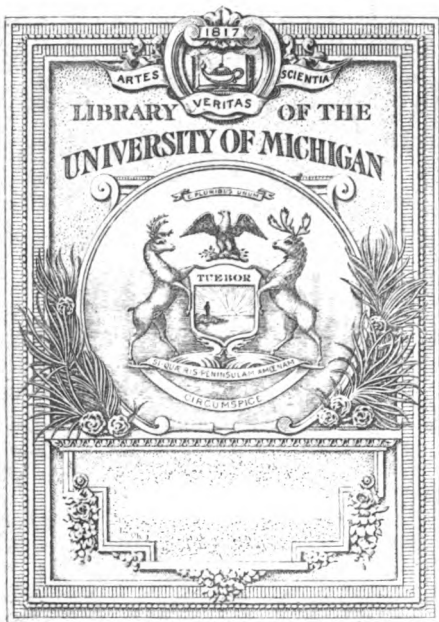
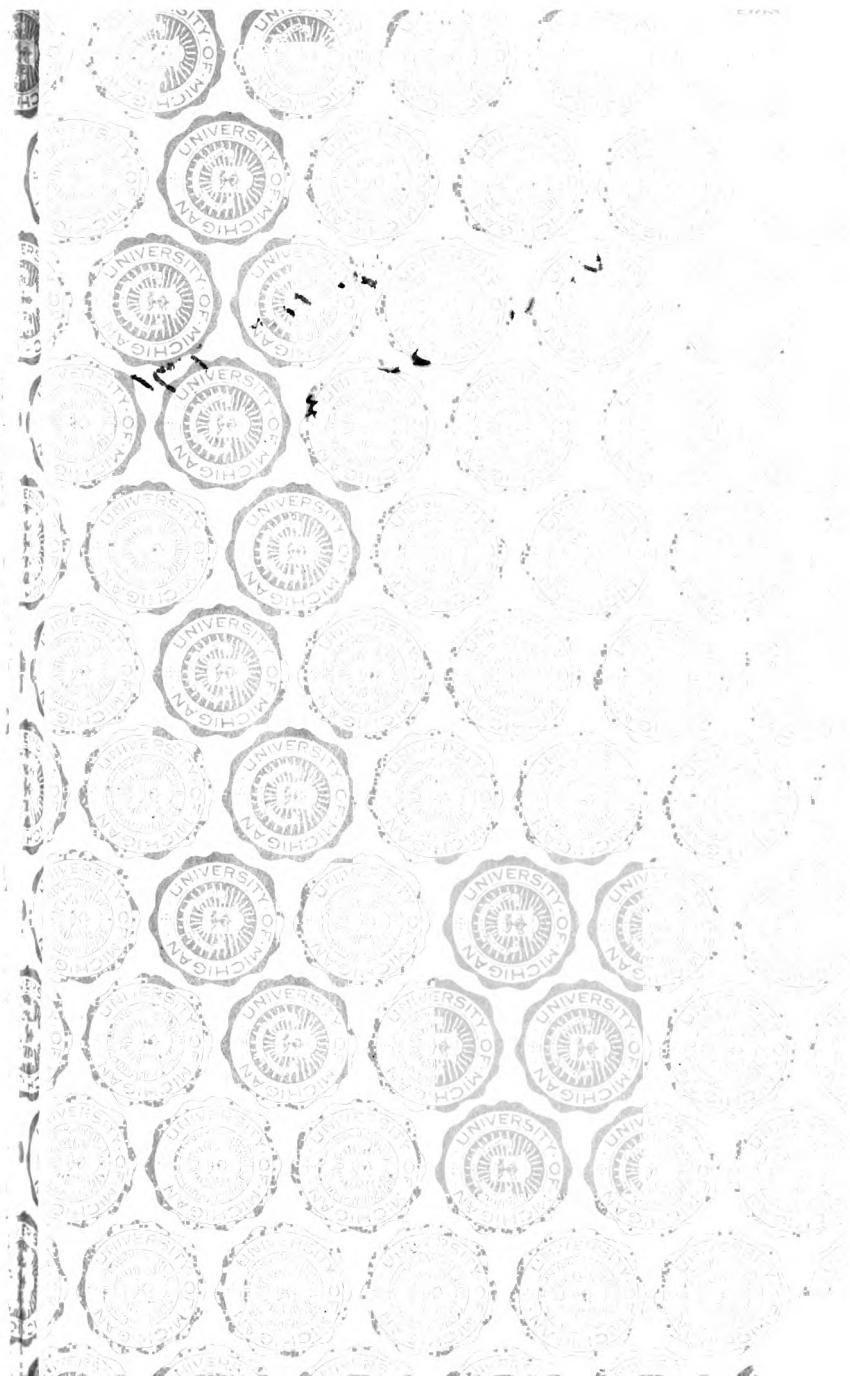


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**Since  
Lenin  
Died**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

ENJOYMENT OF POETRY.

THE SENSE OF HUMOUR.

JOURNALISM VERSUS ART.

COLOURS OF LIFE, POEMS, AND  
SONGS AND SONNETS.

LEON TROTSKY, THE PORTRAIT  
OF A YOUTH.

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# Since Lenin Died

By Max Eastman



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# SINCE LENIN DIED

## CHAPTER I

### LENIN AND TROTSKY

NOTHING that has happened in Russia has been so misunderstood by the entire Western world as the crisis in the Communist Party which has thrown into a silenced opposition men like Trotsky, Rakovsky, Radek, Antonov, Pitiakov, Krestinsky, Preobrazhensky, and many more of the intimate friends and aides of Lenin, and concentrated the whole ruling power in the hands of a group dominated by Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev. And yet there is nothing which the workers of other countries, who look to Moscow for leadership, have a more natural right to understand. As I was in Russia during the whole development of this dispute, and attended the convention of the party in which it reached its climax, and as I have the good fortune not to be separated by the barrier of language from the real facts and ideas involved, I think it will be useful if I explain the thing frankly and completely as it appears to me. I have hesitated to do this for over six months, because I wanted to be sure that I should serve not merely the ends of historic truth, or personal justice, but the real strategy of the revolution. I am convinced now that it is time for somebody to state a few facts exactly as he sees them, and not as they are dictated to him by a temporary political purpose or position.

In order to understand what has happened, it is necessary to know the history of the relations between Lenin and Trotsky. Their friendship began in 1902, when Trotsky, escaping from Siberia, came to London to put himself at the service of that "Organisation of Professional Revolutionists," which Lenin was forming around the underground journal *Iskra*. Although Trotsky was only twenty-three years old, Lenin recognised his magnificent abilities instantly, and was only prevented by his older colleague, Plekhanov, from making him one of the editors of *Iskra*. He admired Trotsky with that wholehearted revolutionary affection which was the romantic motive in his life. They were so close together politically that in the early days of the great convention of the party in 1903, Trotsky received the nickname among the delegates of "Lenin's Big Stick." It was at that convention that the split arose between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Trotsky tried at first to prevent this split, and then he tried to mend it. And when Lenin proved inexorable, and ready to break with all the other editors of *Iskra*, including Plekhanov, the "father of Russian Marxism," and including also Trotsky's best friends and daily companions, Trotsky reacted strongly against him.

For a few months after that split—which was about a question of organisation—Trotsky went into the camp of the Mensheviks. But as soon as their political tendency began to define itself—the tendency to co-operate with the liberal bourgeoisie, instead of relying upon the peasants to support the working class in a popular revolution—Trotsky realised that he could not work with them. He sensed the compromise here, and withdrew from the Menshevik faction. But he did not reconcile himself to the organisational lines

drawn by Lenin. He stood alone between the two factions, still believing that the real party consisted of the sincere Marxians in both camps, and devoting himself loyally to the foolish task of trying to unite them. Doubtless a personal pride contributed to the stubbornness and long duration of Trotsky's opposition to Lenin. The two factions were compelled to work together in the revolution of 1905, and Trotsky, still standing between them, became a president of the revolutionary Soviet of St. Petersburg, and the chosen leader of the first Russian revolution. Under the shadow of the Czar's palace he publicly prepared an insurrection, and actually wielded for some days an authority in Russia exceeding that of the Czar. It would have been a miracle if a young man of an oppressed race, rising to that height at the age of twenty-six, had remained free from all pride of opinion.

Trotsky's pride of opinion was supported, moreover, by a piece of political thinking as far-sighted as any of those which foretold the events of 1917. Rejecting the theory of the Mensheviks that the Russian revolution would end in a bourgeois republic, and also the slogan with which Lenin opposed them, the "democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants," he adopted from Marx the concept of "permanent revolution." He declared that the Russian revolution, once begun, and led by determined Marxists, would not stop at either of these preliminary stages, but would develop straight forward to a dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasants, and opening an epoch of international revolution. This realistic prediction, and the resolute and yet flexible concept of "permanent revolution," were peculiarly akin to the intellectual method of Lenin. They led Trotsky

straight to Lenin's side at the time when the real work began, the spring of 1917, when many of the oldest "Leninists" jumped away in fright at the audacity of his programme. At that time Lenin himself was entertaining the possibility of co-operating with the more revolutionary Mensheviks, and there was not the slightest divergence of opinion between him and Trotsky—for Lenin's ideas were never fixed, and he never regarded his whole past course as faultless and infallible. But events soon taught them both the impossibility of co-operating with Mensheviks. Events taught them that Lenin had been right in drawing an inexorable line between these two factions, and Trotsky had been wholly wrong. Trotsky began to realise that, although his political analysis of the coming revolution had been the more happy, Lenin had created an organisation and invented a political method, or system of revolutionary engineering, wholly beyond the scope of his genius. His pride of opinion did not prevent him from acknowledging this fact and accepting the leadership of Lenin absolutely. "I came to Lenin fighting," he says, "but I came unreservedly and all the way."

Trotsky is a proud man, and he has that consciousness of his own self that proud men have, and that makes their relations with people too personal.\* And, moreover, he has an instinctive self-confidence, an unthinking aggressiveness of will, that is at times almost ludicrous, and at other times—or from other points of view—presumptuous. This makes it easy to say derogatory things about him, and get them believed. But those who know Trotsky intimately, all of them, know that the iron core of his character is a selfless and

\* See Appendix I.



fearless, and to use just the accurate word for it—saintly, devotion to the revolution. And no one knew this better than Lenin. Lenin always believed in Trotsky. He attacked him violently enough, as he invariably attacked people who he believed were making even temporary mistakes. But he never identified him with the Mensheviks. He never broke with him, as he did with Plekhanov, Martov—with all those whom he felt had gone over, whether consciously or unconsciously, to the side of the bourgeoisie. He always regarded Trotsky as one of the real leaders of the Russian revolution, and always thought of him as a comrade in arms. It is well known among Trotsky's friends that he received a letter from Lenin's wife some days after Lenin died, reminding him of their early friendship in London, and assuring him that Lenin's feelings towards him had never changed from then until the day of his death. Lenin's wife shared his confidence completely; and her statement derives an added significance from the fact that it was written after the attack of Stalin, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others, upon Trotsky's character and authority as a Bolshevik had been raging in the party Press for almost two months, and after a special conference of party officials called by them for that purpose had formally branded Trotsky as an enemy of "Leninism."

Trotsky's tributes to the genius of Lenin in all his speeches and writings are such as to sweep out of thought the suggestion that he pretends to be Lenin's equal, or stand beside him in historic importance. But notwithstanding this fact, there has always existed among certain groups of the old followers of Lenin an extreme jealousy of Trotsky. It is nourished by Trotsky's self-assurance and his lack of personal tact,

but it is natural enough in any case. Trotsky seems to them a newcomer, and, by contrast with Lenin's far more prodigious gift of practical thinking, the brilliant endowment, the picturesque and thrilling personality of Trotsky seem to them alien and unreliable. They cannot estimate Trotsky as a certain individual, namely himself, but they see him always as a personality which puts up claims to stand beside Lenin. And all the general population of the globe, including Lenin himself, have contributed to this exasperating thing. Lenin himself used the phrase "Lenin and Trotsky," exactly as it was used by the rest of us in the public Press.\* He was always at pains to support the growing prestige of Trotsky, and to deny the least rumour of a disharmony between them. Even Gorki was surprised at the warmth with which Lenin denied such rumours, and affirmed the greatness of Trotsky.

"They lie a lot, it seems, an awful lot, about me and Trotsky!" Lenin said to Gorki. And then, striking his fist on the table: "Show me another man who could organise almost a model army in a single year—yes, and win the respect of military experts!"†

Trotsky recounts in a little book of his memories of Lenin during the revolution a moment when Lenin suddenly said to him, "What if they kill you and me, can Bucharin and Sverdlov get away with it?"

"Perhaps they won't kill us," Trotsky answered jokingly.

"The devil knows about them," Lenin answered, and laughed.

That anecdote is a reminder, and, of course, a

\* I have in mind his comment on a counter-revolutionary romance published in Paris. As I have not his complete works here, I cannot cite the volume and page.

† Gorki, "Vladimir Lenin," in the *Russky Sovremennik*, Vol. I., No. 1.

deliberate reminder, of the relation which existed among the leaders during the critical days of the revolution and the formation of the Soviet Government. Lenin knew, just as all the world knows, that Trotsky stood head and shoulders above the other Bolsheviks, both in personal force and revolutionary understanding. It is absurd to debate this question, and drag up records of the disagreements\* between Lenin and Trotsky—as though having always agreed with Lenin were the basis upon which you could judge the merits of a disciple.†

Such questions are not decided by debates and gossipy recollections, but they are decided by a man's acts. And ever since Trotsky joined hands with the Bolsheviks, at every single point where it was possible to put a man in a position of supreme importance, both from the standpoint of prestige and from the standpoint of service to the revolution, Lenin proposed Trotsky for that position. Trotsky was elected with Lenin's support to the presidency of the Petrograd Soviet in the summer of 1917, and in that all-powerful position, while Lenin in hiding was guiding the deeper currents of the revolution, Trotsky made all the immediate great decisions which it was necessary for a general in the field to make. In that position, while

\* See Appendix II.

† Having once invented and stood out for a fundamental change of programme, which Lenin opposed and was subsequently convinced of, as Trotsky did in the important matter of "Government Planning," is worth all the impeccable records of "agreeing with Lenin," which go to make up the mere popular history of the whole epoch. Agreeing with Lenin is certainly the easiest task that an uncreative and unthinking revolutionist could set himself.

I quote this sentence from a "Note" about Government planning, dictated by Lenin in December, 1922: "Trotsky advanced this idea, it seems, a good while ago. I appeared as his opponent then because I thought that in such an event there would be a fundamental disaccord in our system of legislative institutions. But after an attentive investigation of the thing, I find that, in the essence, there is a healthy idea here. . . ."

Zinoviev and Kamenev, and many others of the faithful followers of Lenin in easier times deserted the advancing banners of the party, Trotsky marshalled the workers and soldiers of Russia for the Bolshevik insurrection. And when the power was seized and it came to the formation of the revolutionary Government, Trotsky was appointed to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Why? Not because of any genius for diplomacy; a certain lack of diplomacy belongs to the essence of Trotsky's genius. He was appointed to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs because that is by general acceptance the second position in any Government, and because at that particular moment in the international revolution it was the position which required the most reliable audacity and the most comprehensive understanding. And when the situation passed out of that phase and into the phase of war, Trotsky was appointed to organise the first Communist army and defend the life of the revolution. He saved the life of the revolution. And when the last crisis came, when Lenin fell sick and was compelled to withdraw from the Government, he turned again to Trotsky and asked him to take his place as President of the Soviet of People's Commissars and of the Council of Labour and Defence. And, moreover, when Trotsky declined, Lenin did not turn to any other strong man; he passed over the heads of those who might conceivably imagine themselves to be rivals of Trotsky, and divided the position among three men who are obviously not leaders.\* In the face of these acts, to doubt the unique reliance which Lenin placed upon the force and devotion and revolutionary understanding of Trotsky is simply absurd.

\* Rykov, Tzuryupov, and Kamenev.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ANTI-BONAPARTE FRACTION

A LEGEND has been created and carefully nourished by those now in power in Russia that Trotsky attempted to use his popularity, after Lenin's death, in order to manoeuvre himself into a position of leadership that Lenin did not want him to have. The fact that Lenin urged upon Trotsky his place at the head of the Government, and that Trotsky declined it, completely discredits this legend. But it leaves a perplexing question in its place. *Why* did Trotsky decline the elevated position which Lenin offered him? The correct answer to that question will give you the key to everything that follows. He declined it because he has no idea whatever of personal political manoeuvring. He has nothing but a complete incapacity for it. He is not only unable to play this game for personal motives, but he is unable to play it when his most impersonal ideals demand that he should. He knows how to fight his enemies, but he does not know how to manage his friends. He does not know how to manipulate men. He has no impulse to do it. He never thinks of it. That is his great weakness.

If Trotsky had appeared at the first break as Lenin's substitute, the whole party and the whole world would have been set right about their relations, and more than half of what has happened would have been impossible; and certainly any man consciously entering a struggle

for power would have grabbed this first and obviously essential strategic moment. Trotsky was incapable of seeing his duty as a struggle for personal power within the party. He was incapable of living the life of the party in those terms. "An intellectual struggle within the party," he said once, "does not mean mutual rejection, but mutual influence." \* And he continued to act upon this maxim after Lenin withdrew, although it then quite obviously ceased to be true. Stalin and Zinoviev and Kamenev had already, at the very beginning of Lenin's decline, formed a block against Trotsky in the Politburo, the ruling committee of the party. Trotsky was in a continual minority there at the source of power. He knew that he would be baulked at every point as the head of the Government. He knew, I suppose, his own inability to wheedle and coax. He is a natural commander. The situation was complicated, moreover, by his disagreement with Lenin upon that fundamental question of "Government planning," upon which Lenin subsequently yielded to him. All this would have made no difference if he had seen the situation as the "triumvirate" saw it—as a struggle for power in the future. He saw it as an impossible situation in the present. And with a quixotic objectiveness which is far harder to understand than calculating ambition, he declined Lenin's proposal that he should become the head of the Soviet Government, and thus of the revolutionary movement of the world. That peculiar reaction—an over-correction, perhaps, of the personal egotism which would dominate a simpler man in such a situation—does not command my admiration. I think it is a misfortune, but it is the fact about Trotsky's action at this time, and about his character

\* See Appendix II.

in general. And without understanding this fact and this character you will not understand the events that followed.

This act of Trotsky's was simply an invitation to his enemies to perfect and solidify the block which they had already formed against him among the leaders of the party. With Stalin—who possesses all the craftiness that Trotsky lacks—in the key position as secretary of the party, and with Zinoviev enthusiastically cooperating, Kamenev not unwilling, and Bucharin easy to influence, they proceeded, by all those subtle means which the reader understands, to build up an efficient political machine for grabbing and holding the power within the party. The ideology which served them in building up this fractional machine in a party in which fractions are forbidden, was that Trotsky is a potential Bonaparte—or a potential Danton, there was some disagreement about this at the beginning!—and that the revolution must be saved from the danger involved in his popularity.

There are two mistakes which you can make here. One is to imagine that this fractional machine was not deliberately built up, and built up for this specific purpose. The other is to imagine that mere personal ambition was the motive to it. These men were undoubtedly aided by their own thirst of power in arriving at the conviction that they were the true Bolsheviks, and that there was something fundamentally wrong with Trotsky. But the conviction was nevertheless sincere and profound. It is largely explained by the fact that Trotsky stands so high above all the others, both in intellect and self-dependent force, that if he gained an ascendant influence, he would inevitably occupy a position similar to that of Lenin. He would be

a single leader. Whereas if his ascendancy could be prevented, there would be no leader—just a group of the old disciples of Lenin, replacing him with their collective wisdom. It is perfectly intelligible that people who loved Lenin, and had so long followed him, should resent the idea of any leader in his place. Many even of the heartiest admirers of Trotsky felt this emotion. It was easy for his enemies to persuade themselves that in forming a conspiracy against him—a company which can best be described as “Bonaparte Limited”—they were not serving their own selfish ambitions, but the true interests of “Leninism.”

They did persuade themselves of this. And since it was not objectively true, it carried them into the most extreme absurdity and inconsistency. It carried them to the point of *suppressing the writings of Lenin himself*, in order to make sure that “Leninism” should not suffer from the increasing prestige which those writings insisted upon giving to Trotsky.

For Lenin did not stop with a formal offer of his place of leadership to Trotsky. He continued to regard Trotsky as his best representative, and the real defender of his policies in the party councils. Lenin fell sick for the last time in the late autumn of 1922, but from his house in the country he exercised a guiding influence in the party until March, 1923, when a complete collapse withdrew him from political life. And during that last winter when he was compelled to act indirectly, he appealed to Trotsky on three different occasions, and with increasing anxiety, to defend their common policies against this group which had taken control in his absence. The first time it was upon the all-important question of the monopoly of foreign trade. The controlling group had passed a resolution introducing

exceptions into this fundamental principle of Lenin's policy. Trotsky objected; and Lenin, after an extended correspondence with him, stated in a letter dated December, 1922, that he and Trotsky were in "maximum agreement," and delegated to him the defence of their common view-point at the coming convention of the party. At that convention—in April, 1923—Trotsky laid down the principle, now universally accepted, that the monopoly of foreign trade is "one of the pillars of the Socialist dictatorship in the circumstances of capitalist encirclement."

The second time when Lenin called upon Trotsky to defend their common policy, an even more fundamental feature of "Leninism" was at stake—namely, his views on the "National Question." Stalin and Djerzinsky had been sent to Georgia to investigate a dispute involving the autonomy of the smaller republics entering into the Socialist Soviet Union. Their investigation had apparently made things worse instead of better, and Lenin wrote a series of three "Notes"—also in December, 1922—in which he criticised their abandonment of his policies in very extreme language. He said, among other things:

"I think the hastiness and administrative impulsiveness of Stalin played a fatal rôle here, and also his spite against the notorious 'social-chauvinism'; spite in general plays the worst possible rôle in politics. I fear also that Djerzinsky . . . distinguished himself by his true Russian disposition (it is well known that Russified people of foreign birth always overshoot themselves in the matter of the true Russian disposition). . . ."

I wrote long ago in my works on the national question, that an abstract presentation of the question of nationalities is of no use whatever. It is necessary to distinguish the

\* Djerzinsky is of Polish origin.

nationalism of the oppressing nations from the nationalism of the oppressed. . . .

Internationalism from the side of the oppressing, or so-called great nations (although they are great only in their violations) must consist in observing not only a formal equality, but an equality which would destroy upon their side that inequality which is created factually in real life. Any one who has not understood this, decidedly does not understand the proletarian attitude to the national question; he remains essentially at the petty-bourgeois view-point, and therefore may slide at any moment into the bourgeois view-point. . . .

It behooves us to hold Stalin and Djerzinsky politically responsible for this genuine great Russian nationalistic campaign."

It was in his effort to combat this campaign, and check the further influence of the view-point of Stalin and Djerzinsky at the party convention, that Lenin turned to Trotsky. The great significance of the following letter is obvious. It was written when Lenin was exiled to the country, but still exercising a guiding influence in the Government. It was a few weeks before the relapse which withdrew him entirely from politics.

" *March 5, 1923.*

*Strictly Secret, Personal.*

ESTEEMED COMRADE TROTSKY,—I would earnestly request you to take upon yourself the defence of the Georgian affair at the party convention. That affair is now under investigation at the hands of Stalin and Djerzinsky. I cannot rely upon their impartiality, indeed just the contrary. If you would agree to undertake its defence, then I could be at rest. If for some reason you do not agree, then return to me all the papers. I will regard it as a sign of your disagreement.

With the very best comradely greetings,

LENIN."

With this letter to Trotsky, Lenin enclosed an article on the national question, and the three "Notes" from which I have quoted. And he instructed his secretary to write at the same time to Kamenev, then Chairman

of the "Politburo," \* stating that he had intended to speak at the coming convention on the national question, that he regarded this article as of leading importance, and attributed great significance to it, and that he had authorised Trotsky to defend their common position. This letter to Kamenev he enclosed to Trotsky.

Trotsky immediately communicated to the Central Committee of the party the letter of Lenin, his article, and the three "Notes," stating that he was in full accord with the view-point of Lenin. He said that in view of the leading importance of these writings he had made a copy for himself. And he added that since it was evident, both from the letter to him and the letter to Kamenev, that Lenin intended his article to be read at the party convention, he would await an answer from the Central Committee as to whether they agreed to read it or not. A disagreement he would consider a tacit desire to conceal it, and for that he disclaimed all responsibility before the party.

The article which Lenin considered of "leading importance," and which he designed to have read at the party convention, but which constituted a direct attack upon the authority of Stalin, and a corresponding endorsement of the authority of Trotsky, was not read at the party convention, the triumvirate deciding that it was for the welfare of the party to suppress it.

The third appeal which Lenin made to Trotsky in those last days, was literally a cry for help against the suppression of his writings by this intra-party machine. And again it was an attack upon the authority of Stalin, and indirectly a confirmation of the authority of Trotsky,

\* The group of seven members of the Central Committee of the party—the governing authority in Russia.

that the machine was suppressing. Lenin's article was a demand for the reorganisation of a commissariat called "Workers' and Peasants' Inspection." This commissariat had been designed by Lenin to exercise the direct control of the party over the Government, and its *personnel* was identical with that of the "Central Control Committee" of the party. Stalin had stood for a long time at the head of this commissariat—to which Lenin had really confided the task of making the Government follow the lines of scientific communism. Trotsky moreover had long criticised the conduct of it. Nothing could be more disastrous to the authority of Stalin, and to the machine of which he was the centre, than an attack by Lenin himself upon this commissariat. And Lenin's attack was absolutely denunciatory and unqualified.

"The People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection does not enjoy at the present time a shadow of authority. Everybody knows that a worse organised institution than this one does not exist, and that under the present conditions you can ask nothing whatever of this institution."

Bucharin, the editor of *Pravda*, who had already come under the influence of the anti-Trotsky machine, withheld Lenin's article from publication. Lenin, not seeing his article in *Pravda*, became very much agitated, and asked his wife to telephone and insist upon its immediate publication. She did this, and she added that Lenin was dangerously agitated by its non-appearance. The article did not appear, however, and again Lenin was compelled to appeal to Trotsky to interfere on behalf of their common view-point. At his direction his wife telephoned to Trotsky, saying that Lenin requested him to insist upon the immediate publication of his article. Trotsky did as Lenin requested, and in view



of the resistance offered, he proposed an immediate meeting of the Politburo. All those present at the meeting, including the secretaries, were not only against the policies proposed by Lenin, but they were against the publication of the article. And one of the secretaries, Kuibishev, proposed that they should print one number of *Pravda* containing the article, in order to show it to Lenin and quiet his agitation, but conceal the article from the party. Trotsky, backed up by the authority of Lenin and the fear of a premature scandal, succeeded in overcoming the resistance of Stalin's machine, and the article was published. But the degree to which the policies outlined by Lenin have been followed may be inferred from the fact that Kuibishev, the ingenious secretary, is now the People's Commissioner of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, and the head of the Central Control Committee of the party.\*

Of course Stalin and his supporters would defend their action by saying that Lenin, having been confined in the country for four months, was out of touch with the actual situation. They could not pretend that he was not in the full possession of his faculties, because the article itself is a piece of political thinking as masterly as any that Lenin ever did. The title, "Better Less and Better," has become a Communist proverb. And the article has been regarded by the members of the party, ignorant of its history, as a landmark in Soviet policy. Sentences from it have even been quoted by the triumvirate in order to prove to the party that there was a divergence of policy between Trotsky and Lenin!

Just where Trotsky stood in relation to the policies

\* The committee which looks after the Communist ethics of the members and controls the placing of them in the Government.

of Lenin is illustrated in a subsequent incident, involving this same secretary and Kommissar, Kuibeshev. The Politburo was discussing changes in the organisation of the Red Army, designed to weaken the power of Trotsky. Trotsky frankly stated to them that the real motive of their act had nothing in common with the motives officially announced. And Kuibeshev answered him just as frankly :

“ We consider it necessary to fight you, and we cannot declare you an enemy ; that is why we are compelled to resort to such methods.” \*

It could hardly be an accident that the necessity to hoodwink Lenin and the necessity to fight Trotsky should have been voiced by the same man—and that man subsequently advanced into one of the most responsible posts in the party and the Government. It goes to prove what all these other facts and documents prove—that there was a condition of sharp conflict in the governing circles of the party, both before and after Lenin’s final collapse, and that the alignment of forces

\* There is no mystery about my possession of this and the foregoing information ; it is all contained in official documents stolen by counter-revolutionists and published in Russian, at Berlin, in the *Sotzialisticheskyy Vestnik*. This paper, which is a remnant of Menshevism, publishes a great deal of nonsense and irresponsible rumour about Russia, but the authenticity of these documents is recognised by the Bolsheviks. I took pains to assure myself of it absolutely before leaving Russia. One of the documents is a letter of Trotsky to the Central Committee, answering an intimation that he was opposed to “ Leninism.” It is that letter which verified all the facts related above—most of which I had already found out in a less precise way in Russia. It is needless to say that I never spoke about any of these matters with Trotsky. I conversed with him only twice after this dispute began, and for about twenty minutes in all. Our first conversation was in regard to my biographical portrait of his youth. It occurred, however, in the midst of the clamour about “ The New Course,” and I asked him one or two questions about that. All that I learned from him I have attributed to him in the text. Subsequently I met him for a moment accidentally ; I told him then that I knew about “ The Testament of Lenin,” and he told me to regard whatever I knew as an “ absolute secret.” That has been an additional reason for my delay in writing this article.

in that conflict was exactly opposite to what has been sedulously advertised by the victorious group. Trotsky with his back to the wall—and without any signs of tact or political subtlety—was defending the policies of Lenin against an opposing group, who were acting with an eye to power in the future.

The friendship of Lenin and Trotsky ended as it began, with Trotsky in the rôle of Lenin's Big Stick.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TESTAMENT OF LENIN

LENIN evidently knew the drift of things in the Central Committee during those last months. And he had the intention to correct it at the forthcoming convention of the party. But he also knew that he might not be able to attend the convention—he knew, as they did, that he might drop out of the scene at any moment—and so he wrote a letter to the party, to be read at that convention.\* This letter, which was an express warning of the danger of a split in the party, and an attempt to avert it, went directly to the question of personal authority. Lenin confided it to his wife. She did not read it at the ensuing convention of the party (April, 1923), because although Lenin had suffered a severe relapse, and withdrawn completely from active life, still the doctors assured her that there was a hope of his return. And at the next convention (May, 1924), the machine organised by Stalin and Zinoviev was already strong enough to defy the last will and testament of Lenin. The central committee of the party, by a vote of about thirty against ten—and against the demand of Lenin's wife—decided not to read his last letter to the party.† Thus one of the most solemn and carefully weighed utterances that ever came from

\* The letter was written early in the winter of 1922-23.

† They decided that it might be read and explained privately to the delegates—kept within the bureaucracy, that is to say—but not put before the party for discussion, as Lenin directed.

Lenin's pen, was suppressed—in the interests of “Leninism”—by that triumvirate\* of “Old Bolsheviks,” Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who govern the Russian Communist Party.

What does the letter say about these Old Bolsheviks? Of Stalin, it says that he has concentrated too much power in his hands, and it demands that he be removed from his dominating position as secretary of the party. It criticises his character as “too brutal.”

Of Zinoviev and Kamenev it says just one thing: “Their retreat in October was not accidental.” That this is the most damaging thing Lenin could say about them, from the standpoint of their authority as Bolsheviks, will not appear immediately to the English reader. I advise him to examine Lenin's own characterisation of that “retreat”—the Russian word also means “apostacy”—which I have translated in Appendix III. There were, in fact, two retreats at two different times, and Lenin characterised Zinoviev and Kamenev the first time as “strike-breakers” and “traitors,” and the second time as “unbelievers,” “waverers,” “doubters,” “deserters,” “strike-breakers,” and surrenderers to the bourgeoisie. The first retreat was immediately before the revolution of October, the second was immediately after it. That Lenin so judged these men throughout the most critical days in the life of the party, had been by common consent forgotten. Their ability and prestige were needful to him, and neither of them ever opposed him upon a vital question again. Faced with the

\* I adopt the word “triumvirate” from the popular talk in Russia. It was these three, working together, who maintained a balance of power against Trotsky in the Politburo when Lenin fell sick, and they formed the nucleus of the subsequent movement against him. Kamenev is decidedly subordinate, and there is at present a bitter rivalry between Stalin and Zinoviev.

probability of his own death, however, Lenin saw fit to remind the party of that incident, and declare that their behaviour above characterised was "not accidental."

Lenin said in his "Testament," that of the younger men the two most promising were Bucharin and Pitiakov. He did not qualify his praise of Pitiakov—who has stood with Trotsky throughout this crisis. His praise of Bucharin he did qualify in a very damaging way. Bucharin's prestige rests, by about one-half, upon his personal popularity. Revolutionary self-denial and devotion and courage and simplicity of life, are the causes of it. The other half of his prestige rests upon a supposed theoretic mastery of the Marxian philosophy. Bucharin has written a book about Historic Materialism, which is at once so scholarly in appearance, and so utterly undigested and confusing to the brain, that most people are willing to concede his mastery of Marxism in order to avoid having to read and study this book. What Lenin said about Bucharin is that he "does not understand the Marxian dialectic"—which means that he does not know how to think with the method of Lenin—and that he is scholastic. "His head is full of books," is about the expression that Lenin used.

What makes these attacks upon the authority of Stalin and Zinoviev and Kamenev and Bucharin so significant, is that Lenin's letter began with the statement that Trotsky, in spite of his "too great self-confidence," is "a devoted revolutionist," and "the outstanding member of the Central Committee." \*

\* The reader can rely absolutely upon the phrases from this letter which I have placed in quotation marks. They were verbally agreed upon by three responsible Communists in Russia, whom I interviewed

There exist enormous rumours about this letter, extending its details to several pages. It was, like every communication of Lenin upon a subject involving personal emotion, extremely brief. Lenin knew the weight of every word he was writing. He knew what Bonaparte fable he was explaining away, when he said that Trotsky's fault was only a "too great self-confidence," and that Trotsky was a "devoted revolutionist." And the word which I have translated "outstanding" \* is the one which Lenin habitually used to mean simply, and without emotion, the ablest and the greatest. A more direct endorsement of Trotsky's authority—and incidentally that of Pitiakov—and a more direct warning against the excessive power of the group that is now ruling the Russian Communist Party and the International, could hardly have been penned by Lenin.

separately and who had all recently read the letter and committed its vital phrases to memory.

At the same time with this letter, Lenin dictated two others—one of them that in which he "came to meet" Trotsky on the matter of Government Planning. The peculiar state of amnesia developed by the leaders of the bureaucracy in regard to the suppressed letter may be seen in the following quotation from a recent article by Bucharin, referring to the two that were not suppressed :

"Ilych, it seems to me, saw that his end was inevitable, saw it better than his nearest comrades, better than the doctors and professors. And when the second attack felled him, he dictated his political testament, and on the edge of the grave said things which for decades will determine the policies of our party. Thus once again, and for the last time, Ilych says to the party his last substantial words. . . ." (*Pravda*, January 21st, 1925.)

\* "Democritus was the outstanding materialist among the Greeks," is a quotation from Lenin which shows his use of this word—*Samie Vidaiuschisa* in Russian.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RESOLUTION ON WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

IN order to understand what happened after Lenin's collapse and complete withdrawal from the Government, you must know that Trotsky had the support not only of Lenin, but also of the underlying masses of the party membership. Any measure tending to give these masses a fresh and free opportunity to express themselves, would have resulted in the elevation of Trotsky to exactly the position of superior influence which Lenin desired for him. Without realising this, you cannot penetrate beneath the ideological surface of the dispute which followed. For it was a dispute about reducing the party bureaucratism,\* and giving to these underlying masses a real and continuous opportunity to express themselves.

Hardly more than six months after Lenin's collapse a crisis arose, which forced home this question upon every alert mind in the Central Committee as the critical question of the day. In that crisis Trotsky demanded a thoroughgoing abandonment of bureaucratic methods,

\* Lenin had already sounded the alarm more than once in regard to the bureaucratisation of the party. In that very article about Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, which the ruling group attempted to suppress, he said: "Our new Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, we hope, will leave behind the quality which the French call *pruderie*, which we may call a ridiculous affectation and a ridiculous self-importance, which is to the last degree characteristic of all our bureaucrats, Soviet bureaucrats and party bureaucrats alike. In parenthesis be it said that we have a bureaucracy not only in the Soviet institutions, but in the party too."



and a return to Lenin's original programme of "Workers' Democracy." The Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev machine also advocated this change—being compelled to it by the flagrancy of the conditions they had created, as well as by the authority of Lenin and Trotsky—but they advocated it with the firm determination that it should not go far enough to endanger their control, or result in the elevation of Trotsky to that position which the rank and file of the party desired for him. That is the whole real explanation of that confusing dispute about bureaucratism and Workers' Democracy which shook the Russian Communist Party to its depths, and has disturbed the equilibrium of the whole international movement.

The crisis I refer to occurred in September 1923. An acute economic depression was causing discontent among the workers and peasants, in some cities even giving rise to strikes—a phenomenon as portentous as it is rare in Soviet Russia. And at the same time two secret societies were discovered within the Communist Party, called the "Workers' Group" and "Workers' Truth"—the one Menshevik in tendency, the other Anarcho-syndicalist. A number of members of the party who belonged to these groups were arrested, the groups were immediately disbanded and those members expelled. But obviously that was merely a treatment of the symptoms. The question remained how to explain this phenomenon, and how to prevent its recurrence in the future. And it was fairly obvious to all thoughtful Communists that these conspiracies were formed below because the party was too much ruled by appointment from above. Among the broad masses there was no initiative, no free discussion, no opportunity for the rank and file member

to exercise a normal influence upon the conduct of affairs.

It is important to understand that it was not Trotsky alone who realised this. It was not he alone who pointed to the bureaucratisation of the party as the cause of this crisis, and demanded its correction by a programme of party democracy.\* The initiative in this direction was quite general. The difference between Trotsky's demand and that of the heads of the bureaucracy themselves, was that Trotsky's demand was not qualified by contrary considerations of a personal nature. He could advocate that the party be thoroughly and genuinely revived from the bottom without the fear that such a revival would destroy his own influence. The triumvirate could not do so, because it would weaken them and take the control of the party out of their hands. Thus arose that peculiar situation which has been so difficult for western Communists to

\* Bucharin described the situation at the beginning of the discussion in just as extreme language as any ever used by Trotsky: "If we conducted an investigation," he said, "and inquired how often our party elections are conducted with the question from the chair, 'Who is for?' and 'Who is against?' we should easily discover that in the majority of cases our elections to the party organisations have become 'elections' in quotation marks, for the voting takes place not only without preliminary discussion, but according to the formula 'Who is against?' And, since to speak against the authorities is a bad business, the matter ends right there. Such is the election of the secretaries of our lower branches.

"If you raise the question of our party meetings, then how does it go here? . . . Election of the *praesidium* of the meeting. Appears some comrade from the District Committee, presents a list, and asks, 'Who is against?' Nobody is against, and the business is considered finished. . . . With the order of the day, the same procedure. . . . The President asks, 'Who is against?' Nobody is against. The resolution is unanimously adopted. There you have the customary type of situation in our party organisations. . . . It goes without saying that this gives rise to an enormous wave of dissatisfaction. I gave you several examples from the life of our lowest branches. The same thing is noticeable in a slightly changed form in the succeeding ranks of our party hierarchy." (From a speech subsequently quoted by Trotsky. See the Stenographic Report of the Thirteenth Congress of the Party, p. 154.)

understand: Trotsky and the triumvirate split upon the programme of "Workers' Democracy," yet upon that programme they were all verbally agreed.

Another thing should be clearly understood: this programme of democracy within the party—called "Workers' Democracy" by Lenin—was not something new or specially devised to meet this crisis. It was a part of the essential policy of Lenin for going forward toward the creation of a Communist society—a principle adopted under his leadership at the Tenth Congress of the party, immediately after the cessation of the civil war.\* It was not put into operation then because of special objective conditions—the Cronstadt rebellion, the introduction of the New Economic Policy. Trotsky merely revived this original plan of Lenin, and demanded that it be enacted now in a different situation of which it was obviously the true solution. And the heads of the bureaucracy were compelled—in the name of "Leninism"—to join with him in reviving this programme. But in the name of their own ascendancy, they were compelled to continue to postpone its thorough-going enactment. Trotsky was perfectly aware of this, and he addressed a letter to the Central Committee on October 8th which, although temperate

\* The following sentences from the resolutions of the Tenth Congress will show this programme in its origin:

"A party of revolutionary Marxism radically rejects the search for any form of party organisation that shall be right absolutely and valid for all stages of the revolutionary process, and likewise any such method of work. On the contrary, the form of organisation and the methods of work are entirely determined by the specific character of the given historic situation and the problems which arise directly out of that situation. . . . The needs of the current moment demand a new organisational form. That form is Workers' Democracy. A course of Workers' Democracy shall be adopted with the same decisiveness, and as energetically carried into execution, as in the period just past the course toward militarisation of the party, to the extent that this does not meet an obstacle in the need for struggle with the counter-revolution." (Stenographic Report of the Tenth Congress, pp. 128 ff.)

and cautious in describing the programme to be adopted, insisted with the utmost vigour that it must be adopted, and that it must be sincerely put into effect.

Trotsky's letter—from which I have translated some essential paragraphs in Appendix IV.—concluded with the following statement :

“ It is known to the members of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee, that while fighting with all decisiveness and definiteness within the Central Committee against a false policy, I decisively declined to bring the struggle within the Central Committee to the judgment even of a very narrow circle of comrades, in particular those who in the event of a reasonably proper party course ought to occupy prominent places in the Central Committee. I must state that my efforts of a year and a half have given no results. This threatens us with the danger that the party may be taken unawares by a crisis of exceptional severity. . . . In view of the situation created, I consider it not only my right, but my duty to make known the true state of affairs to every member of the party whom I consider sufficiently prepared, matured, and self-restrained, and consequently able to help the party out of this blind alley without fractional convulsions.”

This honest and clear avowal gave to Trotsky's enemies the opportunity to “censure” him for an action tending to “initiate a fraction,” and to set afloat the rumour that Trotsky is impulsive in a crisis and incapable of discipline.\* It is quite plain that if Trotsky were forming a fraction in a party in which fractions were forbidden, he would not have made this honest and clear avowal. And if you wish to consider facts and not forms, Trotsky's scrupulous abstinence from consultation with any party member outside the Central Committee for the whole period during which an efficient political machine was built up, in flagrant defiance of the principle of party unity, in order to

\* See Appendix V.

deprive him of power, is nothing less than a miracle of submission to discipline. Trotsky made no motion against the proceeding so long as its result was merely to deprive him of power. When he felt that the revolution was endangered by it, he moved. Trotsky is the most disciplined character I ever knew. He is the one I would most implicitly trust to carry out to the last punctilious detail, and without regard to his own impulses or emotions, any line of conduct which he had decided was right. And if there is another equally striking trait of his character, it is that he has not enough ordinary human diplomacy in him to form a personal faction if he wanted to. He does not know how to gather people around him, and that, as I have explained, is the very reason why he has fumbled the torch of leadership which Lenin tried to hand on to him.

On October 15th the Central Committee received a letter signed by forty-six well-known party members, representing a great variety of positions and points of view, expressing a trend of opinion similar to that in Trotsky's letter, and testifying to a strong current of feeling in the party in favour of the "New Course." At the same period Radek addressed a letter to the Central Committee, in which, while not pronouncing upon the questions raised by Trotsky, he expressed urgently the necessity of reaching a working agreement with him. Pushed by these signs of party opinion, as well as by their own sense of the necessity of it, the controlling group proceeded to draw up a rather half-hearted programme of "Workers' Democracy." Trotsky emphatically rejected as unsatisfactory to him this first draft of the programme, and they appointed a new committee, with Trotsky on it, to draw up another. That committee succeeded in arriving at a form of words

satisfactory to Trotsky—it was quite obviously in its main features dictated by him—and the “Resolution on Workers’ Democracy” was signed unanimously by all the members of the Politburo and the Central Control Committee.

Before signing this resolution, Trotsky took the precaution to state formally that it was understood between him and the other signatories that he believed the programme should be “pushed from beneath,” and he would agitate in that sense, while they believed that its enactment should be restrained from above, and they would interpret it in that sense. And in order that there should be some record of this formal understanding, he accompanied his signature with a “special opinion” to the effect that he agreed to the resolution only upon condition that it should be regarded as a practical programme actually to be put in operation, and not a mere formula designed to quiet an agitation and serve a temporary political purpose.

The resolution was published in *Pravda* on December 7th, with the unanimous signature of the leaders of the party. And the whole party membership—not to say the whole of Russia—breathed a sigh of relief. The issue had been met, a decision made, and the party was going forward on a “New Course,” which was but the full enactment of a long-familiar policy of Lenin.

That was the ideological aspect of the thing. But it is obvious that the dynamic problem—the conflict of personal forces—had not been resolved. The resolution on Workers’ Democracy was exceedingly drastic in its attribution of the current troubles to the bureaucratisation of the party, and in demanding an absolutely new *régime* of “free discussion and election of governing officials and collegiums from top to bottom.” Its form

of expression was a complete victory for Trotsky, and if it were put into operation by a disinterested power, the result would have been an automatic increase of Trotsky's authority and the triumph of his policies in the Central Committee. Since, however, it was to be put into operation by the very bureaucracy which it attacked, and since this bureaucracy was inflexibly determined to hold its power at the expense of Trotsky, it is plain that nothing had been finally settled. Trotsky's victory was merely a preliminary one. He had gained the right, under the literal meaning of the resolution, to agitate for a genuine stoppage of the system of bureaucratic appointments, and a genuine revival of party initiative, such as would break the strangle-hold of the triumvirate, and give him and those whom he trusted an authority in the governing organ of the party. And he had reinforced that right, and insured himself in the possession of it, by a formal announcement and a written declaration that he intended to agitate for just such a genuine application of the literal meaning of the resolution. That was all that he had achieved, and that was all that had been settled by the unanimous adoption of the resolution on Workers' Democracy.

## CHAPTER V

### TROTSKY'S BAD TACTICS

IF Trotsky had been a great politician and not just a great man, consecrating himself with a rather naïve directness to the task of carrying forward the living wisdom of Lenin, he would have exercised the utmost caution after winning this preliminary victory. He would have taken pains, in agitating for a sincere application of the programme of Workers' Democracy, not to utter one word which might by the most inflamed imagination be conceived as overstepping the literal meaning of the words of that resolution. These words were abundantly adequate to his purpose.

But Trotsky had learned only the larger wisdom of Lenin, his mode of approaching and solving revolutionary problems. He had not learned his political craft, his sly art of handling human beings. And because of that quality in him which Lenin called "too great self-confidence," Trotsky never could learn this art. Trotsky is not any more self-confident than Lenin, but he has a peculiar obtuseness to the feelings and reactions of others. He is full of his own purpose and his own idea, and lacks that instinctive sense of the purposes and ideas of others which would make him adroit in the achievement of his own. He behaves at times with the blundering presumptuousness of a child.

It was certainly a childlike blunder that Trotsky



committed after gaining this preliminary victory. For instead of clinging like a leech to the literal wording of the resolution, he opened his agitation with a discourse richly illuminating it, a profoundly thoughtful and far-seeing essay on the resolution from the standpoint of one who sincerely and whole-heartedly believes in its application. Trotsky's discourse took the form of a letter to be read at a meeting of his own party local—he being sick in bed with a fever and unable to address the meeting in person—a letter which would subsequently come before the party by way of publication in *Pravda*. In this letter Trotsky draws the outlines of a new day of revolutionary life and growth that is dawning for the party, and he draws it with the hand of a master of Marxism and the wisdom of Lenin.\* He draws it, moreover, in essential fidelity to the resolution on Workers' Democracy. He proposes no *practical step* that is not contained in that resolution. But through the mere breadth of his view and the natural richness of his mind—unrestrained by a sense of the political manoeuvre he is engaged in—he oversteps in two respects the literal wording of the resolution. And he oversteps it in two respects upon which there had evidently been a dispute in the meetings of the Politburo, and upon which Trotsky had evidently made a concession to the other side. There is no use minimising the blunder involved here, or the legitimate irritation which it may have caused to those who had just reached an agreement with him. But it is important that this blunder should be accurately defined.

It was universally recognised that the discontent with party bureaucracy was strongest among the

\* See Appendix VI.

Communist youth. And it was also recognised that this discontent often took the form of a protest against the excessive authority attributed to "Old Bolsheviks" as such. There was a certain restiveness under the extreme application of the "priority system," which necessarily prevails in a revolutionary party surrounded with counter-revolutionary influences. Trotsky evidently wished to allude to this discontent in the resolution on Workers' Democracy. He wished to explain it as a result of the excessive bureaucratism of the party, and as indicating a danger which could be eliminated only by a thorough-going application of the principles of Workers' Democracy.

I say "evidently" because he did advance this point in his original letter to the Central Committee. In paragraph 12 of that letter he stated and emphasised the fact that the staff of the Old Bolsheviks is "the revolutionary leaven of the party and its organisational backbone," and he added that the Old Bolsheviks ought to occupy *all the governing positions in the party*. But he pointed out that the universal system of appointing them from the top, and the creation of a whole self-sufficient officialdom of appointed secretaries, who identify themselves with old Bolshevism, creates a discontent which may in the future endanger that very leadership of the old underground fighters which every one agrees should be preserved.

In the resolution on Workers' Democracy this reason for its application is not stated. The resolution simply demands a "strengthening of the party's educative work, in every way avoiding its regimentary presentation . . . especially among the Communist youth."

It is impossible to doubt that Trotsky must have

argued for a full statement of his point of view here, and in the process of arriving at a compromise agreed to leave it out. Nevertheless, he proceeded to expound it explicitly and eloquently in his first contribution to the discussion that followed. His exposition did not, of course, add anything to the practical measures advocated in the resolution. He did not offer a further programme, or any amplification of the programme contained in it. But he offered an additional reason for its sincere application, touching a theme which the others did not wish to touch. There is no denying that this was an improper thing to do. It was a typical example of that fault which Lenin called "too great self-confidence," but which might perhaps be better described as forgetting all about the existence of the other man.

It is obvious that people cannot co-operate if they permit each other to make blunders of this kind. But it is also obvious that they cannot co-operate if, when one of them makes a blunder of this kind, he is not given an opportunity to correct it. And an essential point in understanding what followed the publication of Trotsky's letter is the fact that it lay in the hands of his enemies, and was read by them, and its contents were discussed by them for *four days* before it was published. Moreover, as that delay was unusual under these circumstances, Trotsky spoke to Stalin about it, and Stalin, with entire good humour and with a laughing reference to the contents of the letter, assured Trotsky that they were printing it in a forthcoming issue of the paper. Its contents were known before it was published to every important man subsequently involved in the attack upon Trotsky. It was also known to every one of these men that Trotsky is

minutely scrupulous in living up to any agreement that he has made, and that he had been infinitely patient and reasonable in all the long process of arriving at this agreement. It is therefore inconceivable that, if any of these men had had a real desire to support that agreement and preserve the unity of the Politburo, he would not have telephoned to Trotsky and called his attention to his transgression of it before the letter was published.

What they did do was to decide that it would be possible, upon the basis of this indiscreetly discursive letter, to bring the war against Trotsky out into the open. They decided to attack him all at once, and from every direction, and with every weapon except intellectual honesty, and destroy his authority in the party. The enthusiasm for the programme of Workers' Democracy had taught them that there was no other way to make fast the power of their bureaucratic machine, which was now completely identified in their minds with the perpetuation of "Leninism."

I do not know circumstantially when this decision was reached, but I am convinced that it was reached only *after* the publication of Trotsky's letter. The friendly way in which Stalin spoke to Trotsky about the letter before it was published is a reason for believing this. Another reason is, that on the day of its publication, December 11th, at a meeting of the 4,000 party workers of Moscow, addressed by both Zinoviev and Kamenev, Trotsky's letter was discussed at some length, and no decisive attitude was adopted towards it. Zinoviev alluded to it with animosity, but only hinted that maybe it *foretold* a violation of the unanimity of the Politburo. And Kamenev strongly defended

Trotsky's letter—which he described as an *incautious formulation*—against the insinuation that it was intended to serve as an attack upon the other members of the Central Committee. A third reason is that two days after this meeting, *Pravda* published an article by Zinoviev \*—written, I suppose, some days before—in which he had carried out in good faith the agreement that had been made with Trotsky. Trotsky's letter having “pushed the resolution from beneath,” Zinoviev wrote an article “restraining it from above.” His article is not a direct reply to Trotsky, but its relevance is shown by the fact that in the opening paragraphs he repeats the very things Trotsky had said about the danger of a bureaucratic degeneration, citing the same “frightening example” of the German Social Democrats, and then proceeds to dwell at greater length upon the dangers that lie in the opposite direction. Two days after the publication of this temperate and dignified counter-statement, which was in keeping with the agreement that he had made with Trotsky, Zinoviev launched into a wild and ill-prepared tirade against him before the party workers of Petrograd. And on the same day that he did this—December 15th—Stalin published in *Pravda* an equally hasty and ill-considered, and almost incredibly brief and offhand denunciation of Trotsky, tacked on to the tail of a long article about other people. Those are some of the reasons why I am convinced that the decision to wage this personal war on Trotsky was made only after the publication of his letter. It was based upon the reception accorded to his letter, and not upon the contents of the letter.

A month later, after the campaign against Trotsky

\* “Workers' Democracy and the Problems of the Party Apparatus,” *Pravda*, December 13th, 1923.

had attained the proportions of a stampede, Kamenev described with great eloquence how they had all realised on the very night when Trotsky's letter was first read at the meeting of his local branch, that he had "gone to war" on the Central Committee. "For us," he said, "—I can say it before this responsible assembly and you ought to weigh it well—for us all, when we learned late at night that Comrade Trotsky's letter had been read at the meeting of the Krasno-Presninsky local at his request—for us all it was clear, and we could understand it, and we did understand it only thus: it was a rupture of the achieved agreement. Comrade Trotsky had gone to war on the Central Committee, notwithstanding the fact that every concession which he demanded had been made to him in order to achieve unanimity."\*

Now, if you will consider how unlikely it is that a man of mature years, to say nothing of a man possessing the poise of a great military leader, after spending the better part of a month in the painful labour of reaching an agreement, would take up his pen and paper the next morning and deliberately violate it; and if you will consider further the fact that Trotsky had no need to violate it in order to gain his ends—the agreement had been a victory for him, and not for them; and if you will consider further the fact that no ordinary person in all Russia, reading Trotsky's letter in his morning paper, so much as imagined that it was a violation of the agreement; and if you will consider in addition the little incident of a good-natured conversation about the letter with Stalin himself, which I have upon Trotsky's own authority; you will agree that it is not very probable that on the same night when Trotsky's

\* Speech printed in *Pravda*, January 12th, 1924.

letter was read at a meeting of his local, all the other members of the Politburo instantaneously realised that Trotsky had "gone to war on the Central Committee." And this will prepare you for the rather surprising news that Kamenev himself, at the meeting on December 11th—*five days after* this tragical midnight experience which he describes—not only spoke of Trotsky's letter with perfectly friendly respect, but said in so many words that he *did not know* whether it was meant as an attack upon the Central Committee or not :

"That Comrade Sapronov agrees to take the formula of Trotsky, in order to beat the Central Committee, of that I have no doubt. But does Trotsky agree with Sapronov? That I don't know. (Applause.) Like Radek, I regret that Trotsky used a formula which permitted Sapronov to seize it and direct it against the Central Committee. . . . The article of Trotsky needs supplementation and explanation." (*Pravda*, for December 14th, 1923.)

I do not know the personal reasons for this misstep of Kamenev's. Like the distant historian, I merely discover it in the documents which have come with me out of Russia. But I assume that by the middle of January Kamenev had preached himself into actually believing what he originally knew to be a myth. Kamenev is a great and sincere talker like John Wesley, the evangelist, who says in his diary: "Once the devil suggested to me that I did not believe what I was preaching, and I said, 'Well, I'll preach till I do!'"

Zinoviev, in his speech on December 11th before the Moscow party workers, spoke of Trotsky's letter as "foretelling nothing good." "We will see how the matter goes farther," he said. "Whoever shall violate the achieved agreement will answer for it before the whole party."\*

\* "The Fate of Our Party," by G. Zinoviev, p. 93.

In his wild speech before the party workers of Petrograd, four days later, he said : " We achieved an agreement, and what happened ? The unanimous resolution was printed and the next day Comrade Trotsky contributed his letter which was an *indubitable violation* of the agreement."\*

It seems obvious that between these two speeches a definite decision was reached. And this obvious-seeming thing becomes certain when you remember that Kamenev's statement at the Moscow meeting was in direct contradiction to Zinoviev's. Kamenev said that Trotsky's letter was *not* an indubitable violation of the agreement. The only question is, How was this decision reached and what was the exact nature of the decision ? And the whole answer is, that the decision was reached *without consulting Trotsky*, or *asking him to explain his letter*, although he was accessible by telephone, and lying in bed not three minutes away from the probable scene of any discussion that occurred. Is it conceivable that, if the doubtful point to be decided was whether Trotsky had in fact deliberately violated the agreement and "gone to war on the Central Committee," nobody would have asked him a question ? I am not talking now about the words in which the decision may have been expressed by this or that person, but about the *real nature* of the decision. It was a decision, not that Trotsky had gone to war on the Central Committee, but that the Central Committee should go to war on Trotsky. "We have got to depopularise Trotsky," is the way in which one of the leaders expressed this decision.

To sum up : For four days after Trotsky's letter was first read to his local branch, and for four more days

\* "The Fate of Our Party," by G. Zinoviev, p. 117. Italics mine.



after it was published in *Pravda*, the whole rank and file of the party, and the non-party workers, and the general readers of *Pravda*, continued to breathe the air of relief that had been generated by the unanimous resolution on Workers' Democracy. Accepting Trotsky's letter as but a characteristically luminous and human interpretation of that resolution, they continued to believe that the party was going forward unanimously and sincerely on a new course. The atmosphere is indicated and the fact proven by these words from *Pravda* for December 13th: "The firm word has been spoken, the direction taken. The party will tranquilly and firmly accomplish its historic change of course."

That tranquil and firm accomplishment of a *real* change of course was, as I have said, exactly what the enemies of Trotsky feared. It was the thing that would loose their artificial grip on a party that, in its natural action, trusted Trotsky more than it trusted them. Therefore they were faced with the alternative of accepting a substantial defeat in the personal war on Trotsky, or bringing that war out into the open and "daring to name him an enemy." They decided—while he lay in bed with a chronic fever—that they dared to do it. And they proceeded to denounce his wise but indiscreet letter as a "Fractionalist Manifesto," an "Attack on the Old Guard," a "Pitting of the Youth against the Old Bolsheviki," an "Insinuation against the Disciples of Lenin," a "Giving of the Slogan, *Shatter the Apparatus of the Party*," a manifestation of "Left Communism," a manifestation of "Right Communism," a "Resurrection of Menshevism," a "Demand for the Legalisation of Fractions"—as everything and anything except what it was,

a sincere declaration that the programme of Workers' Democracy was to be taken seriously, just as Lenin had originally intended it, as a turning point in the life of the party.

## CHAPTER VI

### STALIN'S ASSAULT

THE reader who feels shut off from these facts by the barrier of language will perhaps find it hard to believe that the decision to destroy Trotsky by falsifying the meaning of his letter, was deliberate. In whose minds it was deliberate and whose were merely dragged along in the panic that followed, I am not able to say. But that the decision was deliberate is clearly proven not only by the date upon which the attack began and the intervening events I have described, but also—and beyond the shadow of doubt—by the perfectly wanton distortion and misinterpretation and direct turning upside-down of every word written and every position taken by Trotsky, both in his original letter and in his small series of supplementary articles, by the calumnia-tion of his character, and the wrenching out of per-spective of his whole history and the history of the party. To a detached reader the documents in this campaign of slander are so flagrant that, if he does not regard it as a deliberate perpetration, he can only conclude that the whole leadership of the Russian Communist Party has been in the hands of hysterics. The speeches and articles of Stalin and Zinoviev and Kamenev and Bucharin and their lieutenants, if re-garded as a discussion of the points raised in Trotsky's letter, would be thrown out of a prize essay contest in a school for defective children. But if regarded as an

attempt to generate, by fair means or foul, the universal suspicion that Trotsky is an enemy of Leninism, to produce a thoughtless, blind, and convulsive stampede of the organisation men to throw him out, these speeches command a certain respect. They show a keen sense of the emotional and intellectual weak points of the Russian Communist.

Of the reader who doubts whether this perpetration was deliberate, I demand the effort of minute attention to the following series of quotations. It is obvious that I cannot reproduce the whole fabric of falsification that has been weaved in the course of this discussion. I have read it all and listened to much of it, and I can only give you my assurance that these examples are typical, and they comprise all the essential points that have been advanced against Trotsky.

#### “ ATTACKING THE OLD GUARD ”

Stalin opened the campaign in *Pravda* for December 15th with the sudden announcement that Trotsky's letter was not a “ summons to the members of the party to support heartily the Central Committee and its resolution,” but a disingenuous document which “ could only be interpreted as an attempt to weaken the will of the members of the party toward an actual unity in support of the Central Committee and its position.” It was a “ diplomatic attempt to support the Opposition in its struggle against the Central Committee of the party under the guise of a defence of the resolution of the Central Committee.”

This imputation to Trotsky of a duplicity and equivocation, which every stroke of his pen and every act of his lifetime of service to revolutionary truth belies, was necessary at the beginning of the campaign against

him, because everybody was reading his letter. It was perfectly evident that it did not attack, but supported the resolution of the Politburo. A little later Trotsky's letter and some supplementary articles in the pamphlet form were practically suppressed by the Politburo, and even when I left Moscow—though the crisis was past—it was still difficult to get a bookseller to produce one. Under these circumstances it was no longer necessary to accuse Trotsky of meaning things he had not said. They simply declared that he had said things which he had not said. At the beginning, however, the whole campaign rested upon an "interpretation" of what were supposed to be "indirect hints" in Trotsky's perfectly outspoken and only too ingenuous letter.

Let us read these "indirect hints" as they are quoted by Stalin :

The resolution of Workers' Democracy declared that under the influence of the New Economic Policy the party is in danger of "a loss of the perspective of Socialist construction and of the world revolution; in danger of the degeneration of a part of the party workers as a result of their activities in close contact with a bourgeois *milieu*."

Trotsky's letter points out the obvious fact that no one is free from such danger, not even "we, the Old Bolsheviks." Here is what he says :

"The degeneration of an 'Old Guard' has been observed in history more than once. To take the freshest and clearest recent example: the leaders and parties of the Second International. We well know that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde and others, were the direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders—some partially and some altogether—degenerated into opportunism.

. . . We ought to state—we ourselves, the ‘old men’—that our generation, while naturally playing the rôle of leadership in the party, nevertheless does not contain within itself any automatic guarantee against a gradual and unnoticeable weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, provided the party permits any further growth and hardening of the bureaucratic-apparatus method of politics, which converts the younger generation into passive material for education, and creates inevitably an alienation between the apparatus and the mass, between the old and the young. . . .”

This temperate and self-evident statement might almost be replaced with a quotation from Lenin: “History knows transformations of all kinds; to rely on conviction, loyalty, and other superlative spiritual qualities—that is no serious thing in politics.”\* And it might be replaced with a quotation from the article of Zinoviev, printed in *Pravda* two days before it: †

“One of the causes of the unheard-of collapse of the German Social Democracy, a once-powerful proletarian party, was undoubtedly the excess of workers’ bureaucracy and, in particular, the hardening of the party apparatus. . . . The party apparatus gradually degenerated and turned into a closed caste, hostile to the fundamental interests of the proletariat. The frightening example of the German Social Democracy ought to stand continually before the eyes of any mass proletarian party.”

Such a statement is obviously a natural amplification of what the resolution says about the danger of a “degeneration of a part of the party workers.” Nevertheless, from the pen of Trotsky this statement becomes a “hint about opportunism in

\* Lenin, Complete Works, Vol. XVIII., Part 2, p. 42.

† December 13th, 1923.

regard to the Old Bolsheviks," and upon the basis of this, and of this alone, Stalin declares that Trotsky, instead of "having in mind the interests of the party," has in mind "designs for undermining the authority of the majority of the Central Committee, the guiding nucleus of the Bolshevik Old Guard."

That Trotsky did not have in mind any hint or childishly concealed insult against the other members of the Central Committee is perfectly evident in what he said: "We ourselves," who "naturally play the rôle of leadership in the party." It is evident, moreover, in the whole texture of his character, his manner of life and intercourse with men, and his entire literary and political history. Trotsky himself told me that he had nothing of the kind in his mind when he wrote this sentence, and the fact needs no further proof for those who know him. But there is a proof which is interesting, and that is that Trotsky *does not think* that these other members of the Central Committee who are trying to destroy his authority, are examples of a "degeneration into opportunism." I have talked with him about the principal figures among them, and he expressed very widely differing and very precisely discriminating opinions, and no one of these opinions could be brought under the head of a degeneration into opportunism. I think it is no great violation of confidence—and it is an important factor in the situation—to say that he described Stalin to me as, among other things, "a brave man and a sincere revolutionist."!

That Trotsky had not the remotest idea of "undermining the authority of the Bolshevik Old Guard," is also perfectly evident in the paragraphs Stalin quoted. "We—our generation—naturally playing the rôle of

leadership." It is still more evident in a paragraph preceding what Stalin quoted, where Trotsky says that the more experienced comrades "inevitably enter into the apparatus," and that is exactly why the problem of the old and the young arises in connection with the bureaucratisation of the apparatus. And lest that should not be enough, Trotsky reinforced this point in a postscript to his letter, printed with it in *Pravda*, in which he expressly alludes to the possibility of such a misinterpretation, and warns the reader against it. Here Trotsky makes it as clear as words can make it that what he is advocating is a real "party leadership" on the part of the Old Guard, as opposed to a "tight-shut secretarial régime of command." And this, of course, is the whole sense and meaning of the resolution which had just been unanimously signed by the Politburo.

The simple fact is that Trotsky stated a thing here which is true, and which it was good for the party to hear, but which it was extremely *bad manoeuvring* for him to state at that moment, and Stalin was clever enough to see this, to grab Trotsky's statement, falsify it, and use it as a weapon with which to assail Trotsky and turn his preliminary victory into a defeat. And Stalin had already in his hand so perfect a machine for the distribution and suppression of ideas that this falsification of Trotsky's wise and temperate words has now become a rubber-stamp slogan with Communist editors all over the earth, and I have to sit here and read in the educational columns of *L'Humanité*, a year later, the outrageous statement—it is a flat lie, and nothing else—that Trotsky conducted "an impassioned criticism of the Bolshevik Old Guard."



“ PITTING THE YOUNG AGAINST THE OLD ”

But this accusation cannot properly be separated from the other one contained in Stalin's article, namely, that Trotsky is “ pitting the younger generation against the old ”—“ egging them on ” is a more literal translation. Stalin quotes just two sentences from Trotsky's letter to prove this statement. “ The youth—the most reliable barometer of the party—reacts most sharply against party bureaucratism. . . . It is necessary that the youth should take the revolutionary formulas fighting.”

On the basis of these two sentences, snatched violently out of their context, Stalin delivers the following assault :

“ Where did Comrade Trotsky get this *setting-against-each-other* of the ‘ Old Guard ’ who may degenerate and ‘ the youth ’ who constitute ‘ the most reliable barometer of the party,’ the ‘ Old Guard ’ who may bureaucratise and the ‘ Young Guard ’ who must ‘ take the revolutionary formulas fighting ? ’ Whence comes this opposition and for what is it needed ? Haven't the youth and the Old Guard gone always with a united front against the foe within and without ? Doesn't the unity of the old and the young represent the fundamental strength of our revolution ? Whence this attempt to uncrown the Old Guard and demagogically tickle the youth, so as to open and widen the little rift between these fundamental troops of our party ? To whom is all this useful, if you have in view the interests of the party, its unity, its solidarity, and not an attempt to weaken its unity for the benefit of an opposition ? ”\*

The question, Where did Trotsky get this subject of discussion ?—perfectly well understood by Stalin from the endless debates in the Politburo—was answered in the sentence just preceding one of those which Stalin quoted :

\* See Appendix VII.

“To the extent that the most experienced comrades, and those distinguished by service, *inevitably enter into the apparatus* \* to that extent the bureaucratism of the apparatus has its heaviest consequences in the intellectual-political growth of the young generation of the party. This explains the fact that the youth—the most reliable barometer of the party—react the most sharply of all against party bureaucratism.”

And that Trotsky's purpose was not to “set against each other” the youth and the older generation, but exactly the contrary, to prevent by a thorough abandonment of bureaucratic methods the possibility of such a setting-against-each-other, is stated explicitly *four times* in this brief letter and its postscript :

“In as far as the durably revolutionary, non-officialised representatives of the older generation, that is—as I firmly believe—its overwhelming majority, take clear account of the dangerous perspective characterised above, and, standing on the ground of the resolution of the Politburo, put forth all efforts to help the party convert that resolution into reality, in so far disappears the chief source of a possible setting-against-each-other of the different generations in the party.”

This quotation is surely sufficient to make it indubitable what Trotsky really said. He said that since the Old Bolsheviks *inevitably* play the rôle of leadership in the party, *therefore* the only way to avoid a gradual “setting-against-each-other” of these Old Bolsheviks and the rising generation, is for the latter to make this a genuine leadership (as described by the resolution of the Politburo) and not a *régime* of bureaucratic command.

Stalin, by first pretending that Trotsky has attacked the leadership of the Old Bolsheviks, is able to carry off the pretence that he is trying also to “set against each other” the two generations.

\* My italics.

Any grown person can see at a glance what happened here. Both Stalin and Trotsky, and indeed every sincere revolutionist in Russia, was aware of the flagrancy of the bureaucratic methods employed in the party, of the special reaction against them among the youth, and of the dangers involved. But those bureaucratic methods, presided over by Stalin, were the source of his power. And that revival of initiative would automatically transfer the substance of that power to Trotsky, for the simple reason that the mass of the party, just like all the rest of the world, recognised Trotsky's superior moral and intellectual revolutionary greatness. Therefore Stalin was compelled to sign a resolution attacking his own bureaucracy and demanding a revival of party initiative, and at the same time prevent its thorough-going application. He saw Trotsky bringing all the powers of his personality, his art of objective and concise thinking, his mastery of Marxism, and of the method of Lenin, his sensitivity to political facts, and his great literary skill, into the field in support of that resolution. He saw that Trotsky's letter was enthusiastically received by an immense majority of the party. And, having no weapon left but his brutality, he walked up and hit Trotsky over the head with a club. That is the real meaning of Stalin's sudden and dishonest article in *Pravda* for December 15th. And that is the *only real fact* which lies behind the universally advertised opinion that Trotsky attacked the leadership of the Old Bolsheviks, or attempted to pit the younger generation against the old.

## CHAPTER VII

### ZINOVIEV CREATES A PANIC

JUST as Stalin fell back upon brutality in order to beat Trotsky's clear arguments, so Zinoviev fell back upon fear. Zinoviev called together a meeting of the Petrograd officials of the bureaucratised party, and told them to issue a cry of alarm stating that Trotsky had defied Leninism and attacked the unity of the party. In calling them the officials of a bureaucratised party, I am only following the statements of Zinoviev himself, written one month earlier in support of the resolution on Workers' Democracy. I am only following the statement of that resolution. The one thing I add is that Zinoviev presided over the Petrograd branch of that bureaucratised party, and the only question that can be raised about my statement is *to what extent* was that party bureaucratised. And the extent of it may be inferred from the following fact: While the Moscow meeting of the same group of officials, presided over by Kamenev—who for some reason had not yet got in on the plan to destroy Trotsky—heard a friendly and temperate speech about Trotsky's letter, passed a brief resolution supporting the programme of Workers' Democracy, and went tranquilly home to bed, the Petrograd meeting, under instructions from Zinoviev, put forth a unanimous cry of fright that stampeded the whole Russian Communist Party, and produced a condition of intellectual mob-hysteria that lasted all winter, and

went to such lengths that it seemed at times as though there was just one man in all Russia who had retained his emotional equilibrium, and that was Trotsky.

It is noticeable that Zinoviev, like Stalin, was in the beginning a little embarrassed by the facts. He began his speech by saying that he had heard of some "queer guys" who thought that Trotsky's letter was really written in support of the resolution of the Politburo. And he dismissed these queer guys by telling them that Trotsky's letter was "not at all clear," it was "decidedly misty," its language was "extremely inexact," and these queer guys evidently did not understand it. A clearer piece of prose was never written. These introductory remarks were simply a confession by Zinoviev of the difficult job he had to do—namely, compel 3,000 people to believe, or pretend to believe, that Trotsky had meant what he had not said. I am not going to analyse the inconsequential old maid's eloquence with which Zinoviev did this job.\* The one seizable and unadulterated fact he adduced was that, in the far-off past, Trotsky had opposed the organisational platform of Bolshevism. He had been, to use the very careful words of Lenin, a "non-Bolshevik." And in order to raise this historic ghost against Trotsky and start the cry of "Menshevik," Zinoviev had to go back some five years beyond the time when he himself had been—to quote also the careful words of Lenin—a "strike-breaker," a "traitor," a "deserter," and a surrenderer to the bourgeoisie.

What I want to analyse is the *formal indictment* of Trotsky, obviously dictated by Zinoviev, and adopted by those 3,000 Petrograd party workers after he got

\* His speech was printed in *Pravda*, December 21st, 1923

through with his speech.\* It begins, in substance, as follows :

“ If Comrade Trotsky is solidary with the Central Committee—as one might assume on the basis of his voting for the resolution—how then can we understand his violation of its unanimity on the very day after his vote? . . . The party can only spread out its hands in bewilderment when it reads in Comrade Trotsky’s letter an attack upon the direct disciples of Comrade Lenin, whom Comrade Trotsky compares with Edward Bernstein, Kautsky, Adler, Guesde and other Social Democratic leaders.”

That is the beginning of the indictment. Now go back and read the passage I quoted from Trotsky’s letter, and see if you can find anything in it about “ the direct disciples of Lenin.” And if you want to realise the extent to which Zinoviev manipulated these party workers like automatons, let me tell you that this preposterous statement was adopted by a vote of 3,000 against five, with seven abstaining.

The resolution continues :

“ If Comrade Trotsky seriously thus estimates the named (*sic*) disciples of Comrade Lenin, it was his duty not to adopt a resolution unanimously with them, but openly appear with an indictment before the whole party.”

In other words, the fact which makes it clear to a child’s intelligence that Trotsky did *not* mean to compare his colleagues in the Central Committee with Bernstein, etc., but that he meant what he said, is used to make his alleged comparison of them with Bernstein, etc., seem more insane and outrageous.

Before proceeding with Zinoviev’s attack, let us pause to consider this one point in isolation. There is no man in the world whose courtesy and delicacy in personal relations with his comrades has always been

\* Their resolution was printed in *Pravda*, December 18th 1923

more striking than that of Trotsky. During the very height of this attack upon him, when wild slanders and abuse were flying about Russia like bombs in a battle, Trotsky sharply reproved a young Communist for speaking of Zinoviev by the name of "Grishka"—which is just equivalent to calling a person named Thomas W. Something-or-Other, "Tommy." That is an example of the almost quixotic delicacy of Trotsky's conduct in the matter of personal relations with his comrades in the revolution. It has always been so, and it is known to everybody who knows Trotsky. His æsthetic, or, if you will, ethical elevation in such matters is painful. And his books, even the most polemical, are as clear of these dirty under-hints as a stream of spring water. Therefore you have the choice of believing that Stalin and Zinoviev are misrepresenting Trotsky, or that Trotsky has suddenly changed his character completely. And if you will consider all the facts which I have recounted up to this point, beginning with the time when Lenin urged Trotsky to take his place in the Government, and delegated to Trotsky the defence of their common policies against this same opposing group, and ending with the actual words of Trotsky in this very passage, which are as wise and tranquil as any ever written, you will concede, I think, that the former hypothesis is plausible and the latter is absurd.

The resolution of the Petrograd party workers continues :

"With a like heavy feeling we read further the wholesale arraignment against the party apparatus, the summons to dismiss the workers in the apparatus, the laying upon the party apparatus of the blame for the formation of factions, and so forth."

Let us ignore the "and so forth," for Trotsky's letter is very brief, and he can hardly have committed in that one letter all the sins that a reader might be able to think of. Let us take the first two of these actual accusations. Trotsky is accused of violating the unanimity of the Politburo by writing a "wholesale arraignment of the apparatus" and a "summons to dismiss the party workers."\* The unanimous resolution of the Politburo speaks in the following terms of the apparatus: It calls attention to a "noticeable bureaucratisation of the party apparatus and rising out of that the threat of separation of the party from the mass." As a remedy to these evils, it demands "a serious change of the party course in the sense of an actual and systematic putting into operation of the principles of Workers' Democracy." It outlines these principles, and says that in order to guarantee their being carried into action,

"it is necessary to pass from words into action, proposing to the lower branches, the district, branch and provincial party conferences at the coming elections systematically to renew the party apparatus from below, advancing into responsible places such workers as are able to defend intra-party democracy in reality." It further states that "an especially important task of the Control Commissions at the present moment is the struggle with bureaucratic perversions of the party apparatus and the party technique, and the bringing to justice of official persons who hinder the carrying into effect of the principles of Workers' Democracy."

Trotsky says in his letter :

"The renewal of the party apparatus—of course, within the strict limits of the constitution—ought to be carried out with a view to replacing the officialised and bureaucratised with fresh elements in close union with the collective life or capable

\* I translate as "party worker" the Russian word "rabotnik." It means those who make a business of work for the party. The French call them "militants."



of guaranteeing such a union. And first of all ought to be removed from the party positions those elements who at the first voice of criticism, of objection, of protest, are inclined to demand one's party ticket for the purpose of repression. The new course ought to begin with this, that in the apparatus all should feel from bottom to top that nobody dares to terrorise the party. . . . Roughly, the task may be formulated thus : The party should subordinate to itself its apparatus, not ceasing for a moment to be a centralised organisation. . . . It is not necessary to say that the apparatus of the party, that is, its organisational skeleton, delivered of its self-sufficient narrowness, will not be weakened but strengthened. As to the fact that we need a powerful centralised apparatus in our party there can be no two opinions."

To what extent has Trotsky violated the unanimity of the Politburo in his letter ? The resolution of the Politburo demands the renewal of the apparatus from below, the advancing into responsible places of such workers as are able to defend Party Democracy in reality, the bringing to justice of those who refuse. Trotsky demands the removal of the bureaucratised and officialised, and their replacement by fresh elements from below. Can you advance new workers into responsible places without removing those who now occupy those places ? The whole party was agreed at this time that the apparatus should be, if anything, reduced rather than enlarged. Therefore there is no possible *practical* interpretation of the alleged difference here, except that Trotsky views the resolution as a thing to be put into operation, while Zinoviev and his obedient officials view it as a formula with which to quiet the rising agitation against their bureaucratic methods of control.

So much for Trotsky's " wholesale arraignment " of the apparatus, his " summons to a removal " of the party workers. Now as to his " laying the blame on the

apparatus for the formation of fractions." Did he violate here the unanimity of the Politburo? If you will remember what I told you about the origin of this whole discussion—the discovery of two conspirative organisations among the members of the party—you will realise that laying the blame for the formation of fractions upon the bureaucratism of the apparatus, was the whole sense and meaning of the resolution on Workers' Democracy. And that sense and meaning was expressed in the resolution itself in the following words :

"Workers' Democracy means freedom of open discussion by all the members of the party of the most important questions of party life, freedom of discussion upon them, and also the election of the governing official persons and collegiums from top to bottom. However, it does not by any means propose freedom of fractional groupings, which for a governing party are extremely dangerous, for they always threaten a bifurcation or splitting apart of the Government and the State apparatus as a whole. . . .

Only a continual, lively, intellectual life can preserve the party such as it was formed before and during the revolution, with a continual critical study of its own past, correction of its errors and collective consideration of important questions. *Only these methods of work are capable of giving a real guarantee against the danger that passing disagreements will convert themselves into fractional groupings, with all the consequences indicated above.\**

*For the prevention of this, it is demanded that the governing party organs listen to the voice of the broad party mass, and that they should not treat every criticism as a manifestation of fractionalism, and thus impel conscientious and disciplined party members along the road of secrecy and fractionalism."*

That is the manner in which the unanimous resolution of the Politburo discusses the relation of the conduct of the "governing party organs"—that is, the apparatus—to the danger of the formation of fractions.

\* All italics mine.

And here is Trotsky's "violation" of that unanimity :

"Yes, the party could not fulfil its historic mission if it fell apart into fractional groupings. That must not, and will not be. The party as a whole, as a self-active collectivity, will prevent that. But the party can wrestle successfully with the danger of fractions only by developing, strengthening and making durable the course toward Workers' Democracy. The bureaucratism of the apparatus is one of the chief sources of fractionalism. It suppresses criticism and drives dissatisfaction underground. It is inclined to tack the label of fractionalism upon every individual or collective voice of criticism or warning. Mechanical centralism is inevitably accompanied by fractionalism, which is at once a malicious caricature of Workers' Democracy, and a terrible political danger."

What is the difference here ? The resolution of the Politburo declares that an abandonment of bureaucratic methods and an adoption of Workers' Democracy is the only thing that can prevent fractions. Trotsky says that bureaucratic methods and the lack of Workers' Democracy is one of the chief causes of their formation. In other words, there is no difference at all. The statement that Trotsky has violated the unanimity of the resolution of the Politburo under this item is a false statement. Why did 3,000 party workers, agitated by a speech from Zinoviev, put their names to this statement, which is obviously false ? Because their excessive and "self-sufficient" power, like his, is bound up in the perpetuation of that bureaucratic *régime* which the resolution of the Politburo, as sincerely interpreted by Trotsky, would abolish.

And yet that bureaucratic *régime* was already so perfected that in one month after the promulgation of this obviously false statement, a conference of party officials called together by the triumvirate for that purpose, adopted a solemn resolution branding Trotsky's

letter as a "fractionalist manifesto," and beginning its indictment of him with the statement that "The opposition,\* with Comrade Trotsky at the head of it, has given the slogan 'Destruction of the Apparatus of the Party.'" That is the resolution which first placed Trotsky before the party and before the whole world as intrinsically a Menshevik and an enemy of "Leninism." Lenin died three days after the adoption of that resolution. Do you think it is surprising if Lenin's wife wrote an affectionate letter to Trotsky, reminding him of his early friendship with Lenin, and assuring him that Lenin's feeling toward him had never changed to the day of his death?

The reader may find it almost incredible that a conference of grown-up people could adopt such a resolution upon such a basis. He will surely imagine I have omitted, or failed to notice, some factor of importance here. I will give him, therefore, two more examples of the intellectual elevation of the arguments by which the conference was worked up to this action. The first from Bucharin : †

"Bolshevism has always valued very highly, and still values very highly, the party apparatus. This does not say that it would be blind to the point of not seeing the weaknesses of the apparatus, including its bureaucratism. However, Bolshevism, that is to say, Leninism, has never contrasted the party with the apparatus. That would be, from the Bolshevik point of view, absolute ignorance, for there is no party without its apparatus. Remove the apparatus, and you will see the party transform itself into an incoherent conglomeration of human masses. . . ."

Can anything more childish than this be imagined?

\* See Appendix VII.

† "Down with Fractionalism," *Pravda*, December 25th ff.

Is it possible to "see the weaknesses of the apparatus, including its bureaucratisation," and discuss them, without using sentences in which the apparatus and the party are contrasted? And does not the resolution of the Politburo contrast them in exactly the same way and to the same effect as Trotsky? Trotsky explicitly says in his letter that what he is trying to avoid is "an alienation between the apparatus and the mass."

Now the argument of Stalin :

"The third mistake committed by Comrade Trotsky consists in the fact that in his writings he contrasted the apparatus with the party, giving the slogan of struggle with the Apparatchiks [the organisation men, as we should say], and the subjection of the apparatus to the party. Bolshevism cannot accept a contrasting of the party and the apparatus. Of what does the apparatus in reality consist? The apparatus of the party—that is the Central Committee, the Regional Committees, the Provincial Committees, and the District Committees. Are these committees subordinated to the party? Of course they are subordinated, for they are 90 per cent. elected by the party. They are wrong who say that the Provincial Committees are appointed. They are wrong. You know, Comrades, that our Provincial Committees are elected, just like the District Committees, just like the Central Committee. They are subordinated to the party, but after they are elected they ought to lead the party—that is the point. Imagine the work of the party if after the Central Committee was elected by the conventions, after the Provincial Committee was elected by the Provincial Conference, the Central Committee and the Provincial Committee did not conduct the work. Why, without that our party work is completely unthinkable!"\*

Could anything be more obviously disingenuous than this indignant driving home of the obvious? Stalin has signed with Trotsky a resolution demanding that "the district, branch, and provincial party conferences at the coming elections shall systematically

\* *Pravda*, January 20th, 1924.

renew the party apparatus from below, advancing into responsible places such workers as are able to defend intra-party democracy in reality." Trotsky, in commenting on that resolution, has declared that "the renewal of the party apparatus—of course, within the strict limits of the constitution—ought to be carried out with the goal of replacing the officialised and bureaucratised with fresh elements in close union with the collective life or capable of guaranteeing such union. . . . The party ought to subordinate to itself its apparatus, not for a moment ceasing to be a centralised organisation." And Stalin pretends that Trotsky has attacked the principle of centralisation, has advocated a struggle against the apparatus as such, an attempt of the party membership to defy the leadership of the very men they have elected! Why does Stalin attribute to Trotsky an absurdity that would be rejected by the logical instinct of an unborn child? Because he is driven into a corner from which he cannot get out by any more honest or any more plausible method. He has signed a resolution demanding the renewal of the apparatus from below, and a real renewal of the apparatus from below will take his artificial power out of his hand, and give to Trotsky the influence which belongs to him. It is perfectly obvious that Trotsky is demanding nothing but a real renewal of the apparatus from below. And it is obvious that in defining his demand, he has been extremely prudent and careful to safeguard the organisational principles of Lenin. There is no way to beat him, therefore, except to deliberately and flatly falsify what he has said. And that is what Stalin does, and that is what the resolution of the conference of party officials, called together and whipped into an intellectual panic by

Stalin and Zinoviev and Kamenev and their lieutenants, does. That is the only and the whole meaning of the statement of this conference that Trotsky has "given the slogan, 'Destruction of the Apparatus of the Party.'"

#### "FRACTIONALISM"

To return to the manifesto issued by the Petrograd party workers. It prolongs its cry of fright as follows :

"We read with alarm the lines of Comrade Trotsky which attempt to set the youth against the fundamental generation of old revolutionist Bolsheviks, the underground workers, the fundamental staff of our party. . . ."

I will not discuss this point again, for it is exactly the same falsification as that perpetrated by Stalin in his short article in *Pravda* of the day before, and merely demonstrates the close co-operation between him and Zinoviev. I will merely state, as to this question of "old Bolshevism," that if you drew up a list of the "Old Bolsheviks" whose names you learned to know and love *while Lenin lived*, you would find more of them on Trotsky's side than on the side of the triumvirate.\*

The manifesto of Zinoviev's party workers continues, and, so far as the substance of it goes, concludes with the following statement :

"Against fractionalism, against groupings, Comrade Trotsky did not find one clear decisive word. In reality, under the present circumstances and in the present stage of the discussion, such a contribution by Comrade Trotsky is a support to those who demand the legalisation of fractions."

Read now again the words that Trotsky wrote :

\* I naturally do not feel justified in publishing such a list. It would include the names of people who, although their opinions are known, have refrained, for one reason or another, from publishing them.

“The party could not fulfil its historic mission if it fell apart into fractional groupings. That must not and will not be. The party as a whole, as a self-active collectivity, will prevent that. But the party can wrestle successfully with the problem of fractions only by developing, strengthening and making durable the course toward Workers’ Democracy. . . . Mechanical centralism is inevitably accompanied by fractionalism, which is at once a malicious caricature of Workers’ Democracy and a terrible political danger.”

That is what Trotsky says in his letter about fractions, and, as I have already shown you, it is exactly what the unanimous resolution of the Politburo says. Trotsky only adds to that resolution the statement that to interpret its programme as a tolerance of fractionalism would be a “malicious caricature,” and that fractions constitute a “terrible political danger.” He uses the same adjective that is used to describe “Ivan the Terrible.” And upon the basis of this statement Zinoviev’s Petrograd party workers announce, 3,000 strong, that Trotsky has “found no decisive word against fractions,” and that his letter is a support to those who demand the legalisation of fractions. Four days before this the Moscow party workers, 4,000 of them, had met and discussed Trotsky’s letter without excessive emotion, agreeing or disagreeing with the statement that it “needed supplementation or explanation,” and going reasonably home to bed. From this you may infer that Zinoviev is an able agitator, and in that inference you make no mistake.

In order that you may taste the emotional quality of the panic generated in the party by Zinoviev’s agitation, I will quote one additional paragraph from his cry of alarm :

“We do not doubt for a moment that the immense majority of our party will appraise the letter of Comrade Trotsky, just



as we, the Petertzi \* have. The sooner Comrade Trotsky recognises and corrects his mistakes, the better will it be for our party.

We address ourselves to all the organisations of our party with a summons not to let the present discussion take the form taken by that preceding the Tenth Session, when Comrade Lenin had to come out with articles stating that 'the party is sick,' 'the party has a fever,' etc. Let us not forget, comrades, that the whole international situation, the whole internal situation, obliges us to be more cautious than ever before. And, above all, let us not forget this, that the universally accepted teacher and leader of our party, Vladimir Ilych Lenin, is still unable to take a direct part in the work of the Central Committee, and that this obliges us to observe a still greater solidarity and a still more hearty support of our Central Committee. . . . If in the current discussion all kinds of legends have been created, this has been done by the 'opposition' only for fractional purposes. The unity of the party and the solidarity of its general staff will be protected whatever it costs. . . ."

Is it not strange that this extraordinary caution, and this exaggerated anxiety about the solidarity of the general staff, should not have led any members of that staff to call Trotsky on the telephone *before* his letter was published, and ask him to correct the statements in it which seemed to overstep their agreement ?

\* Nickname for those living in Petrograd. I have employed the name *Petrograd* in describing events which happened in Leningrad before the name was changed.

## CHAPTER VIII

### BUCHARIN FALSIFIES HISTORY

I DO not think it is necessary to carry these citations farther, in order to prove that the campaign to depopularise Trotsky by falsifying his position, was deliberate. Either it was deliberate, or the present leaders of the party are hysterics. But the campaign received a certain apparent dignity from the long article by Bucharin, entitled "Down with Fractionalism," from which I think it is worth while to show the reader a further specimen. Stalin had concluded his original attack upon Trotsky with the statement that Trotsky constitutes a block with the democratic centralists and a part of the "Left Communists." And Bucharin's attack begins in harmony with this latter phrase. It tells us that we can only understand the present errors of Trotsky by discovering their origin, and for that purpose it goes back to Brest-Litovsk, and shows us "in what consisted the error of Comrade Trotsky and the Left Communists" in that crisis. It declares that his error consisted in "letting himself be carried away by the revolutionary phrase"—a statement which would indeed place him, as all the readers of Lenin know, among the Left Communists. Trotsky, at Brest-Litovsk, had a marvellous project, but he did not see the "damned reality which the genius of Lenin saw with such prodigious clarity." And especially he "did not see the peasants, who would not and could not fight."

From this Bucharin passes to the crisis about the trade unions, and shows that "the error of Trotsky and other comrades" in this crisis sprang from *exactly the same cause*. They had an "excellent plan" for the amalgamation of the trade unions with the apparatus of the State, but it involved a "political line absolutely contrary to the real state of things." And Bucharin concludes his historical treatise with the statement that: "Our present divergences with Comrade Trotsky can be traced to the same source. These divergences have always existed, etc., etc. . . ." In short, Trotsky has always been a Left Communist.

Does it not strike you as a little peculiar that this campaign against Trotsky, which has resulted in classifying him definitely and decisively as the leader of a "deviation to the right," should have begun with a suggestion from Stalin and a most elaborate demonstration by Bucharin that Trotsky is a Left Communist? Is it conceivable that if these terms were being used, as they were used by Lenin, to discriminate actual facts, they could have been interchanged in the middle of the discussion without anybody's noticing it? They were being used as weapons with which to destroy Trotsky's authority as a disciple of Lenin. And the reason why the weapons were changed in the middle of the discussion, was that it proved expedient to go back *farther* than the days of Brest-Litovsk—to go back twenty years, in fact, and rake up quotations from the attacks made by Trotsky upon Lenin when Trotsky was trying to unite what he imagined to be the real revolutionists in the Menshevik and Bolshevik factions. It proved expedient to adopt Zinoviev's form of abuse, instead of the form invented by Stalin and Bucharin. It is obvious that Trotsky cannot be *permanently* advertised as *both* a Menshevik and a Left Communist. You

may experiment a little in the beginning, but in the long run you have got to standardise your abuse.

I am going to call your attention to another thing about Bucharin's article. It was not signed by Bucharin; it was described as "The Reply of the Editorial Staff of the Central Organ to Comrade Trotsky's Letter." The reason I happen to know it was written by Bucharin is that Stalin stated this fact in a speech printed in *Pravda* for January 22nd, 1924.\* Now let me tell you how Bucharin would have had to write his historical treatise on the errors of Comrade Trotsky if he had signed his article.

He would have had to say: Comrade Trotsky and I both took an erroneous position during the debate on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, because we neither of us had in that crisis an adequate sense of reality. But Trotsky's sense of reality was so much better than mine that he opposed the program of "revolutionary war" advocated by me and the Left Communists. His programme was to declare the war ended, but make our revolutionary character clear to the German workers by refusing to sign a peace with their rulers. And, moreover, when the Germans advanced, and Lenin declared that if we did not sign the Peace of Brest-Litovsk he would resign from the Government and the Central Committee, Trotsky, stating that we could obviously not fight with a divided party, deliberately withheld his vote and gave the majority to Lenin. Whereas I, with an obstinacy of stupidity that I can now only describe as idiotic, continued to vote against Lenin.

That is how Bucharin would have to write, over his own signature, the history of Brest-Litovsk. And the history of the discussion about the trade unions would

\* As this book goes to press, I learn that Bucharin's article was subsequently printed over his own signature.—M.E.

fare but little better. For instead of a history of "the errors of Trotsky and other comrades," it would be a history of the errors of *Trotsky and me*, each of us composing and advocating "an excellent plan" which, nevertheless, ignored the "real state of things," and each of us receiving a good sound lecture from Lenin.\*

It is obvious that such a history could not conclude with the rather pious statement that: "Our present divergences with Comrade Trotsky can be traced to the same source. These divergences have always existed, etc." It would have to conclude somewhat as follows: "Our present divergences arise from the fact that I, having been upon the whole a great deal foolisher than Comrade Trotsky, and having had a less practical sense of reality, have suddenly become far more wise."

And to this Bucharin might have added that having always admired Trotsky without bound or limit, having defended his practical judgment and praised his revolutionary devotion—having remembered when others forgot, that Trotsky once cheerfully sacrificed his own prestige in order to defend the prestige of the party—having done all these things in his folly, Bucharin in his wisdom can find nothing better to do than imitate Stalin in imputing to Trotsky's carefully spoken words *exactly the opposite meaning from that which they express*, and upon the basis of that imputation describe him as a demagogue. I am going to ask you to attend to one last quotation which is typical of the mode of refuting Trotsky's arguments adopted in this rather comically top-lofty article of Bucharin's:

"We must without doubt—and no divergence of views is possible on this point—try during the New Course to elevate as much as possible the political and intellectual activity of the members; we can only do this by employing in the party

\* See Appendix II.

the methods of democracy. It is clear, and we affirm it, that this is not the question which has provoked the discussion. The question is by what means the party shall be revived. Shall it be by developing ideologically the young adherents of the party and assimilating them to it with the aid of the old staff? . . . According to Trotsky, it is not the old guard which should guide the young, but on the contrary, it is the young who should take it upon themselves to conduct the old. . . . That is evidently a demagogic viewpoint sufficiently remote from Leninism."

Now let us recur once more to the thoughtful words of Trotsky :

" We ought to state—we ourselves, the " old men "—that our generation, *while naturally playing the rôle of leadership in the party*,\* nevertheless does not contain within itself any automatic guarantee against a gradual and unnoticeable weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, provided the party permits any further growth and hardening of the bureaucratic-apparatus method of politics, which converts the younger generation into passive material for education, and creates inevitably an alienation between the apparatus and the mass, between the old and the young. *Against this unquestionable danger* there is no other defence, except a serious, deep, radical change of course in the direction of Workers' Democracy, accompanied by a continually increasing introduction into the party of proletarians who remain in the shops."

Is not Bucharin's imputation of demagogism to Trotsky founded upon an exact logical falsification of his words ? And if you remove that falsification, what is there that you can insert into its place in the argument of Bucharin, except the honest and obvious truth about the whole situation, namely :

" We must without doubt employ the methods of democracy, . . . This is not the question which has provoked the discussion. . . . The question which has provoked the discussion is whether those methods of democracy shall go far enough to let the party membership take the excessive power out of our hands, and give to Trotsky, whom they love better and trust more, a dominant influence."

\* Italics mine.

## CHAPTER IX

### THEY DEFEND "LENINISM"

To all this campaign of calumny and falsification Trotsky's only reply was the following sentence inserted in the issue of *Pravda* for December 18th :

"I make no response to certain specific articles which have recently appeared in *Pravda*, since I think this better answers the interests of the party, and in particular of the discussion now in progress about the New Course."

Having made this statement, Trotsky continued to define his position, impersonally, and with an elevation of thought and language that is unexcelled in the literature of revolution. Some of the essays in his little book on *The New Course* will take their place with the classics of Marxism.

In further defining his position upon the question of the old Bolsheviks and the new generation, Trotsky made the following statement :

"The point is exactly this, that the older generation should consciously change the course and thus guarantee their continued governing influence in the whole work of a self-active party."

In further defining his position upon the question of renewing the party apparatus, he made this statement :

"It is monstrous to think that the party will break, or permit anybody to break its apparatus. The party knows that the most precious elements, in whom are incarnated an enormous part of our past experience, enter into the apparatus. But it

wants to renew the apparatus, and remind its apparatus that it is elected by the party, and should not isolate itself from the party."

In further defining his position upon the question of fractions Trotsky made the following statements :

"Fractions are the greatest evil possible in our circumstances, and groupings—even temporary ones—may transform themselves into fractions. . . . The party does not want fractions, and will not permit them."

The articles containing these statements were published before the meeting of the conference of party officials in January. They were in the hands of these officials when they adopted the resolution which has put Trotsky before the world as having issued a "fractionalist manifesto," attacking the leadership of the Old Bolsheviks, "pitting the younger generation against the fundamental framework of the party," "giving the slogan 'Destruction of the Apparatus of the Party,'" and "replacing the Bolshevik conception of the party as an organic whole, by another conception which makes the party an assemblage of groups and fractions." \*

Trotsky's book was practically suppressed by the Politburo until they were sure of the success of their

\* This conference also condemned the "opposition"—"with Comrade Trotsky at the head of it"—for "interpreting the importance of discipline in a way absolutely contrary to the Bolshevik viewpoint." It is, therefore, worth while to see just what Trotsky said in his supplementary articles about discipline :

"Where tradition is conservative, there discipline is passive and is violated at the first serious shock. Where, as in our party, tradition consists of the highest revolutionary activity, there discipline attains the highest intensity, for its deciding significance is continually verified in practice. Hence the indissoluble union between revolutionary initiative, bold critical study of problems—and iron discipline in action. Only through the highest activity can the young man receive that tradition of discipline from the old."



manceuvre—and this, notwithstanding an order of the Central Committee, signed by Stalin and published in *Pravda* for December 15th, directing all the organisations of the party to permit a free and unhindered discussion of the resolution on Workers' Democracy. This discussion ought, in the opinion of the Central Committee, to "involve the whole mass of the party membership in all corners of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics." Notwithstanding that excellent resolution, the unofficial suppression of Trotsky's brochure was entirely effective. The brochure could not be openly bought, and a very general impression prevailed that it had been officially suppressed. Even after this embargo was removed, the whole apparatus of news and book distribution continued to impede its circulation. And in the meantime a stupendous "educational campaign" was undertaken in every town and hamlet of Russia, throughout the party locals, the trade unions, the schools, and the regiments of the Red Army, explaining that Trotsky had made an attack on the principles of Lenin, intimating that there had always been a conflict between them, and that Trotsky has always sought for some independent course which would set him off against Lenin, and make him seem as great. In short, an advertising campaign which outdoes anything known to the most enormous American manufacturing industry, a campaign endowed with the power to suppress the advertisements of its rivals as well as propagate its own, undertook to convince the Russian proletariat and Communist Party, and the proletariat and Communist parties of the whole world, that Trotsky is not only intellectually irresponsible and at heart a Menshevik, but that he is personally ambitious and would like to grab the power

with a view to turning Leninism into "Trotskyism." An irresponsible and ill-written pamphlet professing to give an account of Trotsky's intellectual development, and stating that "Trotskyism" has always been "a form of intellectual opportunism . . . guided in its political activities by the mood of the moment," and that "Trotsky has always been in the sphere of political questions a revolutionary *dilettante*" \*—was spread through the territory of the Union of Soviet Republics, like the Bible of the Gideons through the commercial hotels of the United States. The whole past history of the Russian revolution was revised and amended in order to create a picture of the original sin and unregenerate rebellion of Trotsky against Leninism. And not only the past but the present history, and not only the Russian but the more recent German revolution, was compelled to pay its tribute to this inebriate crusade. A wholesale redistribution of jobs was put into operation, such as to remove from positions of influence any persons who were known to support the programme of Workers' Democracy as sincerely interpreted by Trotsky. Wholesale expulsions of students from the universities were enacted on the same principle. Old Bolsheviks, some of them the closest personal friends and aides of Lenin, were rooted up from positions of administrative importance, and shipped away to kick their heels in foreign embassies. And the organisation of the Red Army, created by Trotsky, understood by him, loyal to him, and under his hand the most powerful instrument ever possessed by a revolutionary movement in the world, was invaded and ripped to pieces and weakened of its power to defend the revolu-

\* This pamphlet was published by the Leningrad Soviet, of which Zinoviev is President.

tion, in order to make sure that it will never defend the name of Trotsky against those who are determined to destroy it.

The resolution on Workers' Democracy had declared that "the party must facilitate the flowing in of new groups of industrial workers, and their promotion from candidates to members." And Trotsky had emphasised this necessity, too, in his letters on the New Course. The bureaucracy seized upon this as an opportunity to change at a stroke the essential composition of the party. Passing a resolution to admit 100,000 workers, they opened the gates to almost 200,000. And, instead of "facilitating their promotion" from candidates (or probational members) to complete membership, they endowed them immediately with the right to vote for delegates to the next Congress of the party. At the same time they passed a resolution that no more "intellectuals" should be admitted. And in the spring they instituted a "purgation" of the party, directed particularly to the expulsion of intellectuals who failed in some respects to come up to the standards of "Leninism." It is perfectly obvious that all these drastic measures, carried out in a hurry, and at the height of the panic about Trotsky's alleged attack on "Leninism," resulted automatically in perfecting the control of his enemies upon the party. One need not even attribute to them a conscious intention, though it would be idiotic to ignore it. The selections of new members and the expulsions of old were carried out by the existing apparatus, already "dangerously" bureaucratized by its own confession, and now very widely indoctrinated with the necessity of defending "Leninism" against "Trotskyism." The result was a perfectly automatic change of composition of the party

in the direction of support to the existing machine and opposition to Trotsky.

Even had there been no selection by the bureaucracy, the very admission of an enormous number of workers in the shops, and an expulsion of "intellectuals," at just that moment, must inevitably strengthen the hold of the bureaucracy. This is not only because the workers are inherently more subject to organisational management than the intellectuals—their fundamental revolutionary strength being in this situation a weakness—but it is also because of the intellectual complexity of the trick that had been played upon them. It is perfectly clear from the citations I have adduced that only a man having some time for critical study, and also some training in such study, could save himself, except by a rare emotional intuition, from becoming the dupe of the official machine. The confident love of the whole underlying mass of the party, workers and intellectuals alike, for Trotsky was what originally compelled his enemies to resort to this campaign of slander and falsification. But after they had carried their campaign through to the end, brutally and ruthlessly, it followed as an automatic conclusion that Trotsky's support remained firmest in those sections of the party possessing intellectual leisure and the habit of critical thought.

I promised to tell the reader all the points that were made against Trotsky in the course of this stampede. And this is the last one—that, *after it was over*, Trotsky appeared to be a man who was better supported by the intellectuals than by the workers. This inevitable result of the demagogue-method by which he had been attacked was converted into an argument against him as the leader of a proletarian revolution. And this

argument was reinforced by an additional fact, namely, that the whole general population of Russia—including those who would like to hang him—admire Trotsky, and have the same involuntary respect for him that they had for Lenin. Everybody loves a hero, though the fight goes on. But those very same "proletarian" writers who repeated a thousand times in praise of Lenin the fact that his enemies admired him, adduce this fact about Trotsky in proof that he really belongs to the bourgeoisie.

Through all this proceeding Trotsky remained silent, doing his work so far as health and the will of the triumvirate permitted him to do it, preparing his own documentary history of the past, and studying the economic situation with a view to some comprehensive plan which may guarantee the future of the revolution. His personal popularity, however, supported by the simple fact that he had approached a revolutionary problem with Marxian understanding and in the spirit of Lenin, continued to embarrass his enemies. And not feeling strong enough to eliminate him from the government, they put forth the preposterous demand that he should "acknowledge his mistakes." At the party convention in May, 1924, Zinoviev officially voiced this challenge, and it was the general feeling in the party, and even among the friends of Trotsky, that he ought to appear and speak at the party convention. Many had the impression that his illness and his subsequent absence in the Caucasus were the reasons for his not responding personally and polemically to the attacks upon him. Trotsky hesitated long about speaking at the convention. It was undoubtedly one of the most perfectly "packed" conventions ever held in the history of the world. And what could be gained

by repeating again, and redefining, those clear thoughts which they were inflexibly determined to pervert? Nevertheless, Trotsky finally yielded to the general demand. He acted upon the counsel of Lenin: "The party will learn not to exaggerate its differences."\* He spoke with the utmost moderation and restraint, reasserting his opposition to fractionalism, and his loyal submission to the discipline of the party, explaining once more exactly what he meant about the two generations, and merely recalling to the delegates that the danger of bureaucratism against which he had struggled was generally recognised, and that the admission of 200,000 workers, although improving the social composition of the party, had not removed that danger. The problem of the relation between the "old theoretically experienced and tempered generation" who govern the party, and the "innumerable youth," had been made only "more pressing and more important."

It was an admirable speech, quiet and profound and sure; but I think it was one of the hardest ordeals in Trotsky's life. He came into the tribune with signs of pain in his face and bearing that I have never seen before. When it was over, these signs were gone, and the next morning, at a celebration in the aerodrome, he was radiant with energy and health and good confident laughter, as always. It was against his instinct to try to say anything to that convention, and the event proved that he was right. The heads of the party were determined to "exaggerate its differences." His restraint and moderation only set them free. Nothing that he said was met and answered; there was no discussion of any problem. An exhibition was

\* See Appendix II.

put on of the perfection of the bureaucratic machine—an exhibition which proved the truth of everything that Trotsky had said, but only by the process of automatically dismissing and ridiculing it. Trotsky had spoken in the morning, and all day long one obedient delegate after another, constituting a kind of representative bouquet from all sections of the party, stepped up and made his little superficial contribution, not to a solution of the great and real problem of the party's future which had been raised by Trotsky, but to the business of confirming and perpetuating the false paper caricature of Trotsky, which they had learned by heart from the writings of Stalin, and Zinoviev, and Kamenev, and Bucharin and their associates.

The general drift of their remarks was that Trotsky's speech had been unintelligible, equivocal, "diplomatic"—Trotsky had not been candid. In view of this, it is worth while to quote his opening sentences :

"I will concentrate, or I will try at least to concentrate, your attention upon that question, an explanation of which the Congress (or a certain part of it—more truly, all of it) expects from me, but in doing this I will set aside from the beginning—and I think the convention will understand my motives—all that which might in any degree sharpen the question, introduce personal moments, and make more difficult the liquidation of the difficulties which have arisen before the party, and from which we all want to extricate the party with benefit for its further work. If for this reason I do not touch upon a series of sharp issues with which my name has lately been associated, that is not because I would decline to give the Congress an answer to any question whatever. . . ."

Not one of the delegates who proceeded to pounce upon Trotsky's speech for its *unintelligibility* and *lack of candour*, not one of them, though they devoted the whole day to this matter, essentially involving Trotsky's

personal attitude, accepted his invitation to ask him a question. That is a sufficient testimony to the machine character of the whole performance. They did not want him to answer any questions. They did not want him to introduce "personal moments" or touch upon any of those "sharp issues" of which I have written the history here.

I will give you an example of the intellectual level upon which this "discussion" was carried on. In declaring his loyalty to the discipline of the party, Trotsky had made this statement :

"The party in the last account is always right, because the party is the single historic instrument given to the proletariat for the solution of its fundamental problems. I have already said that before the face of one's own party nothing could be easier than to acknowledge a mistake, nothing easier than to say : all my criticisms, my announcements, my warnings, my protests—the whole thing was a mere mistake. I, however, comrades, cannot say that, because I do not think it. I know that one must not be right *against* the party. One can be right only with the party, and through the party, for history has created no other road for the realisation of what is right. The English have a saying : 'Right or wrong, it is my country.' With far greater historic justification we may say : Right or wrong, in separate particular concrete questions, at separate moments, nevertheless it is my party. . . ."

Whatever you may think of this statement, and of the Hegelian-Marxian philosophy of history in which it has its roots, you certainly cannot imagine that it imputes to the party a papal infallibility in the solution of "separate, particular, concrete questions at separate moments." And yet that was the meaning attributed to it throughout the discussion. And, thanks principally to Stalin and Zinoviev, all official Communist Moscow was seriously discussing for some days after,

\* Stenographic Report of the Thirteenth Congress, p. 166.



the question whether the Russian Communist Party is infallible! Here is what Stalin said—you must judge for yourself whether with clever dishonesty, or naïve stupidity :

“‘The party,’ says Trotsky, ‘cannot make a mistake.’ That is not true. The party often makes mistakes. Ilych taught us to teach the leaders of the party on their own mistakes. If the party never made mistakes, there would be nothing on which to teach the party. . . . I think this sort of an announcement from Comrade Trotsky is something of a compliment, with something of an attempt to make fun of us—an attempt, to be sure, not very successful.”\*

And here is Zinoviev :

“Comrade Stalin said, and I, of course, am in full accord with him, that the party can make mistakes. It is useless to hand us these sour-sweet compliments. The party has no need of that. Can you imagine Vladimir Ilych ever coming out on the platform and saying that the party cannot make a mistake? ‘A switch!’ you remember. It was he that said it at one Congress of the soviets. ‘A switch is what you need. If we make mistakes, we will fail and go up the spout!’ That is what he said, and not, on the one hand, ‘the party is wrong, and, on the other hand, the party ‘cannot make mistakes.’ There, that’s your answer to the question whether the party can make mistakes!”†

Are we to take this sort of thing, this solemn juvenile nonsense—“Stalin says that the party can make mistakes, and I, of course, am in full accord with him”—as the serious meditation of the leaders of the international proletariat? For my part, as I listened to their speeches, I found it impossible to credit them with so silly and superficial a pair of brains. The performance at this convention was a continuation of the deliberately unscrupulous campaign carried on during the winter. Sometimes a gang of mediocre bad boys

\* Stenographic Report of the Thirteenth Congress, p. 245.

† *Ibid.*, p. 261.

will decide to make the world an impossible place for mature people, to whom truth is true and important things are important. If a gang of these boys had got their bottoms into the vacant chair of Lenin, they would behave towards Trotsky in about the same way that these great revolutionists have behaved.

As for the minor delegates, their performance reminded me of nothing so much as the Armistice Day exercises in a patriotic American private school. The originality of each pupil and, at the same time, their perfect training, is demonstrated by the clever variety of ways in which they all say the same thing, namely, that they hate the Germans and cleave to the Stars and Stripes. A greater contrast to the earnest and terribly honest analytical confronting of every suggestion concerning the problems of the revolution, which has always been the single occupation of the conventions of Lenin's party, could not be imagined. The thing was so manifestly a mere staged ceremony of mutilating the corpse of Trotsky's authority in the party machine, that at last Lenin's wife asked for the floor, and reminded the delegates that they were not discussing any practical question and that, if Trotsky had declared that he was against factions, that was enough. She was greeted with rounds of applause, which suggested that the delegates were sick of their own performance, and after a full day devoted to it, in a late hour of the evening, this post-mortem ceremony came to an end.

It remained plausible, however, that the "debate" must be "summed up." And the better part of the next morning was devoted to a *résumé* of the now perfectly stereotyped falsifications of Trotsky's position by Stalin and Zinoviev—the speeches from which I

have quoted. Stalin rehearsed his "Six Mistakes of Comrade Trotsky"—reduced to five now, because he had found it convenient to forget one of them.\* And Zinoviev, holding Trotsky's little book on "The New Course" in his hand, and sweeping the delegates after him in a torrent of contemptuous oratory—not omitting a sneer at the "Christian Socialism" of Lenin's wife for her intervention of the night before †—made a series of statements, of which the following is a typical example:

"In this book there is a whole chapter on fractions and groupings. There it is not said, 'I am for groupings and fractions.' That is not said directly, but it is written between the lines. Everybody understood it so at the time. That is just such a clever 'diplomatic' article as yesterday's speech."

Knowing that if anybody had looked inside of Trotsky's book, he would have found fractions denounced there as a "malicious caricature" of the programme he was advocating, and as a "terrible political danger," and that he would have found the assertion that "fractions are the greatest evil possible in our circumstances, and groupings—even temporary ones—can turn into fractions," and the statement that "the party does not want fractions, and will not permit them"—knowing this fact, I walked out after the meeting into an adjoining enormous hall, which was full to the windows of piles of every species of revolutionary literature that has been published by any publishing house in Russia, from Marx's "Capital" to the last little pamphlet of an aspiring high-school teacher—all for the instruction of the delegates—and I asked for a copy of Trotsky's

\* See Appendix VII.

† A parenthetical apology appears in the printed report of Zinoviev's speech: "The term 'Christian Socialism' was employed in similar circumstances by Vladimir Ilych." (1)

“New Course,” and I was informed that it was not on hand. I never saw a copy of the book outside of Zinoviev’s possession during the whole of this performance, which was supposed to be a discussion by grown men, “in the spirit of Lenin,” of the infinitely precise and conscientious thoughts contained in it.

It was a few days before this Congress that Lenin’s wife presented to the Central Committee the “Testament of Lenin,”\* his letter, which he had directed should be read to the Party Congress, and which demanded the removal of Stalin from his place of power, warned them that the behaviour of Zinoviev and Kamenev in October was not accidental, and that Bucharin does not know how to think like a Marxian, and explained that Trotsky’s fault is only an excessive self-confidence, and that he is a devoted revolutionist, and the outstanding revolutionist among them. Lenin’s wife demanded that the letter should be read as Lenin directed. It was a severe test for the machine—for the triumvirate—but there was only a moment of wavering. The letter was soon locked up in the safe. Zinoviev closed the convention with a benediction:

“Although we may not have seen so clearly, or so deeply, or so far, as Vladimir Ilych knew how to, yet one thing can be said, that the whole convention, like one man, has been inspired with a desire to work as though Vladimir Ilych were among us.”

If you danced on the corpse of Vladimir Ilych, you would insult his spirit less than by clapping the censorship on his own last words to his party, and juggling under the table with the cheapest tricks of the demagogue, the conscientious thoughts of that man whom he designated as the best of you.

\* See p. 28.

## CHAPTER X

### TROTSKY'S PERSONAL REACTION

You will wonder how it could have been possible, by such obvious tricks, to beat Trotsky down from his great height, and grab the whole power out of his hands. One thing that goes a little way toward explaining it is the peculiar reaction of Trotsky himself. Since the stampede was produced by a campaign of subtle and plausible misrepresentation on the part of men whom the party had learned to trust, the only thing which could have checked it, would have been an act of transcendent candour on Trotsky's part. He would have had to find a way to put forth his whole real warm and convincing personality in a deliberate response to a deliberate personal attack. He would have had to make the entire party feel that they knew him personally, and could, therefore, personally deny what they were being told. But his pride led him in the opposite direction. So far as the articles in *Pravda* were not replies to his words, but a deliberate falsification of them, he made no answer whatever. He not only made no answer to this enormous polemical and calumnious outpouring, which filled all Russia for half the winter, but he *never read any of it*. I asked him once why he did not take all these issues of *Pravda*, and retire for a week, and analyse them and write a complete factual explanation of the whole thing.

“Why, this is not an argument, it is a personal

attack," he said, "I can't reply to a thing like that." And he spread out his hands as though this proposition were perfectly obvious.

To me it did not seem obvious, and I continued: "Now, you could take that speech of Stalin's about 'The Six Mistakes of Comrade Trotsky,' for instance. . . ."

"What is that?" he asked, and he smiled at my expression. "I haven't read any of those things," he explained.

I murmured my amazement, and he spread his hands again in that gesture which indicates that something is quite obvious.

"Why should I read what they write?" he said. "They aren't discussing anything that I said. There is no misunderstanding."

That is the way Trotsky talked to his friends. But throughout the height of this panic he was ill in the Caucasus, and even those few conversations for which he finds time in the pressure of his work were impossible. And in his published writings he maintained an impersonal dignity and objectivity that might in ordinary times be admirable. The self-command and perfect equilibrium revealed by it were admirable. But as a reaction to an attack, it was not intelligible to simple people. It played directly into the hands of those who were propagating calumnious legends about him. It made him seem remote, and a little mysterious, and very sharply different from Lenin, who so often cleared the air by the simple device of saying all that he thought.

I talked once about Trotsky with the man into whose family he moved at the age of nine, when he left home to go to school in Odessa. And the first thing that man

said in answer to my questioning, was: "We did not really know what Leon Davidovitch was thinking about—even at that age he was so perfectly self-contained."

In my own acquaintance with Trotsky I have observed this same quality, and found it irritating. He has that part of a social nature which consists of listening with sympathetic attention while you explain yourself, but he has not that part which consists of instinctively explaining himself. He is extremely frank—quite startling in that respect—but you have to ask him questions. As I have said, the most significant part of his speech before the party Congress was his offer to answer "any question whatever" that the delegates might ask him. And I notice that in his letter resigning his post in the Red Army he repeated this proposal. He had remained in Moscow, although ordered south by his physicians, in order to be able to "answer this or that question or make any necessary explanations." Again, of course, no explanations were asked for. Nothing has been more precious to his enemies, and more essential to their success, than this poised reticence of Trotsky's, his lack of that irresistible impulse which most of us have to explain ourselves.

Trotsky said, in the note inserted in *Pravda* which I have already quoted,\* that he refrained from answering these personal attacks because he believed it was to the best interests of the party. And in his letter of resignation he asserted that he still believed "his silence had been right from the standpoint of the general interests of the party." In attributing his absolute silence to his temperament, I do not mean to deny that he exercised this judgment and acted upon it. Moreover,

\* See p. 79.

in so far as the true answer to the attack upon him consisted of laying bare the facts that I have stated here, it would be bold under the existing circumstances\* to question his judgment. The thing which I attribute to his temperament is the *absoluteness* of his silence. A man who was not proud and had a strong impulse toward social self-expression, would not have acted upon a rigid principle here. He would have found a way to make the party feel the response of his personality without violating its discipline or breaking its solidarity before the world. At least, that is my opinion. And I believe that Trotsky himself might have found this more practical course if he had been able to appear in public at the beginning of the stampede. Nobody can tell how much his sickness played into the hands of his enemies. It is certain that they consciously reckoned upon it in starting this unscrupulous campaign.

\* "The circumstances of capitalist encirclement," to use Trotsky's own phrase in another connection. Of course, neither Trotsky's silence, nor the silence of many strong and courageous men and women in the party who share his view, can be fully understood except in the light of that governing fact.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE MEANING OF THE DISPUTE

It is not Trotsky's character, however, nor his sickness, nor any other personal accident,\* that ultimately explains the success of this stampede, but the dynamic situation within the party. The discussion about party bureaucracy and the need for a new course was not an academic discussion. It was an attack upon an existing force. A sincere enactment of the programme of Workers' Democracy would have meant a decisive reduction of the arbitrary authority of many thousands of very powerful officials. This body of officials wields not only the political, but the economic sovereignty over one-sixth of the surface of the earth. The fact that they are committed to a régime of personal poverty does not impair their natural human self-importance, nor diminish their

\* A great many Marxians will consider this whole book of mine too personal. They will think I am concerned with the moral characters of people instead of the destinies of the revolution, and, unfortunately, the bourgeois reviewers will support this view. As a matter of fact, I have but little interest in moral indignation; I should have been glad to let the myth that all the leaders of the Bolshevik Party are "Supermen" die a natural death. It did good service in its day. My reason for demonstrating so exhaustively, and so often repeating, the fact that the attack upon Trotsky was and is dishonest, is not that I think this is the essence of the question, but that, *unless he knows this*, the western reader cannot possibly come at the essence of the question. Owing to the discipline of the party and the International, and the necessity of revolutionary solidarity in Russia, the whole news-explanation of this dispute is in the hands of the bureaucracy; and they are using Marxian ideas as weapons in a personal fight. The only way to get down to the *facts* which interest a Marxian, is to expose this dishonest use of Marxian *ideas*.

instinctive resistance to any attack upon it. Indeed, I am not sure but this "Soviet aristocracy" is more jealous of its authority than aristocracies whose authority has a soldier foundation. The resolution on Workers' Democracy was an attack upon that authority, and it would be the natural and primitive egoistic instinct of the whole officialdom of the party, having adopted it "in principle," not to let it go into practice.

Everybody knew that Trotsky was the one very powerful man *within that officialdom* who was pushing the resolution. Trotsky was the one big Soviet aristocrat, as you might say, who saw the increasing rigidity of that aristocracy as a fundamental danger to the revolution. Therefore, whatever may have been in the consciousness of different individuals, Trotsky had the primitive, unconscious instincts of the organisation men against him from the start.

Moreover, Trotsky insisted upon removing the one small guarantee possessed by this aristocracy of their *permanent ascendancy*. That guarantee is the idea of the sacredness of "Old Bolsheviks," and friends of "Old Bolsheviks," and friends of the friends of "Old Bolsheviks," and people who have acquired an odour of sanctity from the laying-on of hands of "Old Bolsheviks." I exaggerate a little, but the fact which I exaggerate is of the utmost importance. As Marxists we are accustomed to explain the nobility attributed to families with a heroic past as an ideology. The real basis of their nobility, we explain, is economic. Within the Russian Communist Party the situation is reversed. There is no economic basis of nobility.\* *The ideology*

\* There are economic emoluments, to be sure, and special privileges which add to the value of office-holding in the organisation. They are tiny enough compared to the privileges and emoluments of the upper classes in a bourgeois society, but they are by no means insignificant. To

*is all there is*, and the present value of the heroic past is accordingly defended with exaggerated violence.

To state that a new generation is growing up is no heresy in ordinary circumstances, and to state that an Old Bolshevik is not intrinsically, and just by virtue of his age, a perfect Bolshevik is not a crime. These two statements are as little subject to doubt as the dates on the calendar. But to remind 18,000 revolutionary officials, in many of whom \* the habits of a superior caste are beginning to rigidify, that a revolutionary aristocracy is *not hereditary*—that is a disagreeable thing to do. And to tell them plainly that they are not any better than anybody else *unless they are*—that is violently disturbing. In fact it is revolutionary. Somebody said in the course of this discussion that the party needed a reform, but Trotsky wanted a revolution. That is not true, because Trotsky was attacking this tendency in time to stop it with a mere change of course. But it is true that, to the extent that a bureaucratic aristocracy is actually solidifying within the Communist Party, Trotsky's position toward it is

lose them constitutes a pretty tragic change in a man's personal life. They play an immense *role*, therefore, in explaining what has happened in Russia. But the fact remains that they are not a *basis* of ascendancy, but a privilege accorded to it. They are not owned.

\* Do not make the mistake of thinking that all of these officials were bureaucratized, or all of the Old Bolsheviks against Trotsky, or anything of that kind whatever. I am merely pointing to the most primitive and general egoistic force involved in the stampede against him. Trotsky himself declared that an "overwhelming majority" of these party workers were free from bureaucratic degeneration. Thousands of them were for him, and are still in their secret hearts. And, on the other hand, thousands of them are against him not through egoistic motives, but exactly because they want to sacrifice everything for "Leninism." In a mood as heroic as it is indiscriminating, they have sacrificed their love of Trotsky for "Leninism," and they are clinging to the ideal of the party and of "being impersonal" with their teeth set. Not only in Russia, but throughout the International, the strongest argument which supports the triumvirate may be summed up in this fallacious syllogism: "Leninism is a hard discipline; it is hard not to follow Trotsky; therefore it must be Leninism."

revolutionary. And the position of those who refuse to recognise it is a counter-revolutionary position. Moreover, Trotsky's demand that, having recognised this condition and adopted a programme to cure it, the party should put that programme into drastic operation, is Bolshevik. And the attitude of his enemies, who, having adopted a revolutionary programme, employed all the devices of emotional oratory and academic argumentation in order to avoid putting it into operation, is Menshevik. The fact that these psychological tendencies have, within the party, a limited economic expression does not make their definition any less evident. Trotsky's letters on the New Course are a Bolshevik approach to the problem of forestalling, by a programme of Workers' Democracy, the further growth and solidification of a nascent bureaucratic caste. Starting with that definition, you will find it more simple to understand why the party organisation could be so easily stampeded against Trotsky.

There is no doubt, however, that under the agitation of Zinoviev another instinctive reaction besides bureaucratic self-interest made its contribution to this stampede, and that is fear. Nobody who has not seen Lenin or read his books can possibly imagine the force of that man's will, and his intellectual authority. It was a phenomenon like Niagara, which the strongest men could merely stand by and watch. Lenin took the whole responsibility for revolutionising the Russian Empire, and the others faithfully and intelligently helped him as children help their father. That is only an extreme way to express it. And when Lenin was gone the party was left not only with the wisdom he had taught them, but also the irresponsibility, the childlike dependence upon his will and judgment. A

large family of orphans suddenly found a sixth part of the terrestrial globe in their hands, with all the rest of the globe against them, and no practice in the art of tackling big problems independently and with a feeling of ultimate responsibility for their solution. And their mood was one of exaggerated caution, as is proven by the sudden and surprising advancement of Zinoviev. Zinoviev is a notoriously timid man, and has never been a popular Bolshevik for that reason. And in this period since the departure of Lenin he has sounded the note of caution with hypnotic monotony. In practically every speech he has made and every article he has written, he has repeated these words: "We must be careful," "We must be extremely careful," "Since Vladimir Ilych is no longer among us, we must be careful as never before." That we must be resolute, that we must be strong, that we must be devoted, that we must be at once flexible and firm, honest and astute, that we must be creative, that we must greet every new fact with a new idea, that we must be in a state of growth and permanent revolution, in short—these facts, which are equally obvious if the work which Lenin did is to be done, seem never to have occurred to Zinoviev. And yet his oratory has risen steadily in value during the last year, until from having been the least influential of the leaders he has become almost the mouthpiece of the party. That is sufficient evidence that the mood of the party after Lenin's death is far from the mood in which they seized the power in October. It is a mood of timidity. And, as so often happens, this timidity toward the real job conceals itself from itself by an exaggerated audacity toward something else. The very wantonness and absurd insolence of this sudden attack upon the one

great revolutionist among them, gives to many of these faint-hearted Communists a feeling that they are being very bold and ruthless and revolutionary—very Bolshevik.

At a revolutionary moment the Bolsheviks would throw off this leadership and turn to Trotsky with a single gesture. And they would do the same thing at a moment of critical danger. If Russia were invaded by a capitalist army Trotsky would be at the head of the revolutionary proletariat inside of a month. But in a mood of mere passive timidity no man would turn to Trotsky for leadership. Trotsky's life is a record of aggressive personal courage, physical and moral, that is not excelled in the history of revolutions. Trotsky is, moreover, the one child in this orphan family who was always thinking and acting independently of the father. He grew up to maturity outside of it, opposing it. He came into Lenin's party as a grown man, and by the road of pure intellectual conviction. And he never ceased to think creatively and put up independent plans for the advancement of the revolution, plans which he worked out in full, and for which he was ready to take the responsibility. He is ready now to tackle the problem of advancing the revolution, and not merely holding it where it is. He loves the future instead of fearing it. And, in contrast with the perpetual cries of caution emitted by Zinoviev, he has given expression, since Lenin died, to the complete revolutionary will of a man.

"At turning points, as has been justly stated in many meetings, we need caution, but along with caution we need firmness and resolution. Procrastination, formlessness, at turning points, would be the worst kind of incaution."

That is a sentence from his letter on the New Course,

which really distinguishes Trotsky's attitude from the attitude of the organisation as a whole. Upon that they could honestly attack him. "I love Trotsky, but I am afraid of him," sang the party poet, Demian Biedny.\* And that was supposed to designate the weaknesses of Trotsky. It designates the weakness of Demian Biedny and the Russian Communist Party, bereaved of Lenin and agitated by Zinoviev. Trotsky is a great and audacious revolutionist, and yet he is *not Lenin*; and those two facts together go far to explain why, in the mood of anxiety which followed the death of Lenin, it was so easy to turn Trotsky into an object of dread.

Another thing distinguishes Trotsky's attitude and makes him vulnerable to a demagogish attack. And that is that he really stands upon the difficult height of Lenin's wisdom. He is "thinking dialectically," to use the Marxian expression. He is thinking with a consciousness that the world is a process, and that practical science consists in the application of the right ideas at the right concrete points in that process. It does not consist of learning by heart a set of dogmas that are true *in the abstract*, and then making automatic and universal inferences from them. This method of thinking was very evident in Trotsky's discussion about fractions in relation to the programme of Workers' Democracy. He tried with infinite patience to explain that it was not a question of choosing between these two principles, but a question of understanding the right order of their application—"in our present party situation, in the given epoch, the existing fragment of time." The principle of *no fractions* is being used by a bureaucracy to suppress that free discussion which

\* *Pravda*, January 11th, 1924.

constitutes the fluid life of the party. And the primary danger at the present moment is not fractions, but bureaucratism, which is destroying the fluid life of the party and *causing* fractions. It is an excellent sample—albeit an extremely cautious one—of that “dialectic” approach to reality which was the secret of Lenin’s political greatness. It is an example of that perfect flexibility of mind united with an inflexible will, which *was* Lenin’s greatness. But it is obvious that this kind of thinking demands an atmosphere of confidence. Hegel himself, who was the father of the idea of “dialectic thinking,” found some difficulty in distinguishing it from sophism. And Trotsky’s enemies had only to treat the principle of “no fractions” as an *abstract law, a dogma* of Leninism, and declare that Trotsky was really advocating fractions “between the lines,” as Zinoviev did, or that he “*had* advocated them” in the private meetings of the Committee, as Stalin did, in order to give to Trotsky’s very wisdom the look of sophistry. His very faithfulness to the method of Lenin made him vulnerable to their crass and dishonest attack.

The similarity of Trotsky’s thinking to that of Lenin is emphasised by the fact that, while the triumvirate are attacking him as a Menshevik in disguise, the Mensheviks are attacking him for not having the courage to be a Menshevik.

“He has not availed himself of one opportunity,” says their leader, Dan, in the *Sozialistichesky Vestnik*, Nos. 22-23 (Berlin), “to formulate clear and precise *political inferences* from his criticism of the Zinoviev course, and he has not missed one opportunity to take a stealthy jab at his opponents, to protrude his own personality, to decorate himself with the peacock feathers of senseless arch-revolutionary and bloodthirsty talk.”



To put it shortly, Trotsky is using the concept of "democracy" in a concrete situation, with a concrete meaning carefully defined, at a concrete time, to meet and solve a concrete problem, and he is leapt upon by the *abstract dogmatists* of democracy and the *abstract dogmatists* of anti-democracy alike, and with the same bitterness and the same stupid incomprehension. Lenin was forever finding himself in this position. His characteristic political attitude was to be in a state of motion with the concrete reality, while two sets of abstract dogmatists occupying fixed points on each side of him, howled.

Not many people in Russia truly understand the intellectual method of Lenin. We have Lenin's own word that Bucharin does not understand it.\* Zinoviev has proven that he does not understand it by announcing that "only Leninism, which Lenin and his co-workers, the old Bolshevik Guard, worked out as the theory of the proletarian revolution, can take Lenin's place."† Rykov has proven that he does not understand it by stating that "we are not going to introduce any changes into Leninism." Nobody who understands what Lenin's method of thinking was, could possibly say that any theory will take his place. Nobody who understands the rôle played by change in Lenin's method of thinking, could possibly say that we are not going to introduce any changes into Leninism. Lenin's place can only be taken by living minds who understand that method, and are as free from dogmatic and abstract formulations and fixed points as Lenin's mind was. And this is what Trotsky understands.

"At every new problem, at every new turning point, the task is, not by any means to look up information in tradition and

\* See p. 30.

† Bulletin of the Fifth Congress of the International.

seek there the unexisting answer, but, on the basis of the whole experience of the party, to give a new self-dependent decision, which corresponds to the actual situation, and thus to enrich tradition. . . . If anything can be really fatal to the spiritual life of the party, and to the theoretic education of the young, it is the transformation of Leninism from a method which in its application requires initiative, critical thought, intellectual courage, into a canon which requires only interpreters with a permanent vocation.”\*

If you know a little about human nature, you know that Trotsky has undertaken here a prodigious task. He has undertaken to keep alive the thinking of Lenin after his brain is dead and embalmed. And all the old religious, theological, metaphysical, absolutistical, canonical, scholastic and dogmatical-academic habits of the human race are against him. Only the fool of these habits could fail to detect, in this fanatical panic against Trotsky, the beginning of the transformation of Bolshevism from a science into a religion. The Russian Communist Party, from being the highest historic example of a purely practical idealistic organisation, is on the way to becoming a political church. From being an organisation whose value was relative, and whose laws were justified by its purpose, it is becoming an organisation whose value is absolute and its laws self-justified. You can convince yourself of this in a half-minute's conversation with any properly indoctrinated “anti-Trotskyist” on the streets of Moscow. It was not only the beginnings of an official caste that Trotsky was attacking, but the beginnings of a priesthood as well.

\* “Tradition and Revolutionary Politics,” an essay in the brochure called “The New Course.”

## CHAPTER XII

### REAL ECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

My Marxian reader is impatient by this time of so much personal and political history, unrelated to the prevailing economic currents of Russian life. I have purposely postponed mentioning the economic differences between Trotsky and the bureaucracy—certain minor ones because they were not sufficiently important, and the major ones because they are more important than anything else. The question of “commodity intervention”—the purchase by the Government of foreign goods in order to supply the peasants at reduced prices with articles of manufacture—is an example of the minor economic questions raised at the same time with the problem of Workers’ Democracy. Trotsky and most of the “opposition” advocated this measure, and it was denounced along with everything else they advocated as a “petty bourgeois deviation.” In his speech to the Party Congress Trotsky replied to this denunciation: “Comrades, let us wait a little with these questions, let us wait a little . . . so far as there is a disagreement, it is of a purely empirical, practical character.” And now, eight months later, Rykov has announced that this policy, having been adopted in some small measure last year, will be extended this year, and that “if industry does not develop fast enough, we shall have to contemplate for a certain time the introduction of some foreign merchandise. . . .

The question is being studied.”\* In short, Trotsky’s “deviation” here consisted of a quicker grasp of the practical realities of the problem. It is absurd to try to convict either side of a “deviation” upon the ground of these practical disagreements, which are, of course, continual and inevitable.

There have been, however, three major differences about economic problems between Trotsky and the triumvirate—three differences fundamental enough to justify raising the question of a deviation from revolutionary Marxism. The first was about the need for a concentrated organisation and systematic planning of Socialist industry. I have already told you that Lenin came round, after some objection, to the substance of the change demanded by Trotsky in this matter. A resolution was adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the party (April, 1923) in accord with their views. But not only was Trotsky himself prevented from playing any part in the fulfilment of this resolution—no substantial motion was taken toward the fulfilment of it. An aggressive Communistic intention having been expressed, the policy of “muddling along” continued to prevail. And Trotsky’s letter to the Central Committee of October, 1923, besides demanding a New Course towards Workers’ Democracy, demanded the real carrying out of this resolution of the Twelfth Congress.

He wrote :

“I pointed out to the Central Committee before the Congress the great danger that our industrial problem would be presented to the convention in the abstract agitatorial form, whereas the task is to demand a turning of the attention and will of the party toward concrete life problems, with the goal of cheapening the price of the State products.”

\* Speech at the recent Congress of the Trade Unions.

In actual reality, he continued, the department of State Planning, since the Twelfth Congress, has gone still further backward.

“To a greater degree even than before the Congress, the most important industrial problems are decided in the Politburo, in a hurry, without preliminary preparation, and out of their planned connections.”

The truth of these statements of Trotsky was confessed by all the other members of the Politburo in the resolution on Workers' Democracy, which demanded that the Department of State Planning be given “that position in reality which was assigned to it in the resolution of the Twelfth Congress.”

In short, the disagreement upon this economic question was psychologically similar to the disagreement about Workers' Democracy. Trotsky demanded a *real application* of the revolutionary Leninist programme that had been adopted; his opponents, having adopted the programme in an “abstract agitatorial” manner, were content to let the actual reality of things continue to slide in the opposite direction. The programme has now been put in real operation, and the dominance of the Department of Government Planning is the most striking and most hopeful feature of Soviet policy. To accuse Trotsky of a “deviation to the right” in this matter is manifestly absurd.

That the ruling group are guilty of a deviation to the right, comes out more clearly in the second fundamental question at issue between them—the question of restoring the old czarist policy of financing the Government by means of a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of vodka. This scheme was long ago proposed by Zinoviev and opposed by Lenin. It was revived when Lenin fell sick, and would have been

adopted by the ruling group had not Trotsky and Rakovsky vigorously opposed it. In his letter to the Central Committee, Trotsky reminds them also of this incident. He describes it as "an attempt to found our budget on the sale of vodka—that is, to make the income of a workers' government independent of constructive industry." And he makes this further observation, which I commend to the most thoughtful attention of the reader :

"It is absolutely indubitable that there is an inner connection between the self-sufficient character of our secretarial organisation, growing continually more independent of the party, and the attempt to create a budget as independent as possible of the success or unsuccess of the collective constructive work of the party."

This "ruinous plan," condemned by Lenin, and fought off by Trotsky and Rakovsky so long as their authority was feared by the triumvirate, has been adopted at last—Trotsky and the wife of Lenin opposing it in the Central Committee—and the revolutionary government is now financing itself upon the czarist method, with a difference (for the time being, at least) of 10 per cent. in the strength of the vodka. The revolutionary government has made its life dependent, in other words, upon the successful progress of the ancient industry of debauching the Russian people. Trotsky's policy was to make it dependent upon the education of those people in the art of constructive Socialist industry. If Trotsky is an anti-Leninist here, then Leninism is something that was born since Lenin died.

As though to make the contrast with Lenin more glaring, the bureaucracy have publicly "explained" this reactionary measure—adopted for financial reasons

pure and simple—on various ideological grounds as remote as possible from finance. The peasants are making bad home-brew, they would better have good alcohol, Marxism ought not to be “moralistic,” etc., considerations entirely irrelevant to the question of a *government monopoly* on the manufacture and sale of vodka. When Lenin took a backward step on the road to Communism, he stated that he was doing that, and he stated exactly why.

The third economic disagreement between Trotsky and the ruling group was about the present condition of international capitalism and the prospects of the world-revolution. Trotsky declared last summer that the development of the world revolution is in a temporary ebb, and that the central fact at this moment is the domination of Europe by American capital. “America,” he said, “has put Europe on rations.” The question of the prospects of revolution, therefore, ought not to be put this way: “What is the strength of the social-democrats?” But this way: “What are the chances that American capital, by means of its stingy financing of Europe, will succeed in supporting the new régime?”

Here again the bureaucracy has, after six months, substantially come round to his view—driven to it by the mere crude piling up of the facts in front of them. But their first reaction was to deny these facts, or to waver and qualify, and dodge a real decision, until they gradually drifted into a position tantamount to denying them. After a month’s meditation, Stalin answered Trotsky’s declarations in an article which every day following has proven to be erroneous. There was no ebb in the revolutionary wave, according to Stalin. The decisive fight was still to come. The interference

of American capital in Europe had "not solved any of the old contradictions in Europe, but merely supplemented them with new contradictions, the contradictions between Europe and America" (whatever that may mean).

"One of the surest signs [he said] of the frailness of 'the democratic pacifist régime,' one of the most indubitable symptoms that this régime itself is but foam on the surface from deep revolutionary processes taking place in the bosom of the working class, we must consider the decisive victory of the revolutionary wing in the Communist parties of Germany, France and Russia. . . . [That is—speaking for France and Russia at least—the victory of Stalin and Zinoviev over Trotsky.]"

That is the way in which the triumvirate persuaded themselves, or half-persuaded themselves, that there was a general "strengthening of the revolutionary elements in the workers' movement," exactly at the moment when there was a weakening of those elements. In obedience to this persuasion, they described the situation of the Communists in Germany as a "victory," although the party membership had fallen from 350,000 to 150,000, and the decline continued.\*

It is not difficult to see the connection between these three points of real disagreement between Trotsky and the triumvirate. Underlying them all is that one conflict, indicated by Trotsky in the passage just quoted, between the "abstract-agitatorial" attitude, and the attitude of a Marxian engineer engaged with the "concrete life-problems" of the revolution. Trotsky demands that the party shall aggressively attack the work of Communist construction in Russia while awaiting, and preparing for, the real development of revolutions elsewhere. The triumvirate are content to hold

\* Figures received in November, 1924.



the power in Russia—and that upon a fiscal foundation devised by the czars—while satisfying their revolutionary dispositions and professional habits with abstract-agitatorial gesticulations in the International.\*

Lenin abolished Utopianism out of the practice of Socialism, just as Marx abolished it out of the theory. In the place of the abstract idealistic agitator, he gave us the concrete realistic engineer. If the reader will go back to the days when Lenin's character and attitude first began to dawn upon the Western movement, he will remember that this was the essence of the phenomenon. And in this, Trotsky was absolutely at one with Lenin. The question of employing bourgeois specialists, of studying the Taylor system, of using the czarist generals, the question of the Terror, of the new *rôle* of the co-operatives—all those questions of realistic practical technique which Lenin had to drive into the minds of so many of his followers with a sledge-hammer, were as natural to Trotsky's mind as they were to his. A partial lapse from this concrete practical driving realism of Lenin's—and from that honesty of mind which is an indispensable part of it—a lapse into the old vague talk, the emotional self-deception, the separation of theory from practice, the *practical Utopianism* of the pre-Lenin days—that is what the triumvirate represents in these real disputes with Trotsky.

\* The most astute minds in the counter-revolution instinctively understand where their hope lies in Russia. "In the interest of European civilization," says the London *Morning Post* (Jan. 20th, 1925), "it is perhaps a satisfaction to learn at last definitely that the triumvirate has won; for Trotsky . . . in those diabolical qualities which lure men to destruction, is infinitely superior to the clique which has . . . replaced him."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PEASANT QUESTION

THE inevitable grand result of this difference between Trotsky and the bureaucracy—the essence of it, perhaps, from the standpoint of philosophic Marxism—is a divergence upon the fundamental economic question, the question of the peasants. This is not as yet a concrete disagreement, but it is a difference of attitude which becomes continually more clear. It may be defined, I think, by saying that Trotsky regards the recent concessions made to the peasants—the turning over to them of leadership in the rural soviets—as an expedient, the necessity of which is to be regretted. It is a necessary step backward along the path of the proletarian revolution. He is ready to take such steps, and still further ones, if it becomes necessary to save the revolution, but only after every effort has been made to meet the demands of the peasants by developing and organising and speeding up the industries which produce the goods they need. The triumvirate, on the other hand, do not recognise that these concessions to the peasant are a departure from Marxism, and from the path outlined by Lenin for the proletarian revolution. With the adoption of the new economic policy, Lenin ceased to orient the party upon the poor peasant ; he recognised the necessity of supporting the “middle peasant.” The leaders of the party have now established a new category between the “middle peasant”

and the "kulak," and they have named it with a name which may be translated "progressive farmer." The Bolshevik Party, which started life with the slogan, "Carry the class struggle into the country," is now officially supporting the progressive farmer. And instead of treating this as a *concession from their policy*, the leaders of the party treat it *as a policy*. They call it "Leninism," and they accuse Trotsky, who has all along insisted upon trying to obviate the necessity of it by a more aggressive and systematic organisation of industry, of representing a "deviation from Lenin" on the peasant question. Trotsky, they say, "underestimates the peasant."

It is not likely that Trotsky, who organised the peasants in the Red Army—and he is the only Marxian in the world who ever did organise peasants—would be the one to underestimate them. That he does not underestimate them, is proven by the fact that he advocated the essential features of the concession to the peasants involved in the New Economic Policy a full year before Lenin realised the necessity of it. He was able to do this exactly because of his more immediate and realistic knowledge of the peasants. The statement that Trotsky deviated from Lenin on the peasant question is, according to the testimony of Lenin himself, a lie. And there is no better way to dispose of it than to quote this paragraph inserted by him in *Pravda* for February 15th, 1919:

"Comrade Trotsky says that the rumours of a disagreement between him and me on the question of the peasants is the most monstrous and conscienceless lie, propagated by the landlords and capitalists and their conscious and unconscious servitors. I, upon my side, totally confirm the statement of Comrade Trotsky."

There is certainly no doubt about the meaning of those words. The reader should remember, however, that this united position of Lenin and Trotsky upon the rôle of the peasants in the Russian revolution, was arrived at after a long battle.\* And in that battle it was Trotsky, and not Lenin, who first advanced the formula upon which they subsequently agreed—the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasants. The bureaucracy has raked up all those old passages in which Lenin attacked Trotsky upon this question at a time when *Trotsky's formula was right and Lenin's was wrong*, and they use them without date or explanation in order to prove that Trotsky opposed Lenin at a subsequent time, when *Lenin expressly stated that they were agreed*. That is their method of argument, and it merely makes more convincing the assertion of Lenin that this story about a disagreement between him and Trotsky on the peasant question is a “monstrous and conscienceless lie.”

The question is, therefore, *why* have the enemies of Trotsky revived this lie after Lenin's death, and gradually advanced it into the most prominent place in the attack upon Trotsky, although their attention has been called to the fact that Lenin denounced it? † Is there any doubt about the answer? If the bureaucracy declares that Trotsky diverged from Lenin on the peasant question, when Lenin declared that they were in perfect accord, is it not obvious that the bureaucracy is diverging from *Lenin and Trotsky* on the peasant question, and trying to do this in the name of Lenin? To me this would seem obvious, even if it were not preceded with that long record of opposition to Lenin

\* See p. 11.

† Trotsky's “New Course,” p. 94.

and suppression of his writings in the name of "Leninism," which we have examined. As the culmination of such a record, it is not subject to doubt.

Marxism asserts that the interests of the proletariat are identical with the future interests of human civilisation. And Lenin's fundamental position in the history of the Russian revolution was determined by his assertion that Marxism applies to Russia, and that in spite of the overwhelming numbers of the peasants, the industrial proletariat must occupy the position of leadership. To depart from that proposition will be to depart from the very foundations of Marxism, and of Lenin's application of it to Russia. It will be to convert the Communist victory embodied in the dictatorship of the proletariat into a democratic victory—the establishment of a peasant's petty bourgeois republic. And the only conceivable way to avoid this, is for the proletariat to produce in the socialised industries a sufficient quantity of those manufactured goods which are needful to the peasant. Therefore, whether Trotsky is right or wrong in his practical proposals for increasing such production, to oppose him on the ground that he "underestimates the peasants" is itself a fundamental departure from Lenin's Marxism. Trotsky estimates the peasants *adequately*, just as Lenin did. And he knows, just as Lenin did, that there is only one way to maintain the proletarian leadership of them. There is only one way to avoid making these gradual concessions which will ultimately convert the dictatorship of the proletariat into an agrarian republic. That is to abandon "abstract agitatorial" methods of talking, and "turn the attention and will of the party toward concrete life problems with the goal of cheapening the price of the State products."

“Let’s stop chattering about undervaluation of the peasants,” says Trotsky in his “New Course,” “and achieve in reality a lowering of the valuation of peasant goods.” There is nothing which a sincere Marxian, or a sincere follower of Lenin, can reply to that. It sums up once more the real objective difference between Trotsky and the heads of the bureaucracy. It is the difference between a revolutionary engineer applying the science of Marx in the manner of Lenin, and a group of abstract agitators, capable of basing their policy in the most vital problem of the revolution, on a foundation of unreal and insincere talk.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RECENT EVENTS

IN spite of Trotsky's failure to "acknowledge his mistakes," the machine did not feel strong enough at the time of the May Congress to exclude him from the Politburo. He continued to sit in the inner councils. And although he was prevented by the reorganisation of the Red Army from doing his practical work, he continued to bear the title of President of the Revolutionary Military Soviet. Moreover, his popularity among the masses continued to grow and flourish under this monotonous tirade, which bored the unthinking and disgusted those who know how to think.

His discourse in August on the financial domination of Europe by the United States, was seized upon with avidity by every Russian Marxian who really wishes to understand the current historic process. And his analysis of the failure of the German revolution was generally accepted as stating the real facts from the point of view of revolutionary science. To a query from a party local as to whether it was to be regarded as the official opinion of the party, the Central Committee replied that it was—and this although it contradicted their own thesis adopted by the Third International a short time before. The intellectual leadership of Trotsky thus crops out in spite of the most anxious efforts of the inferior minds that have displaced him.

But in proportion as Trotsky continued to mount

above them in popularity and real grasp of their problems, the "educational" campaign against him, and the campaign of suppressing and discharging from office and expelling from the party his friends and adherents, became more violent.\* The use of the secret police by the party bureaucracy for spying upon its own membership—noted by Trotsky as a dangerous symptom in his original letter to the Central Committee—became the daily and accepted method of destroying him. No friend of Trotsky would let you write him a letter that you did not want to have read before it reached his hand. The Leningrad pamphlet, proclaiming Trotsky a "revolutionary dilettante," reinforced by other books and pamphlets of a similar nature, and by a special journal founded for the express purpose of combating this "deviation," continued to be energetically circulated with the sanction, and with the funds, of a party of whose highest executive committee Trotsky was ostensibly a member. This was the anomalous condition of affairs throughout the summer and up to the anniversary of the revolution last November.

On that date Trotsky issued the third volume of his complete works, comprising all his preserved speeches and writings for the year of the revolution, and entitled "1917." As an introduction to that volume he wrote an article called "Lessons of October," and that article constituted the "violation of discipline" spoken of in the despatches announcing his resignation

\* Trotsky's own trusted secretary, Glazman, a hero of the Red Army, was expelled in September—for no real cause—and committed suicide. An obituary article which Trotsky sent from the Caucasus was not printed. The custom of suicide among party members has grown to such proportions since the beginning of this campaign that a special investigation was conducted, and a report made to the Central Committee recommending means to combat it. (See *Pravda* for October 9th, 1924.)



as Commissar of War. I will tell you exactly what that article is. It is, in the first place, a demonstration that the success of the Bolshevik revolution depended, among other things, upon Lenin's forcing the party to act at the critical moment, and overcoming the resistance of those in the Central Committee who wanted to postpone it, upon the assumption that their strength would continue to grow with the mere passage of time. Trotsky attributes the failure of the recently expected German revolution largely to the fact that this same erroneous assumption, and a similar tendency to postpone the critical action, prevailed. As Zinoviev was a chief representative of this tendency in both situations, a certain sensitiveness to this particular "Lesson of October" on the part of the ruling group would naturally be expected.

But that is only one-half, it seems to me, of the real thesis of Trotsky's "Lessons of October." Besides being a demonstration of the strategy of the Russian revolution, it is also a treatise upon the theme propounded by Lenin in his suppressed letter to the party, namely, that "the retreat of Kamenev and Zinoviev in October was not accidental." I cannot, of course, declare that Trotsky intended his introduction for a treatise upon this theme, but I can declare that that is what it is. And I consider it by no means a coincidence that he introduces into his text the very words employed by Lenin: "The disagreements in 1917 were very deep and by no means *accidental*. But it would be a miserable thing to try to make out of them now, after several years, a weapon of struggle against those who were mistaken then." Trotsky is not making out of these mistakes a weapon of struggle against the ruling group, for the simple reason that he is not struggling against

them—not to the extent of raising a finger. But, nevertheless—in my opinion—he is taking this means of stating the real facts about these leaders, and others who stood with them then, and stand with them now, as they were indicated by Lenin in his suppressed letter.

The uninitiated reader may have thought that, in saying that their retreat in October was “not accidental,” Lenin meant merely that they were likely at any time to betray the revolution in a panic of personal emotion. He meant exactly the opposite thing. He meant that their act was *not* attributable to a temporary emotion, but was the expression of a political tendency. And it is this political tendency, an essentially anti-Marxian and anti-Bolshevik opposition to Lenin, as it manifested itself at every important crisis from the March revolution to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which Trotsky analyses, and of which he writes the history in his “Lessons of October.” He shows that Kamenev opposed or sabotaged the policy of Lenin throughout this whole period, that Zinoviev joined him at both the moments of supremely critical importance, and that several other members of the present ruling group—Rykov, Lossovsky, Milutin, and others—identified themselves in authentic documents with this same tendency.\* He merely publishes these documents in his appendix.

The essay, whatever may be the ultimate judgment upon its thesis, is compact with indestructible facts. It has the weight of a sledge hammer, and is sincere and brilliant as blue steel. There is not any reason in the world why it should not be met and answered, with honesty and manhood, by those whose history it disparages.

\* \* Kalinin was also of those who opposed the revolution or wanted to postpone it.

Instead, it was met with a ruse and a new series of falsifications. Some "technical reason" was found for a three weeks' delay in its publication after the first 5,000 copies had been sold, and while these were disappearing like drops of water in the sand, the whole literary and oratorical force of the ruling machine was turned loose to the business of "creating" an official opinion of Trotsky's book. The public believed that the book had been suppressed, that Trotsky was arrested, imprisoned, exiled. People fought over the few copies in existence, and began typing off the "Introduction" for private circulation. And meanwhile the triumvirate filled the issues of *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and the entire Russian Press with unscrupulous falsifications of its thesis and unrestrained vituperation against Trotsky. They called together a series of "representative" assemblies, fed them these official falsifications, these lies about Trotsky's book, dictated to them the official denunciation, agitated them to the point of passing "unanimous resolutions" condemning a book of which not six in a thousand of them had ever read a single line. A firm supporter of Trotsky who attended one of these meetings was asked why he did not raise at least one voice against the resolution, and he replied: "In that fanaticised crowd if I had not *applauded* the resolution, I would have been beaten up."

In short, the campaign of calumny and falsification against Trotsky was simply redoubled in quantity after the publication of his book. And it was redoubled in dishonesty and impudence and hate. The same slanders were printed and reprinted in all sorts of different newspapers and periodicals. On the counters of the book-stores you could find the same material

under three or four different covers. Few bought them, but they were distributed gratuitously by tens of thousands to all clubs, to all libraries, to all unions and places of assembly. For this there was unlimited paper and funds. All Trotsky's earliest writings were dragged up and subjected to the same process of falsification.

And more recent books, which had been universally accepted and advertised during the life of Lenin as expressions of official party opinion, were now found to contain subtle and terrible departures from Leninism—to be, in fact, nothing but a sly and sinister attempt to put "Trotskysm" in its place. Exquisitely printed anthologies appeared, of all the sentences ever written by Lenin in opposition to Trotsky or his opinions—sentences torn out of their context and their place in history, and simply thrown together to make a pile. An attack was even opened upon Trotsky's career in the Red Army—it was "in spite of him," and not with his help, that the revolutionary war was won by the party of Lenin. All the careerists and sycophants in Russia vied with each other in promoting this process, in devising new "loyalties" to the ruling group, new ignominies against Trotsky. His pictures and statues were chased out of store windows, out of the governmental institutions. Meetings at which he was scheduled to speak were called off or postponed. His salutation to the army of Budenny the papers were forbidden to print. The head of the Government printing house was discharged for publishing his book. Others involved in its publication were compelled to repent and abjure the heresy. It was made clear that a murmur on the part of any vulnerable Communist in defence of Trotsky, or in reply to

the daily vilifications put out by the officials of the party, would cost him his place. The strong friends of Trotsky, or of the truth, saw that speech in such a tempest was futile. The campaign proceeded, therefore, in ominous and absolute silence from the most penetrating and the most honest minds in Russia.\*

I have spoken of the "official lies" by which Trotsky's book has been attacked, because, although the words are more agreeable, I cannot continue to call them *falsifications* or *misrepresentations*. There is some falsification, some misrepresentation. There is even occasionally a page of honest criticism. But, generally speaking, and speaking especially for the leaders, this business has gone entirely beyond the stage of falsifying or misrepresenting texts. They simply declare that Trotsky has said something which he has not said, and then they riddle it and ridicule it, and denounce it as an attack upon Lenin and upon Leninism. And, because the whole business of publicity and of the sale and distribution of literature is in their hands, Trotsky's true texts do not appear in public to refute their statements. These texts are read privately, conscientiously, by those minds who have the courage and penetration to resist a universal official hysteria stimulated and supported by the State.

\* I do not think Trotsky had any anticipation of the political storm which would follow the publication of his "Lessons of October." Russia was being flooded all summer with the false and scurrilous historical propaganda put out against him by his enemies. Under their direction the whole literate population of the country was taking an obligatory course—on pain of losing their jobs—in the new science of knowing that Trotsky is a Menshevik. It must have seemed natural to Trotsky that he himself should be permitted to write a little history. It must have seemed legitimate that his own view, and the suppressed view of Lenin, should find *some* expression in the midst of this whirlwind of "historical" tomes and treatises. He is not, you remember, in any sense of the word, a psychologist.

I am sure the reader has had enough of the quotation and analysis of so-called "arguments" employed in this pretended discussion. If I proved to him that the campaign against Trotsky's "New Course" was carried on by means of falsifications, let him accept my statement that the campaign against "Lessons of October" was carried on by means of lies. Such a torrent of bigotry and irresponsible hypocrisy as the issues of *Pravda* were filled with from November to January of this year, when Trotsky resigned his command of the Red Army, has rarely been seen in history. I find it impossible to continue to mull over so much that is revolting. There are two recurrent motives in it, however, which I want to mention, merely by way of forewarning those who will meet this propaganda in a dilute form in England and America. First, Trotsky's "Lessons of October" and his memoirs of Lenin, are advertised as an attempt to rewrite the history of the revolution in such a way as to discredit Lenin and give the glory to Trotsky. There is not a shadow of egotism in any of these books, and no solidier and more real and beautiful tribute to the triumphant genius of Lenin will ever be written. Second, his "Lessons of October" is advertised as ignoring the party and writing the history of the revolution as though only the leaders and the masses played a *rôle* in it. Trotsky's theme is not the *rôle* of the party, but the *rôle* of an oppositional tendency within the leadership of the party, but he founds his whole argument as to the importance of this tendency upon the explicit assertion that *everything* depended upon the party, that without the party there could have been no successful revolution.\*

\* Whether Trotsky stresses too much the *rôle* of the leaders in general, as opposed to the masses of the workers and peasants, is a quite different

On January 20th, 1925, a meeting was called of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee of the party, to discuss the so-called "attack" upon the party executive contained in Trotsky's "Lessons of October." Trotsky, being unable because of his illness to attend the meeting, wrote them a letter in which he defended himself in very restrained language as to a few of the more outrageous crimes and follies that had been imputed to him.\* He concluded his letter with a recommendation that he be removed from his post as President of the Military Soviet, and a renewal of his offer to "answer this or that question, or give any necessary explanations." His resignation was accepted, but his offer to answer questions or make any explanations was once more silently ignored.

Instead of welcoming such a direct and honest confrontation of the *realities* of the situation, as that invitation suggested, the defenders of "Leninism" preferred to wrap themselves up in a new and perfected series of ideological distortions of reality, lies and rationalisations, so extreme that it is almost impossible for a man in his right mind to read them. The only possible conclusion of such a wholesale indictment of a man's character, conduct and opinions as was contained in their official resolution, would be his exclusion from the party—if not, indeed, his incarceration in a doubly reinforced and hermetically sealed cell or lethal chamber! And yet they not only did not exclude Trotsky from the party, but they did not even remove him from the Politburo! He remains a member of the ruling committee of seven, who exercise the

question upon which a discussion would be highly profitable. The attacks of an unscrupulous bureaucracy upon Trotsky do not prove that everything that he says is right!

\* See Appendix VII.

sovereign power in a party, to whose whole essential nature, purpose and philosophy he is declared to be opposed. This anomalous situation means, in the first place, that there is not the slightest breath of sincerity in that outrageous indictment of Trotsky. And it means, in the second place, that there is a bitter rivalry between Stalin and Zinoviev for the position of leadership. Zinoviev demanded Trotsky's exclusion from the Politburo, and he was supported in this by Kamenev. Stalin, for his own reasons, opposed this demand, and Zinoviev, in a huff, declaring that Stalin merely wanted to use Trotsky against him, tendered his own resignation. It was not accepted, of course, and the tragic comedy continues upon the same essential terms as before. The reader should not be deceived, however, into thinking that there is any length to which these men may not go in their determination to destroy the indestructible popularity of Trotsky.

According to the most intelligent information I receive from Russia, the majority of the party membership is still "*indubitably* sympathetic to Trotsky."\* To the masses of the workers and peasants he is a national hero, the one great man that Russia has left. The inevitable effect, therefore, of this rabid attack upon him by the party organisation and its Press is to discredit the party and its official organisation with the masses. All forms of political discontent, both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, tend inevitably to express themselves in the form of indignant

\* Letter received in December, 1924. I left Russia in June, 1924, and throughout this concluding chapter I have relied upon my own reading of the Russian Press and on letters from Communists in Russia who are courageous and know how to tell the truth.



sympathy for Trotsky. In short, that "separation of the party from the mass," cited in the resolution on Workers' Democracy as the chief danger resulting from the bureaucratisation of the party, is being realised. And because the party bureaucracy attacks Trotsky—without any cause intelligible to the mass or related to their interests—Trotsky inevitably, and without any motion on his part, becomes identified with the mass in its divergence from the party. Undoubtedly Trotsky understands this situation better than anybody else, and he will never let himself be used by any social forces that have a purpose other than that defined and crystallized in the party of Lenin. But the dangerous confusion of the situation is no less real for that.

#### CONCLUSION

A GROUP of leaders against whose domination Lenin warned the party, having disguised their own thirst of power privately under the legend that Trotsky is a Bonaparte, and having disguised this private legend publicly under the legend that he is the leader of a "deviation to the Right," and having thus built up an ideology exactly twice removed from the simple truth, have succeeded in deceiving, or bewildering, or bull dozing, or otherwise silencing, or scattering to the ends of the earth, all those strong Communists who might oppose them. They have established and solidified to an extremely dangerous degree a dictatorship of the officialdom within the Communist Party, entailing a separation of the party from the mass. They have taken backward steps in the political and economic development of the revolution, and instead of recognising them as backward steps, involving lost

ground to be recovered, have put up a pretence that they belong to the true course of revolutionary development. They have initiated a way of talking about the peasants which, if carried to its logical conclusion, would involve a surrender of the essence of revolutionary Marxism. They are inculcating, in place of the flexible and concrete realistic thinking of Lenin, a bigoted religious devotion to a supposed abstract canon of Leninism. And they have thrown to the winds that intellectual honesty before the proletariat which was of the essence of Lenin's character and teaching, and a main source of the unqualified authority of the Russian Communist Party in the international movement of labour.

That is what has happened in Russia since Lenin died. The Government remains in its ultimate source of power a government of the workers and peasants. And revolutionists in other countries ought to remember that it was to these workers and peasants, and not the "superlative spiritual qualities" of any particular leaders of them, that they pledged their loyalty. But they did not pledge themselves to ignorance of the real issues at stake and the real events that are happening in Russia. They did not pledge themselves to accept, in the name of "Leninism," the international authority of a group against whom Lenin's dying words were a warning, and who have preserved that authority by suppressing the essential texts of Lenin.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### LUNACHARSKY ON TROTSKY'S CHARACTER

A LITTLE book of "Revolutionary Silhouettes," by A. V. Lunacharsky, the Soviet Commissar of Education, has come to my hand just as this book goes to press. It contains such a poised and sensible estimate of Trotsky that I insert here a few paragraphs, hastily translated.

I first met Trotsky in 1905, after the event of January. He came to Geneva, I have forgotten whence, and was to speak with me at a big meeting called to discuss that tragedy. Trotsky was then unusually elegant, in distinction from all of us, and very beautiful. That elegance of his, and especially a kind of careless high-and-mighty manner of talking with no-matter-who, struck me very unpleasantly. I looked with great disapproval on that dude, who swung his leg over his knee, and dashed off with a pencil an outline of the impromptu speech he was going to make at the meeting. But Trotsky spoke mighty well. . . .

I met him very little in the revolution of 1905. He held himself apart not only from us, but from the Mensheviks. His work was mainly in the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. . . .

I remember how somebody said in the presence of Lenin: "Khristalev's star has fallen, and the strong man in the Soviet now is Trotsky." Lenin sort of darkened for a minute, and then said: "Well, Trotsky won that with his tireless and fine work. . . ."

Trotsky's popularity among the Petersburg proletariat up to the time of his arrest was very great, and it increased as a result of his extraordinarily picturesque and heroic conduct in court. I ought to say that Trotsky, of all the Social Democratic leaders of 1905 and 1906, undoubtedly showed himself, in spite of his youth, the most thoroughly prepared; least of

all he wore the imprint of a certain emigrant narrowness, which, as I have said, impeded even Lenin at that time; he more than any other realised what a broad struggle for sovereignty really is. And he came out of the revolution with the greatest gain in popularity. Neither Lenin nor Martov made any essential gain. Plekhanov lost much in consequence of his half-cadet tendencies. Trotsky from that time stood in the front rank. . . .

At the Stuttgart Congress of the International, Trotsky carried himself modestly, and advised us to, considering us all knocked out of the saddle by the reaction of 1906, and therefore unable to impose ourselves on the Congress.

Afterward Trotsky was allured by the conciliatory line, and the idea of the unity of the party. He occupied himself with this at various plenary sessions, and he dedicated his Vienna journal, *Pravda*, three-fourths to that perfectly hopeless idea. . . .

I will say here immediately that Trotsky succeeded very badly in organising, not only a party, but even a little group. . . . A tremendous imperiousness and a kind of inability or unwillingness to be at all caressing and attentive to people, an absence of that charm which always surrounded Lenin, condemned Trotsky to a certain loneliness. Remember that even some of his personal friends (I speak, of course, only of the political sphere) afterward became his sworn enemies. . . .

For work in political groups Trotsky seemed little fitted, but in the ocean of historic events, where such personal features lose their importance, only his favourable side came to the front. . . .

I always considered Trotsky a big man. Yes, and who could doubt it? In Paris [during the war] he had already mightily grown up in my eyes as a statesman, and thereafter he grew continually—whether because I knew him better, and he could better show the whole measure of his strength on the wider field that history offered him, or because the actual experience of the revolution and its problems enlarged him and increased the spread of his wings.

The agitational work of the spring of 1917 does not belong to the task of these silhouettes, but I ought to say that, under the influence of its enormous scope and blinding success, many people near to Trotsky were even inclined to see in him the

genuine first leader of the Russian revolution. Thus M. C. Uritsky, who regarded Trotsky with immense respect, said once to me, and, it seems, Manuisky: "You see, the great revolution is come, and, no matter how intelligent Lenin is, he begins to dim a little beside the genius of Trotsky." That evaluation proved incorrect, not because it exaggerated the endowment and power of Trotsky, but because at that time the dimensions of the political genius of Lenin were not yet clear. . . .

The chief external endowments of Trotsky are his oratorical gift and his talent as a writer. I consider Trotsky probably the greatest orator of our times. I have heard in my day all the great parliamentary and popular orators of Socialism, and very many of the famous orators of the bourgeois world, and I should have difficulty in naming any of them, except Jaurès, whom I might place beside Trotsky.

Effective presence, beautiful broad gesture, mighty rhythm of speech, loud, absolutely tireless voice, wonderful compactness, literariness of phrase, wealth of imagery, scorching irony, flowing pathos, and an absolutely extraordinary logic, really steel-like in its clarity—those are the qualities of Trotsky's speech. He can speak epigrammatically, shoot a few remarkably well-aimed arrows, and he can pronounce such majestic political discourses as I have heard elsewhere only from Jaurès. I have seen Trotsky talk for two and a half to three hours to an absolutely silent audience, standing on their feet, and listening as though bewitched to an enormous political treatise. . . .

As to Trotsky's inner structure as a leader, as I said, he was on the small scale of party organisation . . . unapt and unskilful. He was impeded here by the extreme definiteness of the outlines of his personality.

Trotsky is prickly, imperative. Only in his relations with Lenin after their union, he showed always a touching and tender yieldingness. With the modesty characteristic of truly great men, he recognised Lenin's priority.

As a political man of wisdom, Trotsky stands on the same height that he does as an orator. And how could it be otherwise? The most skilful orator whose speech is not illumined with thought is nothing but an idle virtuoso, and all his oratory is a tinkling cymbal. That love, of which the Apostle Paul speaks, may not be necessary to the orator, he may be full of hate, but *thought* is absolutely necessary. . . .

It seems to me that Trotsky is incomparably more orthodox than Lenin, although this will seem strange to many. Trotsky's political course appears a little winding: he was neither a Menshevik nor a Bolshevik, sought the middle road, and then poured his stream into the Bolshevik river. Nevertheless, Trotsky always followed, so to speak, the accurate rules of revolutionary Marxism. Lenin feels himself a creator and proprietor in the realm of political thought, and very often proposes completely new slogans, which afterward give rich results. Trotsky is not distinguished by that boldness of thought; . . . he is infinitely bold in his condemnations of Liberalism, of half-way Socialism, but not in any kind of innovation. . . .

It is often said of Trotsky that he is personally ambitious. That is of course pure nonsense. I remember one very significant phrase spoken by Trotsky at the time when Chernov accepted a place in the Government: "What contemptible ambitiousness—to abandon his historic position for a portfolio!" In that you have the whole of Trotsky. There is not a drop of vanity in him. . . .

Lenin also is not the least bit ambitious. I believe that Lenin never looks at himself, never glances in the mirror of history, never even thinks of what posterity will say of him—simply does his work. He does his work imperiously, not because power is sweet to him, but because he is sure that he is right, and cannot endure to have anybody spoil his work. His love of power grows out of his tremendous sureness and the correctness of his principles, and, if you please, out of an inability (very useful in a political leader) to see from the point of view of his opponent. . . .

In distinction from him, Trotsky often looks at himself. Trotsky treasures his historic *rôle*, and would undoubtedly be ready to make any personal sacrifice, not by any means excluding the sacrifice of his life, in order to remain in the memory of mankind with the halo of a genuine revolutionary leader. His love of power has the same character as Lenin's, with the difference that he is oftener capable of making mistakes, not possessing the almost infallible instinct of Lenin, and that, being a man of choleric temperament, he is capable, although only temporarily (of being blinded by passion,) while Lenin, equable and always master of himself, hardly ever even gets into a fit of irritation.

You must not think, however, that the second great leader of the Russian revolution yields in all respects to his colleague ; there are points in which Trotsky indubitably excels him : he is more brilliant, he is more clear, he is more motile. Lenin is perfectly fitted for sitting in the president's chair of the Soviet of People's Commissars, and guiding with genius the world revolution, but obviously he could not handle the titanic task which Trotsky took upon his shoulders, those lightning trips from place to place, those magnificent speeches, fanfares of instantaneous commands, that rôle of continual electrifier now at one point and now another of the weakening army. There is not a man on the earth who could replace Trotsky there.

When a really great revolution comes, a great people always find for every part a suitable actor, and one of the signs of the greatness of our revolution is that the Communist Party advanced from its midst, or adopted from other parties and strongly implanted in its body, so many able people suited to this and that governmental function.

Most of all suited to their parts are the two strongest of the strong—Lenin and Trotsky.

A. V. LUNACHARSKY.

“ Revolutionary Silhouettes,”  
Moscow, 1923.

## APPENDIX II

### THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE TRADE UNIONS

THE most important disagreement between Lenin and Trotsky arose in 1920, after the final victory of the Red Army. Trotsky, feeling that the energies of the revolution were at last released for Communist construction, devised a creative plan of co-operation and partial amalgamation of the trade unions and the branch of the Government which directs the industries. His purpose was to eliminate a wasteful friction between these two elements in the proletarian society, both of which have administrative functions in the same field. He proposed also to strengthen the trade unions by introducing into their administration a selected body of the ablest executives who had been developed in the organisation of the

army. His plan—falsely described in our newspapers as a “militarisation of industry”—was by no means obviously unworkable, nor was it immediately opposed by Lenin. But Lenin’s mind was already travelling in the direction of the New Economic Policy. He felt that the country needed a rest. The Cronstadt rebellion came just in time to prove it. And in the end he opposed Trotsky’s plan, against which Zinoviev had already been conducting an agitation. This incident was a help to those people who wanted to believe that there was a fundamental disaccord between Lenin and Trotsky. And they were still further assisted by the fact that Trotsky, who, in zeal for his great plan, had committed one of his characteristic acts of childish presumption, received from Lenin a good sound scolding.

These words from a speech of Lenin make clear both what Trotsky had done and what he got for it :

“Only think of this: After two plenary sessions of the Central Committee devoted to an unbelievably detailed, long, hot discussion of the rough draft of the theses of Comrade Trotsky, and the whole party policy in the trade unions defended by him, this one member of the Central Committee, remaining alone out of nineteen, selects himself a group outside of the Central Committee, and, with the ‘collective work’ of this group as a ‘platform,’ appears and proposes to the party convention to ‘choose between two tendencies’! I do not speak of the fact that this invitation by Comrade Trotsky to choose between exactly two, and only two, tendencies, although Bucharin had already on the 9th of November appeared in the rôle of ‘buffer,’ plainly exposes the actual rôle of Bucharin’s group as helpers in the worst and most harmful kind of fractionalism. That is by the way. But I ask any member of the party: Does not such a sudden invasion and jumping in on the idea of a ‘choice’ between two tendencies in the trade union movement strike him as dizzy-headed?”

You can imagine the gratification which this afforded to those circles in the party who felt that Trotsky was an upstart, and that his immense prestige as a Bolshevik—created by the prodigious achievement of a few years rather than by the more hallowing process of the mere passage of time—was unjustified. They were very happy, and they lifted up their heads very high. And they did not by any means enter into



the spirit of the words in which Lenin concluded his chastisement of Trotsky.

"The party," he said, "will learn not to exaggerate disagreements. Here it is appropriate to repeat a correct observation of Comrade Trotsky in regard to Comrade Tomsky: 'In the sharpest polemic with Comrade Tomsky I always said that it was perfectly clear to me that the leaders of our trade unions can only be people with the experience and the authority which Comrade Tomsky possesses. . . . An intellectual struggle within the party does not mean mutual rejection, but mutual influence.' It goes without saying that the party will apply this correct observation to Comrade Trotsky."

### APPENDIX III

#### THE "RETREAT" OF ZINOVIEV AND KAMENEV

THE following letter written by Lenin to the party just a few days before the October revolution gives some indication of what Lenin meant by the "retreat" of Zinoviev and Kamenev in October. Lenin was in hiding, and he made four copies of this letter in minute handwriting, so that it might be sure to arrive at its destination. That explains its rather wide private circulation in Russia, although it has never been published.

#### "LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY OF BOLSHEVIKS.

"COMRADES,—I have not yet succeeded in getting the Petersburg papers for Wednesday, the 18th. When I heard over the telephone the full text of the article of Kamenev and Zinoviev in a non-party paper, *Novaia Zhizn*, I refused to believe it. But doubt proved impossible, and I am compelled to avail myself of this opportunity to get this letter into the hands of the party members by Thursday evening or Friday morning, for to remain silent before an act of such unbelievable strike-breaking would be a crime.

"The more serious the practical question, and the more 'prominent' the people who perpetrate an act of strike-breaking, the more dangerous it is, the more resolutely one must throw out the strike-breakers, the more unpardonable

it would be to waver because of any past 'services' of the strike-breakers.

"Only think of it. In party circles it is known that in September the party discussed the question of an insurrection. But nobody heard a word of one letter or leaflet of one of the people concerned. Now, on the eve, as you might say, of the Congress of the Soviets, two prominent Bolsheviks appear against the majority, and, quite evidently, against the Central Committee. This is not said directly, and from that the injury to the cause is still greater, for to talk in hints is more dangerous.

"From the text of the announcement of Kamenev and Zinoviev it is entirely clear that they have gone against the Central Committee, for otherwise their announcement is meaningless, but just what resolution of the Central Committee they quarrel with, is not stated.

"Why?

"It is quite evident: because the Central Committee did not publish it.

"And what does this mean?

"Upon the most important fighting question, on the eve of the critical day of October 20th, two 'prominent Bolsheviks' in the non-party Press, and, moreover, exactly in that paper which, upon the question at issue, goes hand in hand with the bourgeoisie against the party of the workers—in such a paper they attack an unpublished decision of the party Centre. That is a thousand times more contemptible, and a million times more harmful, than even the publications of Plekhanov in the non-party Press in 1906-7, which the party condemned so bitterly. After all, the question then was only about elections, and now it is a question of insurrection for the conquest of power.

"And upon such a question, after a decision adopted by the Centre, to oppose that unpublished decision before Rodzianko and Kerensky in a non-party paper—can you imagine an act more traitorous, more characteristic of a strike-breaker? I should consider it a disgrace to myself if out of a former close association with those former comrades I wavered in condemning them. I say straight out that I no longer consider either of them comrades, and I will fight with all my power, both before the Central Committee and before the Convention, for the expulsion of both of them from the party.

"A workers' party, which life is continually putting face to

face with the question of insurrection, cannot fulfil that hard task if unpublished resolutions of the Centre, after their adoption, are attacked in the non-party Press, and wavering and confusion introduced into the fighting ranks.

“ Let Messrs. Zinoviev and Kamenev found their own party with handfuls of panic-stricken people or candidates for the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party, for its first slogan will be :

“ ‘ Members of the Central Committee, defeated on the question of the decisive battle at a meeting of the Committee, are permitted to go into the non-party Press for an attack on the unpublished resolutions of the party.’

“ Let them build themselves a party like that ; our workers’ party of Bolsheviks will only gain from it.

“ When all the documents are published, the strike-breaking of Zinoviev and Kamenev will come out much clearer still. . . .

“ As for raising again the question of the insurrection now, so near to the twentieth of October, I cannot decide at this distance just how far the undertaking is spoiled by these strike-breakers with their publications in the non-party Press. Unquestionably the practical harm done is very great. In order to overcome it the first thing to do is to restore the unity of the Bolshevik front by expelling the strike-breakers.

“ The weakness of the intellectual arguments against the insurrection will be clearer the more we drag them out into the light of day. I sent an article on this the other day to *The Workers’ Way*, and if the editors do not consider it possible to publish it, the members of the party will doubtless get acquainted with it in manuscript.

“ These ‘ intellectual,’ if one may say so, arguments reduce themselves to two. First, to ‘ waiting ’ for the Constituent Assembly. Perhaps we’d better wait a while—that’s the whole argument. Perhaps with hunger, and ruin, and exhaustion of the soldiers’ patience, with Rodzianko taking steps for the surrender of Petersburg to the Germans, with lock-outs—perhaps we’d better wait a while.

“ Perhaps and perhaps—that’s the whole strength of the argument.

“ And second, a clamouring pessimism. With the bourgeoisie and Kerensky all is well, with us all to the bad. With the capitalists everything is miraculously ready, with the workers all to the bad. The ‘ pessimists ’ as to the military side of the

business yell at the tops of their voices, and the 'optimists' are silent, for the reason that nobody wants to expose anything before Rodzianko and Kerensky—nobody but strike-breakers.

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"Heavy times. A heavy problem. Heavy treason.

"And just the same the problem will be solved. The workers will unite; the peasant rebellion and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work. Close the ranks tighter; the proletariat must win.

"N. LENIN."

This was just before the seizure of power. Just after it another crisis arose, when the Left Social Revolutionaries refused to go into a Bolshevik Government, and the Bolsheviks were compelled either to form a coalition with the bourgeois Socialists or hold the power alone. At this point Zinoviev and Kamenev made a second 'retreat,' and again Lenin was compelled to denounce them. The following quotation is from an article published by Lenin in *Pravda* at that time. The article is not included in the *Complete Works of Lenin*, of which Kamenev is the editor, but it constitutes one of the most important historic documents of the period:

"Comrades: Several members of the Central Committee of our party and of the Soviet of People's Commissars, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Nogin, Rykov, Miliutin, and a few others, withdrew yesterday, November 4th, from the Central Committee of our party. . . . In such a big party as ours, notwithstanding the proletarian revolutionary course of our politics, there must inevitably be individual comrades not sufficiently stoical and firm in fighting the enemies of the people. The task standing at this moment before our party is really immeasurable, the difficulties gigantic, and several members of our party, formerly occupying responsible posts, have trembled under the assault of the bourgeoisie and fled from our midst. All the bourgeoisie and its helpers exult, and rejoice in our misfortune, shout about collapse, and predict the ruin of the Bolshevik Government.

"Comrades, do not believe this lie. These comrades acted as deserters, not only abandoning the posts entrusted to them, but violating the direct resolution of the Central Committee to the effect that they should at least postpone their withdrawal until the decision of the Petrograd and

Moscow party organisations. We decisively condemn this desertion. We are firmly convinced that all conscious workers, soldiers and peasants belonging to our party or sympathising with it, will as decisively condemn the behaviour of the deserters. . . .

“Remember, comrades, that two of the deserters, Kamenev and Zinoviev, had already, before the insurrection in Petrograd, acted as deserters and strike-breakers, for they not only voted at the decisive meeting of the Central Committee against the insurrection, but even *after* the decision of the Central Committee was made, they appeared before the party workers with an agitation against the insurrection. Everybody knows that the papers, fearing to stand on the side of the workers and inclining more and more toward the bourgeoisie (*Noviaia Zhizn*, for example), raised at that moment, along with the whole bourgeois Press, a hue and cry about the ‘collapse’ of our party, the ‘collapse’ of the insurrection, etc. But life soon refuted the lies and slanders of some, the doubts and waverings and cowardice of others. The ‘storm’ which they tried to raise around the act of Kamenev and Zinoviev to the point of breaking the Petrograd insurrection, turned out to be *a storm in a glass of water*; the mighty rising of the mass, the mighty heroism of the millions of workers and soldiers and peasants in Petrograd and Moscow, on the front, in the trenches, and in the villages, removed these deserters as lightly as a railroad train tosses aside a chip.

“Shame on all unbelievers, all waverers, all doubters, and all those who let the bourgeoisie frighten them, and surrender to the yells of their helpers, direct or indirect! There is not a *shadow* of wavering in the *masses* of the workers and soldiers. . . .”

“This is the conduct which Lenin, faced with his own death, saw fit to advise the party was “not accidental” in Kamenev and Zinoviev. He gave the further advice in his “Testament” that this incident “should not be used against them”—a piece of advice which Trotsky had instinctively followed. He coupled this with the advice that “Trotsky’s non-Bolshevik past” should not be used against him—a piece of advice which had already been violated to the extent of volumes by Zinoviev and Kamenev and their associates.

## APPENDIX IV

## TROTSKY'S LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

THE following passages from Trotsky's letter of October, 1923, to the Central Committee will give the reader a just idea of its tone, and the nature of his demand for a new course.

"One of the proposals of Comrade Djerzhinsky's commission," he began, "declares that we must make it obligatory for party members knowing about groupings in the party to communicate the fact to the G.P.U. [the State police], the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee. It would seem that to inform the party organisations of the fact that its branches are being used by elements hostile to the party, is an obligation of party members so elementary that it ought not to be necessary to introduce a special resolution to that effect six years after the October revolution. The very demand for such a resolution is an extremely startling symptom alongside of others no less clear. . . . The demand for such a resolution means: (a) that illegal oppositional groups have been formed in the party, which may become dangerous to the revolution; (b) that there exist such states of mind in the party as to permit comrades knowing about such groups not to inform the party organisations. Both these facts testify to an extraordinary deterioration of the situation within the party from the time of the 12th convention [six months before]. . . .

"In the fiercest moment of war Communism, the system of appointment within the party did not have one-tenth of the extent that it has now. Appointment of the secretaries of provincial committees is now the rule. That creates for the secretary a position essentially independent of the local organisation. . . .

"The twelfth session of the party was conducted under the sign of democracy. Many of the speeches at that time spoken in defence of Workers' Democracy seemed to me exaggerated, and to a considerable extent demagoguish, in view of the incompatibility of a fully developed Workers' Democracy with the *régime* of dictatorship. But it was perfectly clear that the pressure of the period of war Communism ought to give place to a more lively and broader

party responsibility. However, this present *régime*, which began to form itself before the twelfth session, and which subsequently received its final reinforcement and formulation—[It all happened, that is to say, after the permanent withdrawal of Lenin.—M. E.]—is much farther from Workers' Democracy than the *régime* of the fiercest period of war Communism. The bureaucratisation of the party apparatus has developed to unheard-of proportions by means of the method of secretarial selection. . . . There has been created a very broad strata of party workers, entering into the apparatus of the government of the party, who completely renounce their own party opinion, at least the open expression of it, as though assuming that the secretarial hierarchy is the apparatus which creates party opinion and party decisions. Beneath this strata, abstaining from their own opinions, there lies the broad mass of the party, before whom every decision stands in the form of a summons or a command. In this foundation-mass of the party there is an unusual amount of dissatisfaction. . . . This dissatisfaction does not dissipate itself by way of the open exchange of opinions at party meetings and by way of influence of the mass upon the party organisation (election of party committees, secretaries, etc.), but accumulates in secret and thus leads to interior strains."

## APPENDIX V

## THE REPLY OF THE POLITBURO

THE members of the Politburo replied to Trotsky's objective and conscientious letter with an abusive personal attack. To his patiently repeated exposition of the need for a thorough system of planning in the socialised industries, they replied in the following manner :

" We consider it necessary to say frankly to the party that at the basis of all the dissatisfaction of Comrade Trotsky, all his irritation, all his attacks against the Central Committee which have continued already for several years, his determination to disturb the party, lies the circumstance that Trotsky wants the Central Committee to place him and Comrade Kalegaev at the head of our industrial life. . . ."

It does not seem likely that if *for several years* Trotsky had

been attacking the Central Committee and disturbing the party, through motives of personal ambition and irritation, Lenin would have endorsed Trotsky's authority in the party when confronted with the possibility of his own death. The Politburo did not know about this act of Lenin's when they wrote those words "for several years."

The reply of the Politburo continued: "Trotsky is a member of the Soviet of People's Commissars, a member of the Soviet of Labour and Defence; Lenin offered him the post of vice-president of the Soviet of People's Commissars. In all these positions Trotsky might, if he wished to, demonstrate in action, working before the eyes of the whole party, that the party might trust him with those practically unlimited powers in the sphere of industry and military affairs towards which he strives. But Trotsky preferred another method of action. . . . He never attended a meeting of the Soviet of People's Commissars, neither under Lenin, nor after his withdrawal. He never attended a meeting of the Soviet of Labour and Defence, neither before nor after its reorganisation. . . ."

Again, it does not seem probable that if Trotsky had shown a disposition to shirk the work of the Government *under Lenin as well as after his withdrawal*, Lenin would have written a letter from his deathbed endorsing the authority of Trotsky in the party. The Politburo certainly made a misstep when they wrote the words "under Lenin as well as after his withdrawal."

The punctuality and conscientiousness with which Trotsky meets and fulfils every engagement and every obligation he enters into is one of the natural wonders of Russian society. It is a thing that visitors go to see! And the fact is perfectly well known to everybody in Russia that Trotsky is the only man comparable to Lenin in the sustained intensity of his work, and that he organises his work to the highest possible degree.

There are three facts which explain the possibility of such a misrepresentation of Trotsky. The first is that there has been a gradual shifting of the location of the governing power in Soviet Russia—an organic evolution the significance of which it would be very interesting to trace. The details do not belong here, and I do not know them, but the real centre of executive action has steadily moved away from the Soviet of Peoples Commissars toward the Politburo of the party. There is



often a difference, therefore, between the organ which formally takes an action and the organ which really decides upon it, even though the same individuals function in both cases. If to this fact you will add the fact that Trotsky, like all men of great executive mind and energy, is utterly impatient of time spent in formality and mere talk, you will understand what is the real fact under this incredible accusation—namely, that Trotsky has been entirely consecrated to the real business of getting the work done. Assuming the privileges of his genius, he has refused to attend meetings of a formal or conversational or educative nature. To people emotionally determined that he shall not be a genius, that there shall be no genius in the world but Lenin, this has been irritating. If anything further is needed to explain the possibility of this accusation against Trotsky, it is surely contained in that frank statement of the Secretary, Kuibeshev (quoted on p. 26): "We consider it necessary to fight you, and we cannot declare you an enemy; that is why we resort to such methods." There may have been meetings where it was futile for Trotsky to appear, with the cards thus stacked against him.

The reply of the Politburo continues: "Trotsky categorically declined the position of substitute for Lenin. That evidently he considers beneath his dignity. He conducts himself according to the formula, 'All or nothing.'"

If anything could prove that Trotsky is *not* acting from motives of personal ambition, and is interested solely in getting the work done, it is just this declining the position of acting head of the Government.

Trotsky's whole life is an answer to this abuse.

## APPENDIX VI

### TROTSKY'S LETTER ON THE NEW COURSE

(In order that the reader may have a consecutive impression of Trotsky's thought in the letter to his local branch, which was the original and fundamental basis of the campaign against him, I translate it here in full.)

DEAR COMRADES :

I have confidently expected each day that I should be able to take part in the discussion of the intra-party situation

and the new problems. But illness arrived this time more inopportunately than ever, and has proven more prolonged than the doctors predicted. Nothing remains but for me to express my thoughts in the present letter.

The resolution of the Politburo on the question of party structure has an unusual significance. It means that the party has come to a serious turning-point on its historic path. At turning-points, as has been justly pointed out at many meetings, there is need of caution, but along with caution there is need of firmness and decisiveness. Procrastination, formlessness at turning-points would be the worst kind of incaution.

Certain conservatively disposed comrades, inclined to overestimate the rôle of the apparatus and underestimate the self-activity of the party, take a critical attitude to the resolution of the Politburo. They say the Central Committee is undertaking an impossible task, the resolution will only propagate false illusions and lead to negative results. It is plain that such an approach to the problem is saturated with bureaucratic lack of confidence in the party. The New Course announced in the resolution of the Central Committee consists in this, that the centre of gravity, wrongly shifted under the old course to the side of the apparatus, shall be shifted back to the side of initiative, critical self-activity, self-government of the party, as the organised advance guard of the proletariat. The New Course does not mean that the task is laid upon the party apparatus by such and such a date to decree, create, and establish a *régime* of democracy. Not at all. The party itself can realise that *régime*. The problem may be briefly formulated thus: the party shall subordinate to itself its apparatus, not for one instant ceasing to be a centralised organisation.

In recent debates and articles there is frequent reference to the fact that "pure," "developed," "ideal" democracy is unattainable, and that, in general democracy is not for us an end in itself. That is absolutely unquestionable. But with exactly the same right and foundation we may say that pure and absolute centralism is unattainable, and incompatible with the nature of a mass party, and that neither centralism nor the party apparatus is by any means an end in itself. Democracy and centralism are two sides in the structure of our party. The problem is to equilibrate those two sides more correctly—that is, in a manner better adapted to the existing circumstances. In the recent period this equilibrium has been

lacking. The centre of gravity has been wrongly transferred to the side of the apparatus. The self-activity of the party has been reduced to a minimum. That has created habits and methods of administration fundamentally contradictory to the spirit of a revolutionary party of the proletariat. The excessive strengthening of this apparatus-centralism at the expense of the self-activity of the party has created in the party a feeling of *unhealthiness*. On the extreme flank this has found unusually morbid expression, even to the point of the creation of illegal groups under the leadership of elements clearly hostile to Communism. At the same time, throughout the whole party a critical attitude has arisen toward the apparatus method of deciding questions. An understanding, or at least a feeling, that party bureaucratism threatens to lead the party into an *impasse* has become almost universal. Warning voices have been raised. The first official and in the highest degree important expression of the crisis at which the party has arrived, is the resolution on the new course. It will be realised in actual life to the degree that the party—that is, the 400,000 members of it—desire and are able to realise it.

In a number of articles the thought has been insistently advanced that the fundamental way to revive the party is to raise the cultural level of its rank and file members, after which all the rest—that is, Workers' Democracy—will be added of itself. That we need to raise the cultural and intellectual level of our party, in view of the gigantic tasks standing before it, is unquestionable. But exactly for that reason such a pedagogical, instructorial statement of the problem is wholly inadequate, and consequently wrong, and if it is stubbornly adhered to will only bring a sharpening of the crisis. The party can raise its level as a party only in completely fulfilling its fundamental tasks by the way of a collective, self-active leadership of the working class and the government of the working class. Not a *pedagogical* but a *political* approach is needed. We must not state the problem as though the application of party democracy was to be placed in dependence (by whom?) upon the degree of "preparedness" for it of the party members. The party is the party. We can present very severe demands to anybody who wants to join our party and remain in it; but those who join it become thereby active participants in its whole work.

Destroying self-activity, bureaucratism thereby prevents

a raising of the general level of the party. And that is its chief fault. To the extent that the most experienced comrades, and those distinguished by service, inevitably enter into the apparatus, to that extent the bureaucratism of the apparatus has its heaviest consequences in the intellectual-political growth of the young generation of the party. This explains the fact that the youth—the most reliable barometer of the party—react the most sharply of all against party bureaucratism.

It would be wrong to think, however, that the excess of apparatus-methods in deciding party questions leaves no trace on the older generation, which incarnates the political experience of the party and its revolutionary traditions. No, the danger is great also on this side. It is needless to speak of the enormous significance—not only on a Russian, but on an international scale—of the older generation of our party; that is generally known and generally acknowledged. But it would be a crude mistake to estimate that significance as a *self-sufficient fact*. *Only a continual interaction of the older and younger generation within the frame of party democracy can preserve the Old Guard as a revolutionary factor*. Otherwise the old may ossify, and, unnoticed by themselves, become the most finished expression of the bureaucratism of the apparatus.

The degeneration of an "Old Guard" has been observed in history more than once. To take the freshest and clearest recent example: the leaders and parties of the Second International. We well know that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde, and others, were the direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders—some partially and some altogether—degenerated into opportunism in the circumstances of parliamentary reform, and the self-sufficient growth of the party and trade-union apparatus. We saw especially on the eve of the imperialist war how the powerful social-democratic apparatus, protected by the authority of an older generation, became a gigantic brake upon revolutionary development. And we ought to state—we ourselves, the "old men"—that our generation, while naturally playing the rôle of leadership in the party, nevertheless does not contain within itself any automatic guarantee against a gradual and unnoticeable weakening of the proletarian and

revolutionary spirit, provided the party permits any further growth and hardening of the bureaucratic-apparatus method of politics, which converts the younger generation into passive material for education, and creates inevitably an alienation between the apparatus and the mass, between the old and the young. Against that indubitable danger there is no other defence, but a serious, deep, radical change of course in the direction of Workers' Democracy, with a continually increasing introduction into the party of proletarians who remain in the shops.

I will not pause here on this or that juridical, constitutional definition of party democracy, and juridical limitation of it. However important these questions are, they are secondary questions. We will decide them on the basis of the experience we have, and what needs changing we will change. But first of all it is necessary to change the spirit that prevails in the organisations. It is necessary that the party, in the person of all its local branches and associations, should restore to itself its collective initiative, its right of free comradesly criticism—without fear and without favour—its right of organisational self-determination. It is necessary to revive and renew the apparatus, making it feel that it is the executive mechanism of the collective whole.

In the party Press of recent days there have appeared many examples characterising the extreme bureaucratic degeneration of party morals and relations. In answer to the voice of criticism: "Show your membership card!" Up to the publication of the resolution of the Central Committee on the New Course, the bureaucratized representatives of the apparatus treated the very mention of the necessity for a change of intra-party policy as heresy, fractionalism, and a loosening of discipline. Even now they are only formally prepared to "take cognisance" of the New Course; that is, bureaucratically reduce it to nothing. The renewal of the party apparatus—of course, within the strict limits of the constitution—ought to be carried out with the goal of replacing the officialised and bureaucratized, with fresh elements in close union with the collective life or capable of guaranteeing such a union. And first of all ought to be removed from the party positions those elements who at the first voice of criticism, of objection, of protest, are inclined to demand one's party ticket for the purpose of repression. The New Course ought to begin with

this, that in the apparatus all should feel, from bottom to top, that nobody dares to terrorise the party.

It is wholly inadequate that the youth should repeat our formulas. It is necessary that the youth should take the revolutionary formulas fighting, transform them into flesh and blood, work out for themselves their own opinion, their own personality, and be able to fight for their own opinion with that courage which comes from sincere conviction and independence of character. Passive obedience, mechanical drill, characterlessness, obsequiousness, careerism—away with these things from the party! A Bolshevik is not only a disciplined man; no, a Bolshevik is a man who, boring deep, has worked out for himself in each given instance a firm opinion, and courageously and independently defends it, not only in war with his enemies, but also within his own organisation. To-day he may be in the minority in the organisation. He submits because it is his party. But that obviously does not always mean that he was wrong. Maybe he sooner than others saw or understood a new problem, or the need of a turn. He insistently raises the question a second time, a third, a tenth time. In that he does a service to the party, helping it to meet the new problem full-armed, or to accomplish the new turn without organisational disturbance and fractional convulsion.

Yes, the party could not fulfil its historic mission if it fell apart into fractional groupings. That must not, and will not be. The party as a whole, as a self-active collectivity, will prevent that. But the party can wrestle successfully with the danger of fractions only by developing, strengthening and making durable the course toward Workers' Democracy. *The bureaucratism of the apparatus is one of the chief sources of fractionalism.* It suppresses criticism and drives dissatisfaction underground. It is inclined to tack the label of fractionalism upon every individual or collective voice of criticism or warning. Mechanical centralism is inevitably accompanied by fractionalism, which is at once a malicious caricature of Workers' Democracy, and a terrible political danger.

In clear understanding of the whole situation, the party will accomplish the necessary change of course with that firmness and decisiveness which is demanded by the depth of the problems standing before us. The party will thereby raise to a higher degree its revolutionary unity, a pledge that it can accomplish industrial and international tasks of immeasurable importance.

I have in no sense exhausted the question. I have purposely refrained from examining many of its essential elements, through fear of taking too much of your time. But I hope that I will soon get the better of the malaria, which—judging by my example—is in plain opposition to the new party course, and then I will try in freer vocal speech to supplement and make precise what I have not finished saying in this letter.

With comradely greeting,

Dec. 8, 1923.

L. TROTSKY.

*P.S.*—Taking advantage of the fact that this letter appears in *Pravda* with a delay of two days, I want to make a few supplementary remarks.

I am told that certain individual comrades, when my letter was read at the meeting of the local branch, expressed an anxiety lest my reflections as to the mutual relations of the "Old Guard" and the younger generation might be employed for a setting against each other (!) of the young and the old. You can guarantee at a glance that this kind of thought will come into the heads of those comrades who only two or three months ago shuddered at the mere posing of the question of a change of course. At any rate, to advance into a prominent position such an anxiety in the present circumstances, and at the given moment, shows an incorrect estimation of the real dangers, and the order in which they stand. The present mood of the youth, which has, as every thinking member of the party understands, a highly symptomatic character, was created by those same methods of "dead calm," of which the resolution *unanimously* adopted by the Politburo is a condemnation. In other words, it is exactly that "dead calm" which holds the danger of a growing alienation between the governing stratum of the party and its younger members—that is, its enormous majority. The tendency of the party apparatus to think and decide for the party, leads in its development to an effort to base the authority of the governing circles only on tradition. A respect for party tradition is undoubtedly a necessary constituent element of party education and amalgamation; but this element can be alive and steady, only if it is continually nourished and reinforced by an active and self-dependent verification of that tradition through the collective working out of the policy of the *present day*. Without that activity and self-dependence, a respect for

tradition may degenerate into official romanticism, or even into mere officialism—form, that is, without content. It is needless to say that this kind of a bond between the generations would be wholly inadequate and unstable. Externally it might appear solid five minutes before there appeared an alarming crack in it. Exactly here lies the danger of a bureaucratic course, supported by a “dead calm” in the party. And in so far as the durably revolutionary, non-officialised representatives of the older generation—that is, as I firmly believe, its overwhelming majority—take clear account of the dangerous perspective characterised above, and, standing on the ground of the resolution of the Politburo, put forth all efforts to help the party convert that resolution into reality, in so far disappears the chief source of a possible setting against each other of the different generations in the party. This or that “superfluity,” or the impulse of the young in that direction will be then comparatively easy to overcome. But it is necessary, first of all, to create such conditions that party tradition will not be concentrated in the apparatus, but will live and renew itself in the daily experience of the party. By the same means we shall avoid another danger: a splitting of the older generation itself into the “apparatus men”—i.e., those who are useful in preserving the “dead calm”—and the non-apparatus elements. It is needless to say that the apparatus of the party—that is, its organisational backbone—delivered of its self-sufficient narrowness, will not be weakened but strengthened. As to the fact that we need a powerful centralised apparatus in our party there can be no two opinions.

One might also, perhaps, object that the reference in my letter to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Social Democrats was not right, in view of the deep distinction of the two epochs, the former an epoch of stagnant reformism, the present a revolutionary epoch. To be sure, an example is only an example, and not by any means an identity. However, that wholesale contrasting of epochs in itself decides nothing. Not without good reason do we point to the danger of the New Economic Policy, closely connected as it is with the protracted character of the international revolution. Our daily practical government work, continually becoming more detailed and specialised, hides in itself, as the resolution of the Central Committee points out, the danger of a narrowing of the



horizon—that is to say, an opportunistic degeneration. It is perfectly obvious that these dangers become more serious, in proportion as party leadership is replaced with a tight-shut *régime* of “secretarial” command. We should be poor revolutionists if we hoped that the “revolutionary character of the epoch” would help us to wrestle with all our difficulties, and, above all, with intra-party difficulties. Let’s help the “epoch,” as we should, with a genuine realisation of the new party course *unanimously* adopted by the Politburo of the Central Committee.

In conclusion, one more remark. A couple of months ago, when the questions which are the topic of the present discussion first appeared on the order of the day of the party, certain responsible provincial comrades were inclined to shrug their shoulders condescendingly: Well, that’s only a Moscow invention; everything’s all right in the provinces. And even now in certain correspondence from the provinces we hear the same note. This contrasting of infected or busybody Moscow with the tranquil and reasonable provinces, is nothing but a clear expression of the same bureaucratism, although in a provincial edition. In reality the Moscow organisation of our party is the most inclusive, the most rich in abilities, and the liveliest. Even in the deadest moments of the so-called “dead calm” (a very expressive name, and don’t let it fail of a place in the history of the party!), there was more independent life and activity in Moscow than anywhere else. If Moscow is at the present moment distinguished from other points, it is only that she has taken the initiative in reconsidering the party-course. That is not a minus for her, but a merit. The whole party will follow Moscow through the necessary stage of transvaluating certain values in the period just past. The less the provincial party apparatus opposes this, the more systematically the provincial organisations will pass through the inevitable and progressive stage of criticism and self-criticism. The party will harvest the results in the form of increased solidarity and a higher level of party culture.

L. TROTSKY.

## APPENDIX VII

## WHAT WAS MEANT BY "THE OPPOSITION"

THE "opposition" alluded to in the resolution of the Party Conference in January 1924, includes the forty-six signers of a letter to the Central Committee in October demanding a change of course, and anybody else who had anything to say in divergence from the course adopted by the Central Committee. To treat this phenomenon of widespread dissatisfaction in the party as though it were an organised body, and to state that Trotsky "stood at the head of it," was perhaps the most exasperating trick in this whole campaign. Trotsky *could not* organise an opposition and stand at the head of it, because fractions are prohibited. He could merely define *his position*, and leave other dissatisfied people, responsible and irresponsible, to define theirs. "The opposition," therefore, was not a single existent thing, but merely a generalisation. And this very resolution which accuses Trotsky of "standing at the head of" an opposition, and "issuing a fractionalist manifesto"—this same resolution denounces the "criticisms made by the opposition" for their inconsistency. Some of them want to "renounce the New Economic Policy," it says, and some of them want to make "further concessions to capital." In short, Trotsky is made responsible for all the opinions of an *unorganised* opposition, at the same time that he is *forbidden to organise* an opposition, and *accused* of organising it!

Stalin stated in a speech of January 20th that one of the "six mistakes of Comrade Trotsky" consisted in his "not stating clearly" for whom he stands—for the Central Committee or the "opposition." Kamenev at the same time was ridiculing the "opposition" for having no "political line," "no programme"—nothing but a "many-coloured tail." It is obvious that the only way in which Trotsky, who was *in his own way* opposed to the majority of the Central Committee, could possibly make a choice between the Central Committee and an "opposition," would be to select among the various and many-coloured oppositional groups those who agreed with him, *give them a programme*, and *organise them into a real entity*. But that would be fractionalism. Thus, what Stalin was accusing Trotsky of was *not forming a fraction*. He must have sensed the inconsistency of this accusation with the state-

ment of the resolution that Trotsky "stood at the head of" an existing fraction, for in his speech at the party convention five months later he succeeded in forgetting this point in his indictment. The "six mistakes of Comrade Trotsky" were reduced to five.

## APPENDIX VIII

## TROTSKY'S LETTER OF RESIGNATION

## ESTEEMED COMRADES :

The first point on the agenda of the coming session of the Central Committee is the question of the resolutions of local organisations concerning the "attack" of Trotsky. Since I cannot take part in the work of the session on account of my illness,\* I think that I will facilitate the examination of this question if I give you the following brief explanation :

1. I have considered and I consider it possible to bring into the discussion sufficiently weighty refutations, both in the way of principle and of facts, against the accusation that I pursue the goal of "revising Leninism," and "belittling" (!) the rôle of Lenin. I have refrained, however, from responding, not only because I was sick, but also because, in the state of the present discussion, every utterance of mine on that theme, regardless of its character, tone, and content, would serve merely as a stimulus to deepen the polemic, transform it from a one-sided into a two-sided polemic, and give it a still more bitter character.

And at the present time, estimating the whole course of the discussion, and notwithstanding the fact that there have been advanced against me a multitude of false and actually monstrous accusations, I think that my silence has been right from the standpoint of the general interests of the party.

2. I can nowise accept, however, the accusation that I have pursued a special line (Trotskysm) and tried to revise Leninism. The opinion attributed to me, that not I came to Bolshevism, but Bolshevism to me, appears to me simply monstrous. In my introduction, "Lessons of October," I say explicitly (p. 62)

\* Trotsky has very rapidly recovered his health in the Caucasus. The present reports are excellent. M. E. (March 1925).

that Bolshevism prepared itself for its rôle in the revolution by an implacable struggle, not only with populism and Menshevism, but with "conciliationism"—that is, with the tendency to which I belonged. It has never come into my head throughout these last eight years to consider any question from the standpoint of so-called "Trotskyism," which I considered, and consider politically long ago liquidated. Whether I have been right or mistaken in this or that question coming before the party, I approached the decision of it from the standpoint of the general theoretical and practical experience of our party. Not once in all these years has anybody said to me that any idea or proposal of mine represented a special tendency of "Trotskyism." This very word has swum out, to my complete surprise, only during the discussion about my book, "1917."

3. In this connection the question about the peasants has the greatest political significance. I decisively deny that the formula "Permanent Revolution," which relates wholly to the past, has determined for me in any degree whatever an unattentive attitude to the peasants under the circumstances of the Soviet revolution. If I have chanced to revert to the formula "Permanent Revolution" in any particular instance since October it was only in the sphere of "Party History"—that is, a reversion to the past, and not in the sphere of present political problems. The effort to establish upon that question an irreconcilable disagreement between us has no justification, in my opinion, either in the eight years' experiment of the revolution which we have carried out together, or in the tasks of the future.

Likewise I reject allusions and references to my alleged "pessimistic" attitude to the fate of our Socialist construction, in view of the decreased *tempo* of the revolution in the West. In spite of all the difficulties which arise from our capitalistic encirclement, the economic and political resources of the Soviet dictatorship are very great. I have more than once developed and established this fact, at the direction of the party, especially at international congresses, and I consider that this thought preserves its whole strength in the present period of historic development.

4. Upon the debated questions decided by the Thirteenth Congress of the party, I never appeared, either in the Central Committee or in the Soviet of Labour and Defence, much less

outside the governing organs of the party and the Soviet institutions, with any proposals whatever which might either directly or indirectly raise issues which had once been decided. After the Thirteenth Congress there arose, or became more clearly defined, certain new problems of industrial, or Soviet, or international character. The solution of them has been a matter of exceptional difficulty. The idea was completely foreign to me to oppose any "platform" whatever to the work of the Central Committee of the party in the solution of these problems. To all those comrades who were present at the meetings of the Politburo, the Central Committee, the Soviet of Labour and Defence, or the Revolutionary Military Soviet, this assertion needs no proof. The debated questions decided by the Thirteenth Congress were raised again in this recent discussion, not only out of connection with my work, but, so far as I can judge at present, out of connection with the practical problems of party policy.

5. Inasmuch as the introduction to my book "1917" constitutes the formal motive of the last discussion, I consider it necessary first of all to deny the accusation that I printed my book as though behind the back of the Central Committee. As a matter of fact the book was printed (during my convalescence in the Caucasus) under exactly the same conditions as all other books of mine or of other members of the Central Committee, or members of the party in general. Naturally, it is the affair of the Central Committee to establish various forms of control over the party publications; but I in no direction, and in no degree, violated those forms of control which have been so far established, and I had, it goes without saying, no motive for such a violation.

6. The introduction, "Lessons of October," represents a further development of thoughts expressed by me lately more than once, and especially in the past year. I will here name merely the following articles and speeches. [Follows a list of six speeches and articles.]

All the enumerated utterances, evoked by the defeat of the German revolution in the autumn of 1923, were printed in *Pravda*, *Izvestia*, and other publications. Not one member of the Central Committee, much less of the Politburo, once indicated to me the incorrectness of these works. Likewise, the editorial board of *Pravda* not only did not affix footnotes to my speeches, but not once made the slightest attempt to

indicate to me that they did not agree with them in this or that point.

It stands to reason that I did not regard my analysis of October in connection with events in Germany as a "platform." I never entertained the thought that this work might be understood by anybody whatever as a platform, which it was not, and could not be.

7. Inasmuch as certain others of my books have been dragged into the circle of accusation, and among them those which have gone through a series of editions, I consider it necessary to state that not only the Politburo as a whole never indicated to me that this or that article or book of mine might be interpreted as a "revision" of Leninism, but no single member of the Politburo ever did so. In particular, this relates to the book, "1905," which appeared during the life of Vladimir Ilych, went through a series of editions, was warmly recommended by the party Press, was translated by the Communist International into foreign languages, and now constitutes *the chief material of the indictment against me for revising Leninism.*

8. In setting forth these considerations, I pursue, as I have said already, a single purpose: to assist the session in deciding the question which stands as the first point in its agenda.

As far as concerns the statement often repeated in the course of the discussion, that I aim at some "special position" in the party, do not submit to discipline, decline this or that work assigned to me by the Central Committee, etc., etc., etc.—without permitting myself to evaluate those assertions, I will simply categorically announce: I am ready to fulfil any work whatever assigned to me by the Central Committee, in whatever position, or without any position, and, it goes without saying, under any conditions whatever of party control.

It is unnecessary to demonstrate that, after the recent discussion, the interests of the work demand that I be freed immediately from my duties as President of the Revolutionary Military Soviet.

In conclusion I think it is necessary to add that I remained in Moscow until the session in order, in case it was desired, to answer this or that question or give any necessary explanations.

L. TROTSKY.

Kremlin,

January 15th, 1925.

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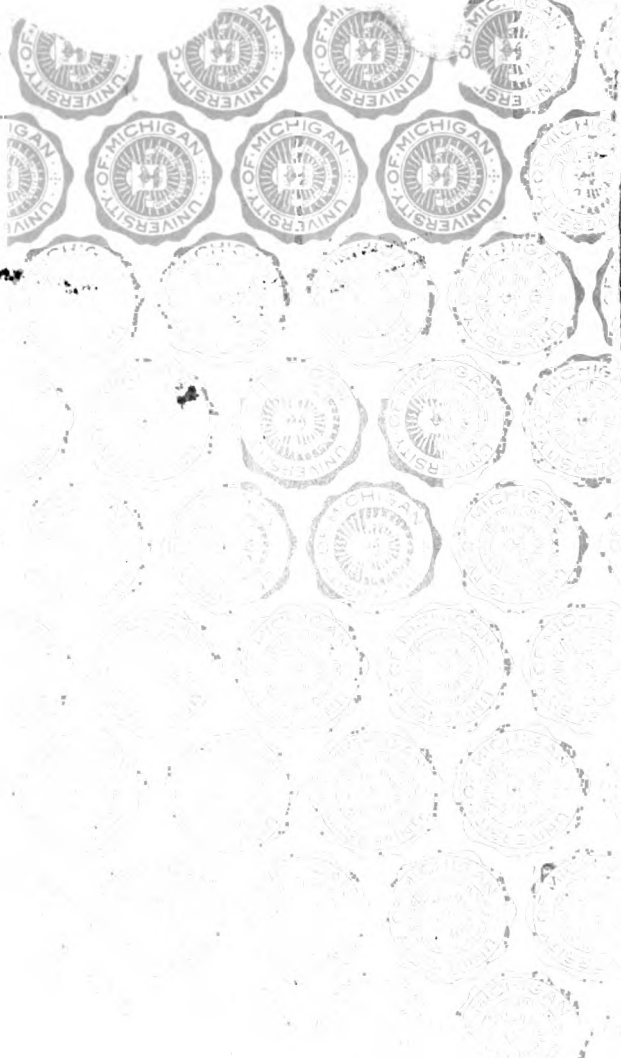




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