauvinism.

Already in 1918, some members of the CC, including Stalin, had cautiously spoken out against recognition of the right of self-determination for the Baltic countries and Finland, on the grounds that the proletariat was not in power there. In his report on the national question presented on January 15, 1918, to the Third All-Russia Congress of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Soviets, Stalin voiced this idea explicitly. After saying that the bourgeoisie made use of "a national cloak" in its struggle for power, he added that "all this pointed to the necessity of interpreting the principle of self-determination as the right to self-determination not of the bourgeoisie but of the labouring masses of the given nation. The principle of self-determination should be a means in the struggle for socialism and should be subordinated to the principles of socialism."^[34]

In using this formulation, Stalin aligned himself in practice with the conception held at the time by Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, and included by them in their book *The ABC of Communism*.^[35]

With one exception -- an appeal addressed in 1920 to the Karelian people the idea of "self-determination of the

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labouring masses" does not appear again in official Soviet documents of the following years: but this did not prevent Stalin from trying to apply it, in Byelorussia and in the Baltic states. As for Lenin and the majority of the CC, they declared for the right of self-determination of nations, and this right was reaffirmed at the party's Eighth Congress, during the discussion on the national question, in March 1919. At this congress Bukharin still sought to defend the idea

of "self-determination for the working classes of every nationality," even quoting in this connection Stalin's report to the Third Congress of Soviets. Pyatakov spoke in the same sense, denouncing self-determination of nations as a "bourgeois slogan" which "unites all counter-revolutionary forces." In his view, "once we unite economically and build one apparatus, one Supreme Council of National Economy, one railway administration, one bank, etc., all this notorious self-determination is not worth one rotten egg."^[36] This quotation shows clearly the link between Great-Russian chauvinism and the ultra-statist ideas held by Preobrazhensky, Bukharin, Pyatakov, and some other Bolshevik leaders.

At the Eighth Congress Lenin thus found himself isolated at first in defending the traditional line of the party in favor of self-determination of *nations*. He explained that the slogan of "self-determination for the worker masses" was a false slogan, for it could be applied only where a division had already appeared between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Lenin declared that the right to self-determination must be accorded to nations in which such a division had not yet taken place, that it must be accepted in the case of countries like Poland, where the Communists did not yet have the majority of the working class behind them. Only in this way, he said, could the Russian proletariat avoid the charge of Great-Russian chauvinism hidden under the name of Communism.^[37]

In the end, Lenin won the day: the relevant points in the party program adopted by the congress conformed to his views. The resolution on the national question mentioned, especially, that, "on the part of the proletariat of those nations which are or have been oppressor nations, it is necessary that

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there should be extreme discretion, and that the utmost consideration should be paid to the survival of national sentiments among the working masses of nations which have been deprived of equal rights. Only by such a policy will it be possible to create conditions for the realisation of a durable and amicable union between the diverse national elements of the international proletariat."^[38]

Actually, the adoption by the Eighth Congress of the resolution which expressed Lenin's views was not sufficient to solve the problem of relations with the various nationalities,^[39] especially as the Bolshevik Party subsequently underwent the changes already described.

The national problem resurfaced with special acuteness during the summer of 1922, when Lenin was again out of action as far as the direction of political affairs was concerned. The existence of a powerful undeclared opposition on this question was revealed.

In August 1922 Stalin, in his capacity as chairman of a commission charged with regulating relations between the RSFSR and the other Soviet republics, drew up a draft resolution on "autonomization." This scheme provided for the inclusion of the independent republics of the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia in the Russian Federation as "autonomous" -- that is, *de facto*, subordinate -- republics. Under Stalin's plan the government of the *Russian* republic, its CEC and its Sovnarkom, would constitute the government of all these countries. The proposal, which would have abolished the independence of the non-Russian Soviet republics, encountered opposition from the Central Committees of the Bolshevik Party in Byelorussia and Georgia. The Ukrainian CC did not discuss the matter, but its members did not view it with favor.

When, on September 26, Lenin learned of this plan, he condemned the principle of adhesion to the RSFSR by the other republics, and proposed instead that a federation of republics be formed in which all the republics would possess equal rights. In his view, this federation

should take the form of a "Union of the Soviet Republics of Europe and Asia," and

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the Russian government should not be the government of the union.^[40]

The advocates of integrating the other Soviet republics into the RSFSR with a subordinate status tried to ignore Lenin's criticism. Stalin communicated his plan to the members of the CC without waiting for them to learn Lenin's opinion.^[41] He even declared, during a Political Bureau meeting devoted to this question, that it was necessary to "be firm with" Lenin, and in a letter of September 27 he went so far as to speak of the "national liberalism" revealed by Lenin in this affair.^[42]

The Central Committee, at its meeting of October 6, 1922, eventually approved Stalin's plan with a few alterations. The final text took only formal account of some of Lenin's comments: the term "Union" was substituted for "Federation," but the concrete provisions guaranteed in practice that Great-Russian hegemony would prevail.^[43]

Lenin was thus confronted with a *fait accompli*. Considering that the decision taken on October 6, 1922 was one of extreme gravity, he resolved to draw a sharp line of demarcation between his views and those which had been adopted by the CC in confused circumstances -- that is, without their being fully informed of the state of discussion on the matter. The very same day that he learned of the CC's decision, he wrote a letter to Kamenev in which he said: "I declare war to the death on dominant-nation chauvinism."^[44]

For Lenin, that sentence was the statement of a fundamental political task, namely, struggle against a "right-wing" line which was *expressed not in a program but in a practice*. All the facts, as he saw them, confirmed the urgent need for such a struggle. A rapid worsening was indeed taking place in the crisis between the Russian Central Committee and that of the other nations, especially the Georgian CC.

The opposition between Lenin's internationalist line and that of the General Secretary then became acute, though this did not emerge publicly. From the end of October 1922 onward, Lenin notes, messages, and diary revert constantly to his analysis of the risks involved *if the Bolshevik Party were to become aligned with Great-Russian chauvinist attitudes*,

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that is, with the attitudes of the bourgeoisie. He denounced big-power chauvinism and emphasized the need for actual "inequality" biased *in favor of the small nations*, so as to make up for their lack of weight in relation to the big ones. On this subject he wrote: "Anybody who does not understand this has not grasped the real proletarian attitude to the national question, he is still essentially petty-bourgeois in his point of view and is, therefore, sure to descend to the bourgeois point of view."^[45]

Thus, in connection with the national question, the *touchstone of proletarian internationalism*, Lenin noted the emergence within the CC of tendencies favorable to the development of an opportunist line.

Lenin now thought it necessary to denounce firmly the pressures which had been brought to bear on the CC of the Georgian Bolsheviks by the secretariat of the Russian party, and which constituted a manifestation of big-power chauvinism. He defined his view on this point, in the document just quoted, as follows:

I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness, and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian who is neglectful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of 'nationalist-socialism' (whereas he himself is a real and true 'nationalist-socialist', and even a vulgar Great-Russian bully), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity . . . [46]

Lenin considered that he had been deceived when he gave his approval to what had been put before him as a formula of "unity" for the Soviet nations. He declared that, in the prevailing political circumstances, the "unification" sought by Stalin should have been renounced: "There is no doubt that measures should have been delayed somewhat until we could say that we vouched for our apparatus as our own." [47]

A later note shows that what was at stake in this affair, as Lenin saw it, was proletarian internationalism and the future of the revolution throughout the world: "The harm that can

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result to our state from a lack of unification between the national apparatuses and the Russian apparatus is infinitely less than that which will be done not only to us, but to the whole International, and to the hundreds of millions of the peoples of Asia, which is destined to follow us on to the stage of history in the near future." [45]

This note -- in which the interests of *the Soviet state* are counterposed to those of *the Russian and international Communist movement* -- ends with sentences which show that Lenin had by that time become fully aware that *the center of gravity of the world revolution had shifted from industrial Europe to peasant Asia*. He said, for example:

It would be unpardonable opportunism if, on the eve of the debut of the East, just as it is awakening, we undermined our prestige with its peoples, even if only by the slightest crudity or injustice towards our own non-Russian nationalities. The need to rally against the imperialists of the West, who are defending the capitalist world, is one thing . . . It is another thing when we ourselves lapse, even if only in trifles, *into imperialist attitudes* [49] towards oppressed nationalities, thus undermining all our principled sincerity, all our principled defence of the struggle against imperialism. But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the decisive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins. [50]

The importance of this dispute and of Lenin's struggle on the Georgian question is due to what was involved, namely, *the conflict between a proletarian internationalist line and a right-wing line which tended to become identified with Great-Russian bourgeois nationalism*. Moreover, this right-wing line, though not forming the axis of a declared opposition, did eventually gather around itself greater and greater forces within the party apparatus, and was destined to prove victorious soon after Lenin's death.

In the absence of a systematic ideological struggle by the Bolshevik Party against Great-Russian chauvinism, the latter was indeed tending to develop, corresponding as it did to the

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"spontaneous" state of mind of a large part of Russia's popular masses, especially of the Russian peasants who, being shut up within the narrow horizon of the village, were readily inclined to look down on the other nationalities: Poles, Tatars, Georgians, etc. [51] After Lenin's death, however, the Bolshevik Party practically gave up this struggle. The party's passivity in the matter was closely connected with the mass-scale penetration of the party and state apparatuses by bourgeois administrators, engineers, technicians, and intellectuals. This penetration strengthened bourgeois ideological and political tendencies, and also the

"economistic" practices connected with a certain conception of the role of technicians, and with a certain conception of the New Economic Policy and of the state in the application of this policy.

The development of a right-wing opposition on the national question was, in fact, one of the effects of the new political relations which took shape within the Bolshevik Party during "war communism." The latter period had favored a highly centralistic style of leadership in the Bolshevik Party, which had undermined the quality of the relations between the different levels in the party, between the rank and file and the top leadership, and between the political and administrative leaderships. The very way in which the party's administrative leadership tried, in 1922, to settle the Georgian affair showed the extent to which nonproletarian practices and relations had become established.

In fact, faced with the refusal of the Georgian Central Committee^[52] to agree to the "proposals" (which were presented to them as orders) drawn up by the commission chaired by him, Stalin decided to resort to *administrative measures*. He appointed to jobs which put an end to their political role -- in some cases removing them from Georgia -- those members of the Georgian CC who refused to bow to the decisions of the secretariat. Some of the Georgian leaders were unwilling to submit to decisions which aimed at "settling" a political problem by means of administrative measures.^[53] Ordzhonikidze, who at the time represented the

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secretariat of the RCP(B) in Georgia allowed himself, during a discussion, to use violence, striking Kabanidze, one of the members of the Georgian CC.

Ordzhonikidze's conduct testified to the appearance in party life of *the use of physical coercion against a party member in order to "change his views,"* or at least to change the way he expressed them. In Lenin's eyes this was no mere "personal defect" arising from Ordzhonikidze's "psychology," but the beginning of political relations that were full of grave danger for the future, since this meant the emergence in the party of a *bourgeois political practice of repression*, with which were associated Stalin, the party's General Secretary, and Dzerzhinsky, who was head of the GPU.

When, on December 30, 1922, Lenin learned what had happened in Georgia, he considered that it was a sign that the party was falling prey to serious *degeneration*, expressed especially by the appearance of a "style of leadership" which was quite inadmissible in a proletarian party. He expressly condemned such resort to violence, and said that what Ordzhonikidze had done, together with the background to this deed, showed "what a mess we have got ourselves into."^[54] Lenin perceived that the Bolshevik Party ran the risk, if it tolerated the development of such relations, of finding itself taking a road that would lead to the stifling of any expression within the party of opinions not in accordance with those of the leaders, and more particularly of the members of the highest executive organs of the party. This would seriously jeopardize the proletarian character of the party, since preservation of this character demanded that the party remain open to discussion and criticism, and that party unity result from open and clear ideological struggle.

Lenin's state of health did not allow him to carry through to the end his study of what was implicit in the Georgian events and in some other similar incidents, nor to advise on the overall measures needed to combat, by strengthening proletarian relations among party members, the degeneration that had set in. Nevertheless, he did undertake an investigation, which he was obliged to carry out by his own means, without

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using the administrative party apparatus which he could no longer trust, as this apparatus supported Ordzhonikidze and was dependent on the secretariat.^[55] This affair also led Lenin to dictate several notes in which he came out once more against what he called "physical means of suppression ('biomechanics')." ^[56] He again condemned such methods in a note of February 14, 1923, saying that "one should not fight" comrades in the course of internal party discussions.^[57]

Before even learning the result of his investigation of the Georgian affair, Lenin did not hesitate to declare that what had happened there called for political sanctions. In his notes of December 31, 1922 he wrote: "Exemplary punishment must be inflicted on Ordzhonikidze . . . and the investigation of all the material which Dzerzhinsky's commission has collected must be completed or started over again to correct the enormous mass of wrongs and biased judgments which it doubtless contains. The political responsibility for all this truly Great-Russian nationalist campaign must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky."^[58]

The problem of relations with the non-Russian nations and that of the style of leadership and of the nature of relations between Communists remained thereafter at the center of Lenin's preoccupations. It is symptomatic that his two very last writings were a letter threatening Stalin with a rupture of relations and a letter to the Georgian leaders Mdivani, Makharadze, etc., in which he promised them his support.^[59] In this last letter Lenin told the Georgians: "I am following your case with all my heart. I am indignant over Ordzhonikidze's rudeness and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky. I am preparing for you notes and a speech."^[60]

Clearly, this affair had assumed major importance in Lenin's eyes, and he was getting ready to denounce publicly the Great-Russian chauvinism (disguised under the cloak of internationalism) of a section of the leadership of the RCP(B).

Thus, to generalize, the transformations which had taken place in the Bolshevik Party and the development of an undeclared right-wing opposition which followed an authoritarian and Great-Russian chauvinist line, led Lenin to issue a

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number of new indications to the party, aimed at the application of a mass line. This line was to be combated in practice by the party's administrative apparatus, which wanted to consolidate its own authority.

(c) Mass line or administrative centralism

Even before the most obvious symptoms had appeared showing the existence of a strong right-wing, authoritarian, and Great-Russian chauvinist tendency, Lenin had already indicated how to fight against the bases for such a tendency. Thus, in September 1921, he spoke of the need for a *mass struggle* against the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology on the party. Let us recall what he wrote on that occasion:

The Party must be purged of those who have lost touch with the masses (let alone, of course, those who discredit the Party in the eyes of the masses). Naturally, we shall not submit to everything the masses say, because the masses, too, sometimes -- particularly in time of exceptional weariness and exhaustion resulting from excessive hardship and suffering -- yield to sentiments that are in no way advanced. But in appraising persons, in the negative attitude to those who have "attached" themselves to us for selfish motives, to those who have become "puffed-up commissars" and "bureaucrats," the suggestions of the non-Party proletarian masses and, in many cases, of the non-Party peasant masses, are extremely valuable. The working masses have a fine intuition, which enables them to distinguish honest and devoted Communists from those who arouse the disgust of people earning their bread by the sweat of their brow, enjoying no privileges and having no

"pull."^[61]

Lenin gave the same orientation on more than one occasion when he wrote about how the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection should work; in one of his last writings he severely condemned the way it was run, and emphasized the fact that this body, which was headed by Stalin, was cut off from the masses. He stressed that the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection

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should make it possible to supervise from below the apparatuses of the state and the party.^[62]

Taking account of the need for struggle against the development of bourgeois political relations in the party and against the right-wing tendency developing in the administrative apparatuses of the state and the party -- and of the influence that these apparatuses wielded where the Central Committee itself was concerned -- Lenin set out a number of pointers for action in what has been called his "Testament."^[63] These related particularly to the make-up of the CC and to the selection of leaders.

On the first point, Lenin wrote that the moment had come to introduce new blood into the party leadership, by increasing the membership of the Central Committee to 50, or even 100, and by choosing the new members mainly from among the workers and peasants. He offered precise suggestions on this point:

The workers admitted to the Central Committee should come preferably not from among those who have had long service in Soviet bodies (in this part of my letter the term workers everywhere includes peasants), because those workers have already acquired the very traditions and the very prejudices which it is desirable to combat. The working-class members of the C.C. must be mainly workers of a lower stratum than those promoted in the last five years to work in Soviet bodies; they must be people closer to being rank-and-file workers and peasants, who, however, do not fall into the category of direct or indirect exploiters.^[64]

To be sure, the membership of the Central Committee was increased in 1923 and 1924, but neither among the seventeen new members elected by the Twelfth Congress nor among the fifteen new members elected by the Thirteenth Congress were there "workers of a lower stratum than those promoted in the last five years to work in Soviet bodies." On the contrary, they were party secretaries of towns and regions, a secretary of the Central Trade-Union Council (A. I. Dogadov), a secretary of the Siberian Bureau of the CC (L. V. Kosior), the

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People's Commissar of Foreign Trade (L. B. Krassin), the chairman of the Gosplan, some secretaries of the Central Council of the Young Communist League, some leading personnel of the Supreme Economic Council -- in other words, "eminent" representatives of the higher stratum of the administrative apparatus of the party and the state.

Consequently, Lenin's recommendations aimed at altering the make-up of the CC so as to weaken the representation in it of the right-wing tendency remained without effect. Furthermore, as we know, the Central Committee, though continuing to be an important organ, tended increasingly to play only a secondary role in relation to the Political Bureau and the secretariat: it was in those two organs, closely linked with the higher administrative personnel, that effective power was tending to become concentrated.

Lenin was not unaware of this. It is therefore not surprising that, shortly before he was finally condemned to silence by sickness, and then death, he returned, on December 24, 1922, in his "Letter to the Congress," to the question of the secretariat and the personality of the

General Secretary.

A few days later, on January 4, 1923, in a continuation of his letter to the Twelfth Congress, Lenin came to the conclusion, already mentioned, about the need to remove Stalin from his post as General Secretary. Over and beyond the "personality" of Stalin, Lenin was here aiming his fire at the supporters of a certain type of *political relations* which, instead of permitting ideological struggle to be combined with the struggle for party unity, led to emphasis being put on an imposed unity, sometimes achieved by expelling old Bolshevik cadres, whose criticisms, or even mere reservations, were to be tolerated less and less.

After his disappearance from the political scene, Lenin's last recommendations were not put into practice by those who took complete command of the party leadership. This applied both to his general advice -- which constituted the beginning of a new strategy for leading the poor and middle peasants along the socialist road -- and to his ideas on organizational matters.

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It is therefore not surprising that, after Lenin's death, both the Political Bureau and the Central Committee decided to conceal from the party the existence of his last writings, those which made up what has been called his "Testament." These writings, which were intended for the party congress, were not communicated to that assembly. Krupskaya tried, nevertheless, to ensure that the Thirteenth Congress -- the first to be held after Lenin's death (May 23-31, 1924) -- should be informed of them. She only managed, however, to get agreement for them to be read to a CC meeting reinforced by the most senior party members. At this meeting, after speeches by Zinoviev and Kamenev, the Central Committee decided, by 30 votes to 10, to keep the "Testament" secret and read it only to the heads of delegations to the congress.^[65]

These points concerning Lenin's orientations and the tendencies which he fought against during his last two years of political activity, must not be lost sight of when the balance sheet is drawn of five years of the Russian Revolution.

Notes

1. Broué, *Le Parti bolchévique*, p. 142. [p. 396]
2. On the Tenth Congress and the discussions that preceded it, see the official report of the congress, and *ibid.*, pp. 138-143 and 157 ff. [p. 396]
3. For Bukharin's ideas, see Appendix 16 (*O zadachakh i strukture profsoyuzov*) to the Tenth Congress report, p. 802, quoted in Brinton, *The Bolsheviks & Workers' Control*, p. 72. [p. 396]
4. "Once Again on the Trade Unions," in *CW*, vol. 32, p. 86. [p. 397]
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 86 and 90 ff. [p. 397]
6. Tenth Congress report, p. 190; quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, p. 227 (my emphasis -- CB.). [p. 397]
7. Point 7 of the resolution on the role and tasks of the trade unions adopted by the Tenth Congress, in *K.P.S.S. v Rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 1, p. 540. [p. 398]
8. *CW*, vol. 32, p. 200; see also p. 204. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.). -- DJR] [p. 398]
9. See Lenin's "Summing-up Speech on Party Unity and the Anarcho-Syndicalist Deviation," in *ibid.*, pp. 257 ff. [p. 399]

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10. The resolution banning "factions" was called the "resolution on Party unity." The text is in K.P.S.S. v Rezolyutsiyakh, vol. 1, pp. 527 ff. [p. 399]
11. *CW*, vol. 32, p. 258. [p. 399]
12. *Ibid.*, p. 261. [p. 400]
13. In Part Five we shall see how the very conception of what the NEP meant evolved during the last years of Lenin's active life. [p. 401]
14. *CW*, vol. 32, pp. 195-196. [p. 403]
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[The Party Crisis](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 404]
16. *CW*, vol. 25, p. 421. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's [The State and Revolution](#). -- *DJR*] [p. 405]
17. *CW*, vol. 30, p. 459. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's [Ninth Congress of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#). -- *DJR*] [p. 406]
18. *Ibid.*, p. 459. [p. 406]
19. *CW*, vol. 32, p.325. (Lenin's notes for a draft of his pamphlet *The Tax in Kind*.) [p. 407]
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[The Tax in Kind](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 407]
21. See Kollontai, *The Workers' Opposition*. [p. 408]
22. See *CW*, vol. 32, p. 351. [p. 409]
23. See Lenin's speech at the Second All-Russia Miners' Congress, in *ibid.*, p. 57 [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[The Second All-Russia Congress of Miners](#)". -- *DJR*], and the CC's report to the Tenth Party Congress, in *ibid.*, p. 191. [p. 409]
24. "[On Slogans](#)," in *CW*, vol. 25, p. 185. [p. 412]
25. Quoted in *Peking Review*, September 7, 1973, p. 21. [p. 414]
26. This question is clearly discussed by Lenin in his pamphlet *Once More on the Trade Unions*, in *CW*, vol. 32, p. 80. [p. 415]
27. An opposition which develops in this way does not conform to the principle of "going against the tide," as has been noted previously. [p. 415]
28. Illness obliged Lenin to withdraw from his leading work for the first time at the end of 1921, then for a longer period between the end of May 1922 and October of that year, and finally in December 1922. His political activity ceased altogether in March 1923. Before that date, even when he was not in a position to lead, he frequently intervened by writing letters, notes, and articles. [p. 416]
29. This was a conference on economic problems of the Baltic region, held at Riga on October 28-31, 1921. The conditions for developing Russia's external trade were discussed there. V. P. Milyutin headed the Soviet delegation. [p. 416]
30. On these divergences regarding the foreign-trade monopoly, see *CW*, vol. 42, p. 418, 599-600 [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Note to J. V. Stalin with a Draft Decision for the Politbureau of the C.C., R.C.P.\(B.\) on the Question of the Foreign Trade Monopoly](#)," and the endnote of that text. -- *DJR*], and vol. 45, pp. 549-550, 739-740 [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Letter to J. V. Stalin and M. I. Frumkin and the Assignment Secretary](#)," and the endnote of that text. -- *DJR*]. [p. 417]
31. *CW*, vol. 45, pp. 550, 740. [p. 417]
32. *CW*, vol. 33, p. 375. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Letter to J. V. Stalin for Members of the C.C., R.C.P.\(B.\) Re the Foreign Trade Monopoly](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 418]
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 455-459, 528-529, 535-536. [*Transcriber's Note*: See, respectively, Lenin's "[Re the Monopoly of Foreign Trade](#)," the endnote to "[Letter to J. V. Stalin for Members of the C.C., R.C.P.\(B.\) Re the Foreign Trade Monopoly](#)," and the endnote to first named text. -- *DJR*] [p. 418]

34. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 4, pp. 32-33. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Stalin's "[Speeches Delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies](#)". -- DJR] [p. 419]
35. See Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, ch. 7. [p. 419]
36. Report of the Eighth Party Congress, published in Moscow in 1933 and reissued in 1939, pp. 49 and 80-81; quoted in Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 274. [p. 420]
37. Lenin's report to the Eighth Congress, March 19, 1919, on the party program, in *CW*, vol. 29, pp. 171-172. [p. 420]
38. *K.P.S.S. v Rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 1, p. 417. (Translated in appendix to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism*, p. 440.) [p. 421]
39. We have seen earlier that the question of relations between Soviet Russia, and the non-Russian peoples was a matter of fundamental importance, politically and theoretically. Correct handling of these relations was necessary for the application of a political line that would enable the proletariat to play an effective leading role in relation to the revolutionary movement of the peoples oppressed by imperialism and colonialism. More broadly, what was involved here was the maintenance of the proletariat's leading role in relation to the various forms of the democratic revolutionary movement: hence the decisive importance that Lenin ascribed to this problem. [p. 421]
40. *CW*, vol. 42, pp.421-423. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[On the Establishment of the U.S.S.R.](#)". -- DJR] In this letter Lenin stressed that all the members of the federation must be "equal republics" (p. 422). [p. 422]
41. *Ibid.*, p. 602. [*Transcriber's Note*: This is the endnote to the preceding text. -- DJR] [p. 422]
42. Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, pp. 51-53. [p. 422]
43. Anna Louise Strong mentions that one of the changes introduced by Stalin into the text which Lenin had read concerned a new measure with considerable political implications, namely, centralization of the political police, as a result of which the latter was no longer under "local rule," but exclusively controlled from Moscow. See Strong, *The Stalin Era*, p. 16. [p. 422]
44. *CW*, vol. 33, p. 372. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Memo to the Political Bureau on Combatting Dominant Nation Chauvinism](#)". -- DJR] Contrary to the usual practice, the letter is not accompanied in this edition by an explanatory note: and the commentary by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism which accompanies the letter sent by Lenin to Kamenev on September 26 (see *CW*, vol. 42, pp. 421-423, 602-605) implies that the resolution passed by the CC on October 6 was in conformity with Lenin's views -- which renders incomprehensible the letter written by Lenin on that same day. [p. 422]
45. *CW*, vol. 36, p. 608. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'](#)". -- DJR] [p. 423]

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46. *Ibid.* [p. 423]
47. *Ibid.*, p. 606. [p. 423]
48. *Ibid.*, p. 610. [p. 424]
49. My emphasis -- C.B. This phrase shows that, for Lenin, there could be other "imperialist" relations besides those that were rooted in the existence of private monopolies and finance capital. [p. 424]
50. *CW*, vol. 36, pp. 610-611. [p. 424]
51. The popular nicknames used in everyday Russian speech when referring to these "non-Russian elements" were denounced by Lenin as expressions of big-power nationalism (*ibid.*, p. 608). [p. 425]
52. The Central Committees of the party in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia eventually yielded to the pressure brought to bear on them, so that relations between the members of these bodies and the

- general secretariat of the Russian party did not deteriorate so obviously as happened in the case of Georgia. [p. 425]
53. On October 22, 1922, the Georgian CC protested against the attitude of the Russian party secretariat by taking an exceptional step: nine of its eleven members resigned as a body. [p. 425]
54. *CW*, vol. 36, p. 605. [p. 426]
55. It was on April 3, 1922, that Stalin, who until then had borne the title of "Secretary," became "General Secretary." [p. 427]
56. *CW*, vol. 42, p. 620. This volume includes the [service diary](#) kept by Lenin's secretaries between November 21, 1922, and March 6, 1923 (*ibid.*, pp. 465-494), which enables us to follow the struggle carried on by Lenin, immobilized as he was by illness, against the development of right-wing and Great-Russian nationalist tendencies and against an authoritarian and bureaucratic style of leadership. [p. 427]
57. *Ibid.*, p. 621. [p. 427]
58. *CW*, vol. 36, p. 610. [p. 427]
59. These letters were dated March 5 and 6, 1923, respectively. See *CW*, vol. 45, pp. 607-608. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's letters "[To L. D. Trotsky](#)" and "[To Comrade Stalin](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 427]
60. *Ibid.*, p. 608. [p. 427]
61. *CW*, vol. 33, pp. 39-40. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Purging the Party](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 428]
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 489-490. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Better Fewer, But Better](#)". -- *DJR*] [p. 429]
63. What is known as "Lenin's Testament" is made up of a series of writings dictated mainly between December 23 and 26, 1922, and completed at the beginning of 1923. These writings were intended for communication to the Twelfth Party Congress, to be held between April 17 and 25, 1923. [p. 429]

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64. *CW*, vol. 36, p. 597. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[Letter to the Congress](#)". -- *DJR*] This, like the rest of "Lenin's Testament" was officially published in Russia for the first time in 1956, in no. 9 of the review *Kommunist*. [p. 429]
65. It was this oral communication to a restricted group that was still presented, when the "Testament" was officially published in 1956, as a communication to the congress "in accordance with Lenin's wish." See *CW*, vol. 36, pp. 712-713, n. 653. [*Transcriber's Note*: This is the endnote to Lenin's "Letter to the Congress". -- *DJR*] [p. 431]

From Marx to Mao	Other Documents	Reading Guide	On to Section 5, Bettelheim's Text
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