

N55

THE SUPPRESSED TESTAMENT OF LENIN

The Complete
Original Text

*With Two Explanatory
Articles By*

LEON
TROTSKY

TEN CENTS

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ERRATA

- Page 9—Read 1st line on page 10, then go back to page 9.
- Page 10—Skip first line.
- Page 11—6th line from bottom of page follows fifth line.
- Page 46—Letter from Piatakov—after “This was told to comrades from”, read—“Leningrad who hesitated on the question of ‘Trotskyism’ . . .”

made about it here risks being repetitive. If we take up some space here it is only in order to fortify two points made by the author, one dealing with the authenticity of the Testament of Lenin and the other dealing with its deliberate falsification by the Stalinists.

Once having suppressed the Testament, it was only a matter of time before the Stalinists began to deny its very value. Any delay, assertions of its authenticity are a disservice to the present C. P. régime. If the régime needs additional verification, it can be found in a speech by Joseph Stalin, reproduced in *Pravda's Correspondence* of November 17, 1934: “It is said that in the ‘Testament’ it was suggested to the party congress that it was necessary to consider the question of replacing Stalin and Comrade Zinoviev in his place as General Secretary. . . . This is perfectly true. . . . Yes, comrades, we must warn those who are rudely and disloyally disintegrating the party. I have never done so and shall not do so now.”

This is given by a pamphlet published by the Communist Party of Great Britain, *The Truth About Lenin* (London, 1934). On page 68, it states: “Lenin during his last illness wrote a letter which was read at the party congress, in which he made a personal criticism of Stalin as ‘too authoritarian’, and recommended his replacement. . . . When he came to Trotsky, Lenin said that the Testament was ‘not accidental’, i.e., he gave a decision.” (Italics by Andrews.)

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Introduction

The documents contained in this pamphlet so exhaustively cover the subject with which it deals that any remarks made about it here risks being repetitive. If we take up some space here it is only in order to fortify two points made by the author, one dealing with the authenticity of the Testament of Lenin and the other dealing with its deliberate falsification by the Stalinists.

Once having suppressed the Testament, it was only a matter of time before the Stalinists began to deny its very existence. To this day, assertions of its authenticity are challenged by friends of the present C. P. régime. If the existence of the document needs additional verification, it may be found in a speech by Joseph Stalin, reproduced in the *International Press Correspondence* of November 17, 1927. In it he says: "It is said that in the 'Testament' in question Lenin suggested to the party congress that it should deliberate on the question of replacing Stalin and appointing another comrade in his place as General Secretary of the party. This is perfectly true. . . . Yes, comrades, I am rude towards those who are rudely and disloyally destroying and disintegrating the party. I have never made a secret of it and shall not do so now."

Further verification is given by a pamphlet published by the Communist party of Great Britain, *The Truth About Trotsky*, by R. F. Andrews (London, 1934). On page 68, the author writes: "Lenin during his last illness wrote a confidential letter, which was read at the party congress, giving his opinions of the leading members of the Central Committee. He gave a *personal* criticism of Stalin as 'too rude' to be a good secretary, and recommended his replacement. . . . But when he came to Trotsky, Lenin said that his 'non-Bolshevism' was 'not accidental', i.e., he gave a decisive *political* criticism." (Italics by Andrews.)

As a comparison of the last sentence with the original text will show, Andrews, in conformity with that disloyalty for which Lenin condemned Stalin, has merely forced together the reference to Trotsky's "non-Bolshevism" and the reference to the "non-accidental" character of the mistakes of Zinoviev and Kamenev, and presented them to his innocent readers as applying to one and the same person, namely Trotsky!

This example, as Stalinist literature proves anew every day, is neither isolated nor "accidental".

NEW YORK, *February 5, 1935*

M. S.

Lennin's Testament

By the stability of the Central Committee, of which I spoke before, I mean measures to prevent a split, so far as such measures can be taken. For, of course, the White Guard in *Russkaya Mysl* (I think it was S. E. Oldenburg) was right when, in the first place, in his play against Soviet Russia he banked on the hope of a split in our party, and when, in the second place, he banked for that split on serious disagreements in our party.

Our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible, and if there cannot exist an agreement between such classes its fall is inevitable. In such an event it would be useless to take any measures or in general to discuss the stability of our Central Committee. In such an event no measures would prove capable of preventing a split. But I trust that is too remote a future, and too improbable an event, to talk about.

I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the near future, and I intend to examine here a series of considerations of a purely personal character.

I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability—from this point of view—as such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, and the avoidance of which might be promoted in my opinion by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat

of Ways and Communications, is distinguished not only by his exceptional ability—personally, he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee—but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split, and if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly.

I will not further characterize the other members of the Central Committee as to their personal qualities. I will only remind you that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not, of course, accidental, but that it ought as little to be used against them as the non-Bolshevism of Trotsky.

Of the younger members of the Central Committee, I want to say a few words about Piatakov and Bukharin. They are, in my opinion, the most able forces (among the youngest) and in regard to them it is necessary to bear in mind the following: Bukharin is not only the most valuable and biggest theoretician of the party, but also may legitimately be considered the favorite of the whole party; but his theoretical views can only with the very greatest doubt be regarded as fully Marxian, for there is something scholastic in him (he never has learned, and I think never fully understood the dialectic).

And then Piatakov—a man undoubtedly distinguished in will and ability, but too much given over to the administrative side of things to be relied on in a serious political question.

Of course, both these remarks are made by me merely with a view of the present time, or supposing that these two able and loyal workers may not find an occasion to supplement their onesidedness.

December 25, 1922

Postscript: Stalin is too rude; and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us communists, becomes un-

supportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. These circumstances may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.

LENIN

January 4, 1923.

On Lenin's Testament

By Leon Trotsky

THE post-war epoch has brought into wide currency the psychological biography, the masters of which art often pull their subject up out of society by the roots. The fundamental driving force of history is presented as the abstraction, personality. The behavior of the "political animal", as Aristotle brilliantly defined mankind, is decomposed into personal passions and instincts.

The statement that personality is abstract may seem absurd. Are not the super-personal forces of history really the abstract things? And what can be more concrete than a living man? However, we insist upon our statement. If you remove from a personality, even the most richly endowed, the content which is introduced into it by the milieu, the nation, the epoch, the class, the group, the family, there remains an empty automaton, a psycho-physical robot, an object of natural, but not of social or "humane", science.

The causes of this abandonment of history and society must, as always, be sought in history and society. Two decades of wars, revolutions and crises have given a bad shake-up to that sovereign, human personality. To have weight in the scales of contemporary history a thing must be measured in millions. For this the offended personality seeks revenge. Unable to cope with society on the rampage, it turns its back upon society. Unable to explain itself by means of historic processes, it tries to explain history from within itself. Thus the Indian philosophers built universal systems by contemplating their own navels.

THE SCHOOL OF PURE PSYCHOLOGISM

The influence of Freud upon the new biographical school is undeniable, but superficial. In essence these parlor psychologists are inclining to a belletristic irresponsibility.

Freud, and not so much for analysis as for literary adornment.

In his recent work Emil Ludwig, the most popular representative of this genre, has taken a new step along the chosen path: he has replaced the study of the hero's life and activity with dialogue. Behind the answers of the statesman to questions put to him, behind his intonations and grimaces, the writer discovers his real motives. Conversation becomes almost a confession. In its technique Ludwig's new approach to the hero suggests Freud's approach to his patient: it is a matter of bringing the personality out into the clearing with its own cooperation. But with all this external similarity, how different it is in essence! The fruitfulness of Freud's work is attained at the price of a heroic break with all kinds of conventions. The great psychoanalyst is ruthless. At work he is like a surgeon, almost like a butcher with rolled-up sleeves. Anything you want, but there is not one hundredth of one per cent of diplomacy in his technique. Freud bothers least of all about the prestige of his patient, or about considerations of good form, or any other kind of false note or frill. And it is for this reason that he can carry on his dialogue only face-to-face, without secretary or stenographer, behind padded doors.

Not so Ludwig. He enters into a conversation with Mussolini, or with Stalin, in order to present the world with an authentic portrait of their souls. Yet the whole conversation follows a program previously agreed upon. Every word is taken down by a stenographer. The eminent patient knows quite well what can be useful to him in this process and what harmful. The writer is sufficiently experienced to distinguish rhetorical tricks, and sufficiently polite not to notice them. The dialogue developing under these circumstances, if it does indeed resemble a confession, resembles one put on for the talking pictures.

Emil Ludwig has every reason to declare: "I understand nothing of politics." This is supposed to mean: "I stand above politics." In reality it is a mere formula of personal neutrality—or to borrow from Freud, it is that inward censor which makes easier for the psychologist his political

They employ not so much the method as the terminology of function. In the same way diplomatists do not interfere with the inner life of the country to whose government they are accredited, but this does not prevent them on occasion from supporting plots and financing acts of terrorism.

One and the same person in different conditions develops different sides of his policy. How many Aristotles are herding swine, and how many swineherds wear a crown on their heads! But Ludwig can lightly resolve even the contradiction between Bolshevism and Fascism into a mere matter of individual psychology. Even the most penetrating psychologist could not with impunity adopt such a tendentious "neutrality". Casting loose from the social conditioning of human consciousness, Ludwig enters into a realm of mere subjective caprice. The "soul" has not three dimensions, and is therefore incapable of that resistance which is proper to all other materials. The writer loses his taste for the study of facts and documents. What is the use of these colorless evidences when they can be replaced with bright guesses?

In his work on Stalin, as in his book about Mussolini, Ludwig remains "outside politics". This does not in the least prevent his works from becoming a political weapon. Whose weapon? In the one case Mussolini's, in the other that of Stalin and his group. Nature abhors a vacuum. If Ludwig does not occupy himself with politics, this is not saying that politics does not occupy itself with Ludwig.

Upon the publication of my autobiography some three years ago, the official Soviet historian, Pokrovsky, now dead, wrote: "We must answer this book immediately, put our young scholars to work refuting all that can be refuted, etc." But it is a striking fact that no one, absolutely no one, responded. Nothing was analyzed, nothing was refuted. There was nothing to refute, and nobody could be found capable of writing a book which would find readers.

A frontal attack proving impossible, it became necessary to resort to a flank movement. Ludwig, of course, is not a historian of the Stalin school. He is an independent psychological portraitist. But a writer foreign to all politics may

prove the most convenient means for putting into circulation ideas which can find no other support but a popular name. Let us see how this works out in actual fact.

“Six Words”

Citing the testimony of Karl Radek, Emil Ludwig relates after him the following episode: “After the death of Lenin we sat together, nineteen members of the Central Committee, tensely waiting to learn what our lost leader would say to us from his grave. Lenin’s widow gave us his letter. Stalin read it. No one stirred during the reading. When it came to Trotsky the words occurred: ‘His non-Bolshevik past is not accidental.’ At that point Trotsky interrupted the reading and asked: ‘What does it say there?’ The sentence was repeated. Those were the only words spoken in that solemn moment.”

And then in the character of analyst, and not narrator, Ludwig makes the following remark on his own account: “A terrible moment, when Trotsky’s heart must have stopped beating; this phrase of six words essentially determined the course of his life.” How simple it seems to find a key to the riddles of history! These unctuous lines of Ludwig’s would doubtless have uncovered to me myself the very secret of my destiny if . . . if this Radek-Ludwig story did not happen to be false from beginning to end, false in small things and great, in what matters and in what matters not.

To begin with, the testament was written by Lenin not two years before his death as our author confirms, but one year. It was dated January 4, 1923; Lenin died on January 21, 1924. His political life had broken off completely in March 1923. Ludwig speaks as though the testament had never been published in full. As a matter of fact it has been press. The first official reading of the testament in the produced dozens of times in all the languages of the world Kremlin occurred, not at a session of the Central Committee, as Ludwig writes, but in the council of seniors of the thirteenth party congress on May 22, 1924. It was not Stalin who read the testament, but Kamenev in his then

permanent position as president of the central party institutions. And finally—most important—I did not interrupt the reading with an emotional exclamation, because of the absence of any motive whatever for such an act. Those words which Ludwig wrote down at the dictation of Radek are not in the text of the testament. They are an outright invention. Difficult as it may be to believe, this is the fact.

If Ludwig were not so careless about the factual basis of his psychological patterns, he might without difficulty have got possession of an exact text of the testament, established the necessary facts and dates, and thus avoided those wretched mistakes with which his work about the Kremlin and the Bolsheviks is unfortunately brimful.

The so-called testament was written at two periods, separated by an interval of ten days: December 25, 1922 and January 4, 1923. At first only two persons knew of the document: the stenographer, M. Volodicheva, who wrote it from dictation, and Lenin's wife, N. Krupskaja. As long as there remained a glimmer of hope for Lenin's recovery, Krupskaja left the document under lock and key. After Lenin's death, not long before the thirteenth congress, she handed the testament to the secretariat of the Central Committee, in order that through the party congress it should be brought to the attention of the party for whom it was destined.

At that time the party apparatus was semi-officially in the hands of the trinity (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin)—as a matter of fact, already in the hands of Stalin. The trinity decisively expressed themselves against reading the testament at the congress—the motive not at all difficult to understand. Krupskaja insisted upon her wish. At this stage the dispute was going on behind the scenes. The question was transferred to a meeting of the seniors of the congress—that is, the leaders of the provincial delegations. It was here that the oppositional members of the Central Committee first learned about the testament, I among them. After a decision had been adopted that nobody should make notes, Kamenev began to read the text aloud. The mood of the listeners was indeed tense in the highest degree. But so far

as I can restore the picture from memory, I should say that those who already knew the contents of the document were incomparably the most anxious. The trinity introduced, through one of its henchmen, a resolution previously agreed upon with the provincial leaders: the document should be read to each delegation separately in executive session; no one should dare to make notes; at the plenary session the testament must not be referred to. With the gentle insistence characteristic of her, Krupskaja argued that this was a direct violation of the will of Lenin, to whom you could not deny the right to bring his last advice to the attention of the party. But the members of the council of seniors, bound by factional discipline, remained obdurate: the resolution of the trinity was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

In order to grasp the significance of those mystical and mythical "six words", which are supposed to have decided my fate, it is necessary to recall certain preceding and accompanying circumstances. Already in the period of sharp disputes on the subject of the October revolution, certain "old Bolsheviks" from the Right wing had more than once pointed out with vexation that Trotsky after all had not formerly been a Bolshevik. Lenin always stood up against these voices. Trotsky long ago understood that a union with the Mensheviks was impossible—he said, for example, on November 14, 1917—"and since then there has been no better Bolshevik". On Lenin's lips those words meant something.

Two years later, while explaining in a letter to the foreign Communists the conditions under which Bolshevism had developed, how there had been disagreements and splits, Lenin pointed out that "at the decisive moment, at the moment of the seizure of power and the creation of the Soviet Republic, Bolshevism had proved a unit, it had drawn to itself *all that was best among the currents of socialist thought close to it*". No current closer to Bolshevism than that which I represented up to 1917 existed either in Russia or the West. My union with Lenin had been predetermined by the logic of ideas and the logic of events. At the decisive moment Bol-

shevism drew into its ranks "all that was best" in the tendencies "close to it". Such was Lenin's appraisal of the situation. I have no reason to dispute him.

At the time of our two months' argument on the trade union question (winter of 1920-21) Stalin and Zinoviev had again attempted to put into circulation references to the non-Bolshevik past of Trotsky. In answer to this, the less restrained leaders of the opposite camp had reminded Zinoviev of his conduct during the period of the October insurrection. Thinking over from all sides on his death-bed how relations would crystallize in the party without him, Lenin could not but foresee that Stalin and Zinoviev would try to use my non-Bolshevik past in order to mobilize the old Bolsheviks against me. The testament tries, incidentally, to forestall this danger, too. Here is what it says immediately after its characterization of Stalin and Trotsky: "I will not further criticize the other members of the Central Committee in their personal traits. I will merely recall the fact that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not an accident, but that it may be as little used against them personally as non-Bolshevism against Trotsky."

This remark that the October episode "was not an accident" pursues a perfectly definite goal: to warn the party that in critical circumstances Zinoviev and Kamenev may again reveal their lack of firmness. This warning stands, however, in no relation with the remark about Trotsky. In regard to him it is merely recommended not to use his non-Bolshevik past as an argument *ad hominem*. I therefore had no motive for putting the question which Radek attributes to me. Ludwig's guess that my heart "stopped beating" also falls to the ground. Least of all did the testament set out to make a guiding role in the party work difficult for me. As we shall see below, it pursued an exactly opposite aim.

"The Mutual Relations of Stalin and Trotsky"

The central position in the testament, which fills two typewritten pages, is devoted to a characterization of the

mutual relations of Stalin and Trotsky, "the two outstanding leaders of the present Central Committee". Having remarked upon the "outstanding ability" of Trotsky ("the most able man in the present Central Committee") Lenin immediately points out his adverse traits: "excessive self-confidence" and "excessive absorption in the purely administrative side of things". However serious the faults indicated may be in themselves, they do not—I remark in passing—bear any relation to "underestimating the peasants" or "lacking faith in the inner forces of the revolution", or any other of the inventions of the epigones in recent years.

On the other side Lenin writes: "Stalin, having become general secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he always knows how to use this power with sufficient prudence." It is not a question here of the political influence of Stalin, which at that period was insignificant, but of the administrative power which he had concentrated in his hands, "having become general secretary". This is a very exact and carefully weighed formula: we shall return to it later.

The testament insists upon an increase of the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty, even to one hundred, in order that with this compact pressure it may restrain the centrifugal tendencies in the Political Bureau. This organization proposal has still the appearance of a neutral guarantee against personal conflicts. But only ten days later it seemed to Lenin inadequate, and he added a supplementary proposal which also gave to the whole document its final physiognomy: "... I propose to the comrades that they devise measures for removing Stalin from his position, and appoint to this post another man who in all other respects* is distinguished from comrade Stalin only advantageously—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to the comrades, less capricious, etc."

During the days when the testament was dictated, Lenin was still trying to give to his critical appraisal of Stalin as restrained an expression as possible. In the coming weeks his tone would become sharper and sharper right up to the last hour when his voice ceased forever. But even in the

testament enough is said to motivate the demand for a change of general secretary: along with rudeness and capriciousness, Stalin is accused of *lack of loyalty*. At this point the characterization becomes a heavy indictment.

As will appear later, the testament could not have been a surprise to Stalin. But this did not soften the blow. Upon his first acquaintance with the document, in the secretariat, in the circle of his closest associates, Stalin let fly a phrase which gave quite unconcealed expression to his real feelings toward the author of the testament. The conditions under which this phrase spread to wide circles, and above all the inimitable quality of the reaction itself, is in my eyes an unqualified guarantee of the authenticity of the episode. Unfortunately this winged phrase can not be quoted in print.

The concluding sentence of the testament shows unequivocally on which side in Lenin's opinion the danger lay. To remove Stalin—just him and him only—meant to cut him off from the apparatus, to withdraw from him the possibility of pressing on the long arm of the lever, to deprive him of all that power which he had concentrated in his hands in this office. Who, then, should be named general secretary? Someone who, having the positive qualities of Stalin, should be more patient, more loyal, less capricious. This was the phrase which stuck home most sharply to Stalin. Lenin obviously did not consider him irreplaceable, since he proposed that we seek a more suitable person for his post. In tendering his resignation, as a matter of form, the general secretary capriciously kept repeating: "Well, I really am rude . . . Ilych suggested that you find another who would differ from me *only* in greater politeness. Well, try to find him." "Never mind," answered the voice of one of Stalin's then friends. "We are not afraid of rudeness. Our whole party is rude, proletarian." A drawing-room conception of politeness is here indirectly attributed to Lenin. As to the accusation of inadequate loyalty, neither Stalin nor his friends had a word to say. It is perhaps not without interest that the supporting voice came from A. P. Smirnov, then People's Commissar of Agriculture, but now under the ban

as a Right oppositionist. Politics knows no gratitude.

Radek, who was then still a member of the Central Committee, sat beside me during the reading of the testament. Yielding easily to the influence of the moment and lacking inner discipline, Radek took instant fire from the testament and leaned to me with the words, "Now they won't dare go against you." I answered him, "On the contrary, they will have to go the limit, and moreover as quickly as possible." The very next days of that thirteenth congress demonstrated that my judgment was the more sober. The trinity were compelled to forestall the possible effect of the testament by placing the party as soon as possible before a *fait accompli*. The very reading of the document to the local delegations with "outsiders" not admitted, was converted into a downright struggle against me. The leaders of the delegations in their reading would swallow some words, emphasize others, and offer commentaries to the effect that the letter had been written by a man seriously ill and under the influence of trickery and intrigue. The machine was already in complete control. The mere fact that the trinity was able to transgress the will of Lenin, refusing to read his letter at the congress, sufficiently characterizes the composition of the congress and its atmosphere. The testament did not weaken or put a stop to the inner struggle, but on the contrary lent it a disastrous tempo.

Lenin's Attitude Toward Stalin

Politics is persistent. It can press into its service even those who demonstratively turn their backs to it. Ludwig writes: "Stalin followed Lenin fervently up to his death." If this phrase expressed merely the mighty influence of Lenin upon his pupils, including Stalin, there could be no argument. But Ludwig means something more. He wants to suggest an exceptional closeness to the teacher of this particular pupil. As an especially precious testimony Ludwig cites upon this point the words of Stalin himself: "I am only a pupil of Lenin, and my aim is to be his worthy pupil." It is too bad when a professional psychologist operates uncritically with a banal phrase, the conventional modesty of which contains not one atom of intimate content.

Ludwig becomes here a mere transmitter of the official legend created during these recent years. I doubt if he has the remotest idea of the contradictions into which his indifference to facts has brought him. If Stalin actually was following Lenin up to his death, how then explain the fact that the last document dictated by Lenin, on the eve of his second stroke, was a curt letter to Stalin, a few lines in all, *breaking off all personal and comradely relations?* This single event of its kind in the life of Lenin, a sharp break with one of his close associates, must have had very serious psychological causes, and would be, to say the least, incomprehensible in relation to a pupil who "fervently" followed his teacher up to the end. Yet we hear not a word about this from Ludwig.

When Lenin's letter breaking with Stalin became widely known among the leaders of the party, the trinity having by that time, fallen to pieces, Stalin and his close friends found no other way out but to revive that same old story about the incompetent condition of Lenin. As a matter of fact the testament, as also the letter breaking off relations, was written in those months (December 1922, to the beginning of March 1923) during which Lenin in a series of programmatic articles gave the party the most mature fruits of his thinking. That break with Stalin did not drop out of a clear sky. It flowed from a long series of preceding conflicts, both matters of principle and upon practical matters, and it sets forth the whole bitterness of these conflicts in a tragic light.

Lenin undoubtedly valued highly certain of Stalin's traits. His firmness of character, tenacity, stubbornness, even ruthlessness and craftiness—qualities necessary in a war and consequently in its general staff. But Lenin was far from thinking that these gifts, even on an extraordinary scale, were sufficient for the leadership of the party and the state. Lenin saw in Stalin a revolutionist, but not a statesman in the grand style. Theory had too high an importance for Lenin in a political struggle. Nobody considered Stalin a theoretician, and he himself up to 1924 never made any pretense to this vocation. On the contrary, his weak theo-

retical grounding was too well known in a small circle. Stalin is not acquainted with the West; he does not know any foreign language. He was never brought into the discussion of problems of the international workers' movement. And finally Stalin was not—this is less important, but not without significance—either a writer or an orator in the proper sense of the word. His articles, in spite of all the author's caution, are loaded not only with theoretic blunders and naivetés, but also with crude sins against the Russian language. Stalin's value in the eyes of Lenin was all comprised in the sphere of party administration and machine maneuvering. But even here Lenin made substantial exceptions, and these increased during the last period.

Lenin despised idealistic moralizings. But this did not prevent him from being a rigorist of revolutionary morals—of those rules of conduct, that is, which he considered necessary for the success of the revolution and the creation of the new society. In Lenin's rigorism, which flowed freely and naturally from his character, there was not a drop of pedantry or bigotry or stiffness. He knew people too well and took them as they were. He would combine the faults of some with the virtues of others, and sometimes also with their faults, and never cease to watch keenly what came of it. He knew also that times change, and we with them. The party had risen with one jump from the underground to the height of power. This created for each of the old revolutionists a startlingly sharp change in personal situation and in relations with others. What Lenin discovered in Stalin under these new conditions he cautiously but clearly remarked in his testament: a lack of loyalty and an inclination to the abuse of power. Ludwig missed these hints. It is in them, however, that one can find the key to the relations between Lenin and Stalin in the last period.

Lenin was not only a theoretician and technician of the revolutionary dictatorship, but also a vigilant guardian of its moral foundations. Every hint at the use of power for personal interests kindled threatening fires in his eyes. "How is that any better than bourgeois parliamentarism?" he would ask, to express more effectively his choking indigna-

tion. And he would not infrequently add on the subject of parliamentarism one of his rich definitions. Stalin meanwhile was more and more broadly and indiscriminately using the possibilities of the revolutionary dictatorship for the recruiting of people personally obligated and devoted to him. In his position as general secretary he became the dispenser of favor and fortune. Here the foundation was laid for an inevitable conflict. *Lenin gradually lost his moral trust in Stalin.* If you understand that basic fact, then all the particular episodes of the last period take their places accordingly, and give a real and not a false picture of the attitude of Lenin to Stalin.

Sverdlov and Stalin As Types of Organizers

In order to accord the testament its proper place in the development of the party, it is here necessary to make a digression. Up to the spring of 1919 the chief organizer of the party had been Sverdlov. He did not have the name of general secretary, a name which was then not yet invented, but he was that in reality. Sverdlov died at the age of 34 in March 1919, from the so-called Spanish fever. In the spread of the civil war and the epidemic, mowing people down right and left, the party hardly realized the weight of this loss. In two funeral speeches Lenin gave an appraisal of Sverdlov which throws a reflected but very clear light also upon his later relations with Stalin. "In the course of our revolution, in its victories," Lenin said, "it fell to Sverdlov to express more fully and more wholly than anybody else the very essence of the proletarian revolution." Sverdlov was "before all and above all an organizer". From a modest underground worker, neither theoretician nor writer, there grew up in a short time "an organizer who acquired unimpeachable authority, an organizer of the whole Soviet power in Russia, and an organizer of the work of the party unique in his understanding". Lenin had no taste for the exaggerations of jubilee or funeral panegyrics. His appraisal of Sverdlov was at the same time a characterization of the task of the organizer: "Only thanks to the

fact that we had such an organizer as Sverdlov were we able in war times to work as though we had *not one single conflict worth speaking of.*"

So it was in fact. In conversations with Lenin in those days we remarked more than once, and with ever renewed satisfaction, one of the chief conditions of our success: the unity and solidarity of the governing group. In spite of the dreadful pressure of events and difficulties, the novelty of the problems, and sharp practical disagreements occasionally bursting out, the work proceeded with extraordinary smoothness and friendliness, and without interruptions. With a brief word we would recall episodes of the old revolutions: "No, it is better with us." "This alone guarantees our victory." The solidarity of the center had been prepared by the whole history of Bolshevism, and was kept up by the unquestioned authority of the leaders, and above all of Lenin. But in the inner mechanics of this unexampled unanimity the chief technician had been Sverdlov. The secret of his art was simple: to be guided by the interests of the cause and that only. No one of the party workers had any fear of intrigues creeping down from the party staff. The basis of this authority of Sverdlov's was *loyalty*.

Having tested out mentally all the party leaders, Lenin in his funeral speech drew the practical conclusion: "Such a man we can never replace, if by replacement we mean the possibility of finding one comrade combining such qualities. . . . The work which he did alone can now be accomplished only by a whole group of men who, following in his footsteps, will carry on his service." These words were not rhetorical, but a strictly practical proposal. And the proposal was carried out. Instead of a single secretary, there was appointed a collegium of three persons.

From these words of Lenin it is evident, even to those unacquainted with the history of the party, that during the life of Sverdlov Stalin played no leading role in the party machinery—either at the time of the October revolution or in the period of laying the foundations and walls of the Soviet state. Stalin was also not included in the first secretariat which replaced Sverdlov.

When at the tenth congress, two years after the death of Sverdlov, Zinoviev and others, not without a hidden thought of the struggle against me, supported the candidacy of Stalin for general secretary—that is, placed him *de jure* in the position which Sverdlov had occupied *de facto*—Lenin spoke in a small circle against this plan, expressing his fear that “this cook will prepare only bitter dishes”. That phrase alone, taken in connection with the character of Sverdlov, shows us the differences between the two types of organizers: the one tireless in smoothing over conflicts, easing the work of the collegium, and the other a specialist in bitter dishes—not even afraid to spice them with actual poison. If Lenin did not in March 1921 carry his opposition to the limit—that is, did not appeal openly to the congress against the candidacy of Stalin—it was because the post of secretary, even though “general”, had in the conditions then prevailing, with the power and influence concentrated in the Political Bureau, a strictly subordinate significance. Perhaps also Lenin, like many others, did not adequately realize the danger in time.

Towards the end of 1921 Lenin's health broke sharply. On December 7, in taking his departure upon the insistence of his physician, Lenin, little given to complaining, wrote to the members of the Political Bureau: “I am leaving today. In spite of my reduced quota of work and increased quota of rest, these last days the insomnia has increased devilishly. I am afraid I cannot speak either at the party congress or the Soviet congress.” For five months he languishes, half removed by doctors and friends from his work, in continual alarm over the course of governmental and party affairs, in continual struggle with his lingering disease. In May he has the first stroke. For two months Lenin is unable to speak or write or move. In July he begins slowly to recover. Remaining in the country, he enters by degrees into active correspondence. In October he returns to the Kremlin and officially takes up his work.

“There is no evil without good,” he writes privately in the draft of a future speech. “I have been sitting quiet for a half year and looking on ‘from the sidelines’.” Lenin

means to say: I formerly sat too steadily at my post and failed to observe many things; the long interruption has now permitted me to see much with fresh eyes. What disturbed him most, indubitably, was the monstrous growth of bureaucratic power, the focal point of which had become the Organization Bureau of the Central Committee.

The necessity of removing the boss who was specializing in bitter dishes became clear to Lenin immediately after his return to work. But this personal question had become notably complicated. Lenin could not fail to see how extensively his absence had been made use of by Stalin for a one-sided selection of men—often in direct conflict with the interests of the cause. The general secretary was now relying upon a numerous faction, bound together, if not always by intellectual, at least by firm ties. A change of the heads of the party machine had already become impossible without the preparation of a serious political attack. At this time occurred the “conspiratorial” conversation between Lenin and me in regard to a combined struggle against Soviet and party bureaucratism, and his proposal of a “bloc” against the Organization Bureau—the fundamental stronghold of Stalin at that time. The fact of this conversation as well as its content soon found their reflection in documents, and they constitute an episode of the party history undeniable and not denied by anyone.

However, in only a few weeks there came a new decline in Lenin's health. Not only continual work, but also executive conversations with the comrades, were again forbidden by his physicians. He had to think out further measures of struggle alone within four walls. To control the back-stage activities of the Secretariat, Lenin worked out some general measures of an organizational character. Thus arose the plan of creating a highly authoritative party center in the form of a Control Commission composed of reliable and experienced members of the party, completely independent from the hierarchical viewpoint—that is, neither officials nor administrators—and at the same time endowed with the right to call to account for violations of legality, of party

and Soviet democratism, and for lack of revolutionary morality, all officials without exception, not only of the party, including members of the Central Committee, but also, through mediation of the Workers and Peasants Inspection, the high officials of the state.

On January 23, through Krupskaja, Lenin sent for publication in *Pravda* an article on the subject of his proposed reorganization of the central institutions. Fearing at once a traitorous blow from his disease and a no less traitorous response from the Secretariat, Lenin demanded that his article be printed in *Pravda* immediately: this implied a direct appeal to the party. Stalin refused Krupskaja this request on the ground of the necessity of discussing the question in the Political Bureau. Formally this meant merely a day's postponement. But the very procedure of referring it to the Political Bureau boded no good. At Lenin's direction Krupskaja turned to me for cooperation. I demanded an immediate meeting of the Political Bureau. Lenin's fears were completely confirmed: all the members and alternates present at the meeting, Stalin, Molotov, Kuibyshev, Rykov, Kalinin and Bukharin, were not only against the reform proposed by Lenin, but also against printing his article. To console the sick man, whom any sharp emotional excitement threatened with disaster, Kuibyshev, the future head of the Central Control Commission, proposed that they print a special issue of *Pravda* containing Lenin's article, but consisting of only one copy. It was thus "fervently" that these people followed their teacher. I rejected with indignation the proposal to hoodwink Lenin, spoke essentially in favor of the reform proposed by him, and demanded the immediate publication of his article. I was supported by Kamenev who had come in an hour late. The attitude of the majority was at last broken down by the argument that Lenin in any case would put his article in circulation; it would be copied on typewriters, and read with redoubled attention, and it would be thus all the more pointedly directed against the Political Bureau. The article appeared in *Pravda* the next morning, January 25. This episode also found its reflection in due season in official

documents, upon the basis of which it is here described.

I consider it necessary in general to emphasize the fact that since I do not belong to the school of pure psychologism, and since I am accustomed to trust firmly established facts rather than their emotional reflection in memory, the whole present exposition, with the exception of specially indicated episodes, is conducted by me on the basis of documents in my archives and with a careful verification of dates, testimony and factual circumstances in general.

The Disagreements Between Lenin and Stalin

Organizational policy was not the only arena of Lenin's struggle against Stalin. The November plenum of the Central Committee (1922), sitting without Lenin and without me, introduced unexpectedly a radical change in the system of foreign trade, undermining the very foundation of the state monopoly. In a conversation with Krassin, then People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, I spoke of this resolution of the Central Committee approximately as follows: "They have not yet taken the bottom out of the barrel, but they have bored several holes in it." Lenin heard of this. On the 13th of December he wrote me: "I earnestly urge you to take upon yourself at the coming plenum the defense of our common view as to the unconditional necessity of preserving and enforcing the monopoly. . . . The previous plenum took a decision in this matter wholly in conflict with the monopoly of foreign trade." Refusing any concessions upon this question, Lenin insisted that I appeal to the Central Committee and the congress. The blow was directed primarily against Stalin, responsible as general secretary for the presentation of questions at the plenums of the Central Committee. That time, however, the thing did not go to the point of open struggle. Sensing the danger, Stalin yielded without a struggle, and his friends with him. At the December plenum the November decision was revoked. "It seems we captured the position without firing a shot, by mere maneuvers," Lenin wrote me jokingly on December 21.

The disagreement in the sphere of national policy was

still sharper. In the autumn of 1922 we were preparing the transformation of the Soviet state into a federated union of national republics. Lenin considered it necessary to go as far as possible to meet the demands and claims of those nationalists who had long lived under oppression, and were still far from recovering from its consequences. Stalin, on the other hand, who in his position as People's Commissar for Nationalities directed the preparatory work, was conducting in this sphere a policy of bureaucratic centralism. Lenin, convalescing in a village near Moscow, carried on a polemic with Stalin in letters addressed to the Political Bureau. In his first remarks on Stalin's project for the federated union, Lenin was extremely gentle and restrained. He was still hoping in those days—towards the end of September 1922—to adjust the question through the Political Bureau and without open conflict. Stalin's answers, on the other hand, contained a noticeable irritation. He thrust back at Lenin the reproach of "hastiness", and with it an accusation of national "liberalism"—that is, indulgence to the nationalism of the outlanders. This correspondence, although extremely interesting politically, is still concealed from the party.

The bureaucratic national policy had already at that time provoked a keen opposition in Georgia, uniting against Stalin and his right hand man, Ordjonikidze, the flower of Georgian Bolshevism. Through Krupskaja, Lenin got into private connection with the leaders of the Georgian opposition (Mdivani, Makharadze, etc.) against the faction of Stalin, Ordjonikidze and Dzherzhinsky. The struggle in the borderlands was too keen, and Stalin had bound himself too closely with definite groupings, to yield in silence as he had on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade. In the next few weeks Lenin became convinced that it would be necessary to appeal to the party. At the end of December he dictated a voluminous letter on the national question which was to take the place of his speech at the party congress if illness prevented him from appearing.

Lenin employed against Stalin an accusation of administrative impulsiveness and spite against a pretended nation-

alism. "Spite in general," he wrote weightily, "usually plays the worst possible role in politics." The struggle against the just, even though at first exaggerated, demands of the nations formerly oppressed, Lenin qualified as a manifestation of Great Russian bureaucratism. He for the first time named his opponents by name. "It is necessary, of course, to hold Stalin and Dzherzhinsky politically responsible for this whole downright Great Russian nationalistic campaign." That the Great Russian, Lenin, accuses the Georgian, Dzhugashvili, and the Pole, Dzherzhinsky, of Great Russian nationalism, may seem paradoxical: but the question here is not one of national feelings and partialities, but of two systems of politics whose differences reveal themselves in all spheres, the national question among them. In mercilessly condemning the methods of the Stalin faction, Rakovsky wrote some years later: "To the national question, as to all other questions, the bureaucracy makes its approach from the point of view of convenience of administration and regulation." Nothing better could be said.

Stalin's verbal concessions did not quiet Lenin in the least, but on the contrary sharpened his suspicions. "Stalin will enter a rotten compromise," Lenin warned me through his secretary, "and afterward he will deceive us." And that was just Stalin's course. He was ready to accept at the coming congress any theoretical formulation of the national policy on condition that it should not weaken his factional support in the center and in the borderlands. To be sure, Stalin had plenty of grounds for fearing that Lenin saw through his plans completely. But on the other hand, the condition of the sick man was continually growing worse. Stalin coolly included this not unimportant factor in his calculations. The practical policy of the general secretariat became the more decisive, the worse became Lenin's health. Stalin tried to isolate the dangerous supervisor from all information which might give him a weapon against the secretariat and its allies. This policy of blockade naturally was directed against the people closest to Lenin. Krupskaja did what she could to protect the sick man from contact with the hostile machinations of the secretariat. But Lenin knew

how to guess a whole situation from accidental symptoms. He was clearly aware of the activities of Stalin, his motives and calculations. It is not difficult to imagine what reactions they provoked in his mind. We should remember that at that moment there already lay on Lenin's writing table, besides the testament insisting upon the removal of Stalin, also the documents on the national question which Lenin's secretaries Fotieva and Gliasser, sensitively reflecting the mood of their chief, were describing as "a bomb against Stalin".

A Half Year of Sharpening Struggle

Lenin developed his idea of the role of the Central Control Commission as a protector of party law and unity in connection with the question of reorganizing the Workers and Peasants Inspection (*Rabkrin*), whose head for several preceding years had been Stalin. On the 4th of March, *Pravda* published an article famous in the history of the party, "Better Less and Better." This work was written at several different times. Lenin did not like to, and could not dictate. He had a hard time writing the article. On March 2 he finally listened to it with satisfaction: "At last it seems all right." This article included the reform of the guiding party institutions on a broad political perspective both national and international. Upon this side of the question, however, we cannot pause here. Highly important for our theme, however, is the verbal estimate which Lenin gave of the Workers and Peasants Inspection: "Let us speak frankly. The People's Commissariat of Workers and Peasants Inspection does not enjoy at the present moment a shadow of authority. Everybody knows that a worse organized institution than the institution of our Workers and Peasants Inspection does not exist, and that under present conditions you can ask nothing of this People's Commissariat." This extraordinarily biting allusion in print by the head of the government to one of the most important state institutions, was a direct and unmitigated blow against Stalin as the organizer and head of this Inspection. The reason for this should now be clear. The Inspection was to serve chiefly as

an antidote to bureaucratic distortions of the revolutionary dictatorship. This responsible function could be fulfilled successfully upon condition of complete loyalty in its leadership, but it was just this loyalty which Stalin lacked. He had converted the Inspection like the party Secretariat into an implement of machine intrigues, of protection for "his men" and persecution of his opponents. In the article "Better Less and Better" Lenin openly pointed out that his proposed reform of the Inspection, at whose head Tziurupa had not long ago been placed, must inevitably meet the resistance of "all our bureaucracy, both the Soviet and the party bureaucracy". "In parenthesis, be it remarked," he adds significantly, "we have a bureaucracy not only in the Soviet institutions, but in the institutions of the party." This was a perfectly deliberate blow at Stalin as general secretary.

Thus it would be no exaggeration to say that the last half year of Lenin's political life, between his convalescence and his second illness, was filled with a sharpening struggle against Stalin. Let us recall once more the principal dates. In September Lenin opened fire against the national policy of Stalin. In the first half of December he attacked Stalin on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade. On December 25 he wrote the first part of his testament. On December 30, 1922, he wrote his letter on the national question (the "bomb"). On January 4 he added a postscript to his testament on the necessity of removing Stalin from his position as general secretary. On January 23 he drew up against Stalin a heavy battery: the project of a Control Commission. In an article on the 2nd of March he dealt Stalin a double blow, both as organizer of the Inspection and as general secretary. On March 5 he wrote me on the subject of his memorandum on the national question: "If you would agree to take upon yourself its defense then I could be at rest." On that same day he for the first time openly joined forces with the irreconcilable Georgian enemies of Stalin, informing them in a special note that he was following their cause "with all my heart" and was preparing

for them documents against Stalin, Ordjonikidze and Dzherzhinsky, "With all my heart"—this expression was not a frequent one with Lenin.

"This question [the national question] disturbed him to an extraordinary degree," testifies his secretary, Fotieva, "and he was getting ready to speak on this at the party congress." But a month before the congress Lenin finally broke down, and without even having given directions in regard to the article. A weight rolled from Stalin's shoulders. At the seniority caucus of the twelfth congress he already made bold to speak in the style characteristic of him of Lenin's letter as the document of a sick man under the influence of "womenfolk". (That is, Krupskaja and the two secretaries). Under pretext of the necessity of finding out the actual will of Lenin, it was decided to put the letter under lock and key. There it remains to this day.

The dramatic episodes enumerated above, vivid enough in themselves, do not in the remotest degree convey the fervor with which Lenin was living through the party events of the last months of his active life. In letters and articles he laid upon himself the usual very severe censorship. Lenin understood well enough from his first stroke the nature of his illness. After he returned to work in October 1922 the capillary vessels of his brain did not cease to remind him of themselves by a hardly noticeable, but ominous and more and more frequent nudge, obviously threatening a relapse. Lenin soberly estimated his own situation in spite of the quieting assurances of his physicians. At the beginning of March, when he was compelled again to withdraw from work, at least from meetings, interviews and telephone conversations, he carried away into his sick room a number of troubling observations and dreads. The bureaucratic apparatus had become an independent factor in big politics with Stalin's secret factional staff in the Secretariat of the Central Committee. In the national sphere, where Lenin demanded special sensitiveness, the tusks of imperial centralism were revealing themselves more and more openly. The ideas and principles of the revolution were bending to the

interests of combinations behind the scenes. The authority of the dictatorship was more and more often serving as a cover for the dictations of functionaries.

Lenin keenly sensed the approach of a political crisis, and feared that the apparatus would strangle the party. The policies of Stalin became for Lenin in the last period of his life the incarnation of a rising monster of bureaucratism. The sick man must more than once have shuddered at the thought that he had not succeeded in carrying out that reform of the apparatus about which he had talked with me before his second illness. A terrible danger, it seemed to him, threatened the work of his whole life.

And Stalin? Having gone too far to retreat, spurred on by his own faction, fearing that concentrated attack whose threads all issued from the sickbed of his dread enemy, Stalin was already going headlong, was openly recruiting partisans by the distribution of party and Soviet positions, was terrorizing those who appealed to Lenin through Krupskaya, and was more and more persistently issuing rumors that Lenin was already not responsible for his actions. Such was the atmosphere from which rose Lenin's letter breaking with Stalin absolutely. No, it did not drop from a clear sky. It meant merely that the cup of endurance had run over. Not only chronologically, but politically and morally, it drew a last line under the attitude of Lenin to Stalin.

Is it not surprising that Ludwig, gratefully repeating the official story about the pupil faithful to his teacher "up to his very death", says not a word of this final letter, or indeed of all the other circumstances which do not accord with the present Kremlin legends? Ludwig ought at least to know the fact of the letter, if only from my autobiography, with which he was once acquainted, for he gave it a favorable review. Maybe Ludwig had doubts of the authenticity of my testimony. But neither the existence of the letter nor its contents was ever disputed by anybody. Moreover, they are confirmed in stenographic reports of the Central Committee. At the July plenum in 1926, Zinoviev said: "At the beginning of 1923 Vladimir Ilych in a personal letter to Stalin broke off comradely relations with him."

(Stenographic report of the plenum, No. 4, page 32). And other speakers, among them M. I. Ulianova, Lenin's sister, spoke of the letter as of a fact generally known in the circles of the Central Committee. In those days it could not even enter Stalin's head to oppose this testimony. Indeed, he has not ventured to do that so far as I know, in a direct form, even subsequently.

It is true that the official historians have in recent years made literally gigantic efforts to wipe out of the memory of man this whole chapter of history. And so far as the Communist youth are concerned, these efforts have achieved certain results. But investigators exist, it would seem, exactly for the purpose of destroying legends and confirming the real facts in their rights. Or is this not true of psychologists?

The Hypothesis of the "Duumvirate"

We have indicated above the sign-posts of the final struggle between Lenin and Stalin. At all these stages Lenin sought my support and found it. From the speeches, articles and letters of Lenin you could without difficulty adduce dozens of testimonies to the fact that after our temporary disagreement on the questions of the trade unions, throughout 1921 and 1922 and the beginning of 1923, Lenin did not lose one chance to emphasize in open forum his solidarity with me, to quote this or that statement from me, to support this or that step which I had taken. We must understand that his motives were not personal, but political. What may have alarmed him and grieved him in the last months, indeed, was my not active enough support of his fighting measures against Stalin. Yes, such is the paradox of the situation! Lenin, fearing in the future a split on the line of Stalin and Trotsky, demanded of me a more energetic struggle against Stalin. The contradictions here, however, is only superficial. It was in the interests of the stability of the party leadership in the future, that Lenin now wished to condemn Stalin sharply and disarm him. What restrained me was the fear that any sharp conflict in

the ruling group at that time when Lenin was struggling with death, might be understood by the party as a casting of lots for Lenin's mantle. I will not raise the question here as to whether my restraint in that case was right or not, nor the broader question as to whether it would have been possible at that time to ward off the advancing danger with organizational reforms and personal shiftings. But how far were all the actual positions of the actors from the picture which is given us by this popular German writer who so lightly picks the keys to all enigmas!

We heard from him that the testament "decided the fate of Trotsky"—that is, evidently served as a cause of Trotsky's losing power. According to another version of Ludwig's expounded alongside of this with not even an attempt to reconcile them, Lenin desired "a duumvirate of Trotsky and Stalin". This latter thought, also doubtless suggested by Radek, gives excellent proof that even now, even in the close circle around Stalin, even in the tendentious manipulation of a foreign writer invited in for a conversation, nobody dared assert that Lenin saw his successor in Stalin. In order not to come into too crude conflict with the text of the testament, and a whole series of other documents, it is necessary to put forward *ex post facto* this idea of a duumvirate.

But how reconcile this story with Lenin's advice: remove the general secretary? That would have meant to deprive Stalin of all the weapons of his influence. You do not treat in this way the candidate for duumvir. No, and moreover this second hypothesis of Radek-Ludwig, although more cautious, finds no support in the text of the testament. The aim of the document was defined by its author—to guarantee the stability of the Central Committee. Lenin sought the road to this goal, not in the artificial combination of a duumvirate, but in strengthening the collective control over the activity of the leaders. How in doing this he conceived the relative influence of individual members of the collective leadership—as to this the reader is free to draw his own conclusions on the basis of the above quotations from the testament. Only he should not lose sight of the fact that the testament was not the last word of Lenin, and that his

attitude to Stalin became more severe the more closely he felt the dénouement approaching.

Ludwig would not have made so capital a mistake in his appraisal of the meaning and spirit of the testament, if he had interested himself a little bit in its further fate. Concealed by Stalin and his group from the party, the testament was reprinted and republished only by Oppositionists—of course, secretly. Hundreds of my friends and partisans were arrested and exiled for copying and distributing those two little pages. On November 7, 1927—the tenth anniversary of the October revolution—the Moscow Oppositionists took part in the anniversary demonstration with a placard: "Fulfill the Testament of Lenin." Specially chosen troops of Stalinists broke into the line of march and snatched away the criminal placard. Two years later, at the moment of my banishment abroad, a story was even created of an insurrection in preparation by the "Trotskyists" on November 7, 1927. The summons to "fulfill the testament of Lenin" was interpreted by the Stalinist faction as a summons to insurrection! And even now the testament is forbidden publication by any section of the Communist International. The Left Opposition, on the contrary, is republishing the testament upon every appropriate occasion in all countries. Politically these facts exhaust the question.

R A D E K A S A S O U R C E O F I N F O R M A T I O N

Still, where did that fantastic tale come from about how I leapt from my seat during the reading of the testament, or rather of the "six words" which are not in the testament, with the question: "What does it say there?" Of this I can only offer a hypothetical explanation. How correct it may be, let the reader judge.

Radek belongs to the tribe of professional wits and storytellers. By this I do not mean that he does not possess other qualities. Suffice it to say that at the seventh congress of the party on March 8, 1918, Lenin, who was in general very restrained in personal comments, considered it possible to

say: "I return to comrade Radek, and here I want to remark that he has accidentally succeeded in uttering a serious remark. . . ." And once again later on: "This time it did happen that we got a perfectly serious remark from Radek. . . ." People who speak seriously only by way of exception have an organic tendency to improve reality, for in its raw form reality is not always appropriate to their stories. My personal experience has taught me to adopt a very cautious attitude to Radek's testimonies. His custom is, not to recount events, but to take them as the occasion for a witty discourse. Since every art, including the anecdotal, aspires towards a synthesis, Radek is inclined to unite together various facts, or the brighter features of various episodes, even though they took place at different times and places. There is no malice in this. It is the manner of his calling.

And so it happened, apparently, this time. Radek, according to all the evidence, has combined a session of the council of seniors of the thirteenth congress with a session of the plenum of the Central Committee of 1926, in spite of the fact that an interval of more than two years lay between the two. At that plenum also secret manuscripts were read, among them the testament. This time Stalin did actually read them, and not Kamenev who was then already sitting beside me in the opposition benches. The reading was provoked by the fact that during those days copies of the testament, the national letter of Lenin, and other documents kept under lock and key, were already circulating rather broadly in the party. The party apparatus was getting nervous, and wanted to find out what it was that Lenin actually said. "The Opposition knows and we don't know," they were saying. After prolonged resistance Stalin found himself compelled to read the forbidden documents at a session of the Central Committee—thus automatically bringing them into the stenographic record, printed in secret notebooks for the heads of the party apparatus.

This time also there were no exclamations during the reading of the testament, for the document was long ago too

well known to the members of the Central Committee. But I actually interrupted Stalin during the reading of the correspondence on the national question. The episode in itself is not so important, but maybe it will be of use to the psychologists for certain inferences.

Lenin was extremely economical in his literary means and methods. He carried on his business correspondence with close colleagues in telegraphic language. The form of address was always the last name of the addressee with the letter "T" (*Tovarishch*: comrade) and the signature was "Lenin". Complicated explanations were replaced by a double or triple underlining of separate words, extra exclamation points, etc. We all well knew the peculiarities of Lenin's manner, and therefore even a slight departure from his laconic custom attracted attention.

In sending his letter on the national question Lenin wrote me on March 5: "Esteemed Comrade Trotsky: I urgently request you to take upon yourself the defense of the Georgian affair at the Central Committee of the party. The thing is at present under 'prosecution' at the hands of Stalin and Dzherzhinsky, and I cannot rely upon their impartiality. Indeed, quite the opposite. If you would agree to take upon yourself its defense, then I could be at rest. If you for some reason do not agree, then return the whole thing to me. I will consider this a sign of your disagreement. With the best comradely greetings, Lenin. March 5, 1923."

Both the content and the tone of this slight note, dictated by Lenin during the last day of his political life, were no less painful to Stalin than the testament. A lack of "impartiality"—does not this imply, indeed, that same lack of loyalty? The last thing to be felt in this note is any confidence in Stalin—"indeed quite the opposite"—the thing emphasized is confidence in me. A confirmation of the tacit union between Lenin and me against Stalin and his faction was at hand. Stalin controlled himself badly during the reading. When he arrived at the signature he hesitated: "With the best comradely greetings"—that was too demonstrative from Lenin's pen. Stalin read: "With Communist greetings." That sounded more dry and official. At that

moment I did rise in my seat and ask: "What is written there?" Stalin was obliged, not without embarrassment, to read the authentic text of Lenin. Someone of his close friends shouted at me that I was quibbling over details, although I had only sought to verify a text. That slight incident made an impression. There was talk about it among the heads of the party. Radek, who at that time was no longer a member of the Central Committee, learned of it at the plenum from others, and perhaps from me. Five years later when he was already with Stalin and no longer with me, his flexible memory evidently helped him to compose this synthetic episode which stimulated Ludwig to so effective and so mistaken an inference.

Although Lenin, as we have seen, found no reason to declare in his testament that my non-Bolshevik past was "not accidental", still I am ready to adopt that formula on my own authority. In the spiritual world the law of causation is as inflexible as in the physical world. In that general sense my political orbit was, of course, "not accidental", but the fact that I became a Bolshevik was also not accidental. The question how seriously and permanently I came over to Bolshevism, is not to be decided either by a bare chronological record or by the guesses of literary psychology. A theoretical and political analysis is necessary. This, of course, is too big a theme, and lies wholly outside the frame of the present essay. For our purpose it suffices that Lenin, in describing the conduct of Zinoviev and Kamenev in 1917 as "not accidental" was not making a philosophical reference to the laws of determinism, but a political warning for the future. It is exactly for this reason that Radek found it necessary, through Ludwig, to transfer this warning from Zinoviev and Kamenev to me.

The Legend of "Trotskyism"

Let us recall the chief sign-posts of this question. From 1917 to 1924 not a word was spoken of the contrast between Trotskyism and Leninism. In this period occurred the October revolution, the civil war, the construction of the

Soviet state, the creation of the Red army, the working out of the party program, the establishment of the Communist International, the formation of its cadres, and the drawing up of its fundamental documents. After the withdrawal of Lenin from his work in the nucleus of the Central Committee, serious disagreements developed. In 1924 the spectre of "Trotskyism"—after careful preparation behind the scenes—was brought forth on the stage. The entire inner struggle of the party was henceforth carried on within the frame of a contrast between Trotskyism and Leninism. In other words, the disagreements created by new circumstances and new tasks between me and the epigones, were presented as a continuation of my old disagreements with Lenin. A vast literature was created upon this theme. Its sharpshooters were always Zinoviev and Kamenev. In their character of old and very close colleagues of Lenin they stood at the head of "the old Bolshevik guard" against Trotskyism. But under the pressure of deep social processes this group itself fell apart. Zinoviev and Kamenev found themselves obliged to acknowledge that the so-called "Trotskyists" had been right upon fundamental questions. New thousands of old Bolsheviks adhered to "Trotskyism".

At the July plenum of 1926 Zinoviev announced that his struggle against me had been the greatest mistake of his life—"more dangerous than the mistake of 1917". Ordjonikidze was not entirely wrong in calling to him from his seat: "Why did you befool the whole party?" (See the already quoted stenographic report). To this weighty rejoinder Zinoviev officially found no answer. But he gave an unofficial explanation at a conference of the Opposition in October 1926. "You must understand," he said in my presence to his closest friends, some Leningrad workers who honestly believed in the legend of Trotskyism, "you must understand that it was a struggle for power. The whole art of the thing was to combine the old disagreements with the new questions. For this purpose *Trotskyism* was invented. . . ."

During their two year stay in the Opposition, Zinoviev and Kamenev managed to expose completely the back-stage

mechanics of the preceding period when they with Stalin had created the legend of "Trotskyism" by conspiratorial methods. A year later, when it became finally clear that the Opposition would be compelled to swim long and stubbornly against the current, Zinoviev and Kamenev threw themselves on the mercy of the victor. As a first condition of their party rehabilitation it was demanded that they rehabilitate the legend of Trotskyism. They agreed. At that time I decided to reinforce their own previous declarations on this matter through a series of authoritative testimonials. It was Radek, no other than Karl Radek, who gave the following written testimony: "I was present at a conversation with Kamenev to the effect that Kamenev was going to tell at a plenum of the Central Committee how they [that is, Kamenev and Zinoviev] together with Stalin, decided to use the old disagreements between Trotsky and Lenin in order after the death of Lenin to keep Trotsky out of the party leadership. Moreover, I have often heard from the lips of Zinoviev and Kamenev how they 'invented' Trotskyism as an actual slogan. K. Radek, December 25, 1927."

Similar written testimonies were given by Preobrazhensky, Piatakov, Rakovsky and Eltzin. Piatakov, the present director of the State Bank, summed up Zinoviev's testimony in the following words: "*Trotskyism* was thought up in order to replace the actual disagreements with pretended ones, that is, with disagreements taken from the past having no significance now, but artificially galvanized for the aforesaid purposes." This is clear enough, is it not? "No one—" wrote V. Eltzin, a representative of the younger generation, "no one of the Zinovievists present at the time objected. They all accepted this communication from Zinoviev as a generally known fact."

The above-cited testimony of Radek was submitted by him on December 25, 1927. A few weeks later he was already in exile, and a few months later on the meridian of Tomsk he became convinced of the correctness of Stalin's position, a thing which had not been revealed to him earlier in Moscow. But from Radek also the powers demanded as a condition *sine qua non* an acknowledgment of the reality of this

same legend of *Trotskyism*. After Radek agreed to this, he had nothing left to do but repeat the old formula of Zinoviev which the latter had himself exposed in 1926 only to return to them again in 1928. Radek has gone farther. In a conversation with a credulous foreigner he has amended the testament of Lenin in order to find in it support for this epigonal legend of "Trotskyism".

From this short historic record, resting exclusively upon documentary data, many conclusions may be drawn. One is that a revolution is an austere process and does not spare its human vertebræ.

The course of subsequent events in the Kremlin and in the Soviet Union was determined not by a single document, even though it were the testament of Lenin, but by historical causes of a far deeper order. A political reaction after the enormous effort of the years of the insurrection and the civil war was inevitable. The concept of reaction must here be strictly distinguished from the concept of counter-revolution. Reaction does not necessarily imply a social overturn—that is, a transfer of power from one class to another. Even Czarism had its periods of progressive reform and its periods of reaction. The mood and orientation of the ruling class changes according to circumstances. This is true also of the working class. The pressure of the petty bourgeoisie upon the proletariat, tired from the tumult, entailed a revival of petty bourgeois tendencies in the proletariat itself and a first deep reaction on the crest of which the present bureaucratic apparatus headed by Stalin rose to power.

Those qualities which Lenin valued in Stalin—stubbornness of character and craftiness—remained of course, even then. But they found a new field of action, and a new point of application. Those features which in the past had represented a minus in Stalin's personality—narrowness of outlook, lack of creative imagination, empiricism—now gained an effective significance important in the highest degree. They permitted Stalin to become the semi-conscious instrument of the Soviet bureaucracy, and they impelled the bureaucracy to see in Stalin its inspired leader. This ten year struggle among the heads of the Bolshevik party has indu-

bitably proved that under the conditions of this new stage of the revolution Stalin has been developing to the limit those very traits of his political character against which Lenin in the last period of his life waged irreconcilable war. But this question, standing even now at the focus of Soviet politics, would carry us far beyond the limits of our historic theme.

Many years have passed since the events we have related. If even ten years ago there were factors in action far more powerful than the counsel of Lenin, it would now be utterly naive to appeal to the testament as to an effective political document. The international struggle between the two groups which have grown out of Bolshevism long ago outgrew the question of the fate of individuals. Lenin's letter, known under the name of his testament, has henceforward chiefly a historic interest. But history, we may venture to think, has also its rights, which moreover do not always conflict with the interests of politics. The most elementary of scientific demands—correctly to establish facts and verify rumors by document—may at least be recommended alike to politician and historian. And this demand might well be extended even to the psychologist.

LEON TROTSKY

PRINKIPO, *December 31, 1932*

On The Legend of "Trotskyism"

Dear Comrades:

After a long pause, comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev and their closest friends are again putting forward the legend of "Trotskyism". For the last two years they went along with us, together with us they worked out the most important documents of the Opposition, including the Platform. But when difficulties arose in the struggle to carry out the line of the Opposition under the assault of world reaction and attacks at home, comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev turned back to the bugbear of "Trotskyism". For this reason I would like to establish a few facts.

1. When the so-called "literary discussion" (in 1924) was kindled, a number of comrades close to our group declared that the publication of *The Lessons of October* was a tactical error because it gave the then majority of the Political Bureau the possibility to open up the "literary discussion". On my part, I maintained that the "literary discussion" would have come in any case, on one ground or another. The essence of the "literary discussion" consisted in hunting up as many facts and quotations as possible against me and—by doing violence to all perspective and historical truth—to spread them among the uninformed party masses. The "literary discussion" had no connection at all with *The Lessons of October*. Any one of my books and any of my speeches could have served as the occasion to begin the baiting of "Trotskyism" in the party. That was my reply to those comrades who were inclined to view the publication of *The Lessons of October* as a tactical error.

After our bloc with the Leningrad group had taken place, I asked approximately the following question in a discussion with Comrade Zinoviev:

"Tell me, please, if I had not published *The Lessons of*

October, would the so-called 'literary discussion' against 'Trotskyism' have taken place in spite of that or not?"

Without hesitation, Zinoviev answered:

"Naturally *The Lessons of October* was only a pretext, otherwise something else would have been the motive; the forms of the discussion would have become somewhat different, nothing more."

2. In the July declaration signed by Zinoviev and Kamenev, it says: "There can no longer be any doubt that, as the development of the present leading faction has shown, the Opposition of 1923 correctly warned against the dangers of the departure from the proletarian line and the menacing growth of the apparatus regime. Yet dozens and hundreds of leaders of the 1923 Opposition, among them many workers, old Bolsheviks, steeled in the struggle and alien to careerism and servility, are kept away from all party work despite their submission to all discipline."

3. At the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of July 14 to July 23, 1926, Zinoviev said:

"I have made many mistakes. But I consider two mistakes as my most important ones. My first mistake of 1917 is known to all. . . . The second mistake I consider more dangerous, since the first one was made under Lenin, and was made good by us after a few days even if it was done with the help of Lenin, but my mistake of 1923 consisted in. . . ."

Ordjonikidze: "That you wanted to make the party believe something?"

Zinoviev: "We say, there can no longer be any doubts now that the kernel of the 1923 Opposition, as the development of the leading faction has shown, correctly warned against the departure from the proletarian line and against the menacing growth of the apparatus régime. . . . In the question of deterioration and in the question of bureaucracy 'Trotskyism' was right in the end against you." (Stenographic record, Volume IV, page 33).

In this manner Zinoviev admitted his mistake of 1923 in

the struggle against Trotsky, and even characterized it as more dangerous than that of 1917.

4. This acknowledgment of comrade Zinoviev called forth astonishment among many Leningrad Oppositionists who had sincerely believed in the legend of "Trotskyism". Comrade Zinoviev told me repeatedly:

"In Leningrad we hammered it into the consciousness of the comrades more deeply than anywhere else and it is therefore more difficult to learn anew there."

Shortly before the departure of comrade Lashevitch for the Chinese Eastern Railway (I cannot remember the exact date) two members of the Opposition came from Leningrad to Moscow to exert pressure on the 1923 group in the question of "Trotskyism". They repeated all the stock phrases about the "permanent revolution", about the underestimation of the peasantry and so forth.

Comrade Zinoviev asked me, together with the other leading comrades of the 1923 group, to participate in a discussion that was to take place at comrade Kamenev's home. The discussion took on a rather violent character, mainly between Zinoviev and Lashevitch on the one side and the comrades who had come from Leningrad, on the other.

I recall quite accurately the words that Lashevitch shouted out to the Leningraders:

"Don't put the thing upside down! We invented 'Trotskyism' together with you in the struggle against Trotsky. Why won't you understand this? You are only helping Stalin!" And so forth.

Comrade Zinoviev said:

"We must acknowledge what happened. It was a struggle for power. The trick was to combine the old differences of opinion with new questions. For this 'Trotskyism' was invented. . . ."

This conversation made a deep impression upon us, the members of the 1923 group, even though we had discerned some time before the mechanics of the struggle against "Trotskyism". On the way back we exchanged impressions and repeated the crassest expressions of Lashevitch and

Zinoviev. Besides that, I reported the discussion the same day to a few close comrades who had not participated in the conference. That is why many formulations of Zinoviev and Lashevitch have remained so well fixed in my memory.

Now that comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev are again trying to make use of the same "trick", that is, to combine old differences of opinion with entirely new questions of capitulation, I ask that you remember what I or some other participant in these proceedings reported to you on the expressions of Lashevitch and Zinoviev. The exact establishment of these facts now has a great political significance and can be useful in summing up the results of "lessons of December" (1927).

With communist greetings,

L. TROTSKY

LETTER FROM PREOBRANZHENSKY

I confirm everything brought out in this document. Only Lashevitch said: "We invented 'Trotskyism' without the words 'together with you'." The two Leningrad comrades who are mentioned here were quite sincerely worried about "Trotskyism". The meeting took place at comrade Kamenev's home about the 16th of October 1926, perhaps a few days before or after—I cannot recall exactly.

E. A. PREOBRAZHENSKY.

December 29, 1927.

LETTER FROM PIATAKOV

You ask me to inform you what I know about the speeches of Lashevitch and Zinoviev on the occasion of a discussion with Leningrad comrades on "Trotskyism" which took place in Kamenev's home. I no longer remember all that was said. But since I have always followed the question of so-called "Trotskyism" with the greatest attention, and since the position of the Opposition of 1925-26 was of the greatest political interest for me, I remember quite clearly what comrades Zinoviev and Lashevitch said. The sense of

their words was the following: "Trotskyism" had been invented so as to replace the real differences of opinion with alleged differences, that is, to utilize historical differences of opinion that had no relation to the present, for definite purposes mentioned above. This was told the comrades from and they wanted to explain to them who had invented "Trotskyism" and to what end.

G. PIATAKOV.

Moscow, *January 2, 1928*

LETTER FROM ELTSIN

Dear Leo Davidovitch!

I remember very exactly an episode that occurred in Kamenev's home on the eve of the declaration of October 16, during a debate on the "literary discussion" and *The Lessons of October*. To your question, as to whether the discussion on "Trotskyism" would have taken place even if *The Lessons of October* had not appeared, Zinoviev then answered: "Certainly it would have taken place, for the plan to open up this discussion was already in existence and we only lay in wait for a pretext." None of the supporters of the 1925 group who were present expressed any disagreement with this; everyone received this information of Zinoviev as a generally well known fact.

January 2, 1928.

E. ELTSIN

LETTER FROM RADEK

I was not present at the first conversation but I heard about it after it took place from L. D. (Trotsky).

I was present at the conversation with comrade Kamenev when L. B. (Kamenev) said he would openly declare at the Plenum of the Central Committee how they, that is, Kamenev and Zinoviev, together with Stalin decided to utilize old differences of opinion between Trotsky and Lenin so as to keep Trotsky from the leadership of the party after Lenin's death. Besides this I heard repeatedly from the mouth of

Zinoviev and Kamenev how they invented "Trotskyism" as an actual slogan.

KARL RADEK

December 25, 1927

Radek here recalls a striking incident that is not mentioned in my letter. During the July Plenum in 1927, Zinoviev and Kamenev were driven into a hail of quotations out of their own writings against "Trotskyism". Since Kamenev hoped to get the floor again on the question of the Opposition, he wanted to take the bull by the horns and declare openly before the plenum how and why the Trotskyist danger was invented. But the speakers list was closed and Kamenev did not get the floor again.

L. TROTSKY

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